
Chapter Four

Arapesh

The Mountain Arapesh are located in the north-west of Papua New Guinea in East Sepik Province and occupy the coastal plain territory between the Pacific Ocean, over the hills and the Prince Alexander Mountain Range into a narrow section of plains adjacent to the hills. The family of Arapesh languages can be broken down into three major groupings: the Mountain Arapesh, the Southern Arapesh, and Bumbita (Tuzin 1976, pp. 18-19). The group that will be the focus of this chapter is the Mountain Arapesh.

Mead's (1934b, 1935, 1938, 1940, 1947, 1950, 1967) and Fortune's (1939, 1942, 1947) work on the Mountain Arapesh was based on seven months of fieldwork between 1931 and 1932. They divided the Mountain Arapesh into three separate sub-groups according to cultural differences, which were, for the most part, based on their geographical setting. These groups were: Plains, Beach, and Mountain Arapesh. The same language is used by all three groups.

Plains

The Plains Arapesh were situated in the confined low foothills area between the mountains and the aggressive and warlike Abelam people who occupied a large area on the Sepik plain. The Plains Arapesh were noted to be significantly influenced in culture by their neighbours the Abelam (Mead 1967, p. 20). They were unable to produce an adequate food supply. The area was insufficiently forested to supply them with building materials or to support enough game for hunting.

The Plainsmen lived in large villages. They manufactured shell rings from the enormous clam shells that they obtained from the Beach Arapesh. These items were traded to procure the goods they required from the Abelam people. In order to get clam shells, the Plains people needed to cross through the Mountain Arapesh's territory as they travelled to the coast.

Mead (1938, p. 326) suggests that a reciprocal relationship existed between the Plains people and the Mountain Arapesh because of the trade

in 'exuviae'. Exuviae is defined by Mead (1947, p. 419) as 'emanations of the body used for sorcery practices'. These emanations are sometimes referred to as 'leavings' and include semen, half eaten food, and saliva. A more detailed discussion of exuviae and sorcery will follow in the section on sorcery.

Mead found that this relationship was augmented by 'wishan', a sorcery technique that impacted upon the intended party by targeting any member of his locality and causing calamity and hardship through accidents and destruction of crops and property. Greater distance between the sorcerer and the victim's locality meant greater power in 'wishan' because the number of individuals whose 'exuviae' could be used increased.

The Plains people used both the Mountain and Beach Arapesh's fear of their powers of sorcery in order to acquire the clam shells they needed to manufacture the rings for the trade items they wished to purchase from their Abelam neighbours. The Plainsmen were dependent on these rings as well as their tobacco yields for both the material items and the cultural practices they imported from the Abelam (Mead 1935, pp. 11-13). There was an economic interdependency among all three groups based upon the trading skills of the Beach people, the carriage skills of the Mountain people and upon ring-making and the knowledge of sorcery by the Plainsmen.

Beach

The Beach Arapesh built vast houses on piles and lived in large villages. Their gardens were fertile and provided a more than adequate food supply. The Beach people were the source of all luxury goods for the Mountain Arapesh and influenced their culture enormously both through the acquisition of goods and through cultural practices such as dance, masks, charms and song (Mead 1935, p. 8; 1967, p. 22). The Beach Arapesh benefited from the riches they received through the trade networks which ranged along the coast from the Sepik to Aitape. They were strongly influenced by this trade and cultural importations from the Lower Sepik region were evident (Mead 1938, p. 321). They too sought access to the Mountain Arapesh's trade routes for particular trade goods such as feathers, net bags and tobacco (Mead 1947, p. 210). Their need for access also included the search for 'exuviae' passed on to the Plainsmen for their services in sorcery. The Mountain Arapesh considered the trade paths as guiding them toward the Beach with all its luxury and excitement. From the Plainsmen came only fear, illness, misfortune and death (Mead 1947, p. 207).

Mountain

The Mountain Arapesh are situated between the Beach and Plains peoples. Their territory is positioned on precipitous slopes. Due to thin and infertile top soil, which is easily washed away by torrential rains, their gardens were marginal and produced no surplus food (Mead 1934a, p. 377). Mead noted that they were the poorest of the three groups due to their 'technological inferiority' and their poor land (1938, pp. 320, 329). Because of this inferiority, the Mountain Arapesh relied on the Beach people for imports of tools, weapons and cooking devices even though they were fairly self-sufficient in food, shelter and clothing production. They manufactured only a limited and crude range of items such as wooden pillows, grass skirts, simple net bags and so forth, mostly in insufficient quantities for their own use. Mead called them an 'importing culture' (Mead 1938).

Their lands were not coveted by either of their neighbours and therefore they were not in danger of aggressive invasions over territory. The one trade item the Mountain Arapesh did have to offer both neighbouring groups was their labour in walking the trade routes receiving and giving the 'gifts', as the trade goods were referred to, and transporting them to another destination. This 'walking about to find rings' as the Arapesh metaphorically spoke of their traffic in trade, was often inefficient. A man walked his hereditary path for a day's journey in one direction, toward the Beach for example, and received goods from his trade-friend. Each trade path was passed on through patrilineal heritage. These paths were owned by individual men who 'walk[ed] about to find rings' and provided a safe route on their way to either the Beach or the Plains. The routes were marked by the residences of hereditary trade friends who would provide safe accommodation and food for the trader during his journey. Threat of injury to a man on such a trade route would be viewed by the man's trade friend as a threat to one of his family. Mead (1938, p. 322) concludes that 'This path, then, represents the maximum freedom of movement which an Arapesh man possessed before the introduction of the Pax Britannica and the freedom of the King's Highway'. She suggests that the tradition of trade friends and trade routes may have originated through marriage ties with distant groups.

The man then might walk two days in the opposite direction carrying his gift which he gave to another trade-friend perhaps taking part of the 'gift' for himself as payment or perhaps waiting until later when his trade-friend appeared in his village with some other item for gift-giving. Later a gift had to be returned to his Beach trade-friend (Mead 1967, p. 22). The value of the 'gifts' was never disputed and often the actual values were unequal especially if one accounts for the cartage. However, the Mountain Arapesh preferred this custom of gift-giving to direct barter (Mead 1938, p. 329). Real profit did not often result from these trading practices. Any regard for real profit was replaced with an emphasis on the giver of the gift's congenial and benevolent behaviour and on the appreciation and gratitude of the receiver (Mead 1967, p. 22).

Each man decided upon the extent to which he participated in trading. He might journey on his hereditary trade paths only a few times a year in order to supply himself with the necessities or he might travel more often. However, it was considered undesirable for a man to 'walk about to find rings' to such a degree that he did not fulfil his responsibilities in gardening and hunting (Mead 1947, p. 222).

The trade paths were also used for sorcery (Mead 1938, pp. 323-5). If angered by someone both Beach and Mountain men might send a fragment of the culprit's 'exuviae' to a sorcerer in the Plains.

The Beach Arapesh often used the trade paths to search for the sorcerer who had received the 'exuviae' of one of their members recently taken ill. After using the gift-friend system of the trade paths, they made contact with the sorcerer and offered him gifts so that he would no longer proceed with his spells.

The Plainsmen used the paths for blackmail. The sorcerer retained the 'exuviae' packet given him by the Beach or Mountain person and waited for the fee. If after several months he still had not received his fee, he might attempt to contact the victim through intermediaries and suggest that if payment was not received the packet would be put to use, therefore implying that the intended victim might soon fall ill or die.

A final use of the trade paths for sorcery purposes was that of vengeance. Reprisal killings for a death were offered by Plainsmen in 'sympathy' to the relatives of the sorcerised person. For a fee, the reprisal was to be carried out on an individual who was the same age, sex and marital status as the lost relative. The success of this type of sorcery was difficult to prove because it was targeted on someone from a distant village.

According to Mead (1947, p. 222) all economic activity outside that involved in running a household was organised around two categories.

The first category was more sociological and aimed at strengthening links with others—equivalent exchange was given more weight than real gain. In the second category, redistribution was emphasised. Redistribution was achieved by making a feast called 'abullu' where decorated piles of yams were displayed and quantities of meat collected. The invited members of the locality came with gifts of meat and net bags or cooking utensils. Each family took away a portion of the taro to plant as seed. The giver of an 'abullu' was seen as honourable and as someone whose 'gardening luck [had] increased the food supply of the community' and in this way 'it [was] actually an effective measure against any one man's accumulating wealth disproportionate to the wealth accumulated by others' (Mead 1967, p. 29).

Social Organisation

Patrilineal in descent, the Arapesh's principal unit was the patriclan. Villages were comprised of the grouping of several hamlets within which resided a small clan. Male clan members often resided in other villages with the result that each village was made up of several clans. Each clan owned an area of land within which individuals built and owned houses; had a water-hole, quicksand, or waterfall for the clan 'marsalai' (guardian supernatural) to live; and owned a forest for hunting and garden land both of which were allocated in sections to different lineages. With the exception of the 'marsalai' land, which was clan owned, all other land was individually owned by men. Once in a while a woman was given property, but it was then considered as the property of her husband or sons (Mead 1947, p. 218). Both the 'marsalai' and the ghosts of the individual clan member's ancestors resided on all owned land. Deference was always paid to these ghosts and permission requested whenever the land was approached or when a man wished to hunt or garden, and all strangers were first introduced to the 'marsalai'. If such recognition was not given, the 'marsalai' would chasten the offending party by causing misfortune through climactic disturbances such as storms, winds or landslides.

As well as land, sago and palm trees that were planted were passed down through the family line on an individual basis. Individual ties and relationships with their emphasis on friendliness and helpfulness were deemed to be more important than the collective within the clan (Mead 1947, pp. 182, 217). The honouring of these individually established ties between trade-friends, affinal relationships and family lineage worked toward the Arapesh cultural ideal of group relationships.

The Arapesh were rather flexible in their kinship system and did not strictly adhere to the rules of genealogy. In fact, they expanded their kinship system to include individuals with whom they had established 'contemporary ties'. Thus, if one of their women married into another locality, they often called all of the men of that locality 'brother-in-law'.

Those who had kinship ties were individuals with whom the Arapesh person learned to have 'good feelings' and with whom they could engage in a 'helping relationship' (Mead 1935, p. 45; 1947, pp. 190, 198). Trust was implicit within these relationships since individuals could count on support and assistance from such established ties when they requested it (*see* Mead 1947, p. 203).

In view of this attitude, the extension of kinship to those who were not within his genealogy enabled the Arapesh to broaden his 'security circle' within which he could journey and find sanctuary (Mead 1947, p. 204).

The main preoccupation of the Mountain Arapesh was the production and locating of food. Taro, a tuber, was the staple food and was produced by the women. Yams were considered a male crop and were planted and

cultivated by men. They were the focus of feasts and could easily be stored. Another food crop was sago which was planted and passed on individually to future generations. Sago was eaten only during feast times. Bananas, greens and coconut palms also served to supplement the diet although coconuts were scarce and were subject to tabus almost year round so as to accumulate sufficient quantities for feasts. Meat was not often part of the Arapesh diet. A man never ate his own meat (Mead 1967, p. 31; 1934a, p. 382). Instead, he sent it to another, perhaps his brother-in-law or his mother's brother. If a man did eat his own meat, he faced the moral outrage of his community. Mead found that the diet of the Mountain Arapesh was inadequate and caused undernourishment although there was no starvation (1967, p. 24).

In order to overcome the food insufficiency the Arapesh developed a system of planting their crops in several gardens belonging to different relatives. A man was host in only one garden and a guest in all the others (Mead 1935, pp. 19-22). Preparations and planting in these gardens were made cooperatively and at varying times. This ensured that the harvests were interspersed so that the families did not face lean periods where no food was available. Gardening, hunting and house-building were all performed in this cooperative way. Men spent most of their time responding to the requests of other people with whom they had ties and therefore an established helping relationship. When asked a man felt obliged to respond.

Mead (1967, p. 22) states, '[t]he whole emphasis of their economic lives is that of participation in activities others have initiated, and only rarely and shyly does anyone tentatively suggest a plan of his own'. Thus, these individual acts of service performed for other individuals worked toward the aggregate aim of 'growth'.

Leadership

There was no formal political leadership (Mead 1967, p. 20). The emphasis on men reacting to the requests of others and only rarely initiating activities contributed to their attitude toward leadership (Mead 1935, p. 22). Leaders were required mostly for ceremonial purposes such as feasting; however, they were sometimes needed for dispute settlement. Leadership was not decided through heredity (Mead 1935, pp. 27-30). Instead, potential individuals were chosen and encouraged to take on the leadership role. It was felt that no member of a locality genuinely preferred to take on a 'bigman' role but the need for leaders demanded that the group cultivate adolescent boys who manifested the necessary traits from a young age. The traits required for leadership included, 'intelligence, energy, and a willingness to assume responsibility, to "take his father's place" in emergencies'; good judgment, the ability to show

angry aggression when necessary and successfully hosting 'abullu's' and other exchange ceremonies (Mead 1947, p. 208).

The chosen boy would be established early in a 'buanyin' relationship with a boy from another clan. The purpose of the 'buanyin' relationship was to train the youths in the qualities necessary for leadership. The 'buanyin' relationship was one of exchange where reciprocal feasts and displays of gifts, particularly meat, for the other partner were organised (Mead 1967, p. 33). Competition and insulting behaviour were encouraged between the 'buanyin' feasting partners. These traits were considered to be disagreeable in non-leaders. Contrary to the system of trade-friends, which camouflaged trade as though it were gift-giving, an accurate accounting of cost was kept between 'buanyins'. Another purpose of the 'buanyin' exchange relationship was as a form of banking since a gift of meat provided to a 'buanyin' would be returned in kind at some later date. The gifts of meat received would then be passed on to relatives. They would subsequently be obliged to provide meat for future gifts to the 'buanyin' partner who would also distribute the gifts amongst his relatives. Thus, as Mead (1967, p. 33) puts it, the 'buanyins' ' . . . cooperate in maintaining a more rapid large-scale turnover of food than would otherwise occur in the community'.

The emphasis in leadership was the maintenance of balance between groups. Mead (1947, p. 205) states:

This type of symmetry may be understood as one expression of responsiveness; every stimulation from outside produces a lack of balance, and the responsive individual moves to restore that balance, which is to him a state of well being.

Position of Women

General

The Arapesh valued their women as it was only in cooperation with women that men could fulfil their responsibilities to 'grow' the next generation. Mead (1947, p. 202) states: 'Women are valuable, very valuable, and they are the nearest to group property which the Arapesh have'.

Cooperation between the sexes was evident. Women carried water, searched for firewood, cooked the daily food (except for feasts), gardened and cleaned (Mead 1947, p. 213; 1967, p. 40). Men hunted, cultivated yams, cooked the food for ceremonies, made fences and built houses (Mead 1935, p. 39). The women shared in the creation and 'growing' of the children with their husbands. The father slept on the other side of the child and had no sex with either the mother or any other woman until the child could walk (Mead 1967, p. 44). Both men and women were assigned an equal responsibility in procreation.

Once Arapesh children reached puberty, they were expected to follow the taboos which forbade them to eat some meats or drink cold water until the yams were 'harvested and sprouting in the yam-house' (Mead 1935, p. 62). The observance of these taboos lasted for almost one year and was considered to be the child's duty to ensure his/her own 'growth'. According to custom, at the time of puberty a boy was no longer permitted to take sexual pleasure from his own genitals and was taught to perform the purification rituals with which to cleanse himself if he were to breach the taboos. The young boy is taught by the older boys how to use the stinging nettles to cleanse his penis and the fragment of sharpened bamboo to insert in his urethra to ritually cleanse himself through bleeding. He alone was responsible for monitoring his own adherence to the taboos. The result of any shortcomings would be evident for all to see by his failure to 'grow'.

The Arapesh divide blood into good and bad blood. Both sexes have within them both types. Good blood is 'life-giving and life-forming' and comes from a wound, from scarification or is passed from a mother to her child (Mead 1940, p. 349). Good blood is nourishing and is considered asexual. It is associated with parenting, non-aggression and the compliance with taboos. Bad blood is dangerous and includes menstrual blood, blood from childbirth, and blood that comes from a sore or from the boy's purification rituals.

Men's tamberan

The tamberan was a 'supernatural patron of the grown men of the tribe' (Mead 1935, p. 63) and was symbolised by the sound of the sacred flutes and garamuts (slit gongs). This male cult differentiated the functions of men and women and was 'a symbol of the men's power' (1967, p. 38). Pubescent boys were initiated into the cult over a period of a few months. They were forced to undergo a series of activities that included having their skins rubbed and beaten with stinging nettles, the decoration of their bodies by incision, drinking the blood of the older men, and practising the purification techniques that they would perform after sexual contact with women or after contact with the tamberan. The purification practices performed in the latter situation were intended to protect the women from the harmful effects of the tamberan. It was believed that the tamberan hated women and would cause them harm through miscarriages and so forth.

Women were not permitted to see the tamberan but were not killed as punishment if they happened to do so. Instead the men told them that they would not have to face such severe repercussions if they promised not to reveal the secrets (Mead 1935, p. 68). Young uninitiated boys were not excluded from the tamberan but were permitted to observe and partake of the feasting. The tamberan focused attention on the importance of separating the different functions of men and women in Arapesh society (Mead 1935, pp. 63-9).

Since the tambran cult was considered to be harmful to women, young girls learned to push all thoughts about the tambran from their minds for if they were to allow their minds to contemplate its secrets, they might 'endanger the order of the universe within which men and women and children live in safety' (Mead 1935, p. 70).

The result of the young girls' lack of speculation, according to Mead, was the dulling of their imagination and stunting of their intellectual growth. If they remained untempted by the forbidden tambran house and its secrets they would 'grow' to marry and produce children. They needed to protect their reproductive powers by observing these rules and thereby contribute to the community by 'growing children'.

Boys, on the other hand, were not discouraged from speculating on the tambran's mysteries. By the time they had reached their own initiation ceremony, they were familiar with many of the secrets. They had already been taught the purification rituals by the older boys and had been permitted to observe and eat during the initiation feasts of the older boys.

Some boys were initiated individually, but the larger initiations held within the locality took place every six or seven years. It took this long to prepare for such initiation ceremonies and the initiates spent much of their lives repaying the debts incurred by their relatives to hold the ceremony.

The secrets of the tambran were revealed to the young boys during initiation. These secrets included the revelation that the voice of the tambran was really made by the men playing bamboo flutes and banging the slit gongs called 'garamut' (Mead 1935, pp. 72-4). The women and the uninitiated were told that these sounds were the voice of the tambran. They were also told that the boys would be swallowed by a cassowary (a female symbol to the Arapesh) only to be expelled again later. The boys learned that it was not really a cassowary, but a man wearing cassowary feathers. They were made to drink blood taken from the old men, which was believed to provide strength and to facilitate the 'growth' of the boy. Through these rituals and the incision ceremony where the boys were also scarified, the symbolism of the reproductive powers of women and the importance of the relationship between blood and 'growth' were again emphasised.

The young men entered the tambran house and were symbolically reborn into the men's cult which shrouded its activities in secrecy and mystery. Through this institution the separation of the sexes was maintained and the boys were reminded of the dangerousness of sexuality and bad blood for both sexes. Men and women learned to protect each other from these dangers (Mead 1967, p. 38). The men did so by guarding their secrets and the women ensured the safety of their men by observing the avoidance practices during menstruation and childbirth. The sexual dichotomy was represented on the one hand, by the reproductive powers of women and sexual contact with them, and on the other, by men's ability to provide nourishment and food. Mead (1935, p. 75) notes that the Arapesh adapted the practices of the men's institution to emphasise

'growth' and not traits which reflect jealousy, competition, and antagonism between the sexes.

At the end of the initiation period, the boys were dressed in their ceremonial finery and taken on their fathers' hereditary trade paths to be introduced to all his trade-friends. Each trade-friend gave the boy a gift which started him off in the reciprocal gift-giving relationships of the trade paths (Mead 1935, p. 76).

After successfully completing the initiation period, the community perception of the boy was forever changed. He was no longer a child without responsibility nor was he included any more in the group whose 'growth' was 'cared for'. Instead he became part of the group who 'cared for' the 'growth' of others and channelled his energies toward the care of the old, his younger siblings and betrothed wife (Mead 1935, p. 76).

Marriage

The concept of 'growth' also underpinned the Arapesh ideal of the husband/wife relationship. A girl between the ages of six and eight was betrothed to a boy usually half a dozen years older. Once she was betrothed, she came to live with her husband's family and used the same kinship terms for them as she would her own family.

She worked with her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law in the same way as she would have worked with her own mother and sisters. The major link between a husband and his wife was the food he provided her in order to 'grow her'. The husband's line's claim to her was not through blood (her family still owned her blood) or the brideprice but through the food he provided, which grew her body. As Mead (1935, p. 80) says, 'An Arapesh boy grows his wife'.

Most marriages were arranged in this way and the relationships established, which could be described as parent/child in nature, were considered to be the most stable and close (Mead 1935, p. 80; Fortune 1939, p. 38). The young girl entered into a dependency relationship with her husband and his people. They provided her with food and safety and in return she worked in the gardens and ensured that she followed all the taboos. In this way, she would 'grow' and later produce children in order to strengthen the patrilineal family line.

In choosing a child bride, the family decided whether it wished to strengthen its existing relationships with a group it already had ties with or whether it wished to extend its trust boundaries to a distant and outside group through marriage exchange (Mead 1935, pp. 81-2). With the latter choice, the risk of possible sorcery always factored in the family's decision. Women represented the blood ties between groups of men who wished to strengthen or extend their ties with other groups of men (Mead 1947, p. 197). The importance of increasing the number of ties between men was evident in the Arapesh attitudes toward incest that according to Mead (1935, p. 84) was not considered repugnant, 'but as a stupid

negation of the joys of increasing through marriage, the number of people whom one can love and trust'.

Women's tamberan

The ceremony conducted at the girl's first menses was called the women's tamberan (Mead 1940, p. 349). The girl was segregated in the menstrual hut, which was specially built for the occasion (Mead 1935, pp. 92-3). Her skin was rubbed with stinging nettles and she learned to cleanse herself with one rolled up stinging nettle by pushing it in and out of her vulva. This latter practice was performed to ensure that her breasts would develop and enlarge. She would later perform this ritual twice more; once after her marriage was consummated and again after her husband's death. Her mother's brother scarified her on the third day. To augment her strength, she fasted for up to five days and took no water. This period was shortened if the girl was too weak to endure the entire period.

At the end of the period of segregation, the adorned girl was taken to the 'agehu' (feasting and ceremonial ground) where her husband waited with some soup he had made for her. The men in her husband's family gave the young bride gifts. As part of the ceremony, she ate half of a yam and the husband hid the other half in the roof of his house. It remained there until she conceived a child. This was the husband's insurance that she would 'not treat him like a stranger and deliver him over to the sorcerers' (Mead 1935, p. 95). Both husband and wife observed taboos for a week, which forbade them to eat meat. Subsequently, the husband hunted and using his catch both he and his wife prepared a feast for those who assisted during the ceremony.

In contrast to the men's tamberan, the rituals performed in the women's tamberan did not significantly change the role of the young girl (Mead 1935, pp. 96-7). It merely marked the maturation of her body and moved her closer to the time when she and her husband could consummate the marriage (this would take place a few months after the menstrual ceremony). Years before she had already been accepted into her husband's group and had been performing most of the duties she would continue to perform during her lifetime.

Casual sexual activity was fraught with danger for the Arapesh. It was seen as an attempt by a strange and enemy woman to seduce and sorcerise a man (especially if it happened while travelling). Safe sex could only be practised within a marriage since child betrothal ensured a trusting and therefore friendly relationship. Given these attitudes, it was a significant risk for a man, who, wishing to elope with another man's wife, would offer to copulate with her. By so doing he gave her his guarantee that his intentions were earnest since she then had the power to cause his death through sorcery if he failed to keep his promise.

Polygyny was practised by the Arapesh as a result of the clan's wish to keep a woman whom they had 'grown' within the clan after her husband died. Thus, widows would be married to their husbands' brothers or at

least within the clan. The first wife, who had been 'grown' by her husband and his family, did not lose any status through this arrangement and as a result the relationship between co-wives was generally amicable (Mead 1935, pp. 107-8).

The role of each partner was defined by the way in which the relationship had begun and by the differences in age. Men had learned to expect that their brides would respect and obey them because they had always played a guiding parental role with their wives since the time they had come to live in their parents' home. Women were taught to receive the guidance offered by their husbands through this relationship which was based on his greater wisdom and her inexperience (*see* Mead 1935, p. 110).

This ideal was not always met when the husband took on a second wife from the Plains. According to Mead (1935, p. 102), the Mountain Arapesh saw the Plainswomen as, '...jealous and actively sexed, rapacious and insatiable. They (had) none of the home-loving virtues that the Arapesh cherish in women'. Discord often resulted from such polygynous combinations since the more spirited Plains wife was frequently successful in 'monopolising all of her husband's attention . . . ' (Mead 1935, p. 103).

Divorce was only accomplished through arranged abductions (Mead 1947, p. 196). Fortune (1939, p. 31) asserted that the 'Arapesh approve[d] of divorce and promote[d] it only in hostilities, in bloodshed against enemies, and in the honour of men slain for and against it'. He also noted that acquiring wives in this manner usually led to marital discord and jealousy since the two women had not previously known each other (1939, p. 38). In addition, Mead contended (1935, p. 123) that the marriage system was not capable of handling conflict.

Relatives did become involved when the wife was mistreated. Given the friendly relationship between brothers-in-law, it was a serious matter for the wife's brother to take her away from her husband although their relationship permitted him to rebuke the husband for failing to carry out his responsibilities toward his wife. If the situation called for more than reproach and they did not wish to provoke a fight between themselves and their in-laws, the wife's relatives secretly arranged for a man from a separate locality to 'abduct' the mistreated wife. This technique acknowledged the complexities involved in the situation due to the institutionalised relationship between brothers-in-law (Mead 1935, p. 127). A fight often ensued between the husband's and abductor's group.

Social Control and Dispute Settlement

General

Arapesh children were not permitted to quarrel amongst themselves, especially if the dispute led to a physical encounter. When fights erupted, parents separated the children allowing them only to 'vent their rage by rolling in the dirt, scratching or biting themselves, or tearing at their own bodies' (Mead 1967, p. 46). She notes that children were not trained to control their emotions but to ensure that they never harmed others when venting it (Mead 1935, p. 50). They were permitted, however, to cause injury to themselves if they needed to express their outrage. Thus, adulthood disputes sometimes resulted in men injuring themselves or destroying their own property.

Girls were trained to control their fits of temper much earlier than boys who were permitted such tantrums sometimes until they were fourteen or fifteen years old (Mead 1935, p. 50).

According to Mead (1940, p. 352), the ideal Arapesh man was able to subordinate his own needs and devote himself to the service of others in his community and was someone who: '. . . controls his aggression and his sexuality, assumes responsibility for the community, and refuses to eat that which he has killed, or to eat hastily, greedily, or exhibitionistically'.

Unaccustomed to aggression and violence, the Arapesh had neither mechanisms nor sanctions with which to deal with offenders who used such aggressive and violent means to achieve their ends. It was the custom of the Arapesh to punish the injured in situations where men repeatedly became involved in altercations. Mead argues (1967, p. 42) that they focused on punishing those who had provoked the anger as was illustrated in their custom of paying the mother's brother for injury and even in their use of the tamberan to punish those who had been shamed by being insulted in public (1967, pp. 33-4).

However, it was more difficult for the Arapesh to deal with the violent perpetrator. Mead maintains that since the Arapesh believed that men had to be convinced to take on leadership roles and therefore to feign aggressive qualities they were completely confused when they discovered individuals who had become bigmen and who were not merely posturing (1967, p. 43).

The rationale for the channelling of injury and destruction onto the self was congruent with the Arapesh goal of working together to maintain and strengthen their group. If such destructive behaviour toward the persons or property of other group members were permitted then the survival of the group might be threatened.

Mead (1935, p. 157) argues that the Arapesh permitted violent behaviour to be expressed as long as it was toward the self but failed to ascribe it with any meaning or significance within their society. She suggests that those individuals who were predisposed to aggressive and

violent behaviour were provided with no outlets and were treated as anomalies.

The Arapesh believed that men and women had similar temperaments and that they were both maternal, mild and unaggressive (Mead 1935, pp. 141, 145).

Fortune (1939, pp. 36-7) disagrees with this assessment of the Arapesh temperament. He suggests that because of the existence of 'aramagowem' ('women male' or effeminate men) that men and women were expected to have 'different' traits. These 'aramagowem' were considered subordinate and inferior and were given a poorer quality of food at feasts. There was no equivalent category of women who were considered 'masculine women'.

The methods of social control incorporated into the Arapesh system were dependent upon the network of personal relationships built up within the group and upon displacing responsibility for hostility and aggression onto outsiders (Plains Arapesh) whom they hired as sorcerers to punish deviants within their localities (Mead 1967, p. 36). In this way, they were assumed not to be responsible for any violent repercussions for offensive behaviour and were therefore able to maintain their obligations to their 'kin' whom they were personally linked in relationship and cooperation through blood, marriage or trade.

Within the group, their sanctions were mild and non-confrontational. In accordance with childhood training, the Arapesh system did not allow an individual to fight on behalf of themselves. They could not display anger directly toward the offending person. Disputes were always disguised as individuals defending the injury of a friend. Outside the group the Arapesh employed the techniques of 'ano'in' relationships, warfare or sorcery.

Ano'in relationships

The term 'ano'in' meant 'rival' or 'competitor' (Mead 1947, pp. 205-6). This kind of relationship developed when two men of different localities had a dispute, perhaps concerning a woman. Once it was apparent that one man was the loser in the dispute, he could then declare an ano'in relationship with his competitor. Ano'in relationships functioned as institutionalised mechanisms of social control through long-distance rivalry, similar in fashion to the buanyin relationship, which competed through reciprocal feasting.

When one man declared that his rival was his ano'in, the other had the choice as to whether or not he wished to participate (Mead 1967, p. 41). If ano'in, the two men never met again but maintained their long distance rivalry.

Their children also became ano'in but were permitted to joke together if they were both boys or if boy and girl, to marry in order to make peace between the two groups.

Warfare

Mead (1935, p. 23) argues that warfare amongst the Arapesh was virtually nonexistent but that disputes between villages developed over women who were lured away from unsatisfactory marriages. Fortune (1939, p. 24) refutes Mead's assessment.

Fortune (1939, p. 27) differentiated warfare from disputes between clans of one locality. He noted that this was possible by an assessment of '... its scale, its determination, and by its traditions and conventions' (1939, p. 27). He assembled his data on warfare from the elder men of the groups he studied. He noted that most Arapesh warfare had been suppressed during the German colonial period prior to 1914 and that the remainder was suppressed during the Australian period of pacification.

The locality, which was made up of several clans, usually acted as one unit in warfare. The Arapesh did not wage war for head-hunting or cannibalistic purposes (Fortune 1939, p. 28). Fortune (1939, p. 26) argues that although the Arapesh did not have an 'expansionist land policy', they did have wars with other localities to rob them of their wives and 'hence of [their] increase'. The practice of pirating women from other localities helped to support the Arapesh ideal of the multiplication of the clan. The loss of men killed in battle had less impact on this goal since their levirate practices meant children could still be produced.

Mead (1935, p. 23) states that, 'The feeling towards a murderer and that towards a man who kills in battle are not essentially different'. Fortune notes (1939, pp. 27-8) that men who murdered within the clan were despised and feared but that men who killed in battle were considered honourable since they had the support of their group in the endeavour.

Individual men could cause a war by seducing a man's wife from another locality. In doing so men did not always gain the support of their own clan and locality and in these situations the woman might be sent back to her husband. When a man stole a woman from another group both individual and collective values had to be weighed by the leaders before a decision was made to fight and therefore to support him.

In order to win the woman, he had to seduce her and convince her to run away from her husband to elope with him. If he failed to get support from his own group and had to renege on his promise to her, the seduced woman was believed to have the power to sorcerise him.

Inter-locality disputes

Once a woman was successfully pirated into another locality the deserted group sent patrols to search for the enemy. When the enemy group was discovered, warfare could proceed in two ways. The first method was by conducting a surprise attack on the locality involved. Through this method, retaliatory killing was sometimes achieved before the abductor was able to inform his people of his actions and that a state of war now existed between the two groups.

The second method of warfare was carried out on the traditional battlegrounds located near the respective localities. Preparation the night before a battle was to take place included predicting the number of men who would be slain the next day. These predictions were announced to the opposition by drumming out the numbers on the slit-gongs. They were calculated by tallying the number of men from the enemy locality who had their 'exuviae' stolen from them during previous periods of peace between the two groups. 'Exuviae' was stolen from members of the other group during times of peace when disputes between individuals arose. This was frequently accomplished with the assistance of a member of the targeted individual's own locality who was willing to 'doublecross' someone from his own group (Fortune 1939, pp. 31-2). Tradition ruled that no man could die on the battlefield unless his 'exuviae' (leavings) had been first handed over to the sorcerers.

The battle was usually considered decided when one side lost one or two men. As Fortune (1939, p. 35) puts it, '. . . as is common in New Guinea warfare, a loss of a man or two might be held sufficiently decisive to justify a flight of a losing party'. Ambush killing occasionally was resorted to prior to an arranged battle between the two groups.

Inter-clan disputes within the locality

Disputes which took place within the locality were regulated by rules of restraint. One option that could replace physical violence was shaming. Clashes between hamlets over the abduction of women or over pigs began, according to Mead (1935, p. 24), '. . . in angry conversation, the aggrieved party coming, armed but not committed to fighting, into the villages of the offenders. An altercation follows . . .' When fighting did take place it resulted in deliberate wounding and not in death (Fortune 1939, p. 33; Mead 1935, p. 24). Yet Fortune suggests that this restraint led dissatisfied factions to resort to retaliation through sorcery. He (1939, p. 34) states, 'Sorcery is believed to be death dealing, but the fact remains that it is substituted for effective physical violence'. The disputes eventually lead to a resolution when both parties gave a gift of a pig to one another.

Periodically, disputes within a locality led to a decision by one clan to split from their locality and join an enemy group in waging war against the other faction (Fortune 1939, p. 27).

Sorcery

The greatest act of aggression an Arapesh could perform was 'to open the door to death, by sending a portion of his neighbour's personality to the sorcerers' (Mead 1940, p. 354). This was because they attributed the cause of all deaths to the magical spells conducted by sorcerers except in the cases of young children (whose parents were held responsible for their deaths) and for the aged (who were considered to have died naturally of old age) (Mead 1940, pp. 356-7). Such aggression, according to Mead (1940, p. 353), was outside the Arapesh maternal temperament that ideally 'outlaw[ed] aggression and sexuality and replace(d) them with an asexual parental attitude'. They were able to rationalise this apparent inconsistency because they themselves did not perform the sorcery, but hired Plains sorcerers to do the job for them. All deaths, they believed, were caused by the hands of a stranger. In other words, death was attributable to someone who was not tied to them in a friendly and trusting relationship.

The Mountain Arapesh had no one within the group who understood the mysteries and skills with which to perform sorcery. The Mountain Arapesh had only the power and knowledge to cause sores to appear on a person. The responsibility for sores was merely displaced to another community of Beach or Mountain Arapesh people. If the sores eventually led to the person's death then it was believed that a sorcerer from the Plains had been called in to assist and therefore the death was attributed to someone from an enemy territory (Mead 1935, p. 158). Sorcery skills were only understood by the Plainsmen who were renowned and feared for such knowledge. In order for the sorcerer to perform his duties, he required the 'exuviae' of the intended victim. The types of materials that could be used as 'exuviae' included small collections of a person's perspiration, mucous, saliva and half eaten food as well as vaginal juices and semen. The most dangerous 'exuviae' was that related to sex but other types of leavings were considered to be a living part of the person's personality and would usefully serve the sorcerer's purposes (Mead 1940, p. 356).

Individuals supplied the foreign sorcerers with the 'exuviae' of an intended victim but the persons providing the necessary materials were not considered to be responsible for any subsequent illness or death. The Arapesh believed that the theft of 'leavings' happened only when an individual was angry and in a highly emotional state: for this he was not held responsible. The theft was viewed as 'an impulse of an aggrieved moment, and the act [was] always subsequently disowned' (Mead 1967, p. 43). Instead, the onus was attached to the individual who had 'provoked this compulsive attack upon his personality' (Mead 1940, p. 355).

Once the sorcerer was in possession of the packet of 'exuviae', he waited for payment from the individual hiring his services. At this stage, the sorcerer might send a message to the intended victim advising him that

someone had stolen his 'exuviae' and delivered it to a sorcerer. This person could then provide the sorcerer with a payment that would encourage him to discontinue the magical spells, which would cause his death. The sorcerer smoked the packet of 'exuviae' along with nettle leaf and a leaf from a particular kind of tree over a fire (Fortune 1947, p. 251). Menstrual blood was considered dangerous to the sorcerer as well and he could only eat food cooked by a woman who had already passed menopause. Once his spells were completed, he positioned a bamboo tube on the ground and waited for an insect of any kind to fly into it, at which time he trapped it. This insect symbolised the victim's soul. Without his soul, the victim would fall ill and die.

Actions to counter or prevent sorcery included avoiding any illicit sexual encounter especially with strange men or women and following the safe customs surrounding child betrothal in order to build up a trust relationship with a bride several years a man's junior.

Even in the safety of an arranged betrothal, the husband ensured his safety from his wife's anger during the first months or years after the consummation of their marriage through the ceremony in which she ate half a yam and gave him the other half to hide until she conceived their first child (Mead 1940, p. 355).

Tamberan and social control

In conflict situations, the Arapesh social system punished those who had the misfortune to become injured either physically or in reputation. If a man was physically injured, he was required to pay his mother's brother for the lost blood.

If a man was publicly subjected to the indignity of his wife's angry rancour or to public insults from a relative and someone overheard, the men's cult might decide to punish him by summoning the tamberan. This punishment was carried out in compliance with the wishes of the man's mother's brother since it was he who had the authority to decide whether or not to punish (Mead 1935, p. 26). In such circumstances, the voice of the tamberan frightened both the husband and wife causing them to flee from their house at night. Once they had left, the men broke into the deserted house, littered it with leaves and debris, and destroyed one of the husband's areca palms. Mead also notes that this punishment meted out by the tamberan appeared to be directed toward the man's wife since much of the destruction was of her cooking pots, net-bag and rings but he was also punished by having one of his trees cut down (1935, p. 117).

Should the man be regarded as a continual trouble-maker in the community (through uncooperative behaviour, stealing other men's 'exuviae' and having a bad temperament), the men also dumped the contents of his fireplace on the floor of his house. This act was intended to shame him and to give him the message that he would be ostracised from the community for a minimum period of one month. His shame would not permit him to return until he could find a pig with which he

could host a feast for the community. Once these conditions were fulfilled, his offence was considered atoned.

Adultery

Adultery within the clan disrupted relationships but disputes were settled much more quickly than they would have been if the adultery had happened outside the clan. Mead (1935, p. 132) cites an example of a man who committed adultery with his brother's wife. When the husband discovered what his brother and wife had been up to and let it be known, the brother ran away for safety. The husband planned to beat his wife for her crime but postponed it because her mother and sister had come to visit and his wife had to cook for them. Meanwhile his brother returned and gave the husband a ring for his crime. This served to settle the matter because, 'after all, they were brothers; between brothers there can be no long anger'.

According to Mead (1935, p. 104), rape was unknown to the Mountain Arapesh. They saw sex within marriage as potentially dangerous unless restraint and taboos were followed religiously. Even when a man abducted a woman from another locality, he did not have sexual relations with her immediately. He waited until the negotiations over her were completed, for the outcome of the battle if there was one, or for verification as to whether his group supported his act of piracy or whether they would pressure him to return the woman. For 'if she is not to belong to him permanently, it is much safer never to possess her at all' (1935, p. 104). Given these attitudes the act of rape would have been viewed as inconceivably dangerous.

Administration Influence

It was after 1887, when the steamer *Samoa* travelled up the Sepik River for 380 miles, that the Germans realised labour recruitment would become the major economic potential of the area (Tuzin 1976, p. 28) and in fact the Sepik District was to remain a major source of labour recruitment for much of the colonial period (Commonwealth of Australia 1937, p. 27, 1948, p. 18; Patrol Reports: Maprik Substation No.1/1952-53; No. 8/1960-61). German exploration into the Sepik region was limited to the north coast area and the area directly adjacent to the lower Sepik River. They focused their attention on these areas throughout the period of German rule, establishing government stations and depending on the lower Sepik areas for a rich source of plantation labourers. It was not until 1913, when the 'explorer-anthropologist', Richard Thurnwald, twice trekked the territory between the Sepik River and the northern coast that the Germans became aware of the population in the hinterland (Tuzin 1976, p. 28). Thurnwald trekked through the Abelam peoples territory on his second journey and most likely passed by the periphery of Maprik (Tuzin 1976,

p. 29). The Australian takeover of New Guinea impeded any further exploration by the Germans and during the Australian military occupation of New Guinea little was changed.

In 1921 Australian patrolling of the Prince Alexander and Torricelli Mountain ranges began. In 1922 Administration officer, G.W.L. Townsend, walked through the foothills of the Torricelli range. He discovered members of the Plains Arapesh who had been previously contacted only by white labour recruiters under less than peaceful circumstances. In 1927 Townsend walked from Wewak to Bainyuk, to the Screw River near Ambunti, and then through the Torricelli Mountain Range to Aitape (Townsend 1968). Although he did not mention the details of his contact with the people one might assume that he crossed through Mountain Arapesh territory.

Nevertheless, the Administration continued to have very little contact with the Arapesh people. Mead (1947, pp. 268-70) mentions both the impact of labour recruitment and of administration control. In her view, the impact was 'diffuse' but the major areas affected appear to have been in relation to leadership, prestige, trade, marriage, and social control.

Mead says that the relationship between brothers was most affected by men going to work as labourers, or on government stations, outside of the area, (either within the Sepik or in other Districts such as Morobe, New Britain and New Ireland). The effect was not all that significant due to the fact that the area was not 'exhaustively recruited' and to the absence of 'police boys'. She gives an example of one man from Alitua who had worked on a government station and therefore was believed to have learned the white man's ways. In view of his acquired 'knowledge', he was given the *tultuls* position, a position to which he was not entitled as it was more important '... than his personality entitled him to hold' (1947, p. 269). A second man, Ulaba'i's, was kept in the position of *luluai* long after his social position in the community had waned. Nevertheless, Mead argues (1947, p. 269) that: '... relationships with the white man were so intermittent that the returned work boy had very little opportunity to demonstrate his superiority in dealing with him; the absence of travelling police boys also served to diminish the role of the returned indentured labourer'.

The impact of the introduced system of social control was less than it would have been in societies where warfare and head-hunting contributed significantly to the social system. The prohibition of warfare had the effect of lessening men's apprehension toward participating in the abduction and elopement of women. However, it 'did not result in a serious derangement of the social order' (Mead 1947, p. 269).

The introduced system had the effect of increasing tensions over the issue of sorcery. In pre-contact times, the Plains sorcerer had to be wary as he travelled through Mountain Arapesh territory to the coast. The sorcerer had depended on the ubiquitous fear of his powers to secure his use of the trade paths to cross through enemy territory. Nevertheless, he

faced the possible prospect of his own murder despite his implicit threat of sorcery. The prohibition of murder by the administration meant that the inherent sanctions built into the system of the trade paths no longer existed. Tension and apprehension rose.

The Mountain Arapesh system of trade was affected by the new order since the Plainsmen could now freely travel to the coast and obtain, not only traditional trade items, but also the new goods which accompanied the white man such as knives and tomahawks.

When regular patrolling began amongst the Arapesh in the 1950s many of the disputes the kiaps dealt with involved women (Patrol Reports: Maprik No. 5/1958-59; No. 8/1960-61; No. 3/1964-65). One Patrol Officer noted that in some villages there was a shortage of women and the men were therefore concerned about their women marrying into other villages (No 5/1958-59). The practice of sister-exchange often led to petty disputes and if unresolved these were referred to the Patrol Officer for settlement (Patrol Report Maprik 1949-50; No. 4/1955-56). However, the number of disputes was considered to be minimal and of a minor nature. A Patrol Officer gave the following summary of the nature of disputes in the area (Patrol Report Maprik No. 3/1964-65):

The Abliges are peaceful and law abiding people. Only six petty complaints were heard and arbitrated during the patrol. These varied from marriage disputes to settlement of money borrowing amongst themselves. Apart from these complaints the people live a quiet life and what little disputes they do have are settled amicably amongst themselves. They fully realised that should they not be satisfied they may refer the matter to the Sub-District office at Maprik.

Administration officers viewed the practice of child-betrothal disapprovingly (Patrol Report Maprik No. 1/1956-57):

Sister exchange has a darker side to it than the usual picture, the children being bought at an early age sometimes seven, and going to live with their future in-laws until old enough to marry. The incidence of wives leaving their husbands in favour of other men is naturally high and squabbles too frequent. Four villages have voluntarily abandoned the practice and it is hoped that others will follow the example.

Patrol Officers attempted to encourage free choice in marriage (Patrol Report No. 1/1956-57):

The Catholic Mission has done much to eradicate these practices, but there is still a long way to go before freedom of choice in marriage will be attained and these immoral practices are stamped out. On many occasions the opportunity was taken to condemn these activities and induce both girls and boys to marry of their own choice and within their own age groups, and for the parents not to allow their daughters to be tied up in the Haus Blut (Menstrual Hut) for such long periods . . .

The same officer concluded that (Patrol Report No. 1/1956-57): '[m]any customs are incompatible with social advancement for women'.

One interesting repercussion of indentured labour was its effect on marriages. One Patrol Officer noted that indentured labourers were often away from their homes for a long time; in some cases up to six years (Maprik No. 8/1960-61). Upon returning home these men frequently found that their wives had given birth to children born as the result of adulterous liaisons.

Mission Influence

The Arapesh area was mainly influenced by the Roman Catholic Mission (Divine Word Mission) and the South Seas Evangelical Mission (Patrol Reports: Maprik No. 3/1949-50; No. 6/1953-54). Missionaries worked to change those traditional customs of the people which they found abhorrent and unchristian. In the Wosera District in the Sepik, a missionary interfered with the initiation ceremonies by burning the Haus Tamberan (Tamberan House) down. He was charged with arson and referred to the Supreme Court in Wewak (Patrol Report Maprik 1951-52). Indigenous missionaries attempted to convince the villagers that continuing to practise the 'old ways' was 'evil'. This caused the abandonment of the Haus Tamberan and of traditionally built houses. (Rowley points out that the long absences of the young men through indentured labour also contributed to the abandonment of initiation rituals (1965, p. 149).) Patrol Officer R.K. Treutlein (Patrol Report Maprik No. 8/1960-61) observed:

Under these influences the natives responsible for the change in house construction see in all traditional methods a link with evil times and preach a complete throwing over of the old culture. Hence, things associated with the tamberan cult are thrown out, the traditional house is regarded as unclean and hence ungodly and a complete acceptance of the 'better' way of life as conceived by these missionaries is urged. At the moment carvings are being sold and house tambarans are being no longer used.

The missions encouraged girls to choose their husbands and not adhere to the traditional marriage customs. One patrol officer noted the following (Patrol Report Maprik No. 4/1955-56):

With the arrival of the missions since the war the system is showing signs of breaking down. Several of the disputes I heard involved girls who had been schooled at the Mission. With their education comes the feeling of a right to choose their own husbands. They are naturally enough encouraged to do this by the Mission . . .

One Patrol Officer noted that many traditional customs were being abandoned due to mission influence. He reported (Patrol Report Maprik No. 3/1964-65):

No apparent signs of traditional customs and rites were observed during the patrol. This has resulted in all social activities coming to a standstill. During the course of many discussions the people expressed reasons why the Long Yam Cult and any celebrations connected with marriage have been completely abandoned. They expressed in no uncertain manner how these social activities brought tribal fights and misery to the people and therefore must be forgotten and live a 'christian' life.

By 1969 the position of women in Arapesh territory lagged behind in its development to that of the men. The Administration had attempted to raise the status of women through the use of women's clubs since the early 1950s when the Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, made this one of several priorities in the social development of the people. Hasluck recognised that men were advancing faster than women because they had more access to education and employment and more contact with Europeans than did women. He stated that he felt that the people should be left to work out their own relationships between men and women based on their own cultural considerations but he felt that the Administration should not contribute to a widening of the gap between men and women's development (Hasluck 1976, pp. 327-8). His policy led to minor financial contributions to women's clubs for training. In 1955, he directed (1976, p. 328): 'the Administrator to start a three-year drive to overcome the lag in the advancement of women and to take measures in education, health and other phases of administration to ensure that men and women advanced side by side'. Hasluck himself, admits that his directive was largely ignored in the Territory (1976, p. 328). Furthermore, Patrol Report, (Maprik No. 2/1969-70) indicated that: '[t]here is a distinct lack of women's clubs in the area and this is reflected in the women's inability to do anything but traditional occupations'.

Village Court

The Village Court system was introduced in East Sepik Province in October 1975. There are seventy-two Village Courts and 563 Village Court officials (*Annual Report Village Courts Secretariat* 1988). Most women who come before the Village Courts in the villages surrounding Maprik are involved in minor domestic disputes usually over conflicts concerning children or for fighting over men (Seglewan R. 1989, pers. comm., 28 November).

Scaglione (1979, p. 124) found in his study of Village Courts in the Maprik area that villagers were depending on the Village Courts to settle their disputes either informally or formally rather than the Local or

District Court system. Out of sixty-five disputes in the Abelam Village of Neligum in 1975 (prior to the introduction of Village Court), 95 per cent of the conflict cases were informally dealt with at the village level and 5 per cent were settled at the Local Court in Maprik. Scaglione found that in 1977, Village Court was used to settle nineteen disputes and he concluded that it was 'a more popular forum for conflict management than is the Local Court' (1979, p. 124). However, Scaglione also noted that 'quite a number' of disputes were not being dealt with by the Village Courts but by the community through traditional means such as mediation by bigmen, avoidance, yam exchanges or through the informal methods of the Village Courts. Scaglione says that in 1975, 23.1 per cent of the conflict cases involved sexual disputes and 15.4 per cent involved petty domestic disputes giving a total of 38.5 per cent of all cases informally dispensed with in Neligum Village. Although Scaglione does not break down the offences according to sex it can be assumed that women were involved in these offence categories or were the 'cause' of the dispute. Scaglione attempted to code disputes according to their 'ultimate cause'. For example, he noted that 'where a dispute over adultery resulted in an assault, the case would be recorded as a 'sexual dispute' ' (Scaglione 1979, p. 123). In 1977, assault (22.1 per cent) and sexual disputes (19.2 per cent) accounted for a total of 41.3 per cent of all the cases dealt with by the Bulupwine Village Court. The 1977 figures from the Bulupwine Village Court are similar to the 1975 informal figures for Neligum Village suggesting that there has been a trend toward greater reliance on the Village Court system.

One elderly female Arapesh informant from Yalihina Village noted that most women are satisfied with the Village Court decisions. She suggested that the Village Courts in the area support women who come before them if these women are behaving according to the local customs but if they are not following custom they do not receive the support of the Village Court. She stated that usually the older more mature women continued to follow custom but that the younger girls were no longer satisfied and wanted to change from the old ways. She gave the example that these younger women sometimes leave their husbands because they become bored with them and will run off with other men hoping to find more excitement (especially when the marriages have been arranged by their families).

Village Court Magistrate Stephen Alpichin (1989, pers. comm., 28 November) reported that most women who came before his Court were involved in fights over men or in adultery. He noted that four women had appealed his decisions to the District Court in 1989. The four women were charged with assault and use of a dangerous weapon. In two of the cases the victim had been a man. These women claimed that the Village Court Magistrate had unfairly favoured the man and his relatives in the dispute. The other two cases involved women assaulting the

suspected girlfriend of their boyfriend or husband. The District Court supported the Village Court Magistrate's decision in all four cases.

One Arapesh informant described a case where a female was ordered to pay compensation to a man whom she did not wish to marry for the time, food and effort he had spent on trying to persuade her to marry him. The man was a local bigman who decided that he wished to marry the woman. He brought her gifts and helped her with her gardening and other chores. She did not tell the man directly that she did not wish to marry him because she was intimidated by his status within the community. The other members of the community also felt that she should marry the man. When he discovered that she did not intend to marry him he took her to Village Court. The Village Court Magistrate ordered the woman to pay K20 (approximately A\$29 at August 1992) compensation to the man. Her family paid the compensation and the matter was settled.

Senior Probation Officer Gerry Berry is from the Mountain Arapesh culture. He noted (1990, pers. comm., 30 January) that many disputes between couples result from men accusing their wives of being lazy and not fulfilling their duties. Yet, Mr. Berry believes that it is the men who have become idle. He stated that nowadays men have very little to do in the village and are very lazy. Women do most of the hard work for the family while the men have become dependent on money. The men expect their women to provide the food for the family, to cook and to care for the children, yet they have lost their own sense of responsibility. Women often bear the brunt of the men's boredom when they find themselves beaten by their husbands after being accused of laziness.

Mr. Berry stated that women will not often take these matters to the Village Court because the Village Court Magistrates are men and they feel that they will be biased. In Mr. Berry's village of Hamsuk, the Village Court Magistrates will refuse to hear many of the complaints made by women arguing that they are small domestic matters and should be dealt with by the family. The families are more reticent nowadays to involve themselves in marital disputes and will only interfere when the couple's problems reach the stage of divorce. Mr. Tohichem, also of the Arapesh culture, gave several examples of cases of wife assault where the families did not interfere until it became clear that the couple were considering separation. In one example, the husband chased his wife out of his home with an axe. The family viewed the husband's act as serious enough to warn him not to do it again.

Probation Service

The Maprik Probation Office which serves the Arapesh people became operational only in March 1988. The Maprik office is a District Office under the supervision of the Wewak Provincial Probation Office and is manned by one Probation Officer. Out of the fifty-five probation cases

supervised by the Maprik office between March 1988 and November 1989, only two were women and only one was from the Arapesh culture. This woman was convicted of 'communicating with a detainee' and was placed on probation for six months. She successfully completed her period of probation without any difficulty. Only two Arapesh women have been supervised by the Wewak Office since 1986. One was convicted for using insulting language against her husband and mother-in-law during an argument and was placed on probation for six months. The family situation improved after she was placed on probation and the Probation Officer had counselled the couple.

The second woman was convicted of stealing some cleaning items from a store and was placed on probation for six months. The Probation Officer noted that she was stealing out of necessity because her husband was incarcerated at the Boram Correctional Institution and she had no means of support in town. Although the woman did not regularly report she was not charged with breach of probation.

Probation Officer, Tony Hare, stated (1989, pers. comm., 28 November) that few women go before the Local and District Courts in Maprik and therefore probation has very little involvement with women. If they do appear before the Court they are usually ordered to pay a fine or compensation. The woman's relatives pay these fines and compensation for her.

Mr. Hare stated that the exception was in the case of maintenance. He noted that there was a prevalent problem especially in the Maprik town area of drunkenness, wife assault and desertion. Women who have been deserted by their husbands will approach the Court or request assistance from the Probation Officer to apply for a maintenance order for themselves and their children.

Mr. Hare noted that the Probation Service had little experience with women in the area because most women were not very vocal and were consequently reticent to complain. Most of their disputes are dealt with either at the informal level or by the Village Courts. The women in the area are unaware that they could ask for a probation disposition in Court.