INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGE IN NEW GUINEA

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# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preface</th>
<th>ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>The New Guinea setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The problem broadly defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives and methods of the present study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Inter-racial marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colonial New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-racial marriage in the post-war era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of inter-racial marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) The frontier marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) The marriage of added opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) The marriage with a mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjustment problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-racial marriages that fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Inter-tribal and inter-district marriage within New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation within inter-tribal marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-tribal marriage and national integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vii
Preface

A study of inter-ethnic marriage in New Guinea could readily absorb a score of researchers for years. The country is so vast in area, and its cultures and traditions so diverse and complex that it presents a myriad of possible combinations of inter-ethnic contacts which no single student could describe and analyse in a lifetime. It might be questioned, therefore, whether an outsider could hope within seven months of study to make any impact on a problem of these proportions.

The suggestion from the New Guinea Research Unit that an American sociologist, without prior field experience in New Guinea, might devote seven months of research under a grant from the Australian-American Educational Foundation to a study of inter-ethnic marriage in New Guinea was made with a full appreciation of the complexity of the problems involved. It was thought that at least a beginning might be made in an area of important but hitherto neglected research, and that sufficient basic data might be gathered and digested from which to frame some basic questions and hypotheses for consideration and testing by more exhaustive later studies.

In the absence of any significant published literature on the subject or of official records relating to marriage of any sort, it has been necessary to fall back to a considerable extent upon non-quantitative sources of knowledge such as the reactions of persons directly involved with inter-ethnic marriages. For scientific analysis, one would prefer the evidence of what actually transpires in such marriages, as measured, for example, by their survival rates. For scouting the field, however, the data obtained from the free-flowing accounts by persons who have ventured into marriage with a person of another ethnic group or who have been intimately involved with the consequences of such marriages are probably more likely to yield valuable insights.

It would be difficult to name all those who have contributed to the background of knowledge necessary for the preparation of this report. Many of the most useful informants, especially those most directly involved as participants in inter-ethnic marriage, have been willing to discuss freely and honestly some of their experiences only because they were assured that their contributions would be anonymous. Even in the case of the 'knowledgeable persons', such as members of the clergy, social welfare officers, educators, and public administrators, the best guarantee for the inviolability of their freely offered confidences has been to refrain from listing any of them by name. The author is indebted
to them beyond his means to express, for the countless hours, freely
given, of their time and for the wealth of experience and understand-
ing which they have so willingly shared.
Chapter 1

The New Guinea setting

A dominant impression derived from the literature on New Guinea is of a vast island area cut off from the rest of the world and internally subdivided into an unlimited number of land islands, sharply isolated from each other by rough physical terrain and equally impenetrable linguistic and cultural barriers. The seven hundred different language groups within Papua-New Guinea reflect a large, but as yet unknown number, of diverse and frequently antagonistic cultures. Even when the students of cultures have taken account of the convergence of these groups in warfare, trade, or the exchange of marriage mates, the major emphasis has usually been placed upon the distinctive characteristics of each group.

There is a growing recognition, however, among anthropologists and other social scientists of the central significance of social change and of the need to take full account of mounting contacts across the traditional cultural barriers. The phenomenal rise in the movement of people from one part of New Guinea to another within the past century, greatly accelerated during the past two decades, has forced a degree of contact among the diverse people which few observers could have imagined even a few years ago. The mere fact of being thrown together in plantation work crews or urban shanty-towns or administrative housing areas affords no guarantee that the social barriers between the groups will be effectively penetrated, or even moderately diminished. The invisible walls of the city ghettos in Port Moresby or Rabaul may be just as formidable as those between enemy tribes in the Central Highlands.

It is, of course, the young, unattached, and adventuresome men and women from the villages who are most widely attracted by the glamour and prospects of the towns and cities and who are also most susceptible to their secularising influences. Separated as the majority of these young migrants are, from the restraining influences of their families, relatives, and fellow-villagers, they are likely also to find special interest in the ways and the people of the diverse cultural groups encountered in such centres. Whether in New Guinea, Fiji, South Africa, Singapore, or Alaska; wherever young people of differing cultural traditions find themselves together, liaisons between the sexes, both temporary and permanent, are established across the traditional cultural lines. No human barriers yet devised to associations between the sexes -
class, caste, religion, or race - are likely to withstand indefinitely
the corrosive force both of the impersonality and the loneliness of
such centres of unattached humans.

New Guinea has, during the past century, experienced the secular
trends inherent in a commercial economy. Plantation agriculture, with
its utilitarian and sometimes exploitative relations between planter
and worker, has become firmly established. To maintain a continuous
supply of dependable labour the plantations recruit their workers from
differing parts of the country and thus set the stage for contact
between local women and men with foreign speech and customs.

As a consequence of New Guinea's late entry into the orbit of Western
life, the proportion of the population living within and deriving their
livelihood from the urban centres is still relatively low, compared
with other island areas in the Pacific; but this ratio is increasing.
The mounting concentrations of people from differing parts of the country
and of the wider world in such centres as Port Moresby, Rabaul, Lae,
Madang, Wewak, and Goroka, define the locale for the more extensive
fusing of ethnic stocks. Even the smaller towns, such as Daru, Mt Hagen,
Bulolo, Popondetta, Kavieng, and Samarai afford a suitable environment
for extensive cross-cultural contacts, some of which are destined to
result in marriage unions of longer or shorter duration.

Thus, within the past century New Guinea has begun to share increas-
ingly in the mingling and fusing of ethnic types which appear to be the
inevitable consequences of the spread of metropolitan and industrial
economy into regions once dominated by self-contained and communally
oriented modes of living. Judging by the experience in parts of the
world where this invasion has occurred earlier and proceeded further,
the number and variety of cross-cultural unions in New Guinea will
continue to mount and it becomes essential, therefore, to understand
the nature and influence of these changes on the total life of the
community.

New Guinea's experience in the meeting of cultures, with the result-
ing inter-ethnic associations, will vary from that in any other part of
the world, owing to the peculiar historical and environmental circum-
stances existing here, and the phenomena of inter-ethnic marriage must,
therefore, be examined within New Guinea's unique setting. At the same
time there are elements of similarity in the experience of all frontiers
of inter-ethnic contact, and the understanding of what is happening in
this part of the world can be heightened and sharpened by taking account
of what has happened elsewhere.

The problem broadly defined

Because of the common tendency to incorporate within the term
'marriage' the entire gamut of heterosexual unions from the most tem-
porary, casual, and even forced alliance to the socially sanctioned
unions lasting the lifetime of the persons involved, it becomes
necessary to state the problem before us more precisely. The initial distinction must be made between mere sex indulgence - of a type encountered throughout the animal kingdom - and human mating, which according to the American anthropologist, Robert Lowie (1957:146) is always 'morally appraised according to norms distinctive of each society'. Lowie goes on to define marriage more narrowly - perhaps too narrowly - as follows:

Marriage denotes those unequivocally sanctioned unions which persist beyond sensual satisfaction, and thus come to underlie family life. It is therefore not coextensive with sex life, which embraces matings of inferior status in the social scheme of values.

Such a definition is appropriate to a relatively stable society in which the kinship relationships have become clearly imbedded in custom, and the family - of which marriage is the commonly accepted social regulator - has become firmly institutionalised. All societies which have achieved any degree of permanence require some order and continued responsibility with respect to the propagation and nurturing of their children, and some system of regularising and controlling this critical function through marriage comes to be universally accepted within a society, however exotic or bizarre the arrangements may appear to outsiders.

Obviously, whatever system of control emerges on cultural frontiers cannot be unequivocally sanctioned by the people of the diverse cultures represented there, and substitute devices of various types take the place of the conventional marriage practices. The critical problem then becomes one of determining the dividing line between unions which are socially sanctioned and those which are not. This boundary is a tenuous one, shifting from time to time and from place to place. Even under the shifting circumstances of cultural frontiers, however, what distinguishes marriage is the social recognition of a continuing relationship between two or more persons of the opposite sex and of the children born of such unions.

Marriages in New Guinea during the present century may be classified as lying on a continuum extending from customary native marriages, at one extreme, to the Western-assimilated civil marriages at the other. There are five quite distinguishable junctures along the line of assimilative progression, of which some account must be taken in this study. Most of these have become sufficiently formalised and institutionalised as to become incorporated within the legal system in New Guinea.

Customary marriages are those heterosexual unions consummated in accordance with local native tradition, the practices of which are as varied as the many cultures and sub-cultures of New Guinea. Thus the Native Regulations in 1955 specified that 'a native may enter into a native customary marriage in accordance with the custom prevailing in the tribe or group of natives to which the parties to the marriage or
either of them belong or belongs' \(^1\). The task of defining what is in accordance with the prevailing custom in even the most widely known of native groups has only recently been seriously contemplated by the legal profession; and an undertaking of such monumental proportions as the determination of all the customary marriage practices throughout the country could take generations, by which time the customs may have changed so much as to make the original findings obsolete.

Some indication of the difficulties of attempting a legal definition of customary marriage, under modern conditions of increasing contacts across cultural barriers, is the further specification that although 'a customary marriage shall be as valid and effectual as a marriage under Part IV of this ordinance' \(^2\) (which applies to expatriates), certain safeguards and precautions are provided. Thus

a magistrate of a local court may, by order, forbid the marriage of a woman in accordance with native custom where the woman objects to the marriage and excessive pressure has been brought to bear to persuade her to enter into the marriage or in the circumstances it would be a hardship to compel her to conform to custom. \(^3\)

Reference will be made in Chapter 3 to some of the peculiar difficulties which result from efforts to apply the legal definition of customary marriage to persons from differing cultures. Although the overwhelming majority of all marriages in New Guinea are customary there are unfortunately no statistics kept about them.

Certain additional restrictions upon all marriages, other than those in accordance with indigenous custom, are defined in the Marriage Ordinance of 1963. A minimum age for marriage is established for males at eighteen years and for females at sixteen years, although a judge or magistrate may authorise the marriage of a male of 16 to 18 years or a female of 14 to 16 years to a particular person of marriageable age upon application if, in his discretion, the circumstances of the case are so exceptional or unusual as to justify the granting of the authorisation sought. \(^4\) Parental consent is required for the marriage of persons

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2 Marriage Ordinance 1963. There is no precise or universally accepted way to classify New Guinea's diverse peoples, and the term 'tribe' is used in a general sense as that unit, distinguished from other mainly by having a distinct language, but also by other cultural traits. There are over 700 linguistic units in the country. It is also divided for governmental purposes into 18 administrative districts, each of which is divided into several sub-districts.

3 Ibid., Section 57(1).

4 Ibid., Section 10.
under twenty-one, and the consent of both parties is required in all marriages. A further requirement of 'the written consent of a district officer' for the marriage between an indigenous and a non-indigenous person, which had been part of the ordinance from 1935-36 onwards and was perhaps a reflection of earlier administrative distrust of such marriages, was repealed by the Marriage Ordinance of 1963.

A second type of marriage along the gradient toward Western assimilation is not always recognised within the defined meaning of the term. Yet heterosexual alliances, even though they lack at the outset the social sanction assumed to be central in the conception of marriage, and may be violently opposed by both kin and community, may be subsequently accepted. During the early contact period de facto marriages - in which persons of the opposite sex elected to live together as husband and wife without the approval of the community - were commonly the only type of union possible between members of different cultures who were nevertheless attracted to each other. Relationships which began as casual alliances but developed beyond sex indulgence into a lasting attachment with loyalty to each other and the children born of the union, became the basis of a family and could command the social sanction essential to marriage. There is no means of ascertaining the extent of such tacit legitimising, though it did occur in sufficient numbers to justify its consideration at least as a transitional type.

The role of the Christian missions in extending Western conceptions of marriage can scarcely be exaggerated, and there has evolved a definite mission-type of marriage. Although both Roman Catholic and Protestant missions had been established by the early 1870s, it was not until this century - and especially since World War II - that their influence was widely felt throughout the country. The impact of Christian conceptions of marriage and family relationships must have become considerable when, by 1967, the various sects and denominations operating could claim as adherents 60.5 per cent of the entire population. Among all Christian missions in New Guinea - thirty-four Protestant sects or denominations and nine Roman Catholic orders - the conception of monogamous marriage for the lifetime of the two spouses has been a central doctrine. Premarital chastity and marital fidelity have also commonly been included within the doctrine, but their violation has been regarded with greater tolerance than a breach of the rule of monogamy.

The conflict between the Christian conception of marriage and the infinitely varied practices of the numerous native cultures and subcultures has not been easy to resolve, and missionaries have frequently found it necessary to compromise with their principles in one respect or another: either by closing their eyes to the lapses or accepting the

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1 Annual Reports of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea for the period 1966-67. Appendices.
inevitability of defection by some of their converts in response to local community pressures. The most widely devised method of doing this has come to be known among social workers and clergy as the 'mission marriage' and the great majority of the marriages performed by the Christian churches are of this type. The clergy, while seeking to hold their members to the Christian code of marriage - and requiring a public promise to do so - nevertheless take account of the possibility of defection by neglecting to record the marriage with the civil authorities. The marriage has the sanction of the church, and its blessing, but the couple is spared the extra obligations inherent in a registered marriage and the complications of a civil divorce if separation should occur. The need for such precautions is especially apparent in the case of inter-ethnic marriages, where the potential conflict involves three cultures rather than two.

'Church marriages' are officially recorded with the Registrar-General and thus become a matter of public knowledge and subject to the laws governing marriage and divorce. This added feature of church marriages, as distinguished from mission marriages, provides not only further restraint on the conduct of the individuals involved - a fact of which the clergy is very much aware - but it also offers protection to the wife and children, which they might not otherwise possess. According to members of the clergy interviewed in this study, the proportion of all marriages they performed which were registered with the state varied, from an estimated 2 per cent in remote areas, to 95 per cent in some of the urban parishes which serve a predominantly expatriate congregation. There is unquestionably the added element of social prestige and status which enhances the attractiveness of a church marriage for both indigenes and expatriates and in spite of secularisation, the number of these marriages seems likely to increase for some time.

The most completely secularised of the officially recognised marriage types in New Guinea is the 'civil marriage' in which the candidates with the proper credentials of age and marital condition simply present themselves before a district officer or registrar and ask to be declared man and wife. This type of marriage, although involving the least degree of public or communal recognition and approval, nevertheless subjects the couple to the same restrictions of Western law as a church marriage. Understandably, it is the recently arrived expatriates, without local family or other close associational connections, who choose this type of marriage most frequently. One may also expect it to increase in frequency among 'expatriate natives',¹ as a mounting proportion of the population is absorbed within the depersonalised and competitive atmosphere of the urban centres.

¹ A term which is coming into increasing use to refer to indigenes who have settled more or less permanently in communities other than where they were born.
We may now focus attention more specifically on the cross-cultural marriages which emerge along this assimilative continuum. Although there was a rough temporal progression in the foregoing account, one discovers a simple territorial gradient in the following analysis of inter-ethnic marriage. In-group marriage - the point of departure for any analysis of out-group marriage - usually occurs within a relatively limited territorial setting. Endogamous marriages among New Guineans usually occurred within the same village or immediate surrounding villages, and certainly within a circumscribed district. Exogamy did not ordinarily involve going any great distances to obtain brides, and even the system of seizing the women of traditional enemies need not require travel far afield or a high degree of cultural accommodation on the part of the captured brides.

With the introduction of a Western economy, which led to the recruiting of plantation labour over long distances and the rise of trading centres serving as magnets to both people and goods within large surrounding areas, strangers from far places were thrown together in considerable numbers for the first time. On the plantations and the mines, from 1875 onward, this affected mainly native peoples from widely separated areas of the country, although there was also limited contact with European or Australian owners or managers, and with small numbers of Chinese, Javanese, and Malays imported as labourers. The plantation situation, at least in the period before the Pacific war, was not conducive to such association among the various ethnic groups that would be likely to result in marriage. Both native and Asian labourers were exclusively men, either unmarried or with their wives behind in the home village. The maintenance of discipline among the labourers argued against close association among the different ethnic groups, and between them and the local residents. Miscegenation did occur, but neither the social atmosphere in the local native communities, nor the dispositions of the imported contract labourers were such as to lead to continuing and socially sanctioned unions. The great majority of native plantation labourers in the pre-war period returned to their home communities to rejoin or acquire wives there. After the war the reduction of authoritarian control of workers by employers, and the larger payments and freer movement of workers, led to reduced resistance to marriage with workers from neighbouring district.

Although the plantations still absorb well over a third of all indigenous male workers in paid employment,\(^1\) it is the centres of trade

\(^1\) So defined in terms of linguistic and psychological distances, although not necessarily in geographic distance.

\(^2\) In 1967, 29.0 per cent in Papua and 39.9 per cent in the Territory of New Guinea; or 36.5 per cent in the entire population. Annual Reports of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea for the period 1966-67.
which have given the greatest impetus to inter-ethnic association and marriage. Trade is by its very nature a purely competitive relationship in which the participants have their attention fixed wholly upon whatever advantage they can derive from the transaction and the centres of trade inevitably attract adventuresome individuals who are divorced from immediate family or community ties and obligations. For both the foreign and indigenous 'expatriates' - persons who have left their native land and kin behind - the trading centres encourage the breaking with traditional controls and the exploitation of the unwary. Thus the cities and towns of New Guinea, which have developed out of the earlier trading and administrative centres, contain the largest number of persons of mixed racial ancestry, and the same is probably also true of persons whose parents come from differing linguistic and cultural districts within New Guinea.

New Guinea has moved more slowly toward industrialisation and urbanisation than most Pacific islands. According to the latest census, less than 6 per cent of the entire population of New Guinea resides in centres with populations of 500 or more (though this ranges from 29.0 per cent in the Central District to 0.8 per cent in the West Sepik District). Among the indigenous population the percentages in urban centres were less. Port Moresby, the administrative capital and a dominant trading centre, has attracted far the largest number of both indigenous and expatriate migrants. Its population increased by 45 per cent in the five years before 1966, by which time it contained nearly 32.7 per cent of the entire urban population of the country, more than the combined population of the next five largest towns: Lae, Rabaul, Madang, Wewak, and Goroka. Although urban growth is likely to continue, the bulk of New Guinea's population is likely to remain rural for many years; and therefore the tension between the conservative folk cultures and permissive urban civilisation with respect to inter-ethnic marriage is bound to play a central role in the New Guinean drama in the future.

Despite the absence of statistics on the territorial distribution of the different ethnic groups (and hence on the likelihood of inter-ethnic contacts), the 1966 census of population shows that the proportion of persons of mixed-racial ancestry is very much higher in the three largest urban centres (Port Moresby, Lae, and Rabaul) than in the smaller towns, or in the country as a whole. For the entire country there were only 1.4 persons of mixed racial ancestry per thousand of the total population; but in the towns, the corresponding rates were 41.3 in Rabaul, 12.1 in Port Moresby, and 10.7 in Lae. The strikingly high rate for Rabaul is to a considerable degree a consequence of the much earlier plantation development in the east New Britain and New Ireland areas and of the importation into these regions of a considerable number of Chinese, Malayan and East Indian labourers, many of whom inter-bred with indigenes. In the smaller towns, the proportion of racially mixed persons was considerably less - 5.0 in Madang, 3.5 in Wewak, 2.7 in Goroka, and 2.4 in Mount Hagen - but still much higher than
in the country as a whole. These figures tell nothing of the proportion of persons whose parents came from differing cultural stocks within New Guinea, but one would assume that the pattern would correspond roughly with the one of racially mixed persons.

The markedly disproportionate number of males to females among the indigenous population in the towns explains why some men would have to find their mates outside their own ethnic group, if they were to marry while resident there. For every one hundred indigenous females, of all ages, living in the urban areas, there were 195 males; which means that in the marriageable ages, the disproportion of males is very much greater. This excess of males is a consequence of migration from rural areas. In the four largest towns, the number of males per 100 females among the indigenous populations in 1966 was 344.2 in Rabaul, 228.4 in Madang, 203 in Lae, and 184.9 in Port Moresby. Among the Europeans, the sex disproportions were less markedly different in the rural areas from the towns, being 156.0 in Madang, 138.5 in Port Moresby, 135.6 in Lae, and 136.1 in Rabaul, compared with 139.6 in the entire country. This factor alone suggests considerable pressure in both the European and the native urban communities toward out-marriage; although the competition for wives would be much greater among the indigenes. Moreover, if census data were available on the place of birth of the native population, they would undoubtedly reveal a wide diversity of cultural districts, as well as great variation in the proportion of the two sexes.

Objectives and methods of the present study

Despite the deeply implanted and universally held prejudices among most ethnic groups toward out-marriage, as a threat to the solidarity of the group, the social situation throughout the modern world points unequivocally to an increasing crossing of the ethnic barriers, either in sanctioned or unsanctioned unions. The relatively late development of the extensive confrontation of diverse ethnic groups in New Guinea is more than counter-balanced by the intensity and complexity of the meeting, particularly in urban centres.

The recognition that increasing numbers of young people in New Guinea will find sex partners outside their own ethnic community, regardless of the proscriptions imposed, becomes a prerequisite for an intelligent handling of the problems which inevitably follow. The nature of the tensions involved and the manner in which they are faced and sometimes resolved is obviously of prime importance to the present and future welfare of the community. This study will explore first the circumstances under which the people of New Guinea, both native and expatriate, become sufficiently emancipated from the traditional bonds of family and community to venture into an inter-ethnic marriage. It seems desirable then to penetrate, however slightly, beyond the facade of rationalisations, justifications, and even deceptions which people inevitably develop under such circumstances and to perceive how their conduct in the marriage subsequently evolves.
Although such goals might appear to fall more within the realm of value judgments than of objective research, in an area of such subjective and intimate interaction, the appearance of the world to those directly involved often plays a more important role than the world as some impersonal and disinterested scientist might view it. As far as possible, the social scientist would wish to uncover the relevant facts of the world as it is, of which certainly a critical element is the participants' conception and imagination of that world. In fact, some preliminary insight into the actual experience of the persons most directly involved as they see and understand it is essential to define the limits of what else to look for.

An objection to this approach is likely to be raised almost immediately, on the grounds of practicability. It would seem to the outside observer, as it did at the outset to this researcher, that marriage is always a relationship of such intimacy that few people who take it at all seriously, will be willing to discuss it with any honesty with a complete stranger. This initial difficulty would seem to be further aggravated in the case of inter-ethnic marriages because of the widely held prejudice toward such unions.

An oblique approach to the problem was recommended instead as more likely to yield reliable and adequate data for an exploratory study. Seasoned researchers in related social sciences insisted that experienced social workers, ministers, priests, missionaries, government administrators, educators, and medical officers would be likely to discuss the problems associated with inter-ethnic marriage more freely and more objectively than the persons who had themselves engaged in such ventures. Certainly no harm could result from reconnoitering the field in this way and much valuable data might be obtained. Port Moresby was not only the point of highest concentration of many informants of this type, but presumably they also had there close at hand more examples of the phenomena than anywhere else. This, at any rate, was the site and the method exclusively employed at the initial stages of the research.

Utilising a list of forty-five recommended informants in the Port Moresby area, appointments were made for interviews during the first month with one or more representatives of all the professions mentioned above. No one refused to be interviewed and all expressed some interest, although nearly a third of those interviewed were apologetic because their information was sketchy or related chiefly to an earlier period. No fixed schedule of questions was followed in the interviews, as a broad range of experience was desired, and the interviewees were encouraged to follow their own interests as long as these centred on inter-ethnic marriage. The questions introduced were geared, therefore, to each individual's experience. Except for a few interviews at the outset, permission was asked (and in every instance granted) to record the discussion on a tape. Once the small cartridge recorder was set in motion, it was completely disregarded and did not seem to inhibit conversation.
The quality of the interviews varied greatly in the authenticity and the credibility of the data provided. Basic attitudes favourable to or, more frequently, critical of inter-ethnic marriage coloured the objectivity with which certain facts were reported, but clear evidence of such attitudes usually emerged in the course of conversations lasting for an hour or more, and the existence of such prejudices in various professional circles was itself of considerable significance. Fortunately the presence of diverse attitudes made it possible to view their reporting more critically and objectively. A few informants avoided specific cases, apparently fearing that the confidence of clients might be violated. They reported instead in vague and meaningless generalities. As a group, the clergy probably provided the richest body of factual information. This was particularly true in the various areas outside Port Moresby - Goroka, Lae, Rabaul and Madang - visited later in each case from a few days to a week.

While the limitations of the 'third person' approach was apparent from the outset, it became increasingly clear that direct contact with persons who had married across ethnic lines was desirable. The decision whether to concentrate research effort on expatriate-native marriages or on unions of indigenes of different ethnic backgrounds had to be made on a highly pragmatic and experimental basis. There were obvious difficulties in each of these areas, and since neither had been previously investigated, it was decided to experiment briefly with both. Through the kind co-operation of two experienced welfare officers in Port Moresby, it was possible to establish direct contact with a considerable number of both types of mixed marriages in Hohola and Kaugere, the districts where they are the most highly concentrated. Interviews were arranged and conducted with the representatives of nearly fifty inter-ethnic marriages.

Several methodological discoveries emerged from this trial run. The necessity of using interpreters in somewhat more than half of the inter-tribal or inter-district marriages greatly reduced the possibility of free communication, and limited both the adequacy and accuracy of the information obtained. Even in the inter-district marriages where either or both partners spoke English, the command of the language was commonly limited, and some found difficulty in comprehending the purpose of the study, consequently there was some reluctance to offer more than desultory answers to questions. On the other hand, some of these informants were quite vocal in English and soon participated freely in the discussion.

Contrary to expectations, there was relatively little reserve in the case of inter-racial marriages; once the purpose, and the auspices under which the study was being conducted, had been explained. In fact, the readiness and even eagerness to discuss the marriage situation, especially by the expatriate partners, was one of the more startling discoveries of the study. Since the wife in these marriages was almost without exception either a full-blooded native or of mixed race, she would
commonly defer to her husband, and if he gave his consent to the interview, her participation came almost as a matter of course. When both spouses were present at the same time, the wife's contribution was almost invariably subordinate to that of her husband and much more subdued than when she was interviewed alone. The wife's ability to communicate in English, even though the husband played the dominant role in the interchange, made her contribution much more meaningful to the interviews involving inter-racial marriages than in those of inter-district marriages.

In most instances of this type of marriage it was as though the couple (but the expatriate husband in particular) had been waiting for some neutral listener to whom their story might be poured out. The researcher frequently had the sense of having released a flood of confidences that had long been piling up behind a wall of self-consciousness. In several instances the informants suggested a return session at which other aspects of the situation might be discussed, and the impression was distinctly given that some inner relief and catharsis was derived from 'talking it out' with an interested, but uninvolved, 'sociological stranger'. An inconspicuous tape recorded was invaluable in preserving the full flavour of these sessions. Because the response from inter-racial couples was so much more readily accessible and, in general, more complete and authentic than that from the native inter-district marriages, there was an inevitable tendency to devote more attention to the former.

The greater part of the field data was thus derived from interviews with 'knowledgeable, third-party informants' and with persons who had married across ethnic lines, and is coloured therefore with the bias, prejudice, and sentimentality of these persons. Much of this subjectivity, however, is shared, and may be distinguished through a comparison of the various accounts with one another. Besides which, a recognition of what these subjective feelings are, and how they are expressed, seems to be a legitimate objective of this study. More orthodox research methods, including the use of official records and questionnaires were used where possible.

1 There was rarely any significant inconsistency between the attitudes expressed by the wife toward the marriage when she was interviewed alone and those she expressed later when her husband was also present.
Chapter 2

Inter-racial marriage

Colonial New Guinea

Centuries before Europeans had set eyes on New Guinea, there had been extended contacts with peoples of South-east Asia, notably Indonesia. By the time Europeans made their first discoveries in the early sixteenth century, Chinese and Malay traders had already 'left their genetic imprint upon the coastal population'. Whatever blending of races occurred before the nineteenth century was probably the consequence of such casual contacts between the crews of trading vessels from South-east Asia and indigenous women, and it was not until late in the century that European influence began to be felt in much the same way.

The introduction of plantation economy into New Guinea from about 1880 onwards resulted in the continued presence of a sizeable number of young, unattached, European men in a strange and often hostile environment; a situation conducive to their seeking sexual and affectional satisfactions how and where they could be found. The plantation has invariably been associated in its early stages with some form of forced labour - either the enslavement of the native population or a penal contract system of imported labour - and this exploitative pattern has not unnaturally been extended by the planters to their relations with native women. Denied a normal type of family life under the conditions of 'military agriculture' in which they were involved, the planter has commonly 'used' native women for his personal gratification - much as the workers have been used for financial profit - with a minimum sense of personal identification with or permanent responsibility for either.

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1 Gavin Souter 1963:17.
2 The term race, as used in this study, departs from the orthodox biological interpretation in favour of a more functional definition - a group of people who, because of commonly recognised external traits thought to be genetically acquired, have become self-conscious and are subject to differential treatment. On this basis races appear and disappear in accordance with the way in which people do or do not take account of them.
Thus most of the references in the literature to the mounting number of 'half-castes' in the population assume their origin to be in the casual and unsanctioned liaisons of native women with either European planters and traders or the imported plantation labourers. Even in the present study both expatriate and indigenous informants tended to repeat the familiar stereotyped judgment on this type of foreigner as 'irresponsible, immature, and immoral'.

The versions by persons directly involved cast a different light on the situation. One elderly informant arrived in New Guinea as a ship's officer during the first decade of this century and later became an overseer on a copra plantation which extended over eighteen different islands. In 1914 he left and tried to enlist in the army but:

I was too lightweight, too frail. I had had too much malaria, we all did in those days. But I had saved a bit of money. I had lived mostly on pigeons and fish and turtle eggs, so it didn't cost me much to live. So when I couldn't go to war, I invested my savings in a little sailing boat, and I lived on that, trading and recruiting labor for the plantations up and down the coast. After about three years of that I took up some land of my own and planted it and I still own it. In another three years I had saved enough to get married to a girl from Australia, but that marriage lasted only four years, since my wife died in the birth of the second child.

Well then I had to take my two small children...to my wife's parents in Australia, and about two months after I left them there, the infant girl was dead. Well...you get over it eventually, but I concluded I really shouldn't have married a white woman; I shouldn't have brought her up to face the sort of conditions that existed here then - the loneliness, the isolation, and all the other privations. You don't think so at the time; but I felt it afterwards, and I have ever since.

It is worth noting that among the plantation frontiersmen the sense of personal responsibility was not necessarily lacking, but the conditions of life were such as to make the normal European codes of conduct virtually impossible to sustain. Repeatedly in interviews with the older European 'Territorians' the proposition was emphasised that to remain a lone male outsider in a strange physical environment, isolated by the rigid caste barriers of the plantation from the only other humans about, was simply an invitation to insanity. The need for intimate companionship, as well as physical cravings, led most European planters and traders and many Asian labourers into liaisons with native women. One old-timer, who had been trader and planter on the Papuan coast early in the century, said simply: 'I couldn't eat my bread alone. I was employing this family, including their two daughters, to help out in the trade store, and I simply married (de facto) the youngest one.'
It was also mentioned parenthetically but relevantly, that as the family had received special favour from him, the granting of one of their daughters in return did not seem unfair.

The more arduous living conditions and the greater uncertainty of continued economic returns on the mining operations may have contributed to the lower degree of permanence in their mixed-racial unions, compared with those on the plantations. The social situation in some mining areas during World War I was described by one participant as follows:

Every white man had his native concubine. They were working hard in those days, with no natives to help out, and so he had to get a sleeping partner. It was as simple as that. Oh, yes, some of them were married and had pretty decent connections, but most of them just couldn't be bothered.

Certainly not all the inter-racial liaisons established during this period were of the fly-by-night variety implied in the usual stereotyped characterisations. Unions which are initiated almost wholly on a purely physical basis and without social sanctions may acquire, as a result of continuing interaction and mutual sharing, emotional bonds of as great intensity as any which have the stamp of societal approval. In the course of this study, a considerable number of mixed-race families were encountered which had been brought into being before World War II without benefit of clergy or district officer but whose cohesion and strength had become progressively greater with successive years of shared experience. In some instances, the gradual appearance of European women as missionaries and as wives of missionaries, administrators, and traders, produced an atmosphere adverse to such conventional irregularities; and in some instances it heightened the determination of the mixed couples to succeed according to the European conventions:

When I decided to take this girl as my wife no one was to know whether I married her legally or not.... The old contention was that when you take a native girl for a wife you inevitably go down the scale instead of bringing them up and unfortunately in those days that usually proved to be the case. Well, I pride myself on the fact that for quite a few years I was one of the few able to keep my head up with the best of them.

The existence of a highly articulate mission community which insisted upon the strict adherence to Western conventions led some Europeans who had lived for years with native wives, to take steps to 'salvage' their status by going through the formality of a church wedding, sometimes in the presence of their grown children, though a record of having provided

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1 We have no record of the undoubtedly far greater number of instances in which the relationships between foreign men and native women were of the most casual and temporary nature, nor of the varied experiences of the innumerable mixed-blood children born of these liaisons.
well for his native wife and children for many years has commonly been regarded as a better criterion for social acceptance than the most elaborate public ceremonials.

Inter-racial marriage in the post-war era

The close war-time association, under the most trying conditions, of Australian and American troops with the native population, probably did more to weaken the ethnocentric dispositions on both sides and to heighten the appreciation of each race for the other than anything else in New Guinea's history. Although the image of the natives as 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' was by no means universally accepted, a sizeable number of soldiers did develop sufficient appreciation for both the country and the people to induce them to return after the war and to marry native women. The war was undoubtedly 'a kind of watershed in the development of race relations in New Guinea',¹ in which it became increasingly possible to accept the marriage of a European man with a native woman as at least tolerable for some people, if still incomprehensible to most 'normal' people.

Every informant has testified to the steady increase in the number of marriages between European men and indigenous women; although their interpretation of what this means in the life of the persons involved, and of the country as a whole, has varied greatly. There are no complete statistics of marriages but the records of the officially registered marriages during a single year (1 April 1967 to 30 March 1968) indicate that 45 out of a total of 310 or 14.3 per cent of the marriages involving Europeans were inter-racial, i.e. the other member of the union was a native, mixed-race, or Asian.² Although no comparative figures are available for any earlier period, this proportion seems surprisingly high in the light of the strongly adverse sentiments which have existed in the past. Although these data refer only to the marriages which are officially registered, it is assumed that most Europeans who are concerned about their status in the community and who conceive of the relationship as more than a clandestine affair would be included in this category.

A further analysis of data from the records of officially registered marriage reveals that the difference in the median age of bride and groom is significantly greater in the racially mixed marriages than in

² No explicit information on race is provided on the marriage registry, and the distinction between Europeans, Asians, and indigenous persons had to be made on the basis of the name of both bride and groom and of their parents and place of birth. In many instances, these data provide adequate grounds for distinguishing between Europeans and non-Europeans, but an element of error is obviously introduced at this point.
those involving only Europeans. Among the inter-marriages, the median age of the brides was 21.5 years and of the grooms it was 28.3 years; whereas among the marriages in which both partners were Europeans the corresponding ages were 25.3 years for the brides and 27.6 years for the grooms. The greater disparity in the case of the mixed marriages may be a consequence of the correlated fact that a sizeable number of the European grooms were men of advanced years, many of whose earlier marriages had ended in divorce, though it is due more to the fact that native women generally were younger than European women. Most mixed marriages involved relatively young European men between twenty and thirty years, whereas their native or mixed-race brides ranged between eighteen and twenty-four years, though there were instances of such disparities between the ages of the bride and groom as 16 and 38, 18 and 52, 20 and 50, 24 and 58.

The proportion of the men who had been divorced was markedly higher (24.4 per cent) in racially mixed marriages than in the racially homogeneous ones (10 per cent) and the disparities in the ages of the bride and groom tended to be greatest where the latter had been divorced. The proportion of civil marriages was highest among racially mixed couples: 46 per cent among these but only 26 per cent for marriages between Europeans. With church weddings, the particular religious auspices under which they were conducted was often more a function of the availability of a minister or priest than of any denominational preferences among the persons being married.

The range of occupations of the European men who married out seems to be as broad as among those who marry within the race. Included among the former are bank officers, plantation managers, builders, teachers, traders, clerks, patrol officers and craftsmen of various sorts. Mission workers were noted frequently among European men marrying European women, but were conspicuously absent among those marrying out, although some have been known to marry native women. The range of occupations among the European brides (all of whom found European husbands during this period) was very much greater than among the indigenous brides of European men. In the rural areas, these native women are almost exclusively classified as domestics, housekeepers, or housewives, whereas in the urban centres skilled occupations such as teachers, nurses and clerk-typists, are more commonly noted. The total number of marriages in this sample is too small to justify analysis of their geographical distribution.

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1 Some observers were convinced that only Europeans who had failed in a previous marriage or were unable to persuade a girl of their own background to accept them would resort to mixed marriages. This is quite incorrect.
Types of inter-racial marriage

Any attempt to categorise a phenomenon so complex in its causative factors and so diverse in its expressions as inter-racial marriage is subject to grave limitations. Each individual must be recognised as a unique personality, and the interaction between each couple necessarily different in important respects from every other. Some common elements and similarities in experience nevertheless appear.

On the basis of the limited number of cases interviewed in this study, the most meaningful system of classification is derived principally from the scheme of life organisation\(^1\) which the participants appear to have evolved. Extended conversations with the principals in the mixed marriages interviewed suggest three fairly distinct types (in the Weberian sense of an ideal characterisation which incorporates the essential elements of all cases falling within the class, but to which no single case conforms in every detail).

The men play a disproportionate role in determining the style of living in inter-racial marriages.\(^2\) This is also true to a greater or lesser extent within the traditional framework of marriage among virtually all the indigenous peoples of New Guinea. Increasingly in recent years, the two individuals in the cross-cultural marriages have been drawn together on the basis of their discovery of shared temperamental dispositions and objectives in life.

A second aspect of the mode of life which appears in varying degrees, forms, and disguises in virtually all mixed marriages examined in this study is an awareness by the partners of the unconventionality of their marriage. There develops some disposition to accommodate themselves to that fact by a partial withdrawal from society or the adoption of an air of indifference or belligerence toward society. The sensitivity to the expectations of the enquiring society and of the home community may vary from one individual to another and from time to time, but it is rarely completely absent. So also, the social definitions of mixed racial marriages have been modified with the passage of time, diminishing in the severity of their disapproval notably during the past decade; but there still remain and there are likely to continue to be for a long time strong collective sentiments adverse to inter-racial marriage in both the European and native communities.

\(^1\) This term does not imply any necessarily purposeful or consciously conceived mode of living, but simply that in the continuing relationship between husband and wife and children a distinguishable pattern of behaviour and conduct inevitably takes form.

\(^2\) The prestige and power which Europeans have been able to command in New Guinea have thus far been channelled almost exclusively through the male participants in the inter-racial marriages. As more European women marry native men, a distinct shift will probably occur in the respective sex roles within such marriages.
(i) **The frontier marriage.** Life on the cultural frontier demands of the participants in any relationships certain qualities of resourcefulness and determination for the sake of mere survival, and one can observe some of these dispositions in both husbands and wives of these inter-racial marriages which have withstood for any length of time the extra handicaps which society commonly imposes upon such unions. The supporting evidence is taken from interviews with inter-racial couples whose marriages have persisted over two decades and give every indication of continued strength. One discovers in such individuals a bit of the rebel and the non-conformist and a disposition to strike out on new ventures; the adversities and the disapproval encountered in society serve rather to strengthen than to undermine their determination to succeed.

I came to New Guinea as a young lad. I'd run away from home to work in where we had made a few pounds. We were lucky and this mate and I thought we'd give it a go in New Guinea, which was just developing then in mining. I had a few months at and came out broke, but I always claimed I was a bit versatile and tried my hands at different things.... When I decided to marry this girl, I said to her parents, 'I'm willing to marry this girl in the church but I'm agnostic and I couldn't be bound by anything that is done there and secondly I don't think the girl would appreciate this in her married life. I think it would be a better show for the girl if she weren't bound by marriage,' and that's been the arrangement to this day. The priest of the church in which she had been brought up came around to see me and said, 'We don't like what you are doing.... Why don't you marry her in the church?' I said, 'I don't think this concerns you.... I'm an agnostic. But I'm a responsible person, just as much as you are, and I don't feel that the church ceremony would bind me in any way or any stronger than I am now.'

In another instance, the independence of mind and strength of character of the European involved was no less marked, although the situation contributed substantially to these characteristics.

When I returned from one of my trips I found that my housekeeper had simply established herself in my home, and since I was lonely anyway I decided to keep her.... There weren't very many Europeans around. In the mission some miles away I was not ostracised, but had I been a native, I would have been excommunicated. But being a European and that I was more useful to them than they were to me, they couldn't show their feelings.... With some people I sensed a coolness - never openly. I may have been a bit overly sensitive, but I was always independent, and anybody that didn't like it could go to hell as far as I was concerned. Then living in this remote area, they couldn't come to see me very easily, although I could go to see them, but I just stayed away. In the towns I was a good customer and was doing a lot of business and money talks in all languages....
In the two cases cited, as in most others of this class, the European man has clearly been the dominating force in the resulting household, establishing a European standard of life to which both wife and children conformed. The evidence in this study suggests that for mixed marriages to last under the precarious conditions in remote areas, a dominating but responsible man and a submissive wife are required. It is equally evident that, given such a relationship, a mutually satisfying and continuing family organisation develops in spite of cultural differences between the partners and the strong societal opposition which has existed in the past. The prospects of success as well as of social acceptance in both European and native communities are obviously greater if the husband has been able to establish himself economically and financially. In fact, much of the more significant economic development, notably in the Highlands, has been carried out by Europeans who in their pioneering activities have dared to oppose traditional expectations by taking native wives. As a Catholic priest in one of these regions points out:

Neither the Europeans nor the natives are likely to say anything derogatory, at least in public, about ___. He is too important in the community and he has done too much for both groups. And even in the case of ___, who lived happily with three native women, the European men just laughed and accepted it, although some of the white women got a little catty. He was such a pleasant, worthwhile person himself. He was so anxious to get all his children well educated, and they were.

Although there are no means by which to determine objectively the adequacy of the relations in these, or any of the other mixed marriages, the mere fact of survival over an extended period does afford evidence of a sort. The native wives would probably not voice the same appreciation for their mixed marriage as the following statement by a European husband, but the years of quiet and loyal devotion which these women have given to their families is perhaps an even better reflection of its value to them.

The last nineteen or twenty years of my life have been much simpler and more enjoyable than the earlier ten years when I was married to a European. But I can tell you this, if I had my life to live over again, I wouldn't be married to a European. With my wife now, there is nothing that I can't do. It's embarrassing at times, I'm an authority on everything. Everything I do, even though it's dead wrong, it's dead right. And you know that is a very pleasant atmosphere to live in.... In the domestic life, there is much more harmony than there ever was with my European wife. That's a fact. With the European couples I know, there is so much bickering but that just doesn't happen in my home. It just doesn't happen. And I could show you at least six Europeans of my generation in this town whose experience has been very much the same and whose attitudes toward marriage with native or mixed-race women are very much like mine.
The value of such a statement lies not in its representativeness, which it is impossible to ascertain, but rather in the reflection of one type of outlook and the hint of a personality type which, bolstered by the marital and family support, has played an important part in the pioneering phase of New Guinea's modern development.

The approach found in these marriages is essentially realistic. There is evidence among both husbands and wives of a disposition to face the conditions of life as they are and to take whatever steps seem to be called for by the circumstances, even though the conventions are violated and one's fellows are shocked.

(ii) The marriage of added opportunity. Many of the more recent racially mixed marriages resemble the frontier marriages just discussed in that they afford both man and wife the means of satisfying basic desires which the circumstances of life seemed likely to deny them. Unlike the pioneer whose only hope of securing a satisfying family life lay in his ability to marry a native girl, the expatriate during the last two decades has had much greater opportunities to marry his own kind. Nevertheless, the prospects of a racially mixed marriage are sufficiently enticing to lead increasing numbers of both expatriates and natives to choose what is still commonly conceived as an unconventional, if not objectionable step.

The interviews with knowledgeable persons strongly suggest that a disproportionate number of inter-racial marriages are undertaken on the basis of physical attraction, the prospects of material gain, or other factors equally tenuous and the accounts of broken marriages from social workers tend to support this contention. The evidence from the case studies, however, indicates that more fundamental human desires also contribute significantly to many of the more lasting inter-racial marriages of recent years.

A sex ratio of 137 males to every non-indigenous 100 females in 1966 and a very much higher ratio among the adults of marriageable age, meant that many of the eligible European men would either have to find non-European wives, if they were to marry, or seek their partners from outside the country.1

In addition to the unequal sex ratio, a variety of personal factors present among the foreigners in such situations make marriage to a native woman distinctly appealing, and also contribute to the likelihood of the survival of the union. A significant number of the expatriates married to indigenes are persons from non-British countries who, because of language and other cultural handicaps, encounter extra

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1 The records of the registered marriages involving only European partners during the year ending 30 March 1968 indicate that 10.3 per cent of the brides had been living outside the country before the marriage.
difficulties in securing wives from among the few white women. New Guinea, as one of the last uncharted areas of the world, has attracted adventure-seeking young men from Europe and America. Some have come first to Australia, and finding it too tame, have pushed on to New Guinea. There seems also to have been for some of the residents of north European countries a special fascination in the acquiring of a dark-skinned wife, as the following interview indicates.

Well, it may be ing to you, but I somehow always did want to marry a coloured girl, when I was back in ____. The blond girls back there all seemed so flat and unexciting, and I was disappointed in my home country in many things. I came to Australia as a seaman and I got off in Melbourne and was living and working there for three years. I fixed documents and passports to go out to India, but I decided to go by way of Papua, and when I got off at Jacksons Airport and on the way in to town I seen many nice young girls on the street and I thought, 'Well, that will be the place for me'. I decided I didn't want to go further on, and so I stopped here.

The steady work habits and industry of the immigrants from Europe, especially from peasant communities, have brought returns in many ways, which have won the loyalty and continued devotion of native women. Moreover, the tastes and expectations of the men have been simple and unaffected enough to make them content with a level of life not too different from that of the village communities of their native wives. On the other hand, native women appear to experience little difficulty in adjusting to a relatively sophisticated plane of living, where the husband's income and standards have made this possible.

Other personality variations, such as a retiring or introverted disposition, may also make the unpretentious and complaisant ways of native women attractive. Experiences of being reared in an orphanage or in a remote rural area with little companionship among one's peers were associated in a number of instances with reports that 'I am not a social type and so I haven't cultivated many friends', or 'I am not really a social person. I don't look for high society. I don't go in for these social circles where they try to go higher and higher'. Another European married to a native went so far as to say: 'The European who marries a Papuan or Mixed Race is usually a person who hasn't had a highly socialised background, and can't stand up in his own social way of life.' This is an exaggerated statement of self derogation, but tallies with the commonly expressed preferences for the exclusive company of each other.

An unfortunate experience in an earlier marriage with someone of their own racial background has led a considerable number of European men to experiment with an inter-racial marriage, and in many instances the submissiveness of a native or mixed-race wife has seemed a most acceptable alternative to a demanding or irritable European wife. The relatively high proportion of divorcees among the older Europeans marrying indigenous
women during a recent year lend support to this impression.\(^1\) There is, of course, no guarantee that an inter-racial marriage will resolve the personality problems which contributed to the earlier failure, and the longer duration of the mixed marriage may simply reflect a greater willingness of the native wife to endure these idiosyncracies than her European predecessor.

Some informants spoke quite readily of their earlier mishaps elsewhere:

Like a lot of other blokes from down South, I came up here to get a job, because things were pretty tight at home in '59. After I had been up here a while, my girl writes to me that it was a mistake and she never really loved me, and so I says to hell with you. I met my wife when I first came up here but we didn't get married for a couple of years and then Father married us at his church after announcing it three times in church. This was a lot better than most of the Australians who come up here and just live with a native girl. It is especially these mixed race girls who are crazy to live with a European man, even though he later deserts her.

There is an element of self-flattery and ethnocentrism in the frequently repeated statement by expatriates that native girls, especially those of mixed ancestry, regard marriage to a European as something to be greatly desired. The material advantages she and her family might derive from marriage with an affluent and generous European are sufficiently obvious to give some plausibility to the generalisation, but even this advantage is by no means universally present. Ministers, priests, and social workers, whose professional activities might have brought them into close association with the native community, report varied reactions among their indigenous parishioners or clients, ranging from widespread approval to complete and universal disapproval of the marriage of their sons and daughters with Europeans.\(^2\)

No adequate means of probing the deeper feelings of native wives toward their European husbands was evolved during the study, since their statements, even when interviewed separately from their husbands, almost necessarily reflected a certain positive bias, if only to maintain a basic self-respect. Where the relationship had proven unbearably unsatisfactory to the native wife she would have deserted; although even under unpleasant circumstances, the better physical accommodation, greater prestige among her fellows, or concern for the welfare of children might have kept the marriage functioning.

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1 Among the twelve European men over the age of thirty whose marriage to a native girl was registered during the selected year, six were classified as divorced.

2 A more detailed discussion of the reaction of natives toward marriage with expatriates follows later.
On the other hand, there is little reason to doubt the sincerity and authenticity of the unsolicited comments of indigenous wives of European men - more commonly noted among the mixed-race women - that they would not wish to marry a man of their own ethnic background. Nor were the reasons they gave necessarily the superior material conditions which Europeans could invariably provide. Certainly the phenomenally higher incomes of Europeans, even in civil service positions involving similar qualifications, could not fail to be an important consideration in the choice between a native and a European husband; and this explains much of the readiness of natives to give consent to the marriage of their daughters to them.¹ The reasons more commonly given by indigenous girls for their own preference for a foreign husband are likely to be expressed in terms of the greater courtesy and consideration for their sex which they have rightly or wrongly identified with the European male. Mixed-race girls associated preference for a European husband with what is commonly thought to be the lack of initiative among mixed-race men:

I wouldn't have married a mixed-race boy. They are my people and I'm proud of them, but speaking for the boys I've met, they don't seem to have any sense of responsibility and ambition. Everything is just one big ball of love, and they don't think of anything serious until they are up in their thirties, and then you meet someone you might think of marrying, but he is miles older than you. I met one that appealed to me, but he was twenty-nine and I was only twenty. None of the younger ones appealed to me. The explanation for the difference is, I think that the Europeans put in the minds of their children that they should aim for something in life, while with the Mixed-Race, they just let them grow up and drift along - tell them what is right and wrong, but put no ideals in their minds.

Studies of the mixed-race community in Port Moresby by Burton-Bradley re-enforce the impression that the women are very much 'concerned with maximising their status, for example, by marrying a European or upper class mixed-race man', and that the group as a whole is subject to 'easy discouragement in the face of difficulty', without implying, however, that this is more pronounced among the men than among the women.² Although quantitative substantiating evidence is lacking, it is

¹ Visits in the homes of eleven European-native marriages and an equal number of inter-tribal or inter-district marriages in the Hohola area of Port Moresby revealed, with only one exception, more in the way of Western conveniences, such as costly radios, tape-recorders, electric sewing machines, washing machines, and expensive musical instruments, in the former than in the latter, although there was by no means a similar differentiation in the cleanliness, artistic order, or physical care in the two types of homes.

² Burton-Bradley 1968:42.
reasonable to assume that mixed-race women have been in greater demand as marriage partners to European men than the women of pure native stock; and hence also more selective in their choice of a mate.

The combination in some of the inter-racial marriages of both husband and wife who 'have an eye on the better chance' has frequently resulted in a rather high degree of success under the Western rules of the game. Emancipated as they are from the strict conventions of either European or native society, it has been possible for them to concentrate more effectively on winning a mark in areas where traditional expectations are not a central consideration, especially in vocational and economic pursuits. It is no accident, therefore, that prominent and successful businessmen, especially in the Port Moresby area, have emerged out of humble origins from among the limited number of Europeans involved in mixed marriages.

(iii) The marriage with a mission. It is probable that the tendency in recent years, especially in religious and academic circles, to idealise the mingling of races and the emergence of 'the citizen of the world' has played a considerable part in the appearance of another type of racially mixed marriage. The instances which have emerged with sufficient frequency and distinction to merit separate attention in this study have been confined to persons with a considerable educational background and a strong moral or religious motivation. A desire to be part of and to contribute to the creation of a 'new race of man', combining white and black, is sometimes the dominating, although probably never the exclusive, consideration in the decision to marry.

The selection of the particular person for such an inter-racial venture may have occurred by accident or just in the natural circumstances of two people being thrown together and attracted to each other - of falling in love. In the process, however, and probably because of prior conditioning on one or both sides, their experience becomes something more than an ordinary case of two lovers finding each other. Sometimes the opposition encountered by the European participant from parents and friends gives to the relationship a deeper significance than it perhaps would otherwise have assumed, and adds as well to the determination to have the marriage succeed.

Certainly in the marriages of this type encountered in the study there is a decided independence of spirit, frequently in both husband and wife:

We had a legalisation ceremony in church and we had a reception afterwards. The only thing unusual about it was that we already had our child with us and she was seven or eight weeks old. We didn't mind this and we have never been ashamed of it. We think we were lucky because we had already decided to get married before we knew anything about the pregnancy. We think that has been an added bond to us.
This same strength of private conviction sometimes manifests itself in adherence to customary expectations and sometimes in opposing them but there is in any case on the part of the European partner, whether husband or wife, a firm disposition to show respect toward natives as persons and toward native culture.

When I started to show an interest in this girl, I went with her to the village and was introduced to her parents. On the very first occasion when I took her out, I asked permission of her parents, as I would have done with a European girl. And at all stages I have tried to show respect to them, and consequently I have been treated as a son in the village. When we were married they put on a feast for us in the village and the following day we were married in European fashion...I don't think this was an exception - there have been other Europeans who have married into society and are spoken of with respect, although I'm afraid that the far greater number have come only to find a woman for a while and then have left her and the child.

The fact that both husband and wife in marriages of this type are persons who, by means of education or experience, have been at least partially emancipated from the restrictive taboos of their respective cultures makes possible a greater sense of sharing in the rightness of their own unique venture.

The conviction that theirs is not only a worthy undertaking but also one upon which the future welfare of the world depends undoubtedly adds somewhat to the solidarity of marriages of this type.

The presence of a strong religious motivation in many of this type of marriage is readily understandable; the union of white and black being conceived as a genuine expression of the Christian doctrine of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. The fact that some of the strongest opposition to inter-racial marriage, re-enforced by scriptural and doctrinal authorities, has also come from religious sources, should not appear too incongruous in the light of comparable experience elsewhere in the world, and in some instances it has clearly had the effect of bolstering the morale of the inter-racial couple.

What was the purpose of our saying we were all equal in the sight of God and when it comes to the acid test which invariably is marriage, we turn around and say, 'Oh, no, that is going too far'.... One of the most vigorous in the opposition was challenged by a young Australian who said to him, 'I can't understand how you could have been talking about brotherhood and equality all these years and now when someone really wants to practice it you turn around and ostracize one of your number. I just don't believe in you. You are a bunch of hypocrites.' And the answer he got was 'Would you like your son or daughter to marry a New Guinean?'.
The idealistic, if not strictly religious motivation in some instances may express itself in rather extreme forms. There have been a number of cases in New Guinea in recent years of European women who have dared defy not only the prejudices and conventions of society, but also the laws of probability by insisting that their devotion to a native husband could withstand even the harshest realities. One such venture during the past year was publicised extensively in Australian newspapers as follows:

Thirty-one-year-old Jennifer Bear and her fiance, Papuan Wallace Andrew, are determined to make a success of their marriage, despite strong prejudice in the Territory. 'My own family and Papuan friends feel I am not ready yet to look after a white lady,' Mr. Andrew, a 34 year old diesel mechanic, said last night. 'They feel I am not sufficiently educated to step into a white community.'

Once home, their real problems begin: Mr. Andrew will have to support his wife on $30 a week - half the salary of a white worker; the couple will be living in a mainly Papuan area; the future Mrs. Andrew will have to find a new job in a white settler's community; the couple are unlikely to receive endowment benefits on having a family.

Miss Bear and Mr. Andrew regard their forthcoming wedding as the real pioneer in racial marriage in New Guinea. 'We will be regarded as a test case and we know there will be considerable prejudice at first. For a start, we will have financial worries and, secondly, people will be continually checking on us to make sure the marriage is a success.' Miss Bear said she would not ask the New Guinea Administration to consider giving her husband equal pay rights. 'We want to make this marriage a success with the bread-winner being a Papuan.... Our children will be raised as Papuans. Only if we succeed in this will our marriage be regarded as successful.'

Mr. Andrew said the Papuan community would accept the marriage once they knew it was a fact. 'At present Papuans believe only natives educated to university level are capable of fitting into a white community. I was educated in a high school. I know I have a lot to live up to, but we will succeed.'

The couple met ten months ago while Miss Bear was book-keeping for the Australian Volunteers Abroad at the Kwato Island Mission.¹

There are doubtless other distinctive types of inter-racial marriages in New Guinea worthy of special attention. The various unions of indigenous and mixed-race women with the immigrants from Asia, mainly

¹ The Age, Melbourne, 17 April 1968.
Chinese, have almost certainly been sufficiently different from those already considered to deserve special attention. The ethnocentric dispositions of Chinese immigrants results in the preservation of Chinese customs and language in the racially mixed household and the rearing of the progeny of the union as nearly as possible as Chinese. The number of such unions in the Port Moresby area, however, has not been sufficient to justify generalisation in this study. Classification of marriage types could be made on the basis of the specific socio-economic traits of the mixed couples, the device used, for example, in Harre's (1966) study of Maori-Pakeha marriages, but the variations of this nature in the present investigation seemed less distinctive than those noted in the foregoing analysis.

Adjustment problems

Simply by virtue of their having broken with the customary and acceptable, all inter-racial marriages encounter certain difficulties which conventional marriages do not face, at least to the same degree, though there may be various compensations which balance or even outweigh these disadvantages. But because inter-racial marriage is destined to increase in the future, the remainder of this chapter attempts to define and describe these problems in a preliminary way for New Guinea.

First in time, if not in difficulty of accomplishment, is the securing of the necessary social approval. To the unattached foreigner, separated from those whose approbation might mean most to him, this may appear to be of little or no consequence; and in fact, this separation has largely explained the relative ease with which both Australians and Europeans have entered into marital relations with native women, especially in the past. With the mounting frequency and speed of contacts with the outside world, and the increase in the number of persons resident in New Guinea from the same home community, social approval takes on a new importance. In the last decade, there has also been a distinct liberalising of attitudes toward inter-racial marriage, both in New Guinea and in Australia; although it would be difficult to determine the range of its effect or how deeply it has penetrated.

Clear evidence emerges from the accounts of both informants - the 'knowledgeable persons' and the participants - that influential elements strongly adverse to inter-racial marriage still persist in both urban and rural areas. The interviews with couples of mixed racial backgrounds might include an early innocuous statement that 'now nobody pays any attention to the many European-Native couples you see on the streets, especially down-town on a Saturday morning', or 'when I came back from college in 1959, there was a lot of discrimination, but we haven't ever encountered any discrimination since we were married a couple of years ago'. Further along in the discussion, after rapport has been more firmly established, it was not uncommon for the following to emerge:
I have never been actually insulted because of my native wife, but I have certainly been made to feel decidedly uncomfortable by the sour looks of both Europeans and Papuans. You know you are under, or at least feel you are under scrutiny. Of course, it is the expatriate women up here who look down their noses. Oh, I'll admit, it's a lot better than it was ten or twelve years ago. Then it was absolutely unacceptable - totally and completely. Nowadays it's almost acceptable, except for the sour looks you get.

Several instances of people losing their jobs as a result of having married outside their own racial group were cited in the interviews, and judging by the evidence presented, and the corroboration of outside observers, there does not seem to be much reason for doubting that the marriage had been an important, if not the deciding, factor. Three cases involving nursing sisters (two Australian) whose out-marriages seemed likely to become an embarrassment to their employers.

I got it from my employer too. I was the best technician they had in this large firm, but when they learned I was going with a native girl, they didn't tell me that I would lose my job if I married her, but that is essentially what happened. The boss said to me, supposedly in a joking manner, but really in earnest, 'Can't you find someone else except a native?' You could tell he was really in earnest about it, but I figured it was none of his business. I began to get lower ratings and finally I lost my job.

It is generally conceded that such discrimination, insofar as it exists, is confined to private concerns and the missions, and is virtually absent in the Administration. A somewhat oblique form of job discrimination was reported by a young European as having occurred within the past year:

In one case there was a bit of racial discrimination arising from the fact that I was married to a Papuan. We were living in an apartment in the same building where my boss and his European wife were living. She (the wife of my boss) made things unpleasant for my wife, and although there were apologies all round, to save further embarrassment for my wife, we moved out. Later when there was an opening as manager of a department, for which I was the only qualified person available, instead of my being selected for the job, they took a person from a completely different area and without my knowledge or experience in the field. I got a whisper from a friend that my social standing wasn't good enough. Well it got to a stage where I said to hell with them all. If I can't be accepted for having married someone of my own choosing, I'll have none of them. I'm not going to leave my wife in order to please them, so I simply pulled out.

The possibility of other considerations having operated in a case of this sort cannot be ruled out, but for the young couple involved, it was
their interpretation of it as a form of racial snobbishness that really mattered.

The more overt and readily identifiable manifestations of social sentiment against inter-racial marriage have come in recent years from the indigenous people. There is still among New Guineans a considerable amount of distrust of the intentions of the Europeans with respect to their daughters, quite apart from the ethnocentric pride, which is part of the heritage of any self-respecting group of people. From long experience with the beachcomber type of European, villagers, particularly in the vicinity of port towns, have become doubtful of the promises of responsible marriage on the part of men whose principal concern, they suspect, is merely in securing a temporary sex partner.\(^1\) The distaste of the natives for the marriage of their women with Europeans appears to be only a more exaggerated form of the disapproval shown toward marriage with other ethnic groups within New Guinea (cf. Chapter 3).

In recent years the young, unmarried native men, especially in the larger urban centres, have probably been more conscious than their parents of the loss through the marriage of native girls with foreigners. One can readily imagine the irritation and frustration among these young men resulting from the fact that outsiders enjoy such extreme advantages over them, in attracting the attention and interest of local girls. Resentment at what seems like the stealing of native girls is most acute among the young natives in the cities who have difficulty in finding suitable employment, accommodation and marriage partners, and whose brightest prospect is a wage or salary no more than half that of their European competitors.\(^2\)

Reports of insults and even threats of violence hurled at native or mixed-race girls in the company of European men have been repeated frequently enough by the young inter-racial couples to leave little doubt as to their authenticity. In one instance, for example, the native wife insisted that her European husband refrain from taking her with him to the petrol station on a Friday or Saturday night because of the derogatory remarks in Motu which the young men loitering around the station would make. The husband told of an occasion when a young man under the influence of liquor had attempted to pull his wife out of the car exclaiming, 'why she belong you? Belong me'. Another very attractive young couple stated that on numerous occasions they had experienced uncomplimentary remarks and that they avoided going out at night and on week-ends to escape such unpleasantness. This young man was probably more imaginative than most in that, while admitting he kept a gun at home for fear of possible attack, he conceded that

\(^1\) Belshaw 1957:237.

If you try to understand the native point of view, you can see why this is so. When I see a native looking at us, I suspect he is thinking 'Why should this European have this good-looking girl that really belongs to us?' And I can just feel some of their resentment toward both of us.

The most widely observed consequence of such experiences is a tendency for both husband and wife to withdraw from potentially painful situations and to rely increasingly on each other for their social satisfactions. Not only are introspective persons especially attracted by the retiring and undemanding ways of native women, but the experience of the mixed marriage in New Guinea tends to create and accentuate such a disposition. Even among the Europeans who pride themselves on their ability to prevail against mere prejudices, one discovers the tendency to draw their associates and friends chiefly if not exclusively from among those similarly situated.

At least at the outset the native wives are probably more prone to rely on the home as a haven from unpleasant social scrutiny, than their European husbands, who frequently referred to the unwillingness of their native wives to accompany them to the club.

We used to belong to the Four Mile Club, which was more or less of a walk-in, and when we first went, it was a good club, but as it got bigger, it got highbrow, and although it wasn't actually said, they felt it. And three or four of my friends, their wives felt it too. They just weren't welcome. And so when I left that club and joined the RSL she still felt the same thing. But we go there at least once every Christmas, and I go there more often. (Wife) Yes, I just don't like it; I feel uncomfortable. They are mostly Europeans there. (Husband) At the club, some of them think I don't take her because I'm ashamed and that I don't want to be seen with her, but that isn't the reason at all. She doesn't want to come with me.

Despite the husband's denial of sensitivity to societal judgments on his marriage, it is obvious that these opinions do affect significantly not only his wife's sensibilities, but also the quality of their marital relations. In other cases, there is a frank recognition of this fact.

The following account is somewhat atypical because of the prominence of striking physical traits, but this anomaly also serves to emphasise psychological reactions which are operative in many other mixed marriages. In contrasting his own with other inter-racial marriages, the informant brings out the necessity of a certain moral fortitude as an alternative to withdrawal.

With this chap I mentioned, he's bombed all the time, and on week-ends he never takes his wife anywhere. Seems he's completely ashamed of her. His wife and kids sit at home all the time. If he goes anywhere it's on his own. It's a common pattern unless a bloke is willing to swallow hard and say, 'Here goes'. And in
a case like mine, where my wife is tattooed from head to toe, it's a difficult thing to face a European social gathering.... I have had some awful butterflies in my stomach to face a European crowd with my wife, evidently a village lass, nothing more and nothing less, because nobody with any education and any sort of background except the bush would be tattooed from their neck to their toes. Oh, there are various places we can go and be quite accepted.... It depends a lot on the native lass's outlook and education and ability to hold her own. No, it's not so much the colour basically. It's if she can talk and act. If she sits in a corner and looks a bit grubby and giggles every time somebody says anything to her, she's in that class. But if she can hold her own and talk intelligently, of course she's accepted.

The problem of social acceptance by the European community is considerably reduced in mixed marriages where the distinguishing traits of the native are less pronounced, as in the case of persons of mixed race. If, in addition, the indigene has assimilated substantially the modes of thinking and acting which prevail in the sector of the European community to which her husband belongs, the possibility of social acceptance is further enhanced. A European businessman said

Yes, we have encountered some discrimination, but not from sensible people. I have never been one to mix socially a lot. I belong to one or two clubs and we go out occasionally and when we get invitations, my wife accepts them just as if she were European. She has good appearance and carriage, and is outgoing. She can defend herself, but she would prefer to stay at home with the kids and listen to the radio; but sometimes we can't get out of these invitations, partly in connection with my business, and that's the only reason I accept them too. We both would prefer to stay at home.

Even in such instances there is a tendency toward withdrawal, but there were cases in which the associations of the mixed couple were almost wholly with the European community and apparently without any evidence of social marginality. In most inter-racial marriages which have survived for any length of time the couple has employed both forms of accommodation - of avoiding exposure to unnecessary harassment and of standing up to that which cannot be avoided.

The parity in educational attainments between husband and wife, so frequently mentioned by the various consultants in this study as a major present-day requirement for effective adjustment in inter-racial marriage, does not appear from the cases interviewed to have played the critical role commonly assumed. In only two of the twenty couples giving clear evidence of the stability of their marriage could it be claimed that there was equality in either the amount or the quality of the 'schooling' each had attained; although in several instances the wife's record in one or both respects exceeded that of her husband.
Usually, by way of explaining away the obvious inequalities in educational background, reference would be made to some rather vague factor, such as congeniality, an ability 'to hit it off', or common tastes. Some of the older Europeans are disposed to pass off the differences in educational and cultural backgrounds as inconsequential because the girls are so 'eager to please and so quick to learn'.

The wider spread of formal schooling in New Guinea in recent years has increased the likelihood of persons with comparable educational backgrounds being thrown together, and it is probable that in future the obstacles to communication in mixed marriages, which have obviously been acute in the past and which still persist today, will be greatly reduced. The fact that some of the early liaisons between foreigners and natives were initiated and continued for a considerable time without a common spoken language and that many more solid families were built around a lingua franca such as Pidgin or Motu suggests that effective communication may not require any high degree of formal education. In all families interviewed the English language was stated to be the common medium of communication, although Pidgin, Motu, or the local vernacular might also be employed, particularly with young children, neighbours and relatives. Among the 45 cases of mixed European and indigenous marriages which were registered during the past year, 21 cases involved people whose occupations were sufficiently similar to suggest that their education or experience might also have been comparable.

The area of marital adjustment which was probably most troublesome and was most frequently mentioned by the European member of mixed marriages was bride-price; but this involves the entire realm of family and kinship relationships. The European conception of marriage as a contractual bond between two individuals essentially distinct from their respective families differs drastically from that of most folk societies. It is extremely difficult for the average Westerner, and especially for those reared in a metropolitan environment, to understand, let alone approve the idea that in acquiring a native wife, he is thereby establishing relationships and assuming obligations not only to her immediate family but also a seemingly infinite number of relatives. The expectation that the prospective groom should 'pay' for his bride is especially abhorrent. The notion that the daughter would continue to cherish sentiments toward her parents and siblings even after marriage, and that her husband might also assume some responsibility for their welfare, is not especially alien to Western cultures, but such obligations are assumed with caution and not with the expectation that they will extend to a host of relatives.

References to the family which appear in virtually every interview give some sense of the difficult adjustments in this area and of the culture shock encountered:

We were a long ways away from her village and there was no contact, and that was very fortunate. I've seen other examples of
Europeans married to native women who had to keep the whole family. They all came. I never had any of that, but I wouldn't have allowed it even if they had been in the vicinity. - A European planter.

Bride-price? Oh, no, nothing like that. That doesn't happen with the Mixed-Race, only with the natives. Some of them pay thousands of dollars for a bride where they used to get them for a case of tobacco or three or four pounds. It ought to be stopped because it makes women like cattle, just like they do in Africa. - Early trader.

I was told definitely by some of my wife's uncles that they would kill me if I didn't get out. Maybe I made a mistake in not agreeing to pay bride-price right away.... But they even brought the police to threaten me.... When I came back later and offered them a small bride price, they accepted it right away and everyone has been happy ever since. Most of our associations have been with my wife's relatives. They come in and out of this place all the time. - Austrian technician.

You might say I took my wife away from her native husband or that she deserted him for me. No, we didn't have any marriage ceremony, and I definitely refused to pay any bride price. Her former husband...wanted back the bride price he had paid for her, but I said I would have none of it. But to keep peace my wife gave him a few pounds I had given her and he left perfectly satisfied. - Australian farmer.

One gets the impression that the Europeans with a peasant background have had less difficulty than most Westerners in adjusting to native marriage and family practices. Their own childhood experience in an extended family setting has apparently prepared them for the idea of their wife's relatives as rather frequent and protracted visitors in their own home. Even the conception of the bride-price seems reasonable and just to those accustomed to life where the family operates as an economic unit and the loss of one effective member through marriage must somehow be recompensed.

However it occurs, some adjustment to the expectations of the native family and kinship group is a basic necessity for the European member of a mixed marriage. Some European husbands, particularly in the rural areas, have come to recognise that the native kinship group may be an asset rather than a liability:

My wife's village people come to see us here, but not to the point of becoming a burden,... I get along very well with the natives, and I enjoy some advantages by being married to one of them. Maybe my relatives think they stand to gain something by it, and they probably do, but then I think they should. That is what relatives are for, to help each other out. The natives certainly don't discriminate against me, and that is more than you can say for Europeans.
The necessary food adjustments in inter-racial marriages appear mostly to have been made with relative ease. A principal contributing factor may have been the readiness of the native women to cater to the tastes of their husbands, although the Europeans have also made concessions. In all except one of the households visited, according to their own statements, European food predominates but native dishes are also served. In this exceptional case, where a number of the wife's relatives are present in the household (apparently with the husband's approval) native food is most frequently served and the husband satisfies his desire for European food by one big meal a day at a restaurant near where he works. A more typical comment was: 'Food has never been a problem here. It is a combination of native and European food. There isn't any of the natives foods that I don't eat and enjoy, and my wife has learned how to prepare western dishes very appetisingly.'

Insofar as the most deeply cherished and unquestioned values in any culture are those associated with religion, one might assume that this would be an area of considerable tension within inter-racial marriages, owing to the backgrounds. The central and unquestioning emphasis which most of the indigenous cultures of New Guinea place upon the relationships within the family and the kinship group in contrast with the primary concern in Western frontier society on individual achievement do indeed represent differences of fundamental religious significance which figure prominently in inter-racial marriages.

Religion, in the sense of identification with a churchly institution, its ceremonies and definitions of conduct, does not constitute a serious problem of adjustment within the racially mixed family. In the sample of twenty-five couples interviewed, there were only four in which the professed religious faiths of husband and wife before marriage were even nominally the same, and in only one instance was the fact of having a common heritage within the same church mentioned as an integrating influence on the marriage. In not a single instance was the difference in the conventional religious heritage mentioned as a divisive factor. In nine couples the husband had no identification with any religious institution or was only a non-practising member. Indifference towards organised religion, as a basis of personal life organisation, was much the most commonly expressed sentiment among the men, although there was usually a willingness that their wives should conform to the conventional expectations of religion, if they wished.

I guess we are all heathen around here. The wife was brought up in the LMS, and many of my friends are missionaries and ministers, who try to get us to go to their various churches, but the more they try, the more they seem to be talking nonsense.

I explained to my wife that I had read the Bible thoroughly, but there are such a lot of inconsistencies in it, and you can't prove all this stuff that the church teaches, and I can't see any reason to believe it. Now my conception of a truly religious approach is to maintain the proper sort of atmosphere in the home.... Well,
she gradually got the idea, and although she had been a very strong Catholic, on the basis of common sense, she worked it out herself and now she doesn't go to church at all. We aren't exactly divorced from the church; we admire some of the work they are doing and we give support for that.

Although generally apathetic, if not hostile, toward the ceremonial and doctrinal interests of organised religions, the racially mixed couples were usually favourably disposed toward the educational and medical activities of the missions.

It is undoubtedly among the human sentiments - affection, anger, fear, jealousy, and humour, for example - that a common understanding and appreciation between husbands and wives in racially mixed couples develops most slowly, and of which it is also most difficult to obtain any clear account. One can, however, get an occasional glimmer of the subtle feelings that have been engendered between the partners in a chance remark or an inconspicuous gesture. One European informant, who had lived for many years in close association with natives speaks of the inevitable barriers to understanding and appreciation likely to emerge in inter-racial marriages in the following terms.

Some of these incidental and unsuspected differences can turn out to be the most difficult barriers just because people are so frequently unaware of them. I think I can appreciate something of the long standing fear of the supernatural, of sorcery, for example, which still exists. I would not think of ridiculing somebody who speaks of that as the cause of a baby's sickness, but I've heard an Australian say to a mother, 'Don't be silly, don't tell me you believe in that yum-yum'. Well, of course, the girl... will never say that again, but the fear is still there. It is the ridicule that hurts more than anything else.

Or take another sort of situation, I can sit down with some Papuan friends and talk and joke, and they bring out something and I dip my hand in the same pot and we eat something about which a newly arrived Australian might ask, 'What's that mess?' and the Papuan would feel like saying, 'Don't you call that a mess. Those fish eyes are a delicacy.' But in our Papuan sense of humour you also see the difference. It is earthy - very earthy, and when an Australian comes into the room, the curtain goes down immediately.... They realise there is a different sense of humour, a different sense of propriety.

The one negative sentiment which several Europeans attributed to native women and of which they spoke with considerable feeling was jealousy.

The real problem of living with native women is... jealousy and it's true of all of them. They can't imagine your talking to any woman, white or native, except that you want to get into bed with them. And all my friends who are married to native women tell me the same thing.
Another informant conceded that among the younger native or mixed-race women who had a fair amount of education, such an interpretation would be inaccurate, but, 'for a lass that's come from the village without a good basic education, the only reason her European husband would talk to a woman, especially a white woman, is sex'. One can only surmise that as native wives look with suspicion upon all associations of their European husbands with other women, there have been adequate grounds for doing so, if not in the conduct of their own husbands, at least in the behaviour and the stereotyped judgments that have been formed of many other European men.

Probably the most widely pervading sentiment among those inter-racial marriages which have survived for any length of time and which show promise for the future might best be characterised as a defensive pride. Genuine affection for each other is clearly a central ingredient in most of these marriages, and there appears to be real satisfaction on either side in being the recipient of such devotion. On the other hand, there is likewise an awareness that society still regards their venture as unusual, to say the least, and some resistance to such social doubts or hostility becomes a necessity for the survival of the marriage. In fact, social questioning or disapproval becomes the basis of added morale within the family and there develops a dogged determination to defy the judgments and predictions of conventional society. One can also recognise in such marriages the operation of personal and social claims and expectations which give both the husband and wife a sense of responsibility for the continuing welfare of the spouse and the children.

**Inter-racial marriages that fail**

The border line between success and failure in marriage is always a tenuous one, subject to radically different but equally justifiable definitions, and in the words of one of our informants, 'the type of marriage which is one man's medicine may be another man's poison'. In an absolute sense, even the categoric statement of one of the authorities consulted that 'no inter-racial marriage is ever completely successful' can be sustained. On the other hand, there is sound logic behind the contention of another informant that 'some of the de facto marriages of the early days were really a blessing for both the Europeans and the natives, even though the husbands later shot off south'. He went on to point out that the unsanctified liaison between a lonely frontiersman and a simple village girl made life in the wilds of New Guinea bearable for the former; it brought material benefits to the latter and to her family, and the offspring were readily absorbed into the native community when the father left.

The attempts to apply the more usual criteria of Western communities to marriage in New Guinea are not on the whole very satisfactory. The most common index of marital failure - the ratio of divorces to marriages - is unsuitable as the great majority of native marriages are
not registered at all and only some of those involving Europeans are registered. Moreover, data on divorces and separations are not available, and there is not even a systematic record of divorces consummated through the courts.

Since divorce is relatively difficult to obtain in New Guinea, requiring action by the Supreme Court, this would provide a poor index of the breakdown in inter-racial marriages even if records were available. In the very few cases where any records of divorce proceedings were available, there were elements present at the time of marriage which in retrospect would seem to have foreordained failure.

Much of the testimony of a wide range of observers - both expatriate and indigenous welfare officers, clergy, and administrators - tends to focus primarily upon the inter-racial marriages which they consider to have failed. In the great majority of interviews with 'knowledgeable people', regardless of their basic perspective, there would appear sooner or later some comment to the effect that many of the inter-racial unions had been of the temporary, irresponsible, beachcomber variety and that self-respecting natives and Europeans alike were somewhat wary about all. Additional reference might then be made to specific known contemporary cases. A conference with native students preparing for the ministry at a seminary on the New Guinea coast brought the sweeping and undisputed statement that:

Many Europeans have married New Guinean women, but most of these marriages have failed. They may live a fairly happy life when they are first married, but when the woman has a few children, the European husband leaves her with the children and runs down south.

It is perhaps the preoccupation with short-term liaisons, or prostitution, that has led some welfare officers to conclude that even where the marriage has been sanctioned by church and state, the European embarks upon it in an essentially experimental frame of mind, as 'something which may or may not work out but which represents in any case an experience'.

In the absence of quantitative evidence with respect to the survival rate among inter-racial marriages as compared with intra-racial marriages, one is forced to the common sense conclusion that the former type entail greater risks than the latter by virtue of the added complications elaborated in the previous sections. There is no reason, however, to conclude that inter-racial marriages are by their very nature destined for failure. There is, on the contrary, ample evidence that inter-racial marriages may derive added ability to survive by the very obstacles to which they are subjected.
Chapter 3

Inter-tribal\textsuperscript{1} and inter-district marriage within New Guinea

Much of the same tension between opposing forces across racial lines as noted in the previous chapter marks the marriage relationships among the more numerous indigenous groups within New Guinea. There are, however, notable differences in the intensity of the forces involved and more particularly in the consequences to the life of both the individuals and the communities involved.

Anthropologists have noted the operation of these conflicting tendencies within specific ethnic groups of the New Guinea mainland and the outlying islands, but as far as can be ascertained, the effect upon inter-tribal marriages for the entire country has not been studied. It is becoming increasingly apparent, however, that the future social and political developments within New Guinea will be greatly influenced by the tendencies toward the integration or the segregation of the several ethnic groups, of which the dispositions toward inter-marriage obviously provide one useful index. Attention is therefore directed to some indications of trends and to the formulation of basic hypotheses which might deserve more detailed investigation.

The part which warfare and belligerence have played in the cultures of New Guinea looms so large in both the popular and scientific literature that it is often assumed that each ethnic group must be at odds with every other and that so intimate a relationship as marriage would be impossible outside the group. Closer investigation, of course, has revealed that warfare and marriage are by no means mutually exclusive. As indicated in a study by Berndt (1964), not only was warfare 'a major characteristic of New Guinea-Papuan societies', particularly in the Highlands where it has been spoken of as 'chronic, incessant, and endemic' (p.183), but in some areas, as Meggit notes, 'there was a definite positive and fairly high correlation between the rate of killing and the rate of marriage' (p.194). Among the Siane, for example, 'relations between unrelated clans were normally hostile. Nevertheless, they supplied one another with wives' (p.198). A missionary priest from the Mt Hagen area reports instances of tribes which are deadly enemies,

\textsuperscript{1} See footnote 2, page 4.
such that even today, 'if a K. could find an N. alone, he would split his head open', yet 'K. women continue to marry into the N. tribe'. There is no means of ascertaining how well the women have adjusted to life among the traditional enemies of their people, but one suspects that it might not have been much more difficult than for any woman in a patrilineal society. In some other areas the women of enemy groups were naturally suspect and 'intermarriage and warfare were regarded as incompatible' (p.197).

The territorial range over which marriage partners might be sought consequently varied greatly among the different ethnic groups before extensive European contacts. Thus among some of the people in the Bena Bena Valley, Langness (1964:178) reported that as a consequence of certain cultural practices, including polygamy and previous female infanticide, there might be a shortage of eligible females and people 'must often travel long distances in search of brides, and they are not particular where they come from. In some cases they buy girls who... do not even speak the Bena language.... In some cases the girl will never see her own people again, nor will her husband'. Early missionaries, especially in the Highlands, report instances in which tribes which were as much as two or three days 'walk away', might deliberately cultivate inter-tribal marriage as a means of maintaining trading relations and that such linkages might extend all the way from the Highlands to the Papuan coast.

Probably the more common practice has been of the type and involving much the same social consequences as those described by Oliver (1955: 153-4) among the Siuai of Bougainville.

The ideal practice is to choose a spouse nearby; this practice acts like cross-cousin marriage to buttress existing kinship ties and to consolidate property holdings. Sentiment enters here too. Parents like their children to reside nearby, and unless political considerations dictate otherwise, try to arrange that their sons and daughters marry locally. During feuding days there was... usually no opportunity for marrying any but a neighbour...people now go farther away for their spouses. Not only is there less risk of marrying a potential enemy, but both men and women see more people and can be more selective than formerly.

From the Nakanai area of New Britain, van Rijwijk (1966:7-9, 29-31) reports that in pre-contact days 'it was only in rare cases that anyone married outside the natal village'. Even in the resettlement community of Silanga, combining under Catholic auspices in 1953-54 about a thousand people from the separate linguistic groups of Nakanai, Mamusi, and Wase, of the 141 church marriages between 1952 and 1964, there were only eight mixed marriages, the first occurring in 1956. Similarly a study by Rimoldi (1966:48-9) among the Mt Lamington Orokaiva in 1962-63 reveals that:
A striking proportion of marriages are contracted between members of groups in close proximity. Data available for 35 marriages contracted over 3 genealogical generations by the householders of our sample, or by the parents, siblings or children, show that in 22 cases one spouse came either from the current village of the other or from a village within a mile of it...while two spouses came from outside the tribe.

Contemporary reactions

To get some reflection of prevailing sentiments toward out-marriage, a small study was made of attitudes found among students drawn from various parts of the country in residence at the four institutions of higher learning in Port Moresby: the Administrative College, the Medical College, the Teachers' College, and the University. The total of 315 students (88 women and 227 men) were requested to record the feelings that prevail in the communities from which they had come with regard to the marriage of local men or women to various categories of insiders and outsiders. A five-point scale was employed expressing feelings toward each type of marriage, ranging from maximum satisfaction at one extreme, through indifference, to maximum dissatisfaction at the other extreme. They were also asked to indicate their own feelings about such marriages and to comment on some case in which someone of their own people had married a person of a different group and about how they were adjusting to each other.

The one question on which there was the highest degree of consensus among all informants related to the desirability of the marriage of their young people to 'a local villager'. Slightly less than nine out of every ten students (88.4 per cent) reported a favourable reaction among their own people to marriage within a local village, while the remainder indicated either an attitude of indifference (7.6 per cent) or of definite opposition (4.0 per cent), the latter being noted among groups to whom marriage within the same village is forbidden by tribal tradition.

The students, reporting on their own reactions, were very much less favourably disposed toward marriage with a fellow villager, although 58.9 per cent indicated their preference for that type of marriage. A large proportion of the students (35.5 per cent) represented themselves as being indifferent, but only a small proportion (5.3 per cent) were positively opposed to in-village marriage. Those students in the Administrative College and the Teachers' Training College who had returned for additional training after a few years of field experience

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1 This term was not meant to be interpreted as 'a person from the same village', although in one or two instances it was apparently so interpreted.
and were older than the average were also more conservatively disposed than their younger classmates: 70.2 per cent were favourably disposed toward this type of in-marriage as compared with 56.4 per cent in the younger group. This attitude among the older students is all the more significant since more than half (53.7 per cent) of their married members had selected their spouses from a different sub-district than their own, indicating at least a scepticism on their part about the readiness of the general population for such a break with tradition. The differences in the attitudes of the two sexes are less marked than one might have expected: 54.6 per cent of the relatively small number of 88 women in the sample expressed a preference for marriage with a local villager and 40.8 per cent indicated indifference, compared with the corresponding ratios among the men of 61.3 per cent and 33.8 per cent respectively. The most radical attitude among the students was found among the younger prospective teachers, among whom only 37.8 per cent showed a preference for marriage with a local villager compared with 60 per cent to whom it was a matter of indifference.

The heavy weight of custom itself and the deep-seated and widely prevalent opposition among the great masses of the people are cited as reason enough for exercising caution. Comments, such as the following, come chiefly from the older students:

My own people (Ihu sub-district) know very, very little about other people in the Territory, therefore they would be very unhappy if a Tolai or a Chimbu tries to marry a girl in the particular area where I was born. Is he going to treat her well or is he going to argue with her when they get back to his home and he sees the girls of his own village. Will they speak to him secretly and say, 'You are blind to marry this girl because she can't do the things we do.' - Male teacher, married to girl from Ihu.

The people from your own village will be very unhappy if you marry a girl from other parts of the territory, and what I have found out is that if the girl can't get along with his parents on activities such as work the couple won't be happy at all. - Male teacher from Wewak, married to girl from Tufi.

According to custom, a girl or boy must marry in their own sub-district, but to marry outside is to make the parents very unhappy because they know they won't have much chance to visit their girl. - Magistrate trainee from Kairuku, married to Kairuku girl.

Members of the clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, tend to be even more sweeping in their descriptions of the strong customary opposition to inter-district marriage, suggesting in some instances that, from their perspective, the difficulties of cultural adjustment in such cases are even more acute than in inter-racial marriages. Comments such as the following were made again and again with variations only in minor detail:
The idea of a local boy bringing home a wife from the coast where he had been working is very much resented by the Highland natives, who are very proud of their own ways. They would say to anyone who dared to try it, 'Well, we aren't good enough for you? What's the matter with you that you have to get a wife from way down there?' And the worst hostility is directed against the girl. An extreme case, perhaps, occurred on the coast while I was there. This local boy brought home with him a girl from M-- where he had been working, and the people simply ostracized her. They did nothing to help her in any way, they insulted her and called her a pig and made life so miserable for her that she climbed a coconut tree and jumped off and killed herself.

Of the hundreds of boys from this area (in the Highlands) who have served from one and a half to three or four years on the plantations on the coast, none of them have taken a coastal wife. No, there is one exception, a boy who worked in the Moresby area for ten years, but he had to go back, because he couldn't take it here. Now when the boys who have been away come in for marriage, I ask them if they hadn't acquired a wife there, and they will say, 'Ah, they want too much for a wife, I couldn't afford it, and then they don't know our language'; or 'Agh, I wouldn't get a wife in Papua!' - Statement by a Catholic priest from the Highlands.

Another Catholic priest spoke of the drastic procedures which the mission had adopted in dealing with the problems arising out of such marriages.

The Mission has opposed inter-tribal marriage as a general principle on the ground that there are invariably difficulties encountered when it occurs. The inland girl who is married to a coastal boy may be able to help out in the cultivation of yams, but she is no good in fishing. Moreover the coastal women resent her inability to help out on the things that need to be done on the coast. And vice versa, of course. The mission has married coastal boys to Highland girls, especially the boys they brought in as carriers in the early days, but it is always with the understanding that it is for life. Even so they have discovered that in some instances the men have subsequently, especially in their old age, gone back to the coastal villages from which they came.

Judging by the testimony of most informants, the native peoples much prefer to have both their sons and daughters marry locally, but their opposition to the out-marriage of their daughters to native men from unfamiliar tribes or districts tends to be more intense than to comparable action by their sons. As one student expressed it: 'If the local girls are married outside the group, the parents are very unhappy, but if a boy married outside his own group, then the parents are only a little unhappy.' There is a gradual softening of the opposition to the
breaking away of the daughters, noted especially in the vicinity of the larger urban centres.

In my village, if a girl chooses a husband from another district, the parents at first feel very unhappy and very often trouble results between the girl's relatives and the boy and perhaps his relatives. That happens very often. But if the boy and girl can stay together for a while, the girl's parents will become friendly, if the boy does his best to make them happy. Then the boy begins to feel that he is a member of their family. - Male teacher from Lae.

**accommodation within inter-tribal marriages**

Much the same basic problems of social and personal adjustment are encountered in all types of marriage, and those demanded in inter-tribal marriages are strikingly similar to those described in the previous chapter. The major obstacle of gaining social approval is no less acute in unions involving natives of different cultural traditions than in the marital alliances between expatriates and indigenes, although different emphases certainly appear.

The fact that both spouses in a marriage of natives have close family and kinship ties within the country makes the process of securing social approval both more important and potentially more difficult than where the relatives of only one of the partners is so immediately involved. For even if the prospective husband's kin are in an area quite remote from the district in which he expects to marry (or of his wife's relatives), he rarely can or wants to cut himself off from his home ties. Quite apart from sentimental attachments to family and home community, there are frequently land rights which he would not wish to jeopardise, even though he does not expect to claim them during most of his lifetime.

A major complicating factor in the negotiations preliminary to a socially sanctioned marriage in virtually any part of the country is the matter of exchange of courtesies between the contracting parties, most frequently expressed through the bride-price or bride-wealth. The fact that in some areas, as for example in sections of the Markham Valley, the practice of the bride-price is not observed inevitably creates difficulties when marriage is contemplated with someone from a district adhering to this custom. This problem is most acute in the urbanised areas of Lae and Port Moresby, where such numbers of unmarried men from all parts of the country have been drawn together for whom the resident women of the area inevitably provide attractive partners. Even when both the man and the woman come from areas where bride-price prevails, the difficulties in carrying out the appropriate negotiations increase when the relatives of one of the participants are not present, and the problems are further compounded if barriers of language and custom intervene.
The scepticism about or opposition to inter-tribal or inter-district marriage among members of the clergy grows out of the difficulties associated with the conflicting tribal practices regarding bride-price and parental or kinship selection of marriage mates. It is claimed, for example, that men from districts where very high bride-prices are demanded, such as the Central District where figures of $500 to $1,000 or more are not uncommon, take advantage of the fact that little or no outlay of money for this purpose is required in other areas, such as the Morobe District. They marry outside their own group, it would seem, for expediency rather than because of genuine affection, and hence, according to the missionary observers, there is less likelihood that the marriages will last. A Catholic missionary with more than thirty years of service in New Guinea was said by his colleagues to advise young people to adhere to the custom of the bride-price while deviating from local custom in other respects.

The custom of the bride-price, if rightly understood, can be called a good custom. No man buys his bride. There is an exchange of presents which cements the relationship of the two respective clans. Where pigs are exchanged, new blood stock is made available to the other parties. Then too, it is quite natural that the parents of the woman, who have raised her and brought her to the marriageable age when she can be helpful to the man, should expect some payment in return....

If the husband and wife come from entirely different areas... where the customs of the husband's people differ greatly from the customs of the wife's people, there could be danger to the marriage.... In the old days no Wewak man or one from the Sepik area could get the approval of his people to marry a Madang woman. The woman was simply not accepted and after the marriage she was socially ostracized. One Rempi woman committed suicide after two years of humiliation from the relatives of her Wewak husband. Highlands women may be looked upon as backward and inferior by coastal people. Coastal people may find it hard to settle down for life in the Highlands.

Social workers also point to the difficulties involved in inter-tribal and inter-district marriages growing out of the inability of the foreign native to provide the type of bride-price which local tradition demands, such as pigs or shell arm bands. As a consequence money is promised instead, even though the prospective husband does not actually possess

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1 The more experienced missionaries, although sensitive to the prevailing European objection to the bride-price as implying a conception of the wife as a mere chattel, recognise that the practice provides a significant group leverage on the couple to make the marriage succeed or at least to make it last.
it. When the promised bride-price is not forthcoming, the bride's relatives may demand her return. The welfare officer in one highlands district went so far as to estimate that less than half of the mixed native marriages would be wholly successful owing to the culture conflicts involved and that the woman's group 'never really accepts a foreign native; they continue to harbor doubts about him even though he remains faithful to his wife and family for fifteen years'.

Perceptive native and expatriate informants call attention to the almost inevitable though unintentional violations of personal and communal sensibilities which occur in most cases of inter-tribal and inter-district marriages. The outside native may commit blunders of local etiquette as serious, and even more offensive, as those committed by the expatriates in inter-racial marriages. When, for example, a man from a patriloc al community wishes to marry a girl from a community where it is customary to live on the wife's land, he is likely to encounter her relatives' expectation (almost certain to be distasteful to him) that the couple will reside in the community where she had been nurtured. This sort of tension is probably relatively easy to resolve, because the confrontation is almost immediately recognised and can be dealt with accordingly, whereas so many of the differences in cultural values lie so deeply imbedded in the unconscious that the difficulties cannot even be discussed.

Matters relating to the persons and things deserving of special respect - the rank and the priorities in social deference, the proper observance of social ritual - these, and a host of other forms of social behaviour are not to be questioned, only accepted. A native informant of more than average insight and objectivity offered the following examples of the unsuspected and unintended mistakes in etiquette which may assume alarming significance in inter-district marriages.

The very way in which words are used by an outsider may be seriously misunderstood and cause unfortunate gossip. A friend of mine who came with his wife from another district to visit in the village, learned afterwards that the people there had talked about how uncouth and undisciplined his wife was. Why? Because the boy's uncle felt that he had not been shown proper respect by the boy's wife during a visit. She had asked him, 'Would you like a cup of tea?' when according to proper local etiquette she should simply have brought him the tea as a gesture of hospitality and respect. The uncle was greatly offended and said 'No, I don't need any tea', but of course he felt he had been humiliated. This sort of difficulty emerges especially in connection with ceremonial occasions - the feasts for example - when one's status in the village figures so prominently and could be easily jeopardized in the eyes of the entire community. If the husband or wife from another district doesn't know what is expected or tries to avoid his obligations, in connection with the exchange of gifts, for example, deep resentments can be
aroused. Especially with respect to the bride-price, it may be necessary to come right out and demand it and this, of course, is a source of embarrassment and tension.

Even among the growing numbers of indigenes in the urban centres who have been supposedly emancipated from the expectations of their home communities, the demands of custom may still intrude. The account by the director of a major Christian mission illustrates how the marriages of westernised natives may be endangered by kinship obligations supposedly left behind.

One of my pastors, a teacher on ___ Island when I first knew him, married a girl from the mainland, who was also a teacher. They had made an agreement that they weren't going to abide by the old heathen customs of the bride-price and the rest of the native rigmarole. It was a fine match as far as education and the abilities of both were concerned, and they were mutually compatible. But it so happened that within a year the father of the girl started demanding special gifts...pigs...and all sorts of monetary obligations that had to be settled, and it festered until there was a real wound in their relations. I'll never forget the day we heard a terrific rumpus and here the woman had torn up every stitch of clothing the man had, except what he was wearing. She had come to feel she was in disgrace because the tribal customs had not been adhered to, and she strove continually to shame him.

A native social worker related that in her own marriage to a man of approximately equal education from another area there were no objections to the marriage or the absence of bride-price by either set of parents, but her relatives had begun to protest because the obligations had not been adequately fulfilled. Another long-term missionary pointed out that the neglect of inter-ethnic family obligations, including that of the bride-price, might not constitute too serious an obstacle in urban areas to the stability of cross-cultural marriages between people 'at the lower economic or social levels, as long as they don't want to go back to their respective villages'. If they do, he said, the full force of family and community expectations come into play as a potential threat to the solidarity of an inter-ethnic couple. For the growing number of cross-cultural couples who continue to live in the urban centres, the strength of either husband's or wife's claim to land rights in their respective ancestral communities, although perhaps theoretically still intact, naturally become more and more difficult to sustain for lack of use. For the children of these marriages 'who have been born and brought up in the urban area, there is no village home nor any land to which they can fall back in time of economic distress'. This could become, he insists, a serious social problem within the coming generation in centres like Lae and Port Moresby.

The women students who expressed feelings adverse to out-marriage were likely to cite examples, known to them, in which the husband
returned to his home village after some years of living elsewhere and then rejected the foreign wife and family for a younger and more attractive companion and for the social and economical advantages he has discovered at home.

The generally depressed status of women throughout traditional New Guinean society may paradoxically have been an important factor contributing to the frequency of inter-tribal marriage and also affecting the accommodations within such marriages. The fact that women were 'completely overshadowed by the male', burdened with the routine drudgery, and in many regions ill-treated (Reay 1966:166) could naturally lead them to seek some escape from their downtrodden condition by marriage to an outsider. Some members of the clergy and welfare officers interpret the readiness of local girls to accept the offer of marriage to non-residents as a means of avoiding the unpleasant prospect of marriage to a local villager. It is claimed that where the old community ties and sanctions have broken down to a considerable degree there is a tendency for the male to over-react in his effort to reassert his traditional role and that he resorts to brute force in order to maintain his authority when the older sanctions fail. The newcomer who wishes to remain in the community, perhaps as a plantation employee or as an urban worker, and seeks to marry a local girl, must accept a less dominating role in the local village and toward his prospective wife than the average resident male.

The young men from the Sepik area who come in to work on the plantations frequently marry locally, but it always seems to be a step downward in the social scale. These are good men and forceful. They may be bosses on the plantation line and very highly respected by their plantation employers, but in the local community they are looked down upon. They have no land, and no position. - Lutheran Minister.

Repeatedly in the interviews with women in the Hohola and Kaugere areas of Port Moresby who had married men from districts other than their own, the feeling was expressed that they were 'treated better' than their friends who had married locally.

The men in the district where I grew up don't know how to take care of women. Sometimes they hit them and don't show respect for their wives, while my husband from Daru is much kinder and more considerate. Sometimes when we go home to my village for a visit, the girls I grew up with ask me about my marriage and I tell them they would be better off to get a husband away from home. During my husband's leave, we can go to either his village in Daru or to mine.

Before it used to be hard for a girl to marry out, but for me it was easy because when both of my parents had died, I came to Moresby to live with my older brother. It was here that I met my husband who had come to work in Moresby. When we decided to
get married, my brother was willing. My husband's family gave both cash and food as part of the bride-price to the customary marriage. We have been married now for 11 years and I think marriages like ours last longer and are better than where two people from the same village get married. But it depends very much on the man; if he is kind and thoughtful, it works, otherwise it doesn't.

The likelihood that the partners in a cross-cultural marriage may escape from whatever burdens the traditional cultures impose is greatest in the urban centres. Although the relatively free atmosphere or urban life certainly offers greater encouragement for inter-district as well as inter-racial marriage, few persons who have known the warm and intimate atmosphere of the village care to cut themselves of completely from its benefits or to subject themselves wholly to the impersonality and ruthless competition of urban life. The conflicting attractions and repulsions of the two styles of life are perhaps sensed rather than explicitly stated in the following account by a young man from an island off the coast of Papua who had met and married a girl from Rabaul while both were training as teachers in Port Moresby.

My marriage was quite unusual because I married a girl from another district. We were very happy together when we were away from our home districts for a number of years. But we got anxious to see our parents about a year after our marriage. I was very pleased to be with them, but not my wife. For the first few days, she was happy there. Of course, she was very shy with all my folks. Some time later we went to my wife's home village and there she was very happy, but I was a bit shy toward the people and their customs. But I think we were better off living in Lae away from either of our home districts. Of course we have our arguments between the two of us in our own working place, but as a whole I feel that my marriage was both interesting and good.

The problems of communication inherent in the forms of culture conflict already discussed merit separate mention. Frequent reference was made to the suspicions and false conclusions engendered in cross-cultural marriages by the use of a language which the partner could not understand. A teacher from Wewak, for example, stated that the only major difficulty encountered by a number of his friends from home who had married girls from the Central and Samarai districts was the girls' inability to speak pidgin, this making it 'impossible to take their wives home'. Another teacher, born in Rabaul who had married a fellow teacher from Port Moresby, reported: 'Language is the main problem which causes unhappiness in marriages like mine. When I took my wife home last Christmas, she was not very happy because my relatives could not communicate with her.

By the way of illustrating the complications which arise where one of the partners is unacquainted with the vernacular of the other, a
Catholic priest cited the case of a police officer from one of the southern islands who became intimate and established a household with a girl from an entirely different cultural area where he was stationed. He was subsequently transferred to an urban centre in still another district where he and his wife were making a moderately satisfactory adjustment. His relatives came to visit him with the information that he had been promised in marriage to a girl in his home village and that part of the bride-price had already been paid. In the conversation, which the girl could not understand, she heard her own name mentioned several times, and, becoming suspicious that they were conspiring to get rid of her, did not treat them with the respect to which they felt they were entitled. They complained to the husband about this fact and as a consequence he beat her and then threw her out, presumably at the relatives' insistence, although he subsequently claimed that he had not wanted to break up the marriage. In this particular case the lack of a common language was only one, but according to the priest, a significant factor contributing to the dissolution of the marriage. The girl, having broken contacts with her own relatives, was the major victim in this instance of faulty communication.

During the transitional period before a common medium, such as pidgin English, becomes sufficiently well established, this problem of effective communication will continue to be a complicating factor in the marriages across ethnic lines. Both clergy and government officials attribute many of the tensions developing among the different ethnic enclaves in the cities to the misunderstandings and consequent difficulties in the mixed marriages that have occurred. Instances were cited in each of the four larger centres where eruptions, bordering on open conflict between tribal groups within the city, had been precipitated by a minor quarrel between the spouses of a mixed marriage. A wife misinterprets a harmless conversation between her husband and the daughter of a fellow villager in their native tongue as the arrangement for a private rendezvous, she falsely accuses her husband, and he beats her for her insolence, whereupon the fellow villagers or fellow tribesmen on either side may be drawn into the conflict. Clergymen contend that if both husband and wife in mixed marriages are affiliated with the same religious group, their offices and the conciliatory influence of the church have been utilised to prevent 'blood-baths' in such conflicts, whereas government administrators call attention to their role in avoiding such outbreaks.

Certainly the major trade-languages - Pidgin English especially in New Guinea and Police Motu in Papua - have adequately provided the necessary media of communication for the great majority of mixed marriages, although in some instances where the couple has remained more or less permanently in the community of one spouse, the other has learned that language.

The schools, appearing especially at trading and administrative centres, have given further impetus to the spread of some common medium
of communication (both through formal teaching and informal contact),
whether a widely used native language such as Kate, Gedaget, and Tolai,
or a Police Motu, Pidgin or English; by the same token they have pro-
vided the means and encouragement for additional crossing of ethnic
lines in marriage. The high schools, maintained by the missions and
the government and in recent years using English exclusively as their
medium of instruction, have facilitated contacts among young teachers
and students from differing cultural traditions and thus have lent
support to cross-cultural romances. The evidence of this trend is most
apparent at the several administrative, nursing, medical, and teacher
training schools and colleges, and at the University of Papua-New Guinea.
Of the 79 married persons included in the sampling of students at the
four institutions of higher learning in Port Moresby mentioned earlier,
40 had found spouses from districts other than their own, with the dis-
position toward out-marriage being notably higher at the university
level and lowest among the students at the Administrative College.

The nursing trainees, whose command of English appears in their
written statements to be inferior to that of the teacher trainees or
the university students, were also much more disposed toward in-group
marriage. After completion of their training and additional experience
in the cosmopolitan and English-speaking atmosphere of the hospitals,
however, it appears that their marriages are overwhelmingly with men of
differing language or cultural backgrounds from their own. A tabulation
of the women graduates of the Papuan Medical College in 1966 and 1967
indicates that twenty-two out of the twenty-nine who subsequently
married had found spouses from districts other than their own. As one
would expect, all the husbands had occupations requiring levels of
skill equal to or greater than that of nursing, and presumably the
language spoken in the twenty-two households was either English or
Pidgin. Among the eighteen indigenous doctors and dentists in the
country in 1968, all except one had married women from a district and
language different from their own.

A high proportion of the students on their entrance at these schools
have been removed overnight from homes still largely dominated by the
moral sanctions and the practices of a preliterate folk culture and as
suddenly thrust into the permissive and individualistic atmosphere of
a coeducational college campus. It is only natural, therefore, that
many of the students should cling for some time to the set of expecta-
tions regarding social relations that they have known from earliest
childhood. It is no less natural that a high proportion of these same
students should subsequently become attracted by the new and stimulating
opportunities for association across ethnic lines which the college
campus affords. Thus the expressed attitudes among the second-year
students at the Port Moresby Teacher Training College had already
become predominantly one of indifference to the village expectations
of in-marriage, but well over a third still held firmly to the traditio-
nal norms. One of the expatriate faculty described the situation in
the Goroka Teachers College:
We have many here who simply assume that a woman...will be delivered to you in due course by the tribal system.... On the other hand there are a good many friendships here that do cross tribal lines, and for these young people there is no problem except when some of their fellows voice criticisms because they are opposed to any form of relationship or when there are objections to girls going with someone outside their particular area. Probably the majority of students would lean to the idea that each individual ought to be able to choose for himself, and the tribe has no right to interfere.

Conflicting dispositions among the students with respect to dating and courtship find expression in a good deal of open association between the two sexes in the classroom, at meals, at social functions, including dancing, and also in keeping company on walks and secret trysts about the campus. These activities, more evident in government schools than mission schools, obviously run counter to the practices in the villages from which most of the students have come and encourage a critical attitude toward the traditional selection of marriage mates by the family and kinship groups. Of the sixty women in a total student enrolment of 278 at the Goroka Teachers College, thirty-seven were keeping steady company with men students of their own choice, and this fact in itself represents a significant departure from village mores. On the other hand, only a very small number of these couples cut across district or ethnic barriers. According to faculty observers, the disposition to break away from village norms with respect to marriage selection and to insist upon the right of the individuals to choose for themselves was most noticeably developed among students from the Central District and least pronounced among those from areas where Western secondary education had made the least advances. By the same token, one would expect the male students from the more highly urbanised areas to seek and woo their courtship partners from the broad field of eligible girl students from the entire country rather than exclusively from their home districts. This ranging disposition among the urbanised males would probably be paralleled by a greater readiness on the part of city-bred and educated females to respond to whatever amatory attentions they might encounter from boys of other districts.

Inter-district marriage and national integration

One of the potentially significant, but unexplored hypotheses which naturally emerges from even a casual consideration of inter-district and inter-tribal marriage in New Guinea is that the cross-cultural...
fusion of this type is conducive to viable national solidarity. Theoretically at least, one might assume that until the great mass of New Guineans had become sufficiently indifferent to local loyalties to consider marriage across these district barriers as being at least a reasonable, if not necessarily preferable choice for the individual, the prospects for wider political integration are reduced. It has not been possible to examine with any thoroughness the empirical grounds for such a theory, although it deserves investigation.

Students at the institutions of higher learning appear to have been especially intrigued with the idea of political consolidation through inter-marriage. The most pronounced reflections of this point of view were found, with one or two exceptions, among students who had themselves married out of their own ethnic group and for whom this was possibly a convenient rationalisation for their deviation from the traditional norms.

The people who have married persons of different groups from their own have done a service to the country in bringing the relatives of both husband and wife together and thus bringing unity to the country by means of friendship. I have seen this happen through the regular visits of relatives from both groups. The difficulties arising from the differences in customs and language in such marriages are not as great as when there are differences in religion. - A male teacher from Rigo, married to a girl from another tribe in the Central District.

My own opinion is that marriages between people from different districts brings happiness to the people themselves, but most of all it brings about unity and the breaking down of tribal and racial discrimination within the country. - A male teacher from Manus, married to a girl from the Central District.

These and other accounts were usually preceded by statements indicating that village sentiment was overwhelmingly opposed to such unions.

Comments on this issue from the expatriate informants were usually in response to questions from the interviewer. Although recognising the theoretical validity of the proposition, they commonly insisted that the extent of out-group marriage was still so slight as to have little positive effect on political integration. It is probable that the prevailing scepticism, particularly among missionaries, regarding the stability of such marriages, figures prominently in their doubts as to the likelihood of national solidarity being greatly hastened thereby. Government and mission administrators would commonly give lip service to the proposition that 'inter-tribal marriage is the only way for New Guinea to become unified and a strong nation. There is no hope for them to continue in their old ways of retaining tribal or local isolation'. But such expressions, usually from the upper administrative echelons, were as frequently countered by statements from subordinates who see the situation from a narrower perspective.
Eventually when everybody is better educated than at present, 
I suppose that inter-tribal marriage will help to unify the 
country, but I wouldn't say that it has had any noticeable 
effect so far. - Social worker.

It must be noted, however, that even before Western influence had 
penetrated the region, some degree of cultural and biological integra-
tion had developed, especially along the coastal regions and the islands 
of Papua through the traditional inter-tribal trading expeditions. This 
is partially reflected in the emergence of Motu as a lingua franca for 
the central Papuan area and the greater acceptance of inter-district 
mariage of persons drawn from within this extended region. There is 
also evidence within large sections of the Bismarck Archipelago and the 
entire New Guinea coast where Western trading, plantation, and mission-
ary contacts have operated over long periods, that villagers now tolerate 
and may look favourably upon both political and marital association with 
groups formerly conceived only as enemies. Moreover, some of the more 
forceful figures in the emerging political structure of New Guinea, such 
as Mr John Guise and Mr Albert Maoi Kiki, are themselves the products 
of inter-ethnic marriages and have been married to persons from outside 
their own tribal groups, and have doubtless derived part of their politi-
cal vigour and acumen from their associations in contrasting ethnic 
groups. In fact, Mr John Guise (1969:51), the present speaker of the 
House of Assembly, gives public testimony to his varied connections by 
blood or marriage with ethnic groups throughout the country - Abau, 
Central and Northern districts, Kairuku, Kavieng, Madang, Baniara, 
Milne Bay, Kwato, and Trobriand Islands - as the basis at least of his 
knowledge of 'what national issues the village clans and people would 
support'. More extensive research will be needed to substantiate or 
controvert the observations and predictions of one perceptive informant.

Inter-district marriage has not progressed far enough as yet to 
affect significantly the political unification of the entire 
country, but where whole districts have been subjected to 
extensive contact with the West, and hence with other tribes, 
there has been less resistance to inter-tribal linkages through 
mariage, trade, and other channels. Developments thus far point 
to a broadening basis of life, in part through marriage, and a 
corresponding decline in the attachments which are exclusively 
local.
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