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A Pen or a Bushknife? School, Work, and "Personal Investment" in Papua New Guinea

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This article discusses a perennial problem in education in developing nations: how to balance the public investment of the national education administration with the private investments of parents who send their children to school. The development of the national education system of Papua New Guinea is analyzed in terms of three broad phases of education policy, each with its respective aims, goals, and results. Three villages' experiences with the educational system are reviewed, compared and contrasted with respect to changing government educational policies and implications for future development. DEVELOPMENT; EDUCATION AS INVESTMENT; MELANESIA; PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

Our goal in this article is to document and analyze some aspects of the conflict between official government policies and actions and community views and desires vis-à-vis the public education system in Papua New Guinea. The initial motivation for choosing this topic came from two major sources. One was a sense of discomfort that David Lancy experienced as Principal Research Officer for the Papua New Guinea Department of Education between 1976 and 1980. In that capacity and as director of the Indigenous Mathematics Project (Lancy 1978, 1983) he became a conduit of ideas about education between the Education Department headquarters in Port Moresby and villagers throughout the country. The discomfort arose because these two groups' ideas were often in direct conflict. The second source of motivation was Alice Pomponio's ethnographic research on Mandok Island, Papua New Guinea, undertaken from September 1979 to March 1981. Originally focusing on concepts of "success" and "achievement" and how these were taught to children in both the village and the school, the research also opened a seeming Pandora's box of notions about work, nonwork, investment, and return. Mandok's involvement in the school system reflected critical evaluations on the part of Mandok parents of the European-style school system in terms of these culturally constituted concepts.

We believe our material from Papua New Guinea to be especially instructive for several reasons. First, government policies and programs for education are historically recent and are undergoing a clear

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process of planned change. Second, the general process of education development, whether at the national or local level, is being informed only recently by ethnographic considerations and analyses. The supporting literature is thus scattered and in many cases confined as yet to unpublished doctoral dissertations. To close the gap between Lancy's broad but shallow material at the national level and Pomponio's deep but narrow material on Mandok, we decided to draw on two recent and extensive bodies of ethnographic material on Ponam Island (Manus Province) and the Kero area (Southern Highlands Province). These two areas "bracket" Mandok very nicely, as the former first was exposed to schooling more than a decade earlier than Mandok and the latter more than a decade later than Mandok.

The article is divided into four parts. First we offer a brief review of national education and development history in Papua New Guinea since European contact in terms of three discernable stages. With this background, we move in turn to Kero, Mandok, and Ponam and discuss how each particular case fits into the national scheme. The third section offers an analysis of similarities and differences among the three case studies. We conclude with an indication of the lessons that might be learned from the analysis of these case studies—what they tell us about education, development, and the nature of cultural factors that influence these processes.

Education and Development in Papua New Guinea

It is possible to identify three phases in the history of education in Papua New Guinea (see also Lancy 1979, 1980, 1983; McNamara 1979; Smith 1972, 1973). Phase I, the "Mission Phase," lasted until the late 1950s. During this period, schools were run almost exclusively by various missions and provided only a rudimentary education. The curriculum was designed to prepare the indigenous people for conversion to Christianity and for employment as soldiers, mine and plantation laborers, and clerks. Coastal areas of the country had a fairly long history of exposure to schooling, missions, and wage employment. Economic development in rural villages was ignored, however, and in the interior the vast majority of the population experienced none of these changes.

Phase II was initiated as a result of international political pressure exerted on Australia to speed Papua New Guinea toward independence. Effective self-government required a large supply of "educated" citizens to serve as civil servants and elected leaders. The colonial administration launched a major campaign to develop the nation's schools. The number of schools at every level from elementary to university increased exponentially during the 1960s. New schools were established in areas previously not served and mission involvement was curtailed sharply. Curricula became standardized and English became the language of instruction. A large proportion of teachers in the

elementary schools, and all of the teachers at higher levels, were expatriates recruited primarily from Australia and England. There were concomitant economic and political changes as well, so that graduates from every level of the system found immediate, high-paid employment and opportunities for further study and upward mobility.

This second phase lasted less than 15 years. By 1970, the cost of the system was getting out of hand, due principally to two factors: employment of a huge cadre of expatriates at wages comparable to those paid in their home countries, and an intensive building program designed to extend elementary schooling to all the population and secondary schooling to at least 35 percent of it.

In contrast to the rapid expansion of the school system, the economy did not expand rapidly enough to absorb the growing number of "school leavers." Even an aggressive nationalization program designed to replace expatriates with their Papua New Guinean counterparts failed to accommodate all of the newly schooled manpower. In the private sector, plantations and mines continued to employ unschooled younger men from the villages on short-term contracts.

During Phase III, initiated around 1970, another major policy shift was undertaken. The pace of building new schools slowed considerably. Even more dramatic was the cutback of support for existing schools. This included: a reduction in elementary schooling from seven to six years; the elimination of all expatriates in the elementary system, and of 65 percent in the secondary system; and additional reductions at tertiary levels. Boarding subsidies were eliminated entirely at the elementary level and reduced sharply at the secondary level. Budgets for materials were slashed and school fees were imposed for the first time. Again there were accompanying social and political changes, primarily in terms of a shift to a rural development emphasis. Under the guiding motto "Education for Community Development," the curriculum in schools was redesigned to prepare students to return to the village and initiate various small-scale money-making schemes. This emphasis is being extended to the high schools on an experimental basis, as illustrated by the Secondary Schools Community Extension Project (SSCEP) pilot schools (Cummings 1982; Vulliamy 1981). Small business extension services and loan programs intended to promote village development also were instituted.

These changes in government policy can be contrasted with a remarkable stability and uniformity in attitudes toward schooling and economic development on the part of the governed (see for example, Conroy 1970; McLaren 1975; Smith 1975). Conroy, among others, noted and supported "the contention that private demand for education (in Papua New Guinea) [was and is still] inspired primarily by pecuniary motives . . ." (1970:498-499). During the five years of fieldwork accumulated between the two authors in Papua New Guinea from 1976 to 1981, inquiries into the attitudes of parents toward public

schools in several different provinces met with the same response: the sole purpose of schooling is to prepare children for wage employment so they can live like white men and send money home¹ (see also Carrier 1979; Cheetham 1979; Grieve 1979). Likewise, it is believed that village development will occur only when some external agency, be it government or private concern, steps in, establishes an enterprise, hires workers from the village, and pays them a wage.²

The result of these differences is a standoff between the government and the people and a growing malaise. The government wants villagers to be "self-sufficient"; the villagers want government financial aid and management. The quality of the education system has diminished since the heady days of the 1960s. The localization program is at a standstill. Given the current reduction of resources committed to schools, the system is unable to produce competent technocrats and managers to replace the remaining expatriates. On the other hand, rural development is also at a standstill. Every new initiative is coupled with the collapse of another project somewhere else. Output per acre of coffee, copra, and cocoa, the three major income-generating crops, has declined steadily as the government made a shift from a plantation economy in which workers were paid wages, to a self-employment system in a society that lacks the concepts and experience necessary to plan, execute, and maintain independent businesses in the Western sense of the term (Fitzpatrick 1980; Logan 1981; Pomponio 1983).

At present, there are two worlds in Papua New Guinea: a modern world patterned on Western culture, in which people are schooled, work a 40-hour week for wages, live in Western-style houses, drive cars, and wear Western clothes; and a traditional world in which people live in villages, labor almost exclusively for their own subsistence during a work week considerably shorter than 40 hours, practice most if not all of their traditional customs, and generally depend upon direct interaction with the environment for their survival. The gulf between these two worlds is wide indeed and seems to be growing wider.

Schooled individuals are encouraged to return to the village for short visits, but their status and prerogatives are dictated by traditional village-based norms, not by their level of education or wealth achieved in town. They are encouraged to send home money and goods that are consumed directly or used to pay for elaborate feasts, school fees of younger relatives, and taxes. Modern monetary gains accrued in town jobs are recycled continually into traditional status and prestige systems in the village. Those school leavers who return permanently to the village without having secured town employment are viewed as failures and sometimes become objects of varying degrees of scorn. In some cases these returnees blend into the society; in others they remain apart, making what are considered to be inadequate contributions to daily life, referred to by their elders as "bikh-

ets." (The term *bikhet* is a Tok Pisin word meaning "stubborn, contrary, disobedient.")

Many studies demonstrate the lack of congruence between school- and village learning processes, content, and social relations (see for example Gay and Cole 1967; Peshkin 1972; Rosenfeld 1971; Ward 1971). We would like to note, however, that in the eyes of most Papua New Guinean parents, these concerns are beside the point. Only after the children return to the village as "failures" do questions of "what children know" (or, conversely, what they do not know regarding village customs) become important. By focusing on the notion of school as a personal long-range *investment* on the part of parents (and other relatives) who support a student during the school years (both financially and emotionally), the *content* of the actual material learned in schools becomes irrelevant. In its place are the value assumptions and goal orientations imputed to the educative process, viewed from each perspective (that is, village and government school).

We would like to examine this relationship between government policy changes and village attitudes toward (and support of) Western schooling from the perspective of three specific villages: Kero village in the Southern Highlands Province; Mandok Island in the Siassi Islands, Morobe Province; and Ponam Island in Manus Province. To illustrate our point, the experiences of each village can be understood to represent varying stages in the "investment process" in education vis-à-vis the three identifiable phases of the development of the school system discussed above.

Three Case Studies in Education and Development

Case 1: Kero

Kero Community School, located about 60 km. south of Mt. Hagen in the Southern Highlands, serves 15 hamlets occupied by people speaking the Imbonggu language. The Imbonggu were among the last group of Highlanders to be contacted by Europeans. Regular contacts began in the late 1950s with the establishment of a patrol post at Ialibu (about 10 km. from Kero) and vehicle tracks radiating out from the post. Change has occurred gradually since then. For example, the modal pattern of residence remains the same: hamlets of one to three houses in which women, with their children and pigs, live in a home of their own, and men live separately or in a communal men's house. These hamlets are located in close proximity to gardens. The majority of the gardens consist of shifting plots made in flat or gently sloping savannah. The high elevation (2000–3000 m.), heavy rainfall, and clay-like soils restrict cultivation. Sweet potato is the dominant cultigen, with taro, pandanus, sugar cane, and various greens occasional supplementary foods. Although pigs are raised by every household, their primary function is as a store of wealth and medium of exchange,

rather than as a source of protein in the daily diet. Supplemental protein is obtained, to a limited degree, by hunting and gathering.

The most noticeable change in Imbonggu life is the demand for cash. Money is required to meet council taxes and school fees, to buy manufactured goods and imported food items (for example, rice and tinned fish) from trade stores, to pay off loans, and to cover the transportation costs of an increasingly mobile population. Cash also is being slowly introduced into traditional prestation and exchange activities.

Compared to other areas in the Highlands, the Imbonggu are cash poor. The only cash crop of any significance in the Highlands is coffee, and this plant will not grow in the Kero area because of the high elevation and frequent frosts. Government-initiated cash-producing ventures, such as cattle husbandry, have failed consistently.³ The Imbonggu capture and raise young cassowaries for later sale in the Mt. Hagen area, but this is an unreliable source of income. A steady but small percentage of Imbonggu men have sought wage labor on plantations⁴ since the late 1950s. However, gambling, alcohol, prostitution, and transportation expenses siphon off most of this income, and migrants return with very little cash (Wormsley 1978). In any event, labor, whether invested locally or on a distant plantation, is not a very valuable commodity for the Imbonggu. The reason for this lies chiefly in the fact that men "work" (that is, engage in physical labor) very little within the traditional subsistence system.⁵ One estimate for the Kero, close neighbors of the Imbonggu, is 10–15 hours per week (Leroy 1975). Men may be willing to adjust this figure upward in a cash economy, but not very much and not for very long.

Consequently, the Imbonggu, like other Highlanders (see, for example, Cheetham 1979), consider that the most promising source of revenue lies in remittances from family and clan members who have made their way into the ranks of white-collar wage earners in towns. Schooling is seen as the primary avenue leading in this direction. Moreover, to them this is the only conceivable purpose of formal education.

The school began modestly in 1966. The local people built a classroom from bush materials and the government sent a teacher. It was not until 1972 that a full elementary school curriculum and six grades of instruction were offered. Attendance climbed steadily; by 1980 the school provided eight classes for 285 students. The facilities are quite primitive. Desks are few and in disrepair, as are books and other materials; the buildings themselves provide only the most rudimentary protection from the elements (Johnson 1980). Teachers' houses, salaries, levels of experience, and training are inadequate by most accounts.⁶

Kero is clearly a Phase III school, built during a period when the government's major goal was to increase the availability of schooling

universally to rural populations. Despite the poor facilities, frequent rain, cool temperatures, and scanty clothing (for example, shoes are a great rarity), students walk for as much as two hours to attend school. Nearly 90 percent of the children who live within an hour's walk attend regularly. Parent participation in school governance is high and school fees are paid on time (Johnson 1980).

Although the parents do not yet realize it, less than 10 percent of the children now enrolled are likely to become the white-collar wage employees that their parents expect them to become. Kero school has done an excellent job vis-à-vis other comparable schools in the Highlands (Lancy 1983); yet only about 30 percent of the graduates actually will go on to high school. These will have a grade 3 or lower level of achievement in mathematics and reading when they matriculate. Less than half of them will graduate from high school. This group will shrink further in tertiary school, and the dropouts are unlikely to find employment.

Case 2: Mandok Island

The dim prognosis projected for the Kero community school already has been realized in the second site we will discuss: Mandok Island. Mandok is a ten-acre, raised coral islet that lies just south of the high island of Umboi in the Siassi Islands. In contrast to the Imbonggu, the Mandok have a long history of contact with the outside world. Historically, they are middlemen and traders in a vast seaborne trading network extending from Madang to West New Britain, along the Rai Coast as far as the Finschhafen areas of the Huon Peninsula, up to and including Tami Island and Malasiga on the coast (Harding 1967). Mission contact in Siassi was initiated by French Marist priests around 1848 for a brief time (Wiltgen 1979:474-487). During the early part of this century, the Lutherans contacted and controlled mission activities in what is now Morobe Province, including Siassi. Although contacted by the German Lutherans, in 1937 the Mandok chose to become Roman Catholics.

The Mandok sent four youths to Kilenge on West New Britain for basic literacy and catechistic training during the "Mission Phase" of education. Education was suspended during World War II and resumed around 1948, again with the purpose of basic literacy, numeracy, and religious instruction. Those who had been educated in Kilenge or Rabaul for one to three years were employed by the mission to teach basics in "3 Rs" and catechism to the village children on Mandok.

In 1960, a permanent mission house and a "Primary T" school (grades K-3) were constructed on Por Island, adjacent to Mandok. Students attending this school were then sent to mission schools near plantations in Kilenge and Rabaul for grades 4-6, and then to high school or technical school in Rabaul. Although there was fear of the

unknown involved in sending the children off to distant shores to attend high school, parents' monetary input to this venture was virtually nil. Moreover, the children were in town centers and within reach either of family trade relations or kinsmen who were employed at the mission-owned plantations. Thus, they saw visible evidence of progress in town centers and, via their school experience, became a part of the process of national development.

As the seat of local government and mission headquarters changed, so did the location of the high schools to which Mandok students were sent. Depending on the year of entry into Form I (grade 7), Mandok students were sent to secondary schools in Rabaul, Dregerhafen, Madang, or Lae. All of these locations were town centers along traditional trade routes, except for Lae, which was by this time easily accessible via commercial boat. Except for Dregerhafen, all of the schools were run by the Catholic Mission. The children, while far from home, were never far from a support group. Moreover, this was during the "Education for Development" phase (that is, Phase II) of administrative policy, so they were encouraged, not only by their parents but also by the circumstances of the time, to achieve well-paying town jobs and enjoy rapid upward mobility.

Sending more and more children off-island and encouraging them to pursue higher education and to secure wage employment provided the Mandok with several benefits. By this time, the overseas trade system was starting to decline, a result of an influx of more desirable European goods and easier access to distant places for all with the advent of commercial shipping. This meant that other Papua New Guineans who previously depended on Mandok traders for valued goods could now get them for themselves. Moreover, the introduction of cash into a barter system meant that, along with the rest of the country, the Mandok needed and sought employment from Europeans. In the Mandok case, this was achieved primarily through the education and subsequent employment of children.

The children, by securing town jobs and achieving great upward mobility during Phase II of administrative policy, subsidized the declining trade system by sending cash and goods back to the village. These "first generation" Mandok graduates were educated and later employed in mission and/or town centers, some of which were along traditional trade routes. Mandok traders thus were able to increase their trade networks in two ways. First, by visiting children at schools, they also visited towns and established new connections. Second, *the children themselves* became "new trade partners" by recycling new wealth back into the traditional system of formal distributions and status mobility. Education, in essence, became a "new trade route." In this way, the Mandok increased their economic base and staved off the demise of the trade system. In addition, they evaded government attempts to relocate the village to Umboi Island and turn them into sedentary horticulturalists.⁷

The government's move to reduce the resources committed to education, beginning in 1970, hit the Mandok hard for several reasons. First, education, which was previously free or required a token payment of school fees, now cost a great deal in tuition, clothing, and transportation. The School Localization Program, initiated originally to encourage children to stay in school, had the opposite effect on the Mandok. Instead of going to high school in town centers, Mandok students were assigned first to Gelem High School on the west side of Umboi, and then (as now) to Siassi High School in Lablab, on the east side of Umboi.⁸ The students no longer were surrounded by kinsmen, no longer in urban centers, and no longer supported by the Catholic Mission. In fact, both Gelem and Lablab high schools, while government subsidized, were originally Lutheran mission high schools.

Worse still, from the students' point of view, they now had to work in the school gardens, a type of labor far more demanding and demeaning than fishing and reef-gathering activities in which they otherwise would have been participating at home. The "first generation" Mandok students who were sent off to Kilenge and Rabaul during the mid-1960s were 17–19 years old at the time they entered Form I (grade 7). According to Mandok concepts of physical and moral development, they were on the verge of adulthood. In contrast, those students attending Gelem and Lablab from 1970 onward were aged 12–14—too young, by Mandok standards, to be expected to do hard garden work. Thus, when the students complained that they were being overworked and underfed in their bush high schools, the parents felt sorry for the students, and angry at the school teachers for what they felt to be unreasonable and cruel exploitation of "mere children."

From the Mandok parents' perspective, the closer the country came to independence, the more incentives were taken away from them to participate in "development." Early graduates have noted that the standards of excellence even at the elementary level have declined drastically since they were in school, a condition they blame on the removal of expatriates from the teaching staff during the nationalization program. As one educated Mandok woman expressed it:

When I was in school [early to mid-60s] the teachers were much stricter—we were not allowed to speak Pidgin [sic.] or our language, we always had to speak English only. Now, the teachers are not strict about this, and the kids can't speak English. I saw the 6th grade exam that they just took [in 1979], and it's a disgrace—they can't do in 6th grade what we had to do in the 4th grade.

Parents recount with bitterness the fact that in 1964 there were no school fees; in 1970 they paid K 40 and, as of the 1981 school year, the cost of grade 7 was K 150.⁹ In contrast to rising school fees and a general inflation in the cost of trade store goods that have been incorporated into the local diet as staples rather than luxuries (for example, rice, tinned meats and fish, tea, sugar), the access that the average

Mandok man has to money either has remained constant (in the case of carvings sold in Lae or to occasional tourist boats coming into the area), or declined (in the case of young men going off for temporary employment as plantation laborers). Numerous government-sponsored enterprises including cash cropping and fishing businesses have failed (Patrol Report 1961). The deficit between available income and expenditures was made up by remittances from the educated and employed Mandok in towns. This additional income, however, proved only a temporary reprieve for the villagers. Whereas until the late 1960s anyone who was literate and numerate could count on finding a job, by 1970 a tertiary degree or diploma was necessary for all but the most menial jobs. Even these were in short supply. From the villagers' perspective, they are paying more and getting less in return.

These disincentives have accumulated to the point that parents today view the school as a "losing investment." Interest in school, at all levels, has plummeted. We can see these changing attitudes reflected in the number of Mandok children sent off the island to high school. Between 1964 and 1968 an average of 7 children went to grade 7; between 1969 and 1971 this average jumped to 20; from 1972 to 1974 the average dropped to 6; and from 1976 to 1980 no children were sent to high school from Mandok. Attendance at the Por-Mandok Community School has shown a similar pattern of dropouts, and parental participation is very lax. In 1979, for example, 20 children dropped out of the Community School, and none were sent back and made to finish the year. In the 1980 school year, teachers spent from January until the end of May getting a majority of parents to pay the K 3 annual school fees.

What is more interesting perhaps is the comparative achievement levels of past and present Mandok graduates. The early graduates in the work force earned quickly a reputation for being very bright, highly motivated, and upwardly mobile. As late as 1978 Mandok children scored well on a battery of cognitive tests, demonstrating a high level of cognitive development (see Lancy 1978, 1983). However, the actual achievement levels of those same Mandok children in the National grade 6 exam declined sharply between 1975 and 1980, reaching an all-time low score of 42.22 percent in 1979.

It would seem that the Mandok, in effect, have adjusted their participation in schooling to reflect the likely return on their investment. It would also seem that these attitudes have been transmitted to the children, who are moderating their classroom performance in a similar fashion.

Nevertheless, the Mandok are disillusioned terribly by this turnaround in their fortunes. For a brief period, investment in schooling brought a financial bonanza and supplemented an ailing trade system, allowing the Mandok to maintain their cultural identities as middlemen. They remained mobile by sending their children to towns where

they could visit them, enjoy the luxuries of town life, and possibly expand their trade networks to town centers. Parents maintained a "cosmopolitan outlook" (Strathern 1972) toward their historical identities, repeatedly spurning government and mission efforts to relocate to Umboi and become gardeners and cash croppers. Today, in the face of a rising population on an island of critically limited land mass and resources, remittances from those who are employed off-island barely balance school fees and taxes. More and more educated and employed Mandoks are getting married to "outsiders," and, once they start raising their own families, are less willing and/or able to maintain the level of support to which their families in the village have become accustomed.

Case 3: Ponam Island

Our third site is a coral sand quay that lies just north of Manus Island. The quay is 3 km. long and 200 m. wide, and houses about three hundred Ponam Islanders (about two hundred Ponam live off-island). Ponam proper includes an additional 10 km.² of submerged reef. The Ponam are fishermen who historically have based their subsistence on the exchange of marine products for sago and other vegetable products with the people on Manus Island. A variety of fruit trees grow on the island and a few pigs are raised, primarily for later sale. Like the Mandok, the Ponam have had a long period of contact with the outside world. Japanese traders visited irregularly at the turn of the century and the Roman Catholic mission had established a station at Bundralis, on Manus (about 5 km. from Ponam) by 1920. However, also like the Mandok, traditional subsistence, religious and social practices are very much alive. Major changes common to all three sites are a growing need for cash, and, for Ponam and Kero, a sharp drop in intergroup warfare.

Ponam's educational history combines elements of both Kero and Mandok. Like the Imbonggu, the Ponam are committed deeply to schooling for their children. Primary school attendance rarely drops below 100 percent and Ponam children score at or near the top on national exams. Although Ponam children have been able to complete their elementary schooling at home only since 1973, they have been able to attend an elementary school at Bundralis and high school in Lorengau (provincial capital about 60 km. from Ponam) since before the war. A large proportion of the population has climbed to the top of the education ladder, which, of course, has slowly extended upward. Upon completion of their schooling, they have entered the modern economy as wage-earners. At present nearly 20 percent of all Ponam speakers are employed (not including a few plantation workers). This is an extraordinary figure when compared with Papua New Guinea as a whole (Carrier 1979, 1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1984).

The parallel to Mandok is that the Ponam have been exposed to all three phases of the development of the education system. Although

the evidence is scanty, it would appear that the Ponam exploited changes and improvements in the system earlier and in greater numbers than did the Mandok. Thus, Ponam has weathered the shifts in government policy better than Mandok. Two main factors have been identified to explain this (Carrier 1980, 1981a, 1981b). First, unlike most other societies in Papua New Guinea, the Ponam never placed much faith in village development. Land for gardens or cash crops is limited both in area and fertility. Unlike the Mandok, the Ponam are dependent on only two or three Manus coastal villages for vegetables, starches, and other items, which are exchanged for the marine products the Ponam people collect. Hence, though they depend on *local* trade for subsistence, their cultural identities tend more toward being "fishermen who trade." In contrast, the Mandok tend to view themselves more as "traders who fish." Also, unlike the Mandok, the Ponam have ignored virtually all mission and government inducements to invest in on-island money-making schemes.¹⁰

Ponam Islanders realized early on that the only *rot bilong mani* ("road to money") was to invest their meager resources in their children's education. Children were socialized with this in mind and were reminded constantly of their obligation to "help" those who stayed behind (Carrier 1980). Though Carrier also notes that there is an apathetic attitude toward the actual operation of the Community School, his conclusion that Community School is the necessary link in the chain from village to wage employment supports the general view in Papua New Guinea that education represents an investment. He asserts that when Ponam Islanders send their children off to higher education, this constitutes an export labor business:

With Ponam we have not just labour emigration, but the export of educated high cost and high priced labour. The use of the word "export," with its business connotations, is justified by the strong elements of consciousness, rationality, calculation and intention which surround education and remittance in Ponam society. [Carrier 1981b:239]

In contrast, the Mandok's support of the education system constituted only one of several attempts to "break into" the European-dominated market system.¹¹

Discussion

In the introduction we suggested that each of our examples represents a different stage of "attitude development" toward Western education in relation to specific changes in administrative policy. The Imbonggu, the most recent recipients of schooling, are in the initial "supportive" stage of schooling. The newness of the school, and the promises of education foster a certain excitement toward a new venture and hope for a secure future. Ponam's success rate over time has

maintained this supportive attitude, and exemplifies a "dependency" attitude toward their schooled offspring (Carrier 1979; 1984). The Mandok, having gotten comfortable in dependency on educated and employed youths, now face disillusionment as a result of shifting policy changes that have affected their success rate for producing employed graduates of the school system. Once they ceased to reap adequate and consistent returns they stopped investing. They are no longer the avid supporters of schooling they once were.

We have pointed out that the positive attitude toward schooling on the part of the Kero results from the fact that they do not yet realize what a poor investment it may prove to be. When they do, we predict that their attitudes will change. In fact, across the nation we detect a pattern of response such that, in those areas where schooling has been available for a long time, attendance has dropped to 50 percent of the school age population or lower. The Imbonggu will see their expectations for a handsome financial return on investments in schooling frustrated and most likely will react as the Mandok did by scaling back their expectations and their investments.

The Mandok still are resisting efforts to get them to relocate and become horticulturists.¹² As of 1981, the Community School was receiving better community support in terms of attendance, but remained a separate entity with at best tangential significance to village life in general. Money is still hard to get for individual Mandok parents. They feel, "Why should I spend my hard earned money to send him to school, if I know he will only be back in a few years empty-handed? Plus, then we have to teach him village things all over again, so he can survive and have a good life." Mandok parents thus are reemphasizing child participation in their subsistence economy, but realize that their children need basic literacy and numeracy training to survive in their quickly changing environment. As one informed parent so cogently summed it up, "If one hand holds a pen, then the other must hold a bush knife. We need to read and write and do numbers, yes. But first, we need to eat." The Mandok see the need for education at least for basic literacy and numeracy. They also want to be active participants in "development." They are not, however, willing to sacrifice their cultural identity or their present way of life to do so (Pomponio 1984, 1985).

A major factor contributing to Ponam's high success rate with its educated youths relates to the fact that Ponam had a slight head-start on other communities, such as Mandok, because higher quality schooling was available earlier. Thus, when the gates of education and wage-employment opportunities were opened in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Ponam were ready, and sent at least five times the number of children off-island to school as the Mandok did during the same period. As a result, most of the major urban centers have a large contingent of Ponam people who support each other as well as their

families back home. In 1980, James Carrier estimated that wage earners sent home at least \$30,000, or about \$1000 per capita (Carrier 1981b). This is a staggering sum of money in rural Papua New Guinea. Most of it was spent to pay school fees for younger siblings still in school, but plenty was left to subsidize purchases of such imported luxury items as radios, guitars, clothing, and outboard motors. Although in the short run the present ratio of wage earners to villagers is still climbing, and might continue to remain high for quite a while, in the long run inevitably it will decline (Carrier 1979).

Both Ponam and Mandok villagers participated in education throughout the "three phases" of development of the education system in Papua New Guinea. In the beginning, both of these villages were eager to send their children to school. Each village shows a similar pattern in "investment" attitudes, and, for a time, significant similarities in success patterns during Phase II. However, the budget cutbacks and deemphasis on outmigration for secondary school students affected Ponam and Mandok differently. Part of this has to do with changes initiated in each village. For example, from the beginning Ponam Islanders had to send their school children off-island to the mission center at Lorengau. The various policy shifts in the Education Department did not affect the location of the school, or the cultural milieu in which the children were learning. The Mandok, on the other hand, were moved from place to place, and eventually were transplanted from government schools in town or schools at Catholic Mission centers to remote rural schools on Umboi. This development seems to have had two major effects on the Mandok. First, the students never were able to build up a contingent of *wantoks* (Tok Pisin term for "speaker of the same language," extended as "friend, countryman, ally") in any one school that could provide mutual support in the adjustment process to high school in a strange environment. Second, and equally important, is the parents' perception of the move to "bush" schools as a definite step backward, rather than forward. The additional changes in subsistence activities in which the Mandok children were engaged in the bush schools added insult to injury for students and parents.

Another difference between Ponam and Mandok has to do with the cultural values each community attached to the educative process. Whereas the Ponam considered themselves "poor fishermen" in a limited environment, the Mandok historically had expanded their horizons through overseas trade, and considered themselves to be "kings of the sea." Education for the Ponam, then, was and remains a step up from a life on a barren island to a "soft life" in town. For the Mandok, education was just one of many investments designed to recycle wealth back into the village, and to put off relocating the village to the Umboi bush. When children no longer provided this reprieve, they were kept in the village.

What happens to the children in all this twisting and turning of policy and parental attitudes? In the first place, for Papua New Guinean children, school is not an escape from a life of drudgery in the village, nor a pathway to enhanced prestige and status. In most societies children do not make an important contribution to subsistence. They may be involved in gardening, fishing, and gathering but this is almost entirely voluntary for school-aged children. More commonly they play at these activities and get to eat for themselves any snacks that they can gather with their hands, spears, and fishing lines. Adult responsibilities and adult labor are introduced gradually and do not require prolonged periods of intensive energy output.

There is status attached to owning imported goods (for example, trucks, outboard motors, new clothing), but beyond this students and wage earners alike remain subject to local standards of prestige. Thus, traditional virtues like aiding one's kin may be more important than owning an outboard motor. While in some areas few wage earners earn enough money to sponsor lavish feasts that are the hallmark of village bigmen, in others the reverse is true. In cases like Ponam and Mandok, where highly educated, highly paid labor is predominant, returning town workers may be pressed to spend thousands of kina per year in outdoing those feasts offered by their village peers, precisely because of their perceived status as successful in the modern, urban culture.

On the other hand, there are real costs associated with schooling. Schoolwork, whether in class or on the school grounds, typically is more demanding than village work. On cold, rainy days when one's relatives are clustered around a cozy fire at home, the student must trudge or paddle a canoe as far as three miles for the dubious pleasure of sitting on a hard bench in an open building. As we have mentioned, dropouts who return to the village may be treated with scorn, the degree of which corresponds to how far the individual progressed in school before he or she dropped out. Conversely, girls may be taken abruptly out of school, regardless of how well they are doing or how far they have progressed, either to join their husband's family in an arranged marriage or because parents fear they will become pregnant. Social and cultural isolation may be acute, as many students in secondary and tertiary studies are able to get home only once a year and they may be among only a handful of their own kin at that particular school.¹³ A fair number of those who complete their studies will not find jobs, will be underemployed, or will feel that they are poorly trained for the jobs they have secured.

Conclusion

In each general phase of development in the education system that we have identified for Papua New Guinea, we can isolate three separate sets of administrative goals. The "Mission Phase" was aimed at

basic literacy, religious conversion, and plantation labor recruitment. Phase II was characterized by enormous expansion of the entire education system. Standardized curricula were designed to promote universal literacy and national development. During this phase the education system was organized to enhance economic and technological development. Phase III can be summarized as a general retrenchment from Phase II. In recognition of a glutted job market, educative goals and budgets were cut back and replaced with a push for rural development projects. Villagers were encouraged to engage in small businesses and cash cropping and to become "self-sufficient."

It would seem, however, that while public investment goals of administrators have been met, private investment goals of the rural population have not. Consequently, societies like the Mandok have initiated a retrenchment policy of their own. Even in those societies in which the success rate for education and employment is high, the tendency is not toward community self-sufficiency but toward individual dependency on the employed. What has happened on Ponam, for example, is that villagers previously dependent on mission and government subsidies now are dependent on remittances sent from wage earners in towns (Carrier 1979).

A danger in the widespread application of schooling in Papua New Guinea is that there is no modern economy to utilize the mass of semi-skilled workers who constitute the majority of present secondary and tertiary graduates; meanwhile, children are absent from the village economy during a critical period of their development. When they eventually return, they are poorly equipped to participate in this economy. Educated school leavers cannot be expected to contribute to change and economic development because, being young and inexperienced in the ways of the village, they have neither the knowledge nor the status necessary to influence others. Even if they have learned a trade they may run into difficulty at home if they try to pursue it. This occurs for several reasons. First are the problems involved in villagers' perceptions of how different forms of knowledge are acquired, the comparative values assigned to different types of knowledge, and how knowledge should be distributed (see for example Burkins and Krause 1982; Carrier 1980, 1984; McLaren 1975; Young 1977). Second, given that technological knowledge is acquired, there is the problem of applying it at home. In many Papua New Guinean societies, although personal industriousness and "success" are valued, they seem only to be rewarded at the local village level when "success" conforms to *that particular society's formulations* of it. There is a definite notion of too much of a good thing, and a person who is overly or ostentatiously "successful" in the eyes of his or her fellow villagers is liable to be sanctioned socially (Carrier 1984:67-86), sometimes in the form of accusations of or vulnerability to sorcery (Vulliamy and Carrier 1985). Third, in most traditional societies in Papua New Guinea, individual

efforts usually are not recompensed directly; instead, work efforts often are repaid indirectly over time to one's group (Carrier 1980). This factor has the effect of siphoning off or nullifying potential financial rewards for work done in the village context. These sorts of social and cultural constraints are major obstacles to development programs and technical education programs designed to promote "community development" from within and which assume, first, that "development" implies "technological change," and second, that formally educated and technically trained youths will return to their villages and be able to initiate major changes of any sort.

Villagers like the Mandok seem to have a clear notion of investment, and realize that they are not receiving adequate returns on their school fees. Concerned with their children's long-term survival, they are deemphasizing secondary schooling and reemphasizing village skills. However, they face the following dilemma: village skills and traditional subsistence patterns are oriented toward maritime mobility and trade; European contact, national independence and the demands of a cash economy reward sedentariness and land productivity in the form of horticulture or pig husbandry. Mandok reactions to this paradox have taken several forms since 1960 (discussed in Pomponio 1983, 1985), each of which has kept them on their island, and at least part of the population mobile.

On the other hand, villagers like the Imbonggu, who have land and can participate in land development projects, tend to view education and village development as an either/or proposition. Participation in one implies exclusion from the other. For example, Lancy once asked members of a Highlands village council why they did not teach their children the traditional way of life on weekends when they were home from school. Their reply was, "Do you white people work on weekends? Our children are going to be like you, so they shouldn't have to work on weekends either."

Economists distinguish between economic growth and economic development. A great deal of growth has occurred in Papua New Guinea, but very little development. Though government planners attempt to set policies to meet and to sustain national goals, isolated rural villagers do not understand or maintain national visions; their priorities remain village-focused. Administrative policies have stressed "public investment" aspects of the education system in order to coordinate education with economic and technological development at the national level. As educational needs changed, policies were altered accordingly. Contrastively, in rural villages the "personal investment" aspects of education remained constant. Indeed, as benefits accrued to those villagers with educated and employed children, the desire for education increased accordingly. When government policies shifted the focus of development strategies from urban centers to rural development, however, villages like Mandok got caught in the

middle of what they perceive to be a losing investment. In places like Kero, where school is a recent introduction, aspirations remain high, but there is little infrastructure in economic activities that will continue to grow without external aid.

Cognitive and social aspects of learning can be overcome by good curriculum development and teaching. However, we have seen how the gap between administrative goals and policies on the one hand, and village parents' expectations and attitudes toward education on the other, can influence this process. We suggest that it is not enough to inculcate Western values and incentives in school children (see also Lancy 1975). The opportunities for the expression of those values and economic rewards for students' efforts must be made available and accessible to them and visible to their parents in order to sustain this kind of vision.

Notes

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1. This attitude seems to be deeply ingrained in school children. In the course of administering a questionnaire and interviewing 34 Mandok children from composite grade 4 and 5, 25 (73.5 percent) saw the value of secondary education to be a means to wage employment in towns, whether or not they expected to go to high school. Likewise, 21 (64.7 percent) felt the obligation, once employed, to send money back to the village for such things as food and future school fees.

2. An example of this attitude was illustrated at a meeting of village leaders in Siassi Sub-District in August 1980, regarding the proposed Umboi Timber Project. The leaders all agreed that what Siassi needed most of all in terms of "development" was schools, hospitals, roads and marine transport to markets in Lae and Madang. The general conclusion was that whatever company took the timber contract would provide these things for its own employees and company operations; the Siassi would then benefit directly by being able to tag along with company facilities (for example, a hospital or shipping schedules) and by "inheriting" vacant roads and buildings when the company left (Logan 1981).

3. See Burkins and Krause (1982) for an ethnographic analysis of a similar case in Muli, close to Kero. They suggest some compelling reasons why these kinds of development projects fail.

4. For these men, coffee plantations in the Western Highlands have been the most accessible and popular source of wage employment.

5. This element of the relative lack of physical exertion in traditional societies has been noted repeatedly for Papua New Guinea as a whole, as well as for the Highlands (Sahlins 1972).

6. Children who were sent to schools at the patrol post in Ialibu when they were first established about 1959 (during Phase II) were more fortunate. Schools there were well built and provided boarding facilities, trained expatriate teachers, and a much better supply of educational materials than at Kero. A significant number of this early group continued on through an education system that maintained extremely high standards. Many are now employed in important positions in government.

7. There were several government, school, and mission attempts to move the Mandok to the Muru area of Umboi Island. Since "development" in Siassi always has been virtually synonymous with "cash cropping," and since all of the small islands are too small to grow crops, the small islanders were encouraged to relocate from their tiny overcrowded islands to Umboi so that they could participate more effectively in "development." (For an expanded discussion of these points see Pomponio 1983:269–298.)

8. Although 1971–72 marks the beginning of the decline of Mandok High School enrollments, Gelem High School was better situated, from the Mandok point of view, than Lablab. The Mandok maintain fairly intensive trade and intermarriage with Barim (west coast of Umboi) and Aronaimutu Island (adjacent to Barim). They were therefore still within reach of kin and/or trading relations.

9. The exchange rate as of 1980 was K 1.00 = US \$1.41–1.50.

10. On the one occasion on which they did succumb—they purchased a freezer to quick-freeze their catch for later sale at the Lorengau market—the freezer broke down and they could not get it fixed (Lancy 1983). The episode afforded them an opportunity to remind themselves, outsiders, and their kinsmen living off-island that, "See, we told you so."

11. Over the years, the Mandok have invested in several varied "business" enterprises, including collecting trochus, producing copra, establishing trade stores, and most recently, selling fish in Lae. Although a detailed account of these enterprises is beyond the scope of the present article, suffice it to note that each one failed.

12. The most recent move to relocate was initiated in October 1980, and was forgotten by January 1981. Instead the Mandok started another "fishing business," freezing fresh-caught fish in a nonmotorized ice box for later sale in Lae. This, too, was defunct by May 1981. The most recent project was initiated in April 1984. The Mandok are storing fish in a generator-run freezer and air-freighting it to market in Lae. As of this writing it is still operating.

13. Over seven hundred languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea.

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