



## IASER DISCUSSION PAPER

Facing the facts: the need for  
policies for permanent urban residents

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### Summary

Much government thinking is based on the assumption that urban residents in Papua New Guinea are migrants who can and will return to rural areas. This paper argues that there are today very substantial numbers of urban residents who are permanent and will not return to rural areas. These permanent residents fall into three groups: people who traditionally owned land now within town boundaries; migrants who have decided never to return home, and the children and grandchildren of migrants who have been born in town. Furthermore, among townspeople these permanent residents are relatively disadvantaged economically.

The paper suggests that there is a need for government policies to be specifically directed to these permanent urban residents, in addition to certain existing policies that are appropriate only for temporary residents. Although there are some difficulties associated with these ideas, the author suggests that increased economic opportunities be made available to customary landowners in towns. In addition she recommends that either repatriation programmes in the same form as resettlement schemes be offered to tempt migrants and their children back to their rural homelands or that in the towns themselves increased opportunities be directed specifically to those young people who have completed their primary or secondary education in town.

Much government thinking about towns in Papua New Guinea is based on the assumption that urban residents are migrants not only in the sense that they came from rural villages but in the sense that they can and will go back to these villages. The National Development Strategy states 'Most urban people have been born in villages and maintain close links with their own communities' and '... most urban dwellers expect to return to their villages and a high proportion do return, after a few years in town' (Central Planning Office 1976:37). It would follow from this assumption that many urban problems can be rather simply solved by the migrants with the problems leaving town and going back to their villages. This attitude has been made quite explicit in a number of areas. In the words of the National Development Strategy, '... people who do not succeed in finding wage employment can in most cases choose to return to their village' (ibid.). Many proposed solutions to law and order problems centre round sending convicted persons and/or the unemployed 'back to their villages'. In a more constructive and long-term set of proposals the recent Ministerial Committee on Law and Order proposed to rehabilitate rural industries and increase rural economic opportunities partly on the assumption that this would encourage unemployed urban residents who may be contributing to urban disorder to return home (Post-Courier, 17 August 1979). This is in line with government thinking to the effect that solutions to urban unemployment mainly lie in rural development.

Both the National Development Strategy and Managing Urbanization in Papua New Guinea (National Planning Office 1977) recognize the central importance of the temporary migrant to government policy as it is currently being formulated. Thus the Government says it will seek to preserve the pattern of contact between rural and urban people so that most people can continue to have a choice between rural or urban life (Central Planning Office 1976:37), and rural-urban links are to be encouraged (ibid.:35; National Planning Office 1977:15). Although there is some recognition of 'a danger that the next generation of urban dwellers will have few or weak links with rural communities' (Central Planning Office 1976:37), there is little recognition that there are thousands of people in the present urban population who cannot be regarded as temporary migrants at all.

Policies of rural development are appropriate long-term solutions for many urban problems in so far as the assumption that townspeople are temporary residents is correct. They are important for the majority of present urban residents and also for those currently in rural areas who might be thinking about moving to town. But policies based on the assumption that people are only temporarily in town are not appropriate for permanent urban residents. If you want to 'repatriate' a convicted person born in an urban village, where are you going to send him? If you send an unemployed teenager from the Malalaua District in the Gulf Province 'back to the village', how will he live there when his family and close relatives are all in town and he does not know how to make sago, catch fish or build a house? Nor will permanent residents leave town of their own accord if they are poor or unemployed. They will stay on in town even when things are bad.

In this paper, therefore, I want to do three things. First I shall try to identify who are the permanent urban residents in Papua New Guinea; second I shall consider what other characteristics they may have in common, apart from their permanence; and third I shall discuss some of the implications for national and urban policy of recognizing the existence of this group.

The paper is not based on original urban research, although I have some familiarity with Port Moresby and am at present doing research on rural incomes and rural-urban exchanges in the Malalaua District of the Gulf Province (see Morauta and Hasu 1979). Rather the paper draws on existing materials on Papua New Guinea's towns and two sets of unpublished tabulations on people from the Malalaua District resident in Port Moresby.<sup>1</sup>

#### Who are the permanent urban residents in Papua New Guinea?

There are many problems in trying to identify who are permanent urban residents in Papua New Guinea's towns.<sup>2</sup> In one sense you never

<sup>1</sup> Special tabulations from the 1971 Census, unadjusted data, arranged by Tom McDevitt of IASER; 1973/74 Australian National University/University of Papua New Guinea Urban Household Survey, arranged by Richard Curtain previously of IASER (see Morauta [in press] and Curtain and Morauta 1978).

<sup>2</sup> Earlier discussions of this issue can be found in Conroy and Curtain 1978; Curtain 1977, and Young 1978.

know if someone is permanently settled in town until he dies, because only then does he have no chance whatever of moving to a rural area. However in another sense it is possible to comment on the likelihood of people moving from towns to live in rural areas and to identify those who are least likely to make this move. We can pick out groups who are permanent residents by looking at a number of variables: what opportunities people have to move to a rural area, what they say they intend to do about staying on in town or going 'home', and whether or not they have close kinsmen outside town.

When I look at these variables, I find three kinds of people in town who are most likely to be permanent residents:

1. People who have or did have land rights within the boundaries of towns. Most but not all of these people live in traditional villages.
2. People who have migrated to town and do not intend to return home.
3. People who have been born in town but have no traditional land rights there. At present these are mainly the children of migrants, although a few are grandchildren of migrants.

The first kind of people will always remain in town mainly because they have no land rights or access to other resources in a rural area. Their land and settlements have been engulfed by a town and, whether they like it or not, they will spend the rest of their lives in an urban environment. These people rely to differing degrees on subsistence production, wage income and income from informal sector activity.

The second group of permanent urban residents are migrants who intend to live the rest of their lives in town. These are not only people who migrated to town as adults but those who came to town while they were still young with their parents.<sup>1</sup> Migration of children occurs in groups where there is a pattern of family migration to town. The strongest available indicator of the likelihood of migrants returning

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<sup>1</sup> For instance the 1971 census showed that of all Malalaua migrants who had been in Port Moresby for one year or more, 305 or 20.4 per cent, were still under 15 years of age at the time of the census. Many more Malalauas, now adults, were children when they came to town.

to a rural area is their expressed intentions about returning home. The Urban Household Survey (UHS) in 1973/74 (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977) asked migrants about their intentions to return home. This is a difficult question to ask strangers, but even in a formal interview, 9.1 per cent of migrants aged 15-44 said they would never return home, while a further 50.9 per cent did not know if they would or not.<sup>1</sup> Given the high proportion of 'don't knows', the figure of 9.1 per cent must be regarded as the minimum proportion of permanent residents among lifetime migrants. Thus a section of the migrant population had a declared intention to remain permanently in town.

While a number of other factors (e.g. long urban residence and impoverished rural areas) may be important in causing permanent residence in urban areas, they are not strong indicators of its incidence. Many people remain in impoverished rural areas or return to them, so the migrant from such an area is by no means always a permanent resident. However there is another factor that might be used as an indicator of permanence because its link with permanence is a much more direct and exclusive one. Whether migrants have close family or relatives in a rural area may be very closely associated with the decision to stay on in town. If a migrant's parents, his married children or all his siblings are in town, he is unlikely to choose to return home. There would be nobody in the village to help him settle down and he would be parted from the most important people in his life. This situation is most likely to occur in areas of heavy outmigration. For example the Malalaua District has at least 55.2 per cent of its population living outside the District (Seiler 1974: appended but unnumbered page and table). This is a minimum figure because a rural census often does not record fully the wives and children of absent males. This factor may also be more important in societies without strong unilineal kin groups where most rights of kinship are concentrated in the nuclear family and sibling group. This is the case for the Toaripi of the Malalaua District.

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<sup>1</sup> UHS Tables 5.31, 5.33, 5.37-5.40, 5.42 and 5.43 from Garnaut, Wright and Curtain (1977), referring to the eight towns described in Table 1 below. The large proportion of 'don't know's' probably reflects the weakness of the question. Hereafter UHS Table numbers refer to Garnaut, Wright and Curtain (1977).



The third category of urban residents who are unlikely to move to a rural area is drawn from those people--the children and grandchildren of migrants-- who have been born in town. Not all such people will remain in town. Some, such as the children of Morobe migrants in Port Moresby (see Zimmerman 1973), will return home when their parents do. But the children of migrants who never return (my second category) are unlikely to go on their own to rural villages. For them it is not a question of returning at all. This is both because the people most likely to help them are their parents and siblings who remain in town, and because they are unaccustomed to social life and work in the rural area. The likelihood of moving to the village probably decreases with age. If people reach marriageable age without ever living in the village (and sometimes without even visiting the village),<sup>1</sup> it is most unlikely they will move at a later stage, even if their parents were to return home. This is not a hypothetical example. Already in 1979 in Port Moresby, children of Malalaua migrants, born and raised in town, are 20-24 years old, and are marrying and bearing a second generation of children who have never lived in a village.<sup>2</sup> If the rural opportunities for long-term migrants are relatively low, they must be much more so for these first and second generation townsmen and women (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977:78).

It is difficult to put exact numbers on these groups of permanent urban residents, either separately or in combination. Other writers (Amarshi and Blaxter 1975:6; Curtain 1977:24 and Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977:80) have perhaps underplayed their strength. For this reason I want to examine the available data bearing on the question of the proportion of urban residents who are permanent. As a starting point I shall take the UHS tables on intentions to return home and those born in town. Table 1 sets out these data and, presumably, includes my categories 1 and 3 under "village is town", and my category 2 under those who never intend to return home. This table gives an overall figure of

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<sup>1</sup> For example, one quarter of children aged 0-14 years who were born in Lae, Rabaul and Port Moresby had never visited the village of either of their parents (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977:78).

<sup>2</sup> The UHS was not particularly successful in distinguishing this group (see Curtain and Morauta 1978:2 and 6).

13.1 per cent of urban residents who are permanent among those aged 15-44 years. However, if we compare the proportions born in town with the proportions of those resident in traditional village areas given in the first bracketed column of the table we can see that Table 1 clearly underestimates the proportion born in town. Although there are some migrants resident in traditional village areas, the figures in column A in Table 1 appear to be too low for Port Moresby, Rabaul, Madang and Wewak.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1

Expressed intentions on returning permanently to village<sup>a</sup>  
(in percentages)

Town	Per cent living in traditional village areas <sup>b</sup>	Village is town <sup>c</sup>	Sometime	Never	Don't know	No reply	All replies	Permanent urban residents
		A		B				A+B
Port Moresby	(16.8)	10.3	32.3	13.9	41.0	2.4	99.9	24.2
Lae	(3.0)	1.4	58.9	8.4	28.1	3.2	100.0	9.8
Rabaul	(11.6)	-	34.2	13.6	50.5	1.6	99.9	13.6
Madang	(9.8)	-	39.0	6.2	54.8	-	100.0	6.2
Wewak	(12.0)	4.3	28.4	7.9	59.4	-	100.0	12.2
Mount Hagen	(1.2)	1.5	22.3	6.8	67.8	1.8	100.2	8.3
Goroka	(11.6)	11.7	21.8	11.2	54.4	1.0	100.1	22.9
Arawa/Kieta/Panguna	(3.6)	0.2	51.5	2.5	45.7	0.2	100.1	2.7
All towns		4.4	36.9	8.7	48.7	1.3	100.0	13.1

<sup>a</sup> responses of residents aged 15-44 years only.

<sup>b</sup> UHS Table 3.5.

<sup>c</sup> means respondent was born in town and does not regard himself as having a rural village to return to.

Source: UHS Tables 5.31, 5.33, 5.37-5.40, 5.42, 5.43.

<sup>1</sup> The discrepancy is probably caused by the differential response rates for B and C questionnaires. Table 1 is based on only those questionnaires where the subject was personally interviewed. From the figures it appears that a relatively low proportion of persons born in town were interviewed. Figures in the first bracketed column are drawn from all completed questionnaires regardless of whether the subject was personally interviewed.

On these grounds the eight-town total of 13.1 per cent can be assumed to be too low. Furthermore, this figure refers only to the population aged 15-44. When older and younger people are considered, the proportion of permanent residents must rise again since both categories are larger among permanent than among temporary residents. Thus for the eight towns the proportion of permanent residents in the total population will be higher than 13.1 per cent, perhaps around 20 per cent. In a few towns the figure may be over 20 per cent and in Port Moresby it may be closer to 30 per cent.

While these proportions are conjectural, I want also to present the data in absolute numbers so that there can be no doubt about the significance of this group within the population. If only 24.2 per cent of Port Moresby's citizen population in 1977<sup>1</sup> was permanent, this would be just under 23,000 people, i.e. a larger group than the entire citizen population of Madang (18,730) or Rabaul (15,810). For Lae, using the conservative figure given in Table 1, the figure would be around 4,000, in Rabaul 2,000 and in Madang 2,500. Thus although uncertainty must remain on the exact proportions and numbers of permanent urban residents, it is reasonable to conclude that they are now a significant section of our urban population, especially in the national capital, Port Moresby.

Furthermore the group of permanent urban residents will continue to expand by virtue of natural increase even if no new migrants decided to remain permanently in town. Whether the number of permanent urban residents grows faster than the number of temporary urban residents depends on the rate of new migration and the rate at which temporary migrants choose to become permanent residents. Skeldon (1978) has shown that in many towns urban growth rates in the 1970s have fallen, in some cases to only a little over the rate of natural increase for the population as a whole. This is not true for Port Moresby (*ibid.*:11). At least in towns with lower growth rates, it is likely that the proportion of permanent residents in the urban population will rise over time.

What is clearer than the absolute numbers of permanent urban residents is that they are concentrated in groups from particular areas

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<sup>1</sup> Figures in this and the following sentence are based on citizen population estimates in Bureau of Statistics 1978, Table 1.

of Papua New Guinea. This is not only true of category 1 permanent residents, those in traditional villages (Motu and Koita in Port Moresby, Bel people in Madang etc.), but also of migrants and their descendents. Elsewhere (Morauta, in press) I have described how migrants and their children from the Malalaua District are atypical in a number of ways.<sup>1</sup> Few of them are positively committed to moving to a rural area, either returning or for the first time. They also have high proportions of their population absent from the village. Many Malalaua people in Port Moresby have no close kin in the village to whom they could turn for help. Although permanent residents are particularly prominent in Port Moresby, there are groups in my categories 2 and 3 in other towns. Central Province migrants in Lae and people from the Goroka District in Goroka were also fairly strongly committed to towns (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977:76).

What are the other characteristics of permanent urban residents?

To look at characteristics of permanent residents other than their permanence, I shall discuss only two categories of people within this group. The reason for narrowing the discussion in this way is that urban statistics are not collected with reference to who is or is not a permanent resident. However they are collected by location of residence, for example in the Urban Population Survey (UPS, Bureau of Statistics 1978) and sometimes by rural area of origin (The outstanding data here are from the UHS.). In this section, then, I shall discuss two groups of people in Papua New Guinea's towns, one a locational group, the other a district group. The locationally-defined group are the residents of urban villages. These villages certainly contain a very high proportion of permanent urban residents. The boundary of this locationally-defined group is not, however, exactly coterminous with my first category of permanent residents. This is because some traditional land-holders live in other kinds of residential areas and because some migrants live among right-holders in traditional villages.<sup>2</sup> Thus, although residents

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<sup>1</sup> In fact these characteristics are shared widely by Gulf migrants in general in Port Moresby and to some extent in Lae too (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977:76).

<sup>2</sup> In Port Moresby such migrants are particularly likely to be from the Gulf Province and many will be permanent urban residents of another type.

of urban villages are not all or exclusively members of category 1, they are a good approximation to it.

The second group on which I have detailed data is defined by rural district of origin or allegiance. These are migrants and descendants of migrants from the Malalaua District who live in Port Moresby.<sup>1</sup> I have written in detail elsewhere about this group (Morauta 1979; Morauta and Hasu 1979 and especially Morauta, in press). In this paper I shall simply summarize certain of their characteristics and compare them with residents of urban villages. Just as my first category of permanent residents was not exactly represented by urban villages, so Malalauas in Port Moresby are not coterminous with categories 2 and 3. Other district groups, especially from Kerema, Kairuku and Rigo, probably have a similarly high rate of permanent urban residence. Nevertheless the Malalauas are the largest district group of migrants in Port Moresby (UHS Table 3.6) and in some respects exhibit most strongly the indicators of permanence.

Let me look first at the characteristics of urban villages. In Port Moresby, at least, the stereotype of people from these villages is of relatively well-off people. However recent urban surveys paint rather a different picture. This arises because the popular stereotype is based on the working man from an urban village. Indeed the UPS indicates that average wages are usually higher in traditional villages than in planned or unplanned settlements, although not higher than in 'urban areas' (UPS Table 7). But if we look at only the working man, we are looking at only half, or actually less than half, the picture. We must not forget that the demographic structure of urban villages is the same as that of any village in Papua New Guinea. There are large numbers of children, women and the elderly. Furthermore in traditional villages the proportion of males aged 15-44 years without formal employment is generally higher, sometimes very much higher, than in other residential areas of towns. In nine out of twelve of Papua New Guinea's towns 40 per cent or more of males in urban villages were unemployed (UHS Table 4.4). The demographic structure and rates of unemployment result in relatively high numbers of persons being dependent on each wage-earner in traditional villages. The figures are given in Table 2.

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<sup>1</sup> There are too few Malalaua sample members in other towns in the UPS to merit discussion (see Curtain and Morauta 1978:2).

Table 2

Mean number of residents per wage-earner by area of residence

Town	Traditional villages	Formally sub-divided residential areas <sup>a</sup>	Institutional residential areas	Migrant settlements	All areas
Port Moresby	4.0	2.8	2.0	4.2	3.1
Goroka	10.8	3.3	3.2	4.7	4.0
Lae	6.1	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.4
Madang	7.5	3.2	2.2	3.3	3.3
Wewak	10.0	6.1	2.9	5.6	4.9
Rabaul	6.9	2.7	3.7	4.1	3.6
Kieta/Arawa/Panguna	2.1	2.5	1.7	1.2	2.2

<sup>a</sup> Includes all areas designated high, low and no-covenant.

<sup>b</sup> Police, army, hospitals, schools, industrial and commercial blocks.

Source: UHS Table 6.1.

When these large numbers of dependents in urban villages are considered together with average wages or even total cash incomes, any advantage these villagers may have appeared to have completely disappears. Table 3 shows that in Port Moresby, Rabaul and Madang cash incomes (including non-wage incomes) per resident are consistently lower in villages than in other kinds of residential area.

Alongside cash income, we must look at subsistence income in urban villages if we are to make a fair comparison with the residents of other areas. The UHS showed that in traditional village areas a very high proportion of households provided 'some of their own food', and the proportions were much lower in other areas.<sup>1</sup> While the authors of the UHS Monograph appear to draw comfort from these figures (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977:121), I do not. To say that a household provides 'some of their own food' is to say nothing whatever about how much food it produces

<sup>1</sup> For Port Moresby, Goroka, Lae, Madang, Wewak, Rabaul and the North Solomons towns, on average 43 per cent of households provided some of their own food. The proportion in urban villages was 86 per cent (UHS Table 6.1).

Table 3

Average cash income per resident by location  
of dwelling (private dwellings only)

Towns	Urban areas	Planned settlements	Unplanned settlements	Villages	All dwellings
Income per resident in kina per fortnight					
Port Moresby	29	16	17	16	24
all settlements					
Lae	27	n.a. <sup>a</sup>		n.a. <sup>a</sup>	22
Rabaul	29	15		11	20
Madang	24	14		10	18
All four towns	28 <sup>b</sup>	15 <sup>c</sup>		13 <sup>c</sup>	22 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Only a combined figure of K16 is available for settlements and villages in Lae.

<sup>b</sup> Including Lae

<sup>c</sup> Excluding Lae

Source: UPS Table 10.

or what proportion of its food needs are met in this way. Many urban villages are short of land, others share their traditional fishing grounds with hundreds of migrants, a few (such as some in Port Moresby) did not even in pre-colonial times produce all their own food. In addition at least half the able-bodied males are usually in formal sector employment. We do not appear to have enough data yet on this point, but it seems possible that many urban villagers do not provide a substantial part of their food requirements from their own subsistence production.

Another field in which residents of traditional villages appear to be relatively disadvantaged is in housing. While the popular view is probably that urban villagers have advantages in housing because they own land and are owner-occupiers (*ibid.*:123), figures on size of household present rather a different picture. Table 4 shows that in nearly every town households are larger in urban villages than in other areas. The UPS in 1977 found average household sizes in Port Moresby's urban

Table 4  
Average size of household<sup>a</sup> in eight major towns

Town	Village areas	Formally subdivided residential areas	Institutional	Migrant settlements	Sample size	All areas
Port Moresby	9.7	6.2	4.6	7.1	594	6.4
Mount Hagen	7.7	5.1	4.9	5.9	201	5.5
Goroka	5.4	5.3	6.8	6.1	257	5.8
Lae	9.2	6.7	6.2 <sup>b</sup>	6.8	453	6.7
Madang	6.0	5.5	5.6	4.6	261	5.3
Wewak	7.0	4.9	4.7 <sup>c</sup>	5.1	306	5.1
Rabaul	5.5	4.6	5.5	5.3	182	5.1
Arawa/Kieta/Panguna	6.3	4.7	5.4 <sup>d</sup>	3.6	152	4.7
All eight towns	7.6	5.7	5.3	5.8	2,406	5.8

<sup>a</sup> excludes short-term visitors

<sup>b</sup> The Lae figure includes students at Lae Technical College, Balob Teachers College and the University of Technology because data were collected in August/September.

<sup>c</sup> Includes a large single men's quarters (army barracks).

<sup>d</sup> Including industrial/commercial.

Source: UHS Table 6.1.

villages even higher at 10.8 persons (UPS Table 11). While these figures may reflect a preference for large households<sup>1</sup> or a shortage of housing sites, they may also reflect the high costs to villagers of building when traditional materials are scarce and cash incomes low. The National Housing Plan defines overcrowded households as those where there are eight or more usual residents. Table 4 shows that the average household in an urban village in Lae and Port Moresby was overcrowded by this standard in 1973/74, and that in other towns a significant proportion of urban village households must have contained more than seven persons.

<sup>1</sup> It is not likely to be simply a result of large nuclear families since the 1975/76 Household Expenditure Survey Table 1 (Bureau of Statistics n.d.) showed an average of 1.8 nuclear families per household in villages and settlements in Port Moresby.



I shall take as my second example of a group of permanent urban residents migrants and descendants of migrants from the Malalaua District who live in Port Moresby. In many respects they exhibit similar characteristics to the residents of traditional villages, although exactly comparable data are not available on all variables. Like the urban villages the Malalaua population has a higher number of residents per wage earner than in the Port Moresby population as a whole. Even when we look only at the Malalaua population under 45 years of age,<sup>1</sup> they had 4.0 residents per wage earner, compared to the town average of 3.1. If older people were added in, the Malalaua figure would be even higher. As in traditional villages, this high proportion of dependents is a result both of the presence of families in town and a relatively high proportion of unemployed males (25.2 per cent as opposed to the Moresby average of 19 per cent<sup>2</sup>). Figures are also available on unemployment and age among Malalaua males. These show that unemployment was much higher among 15-19 year olds than in other age groups. In this age group 55.6 per cent of males were unemployed while among men aged 20-44 the proportion of unemployed was less than a fifth. This may also be the case for unemployment in traditional villages. Generally, permanent urban residents because they live in town in families for long periods, are likely to have more teenagers among their number than other urban groups. They thus probably experience more directly the discomforts and difficulties of the lives of urban teenagers.

Average income figures for Malalauas are only based on the incomes of twenty-three wage-earners (UHS Table 6.41) so it is not possible to consider them in this form. Nevertheless two pieces of evidence suggest that average incomes per wage-earner may be higher among Malalauas than other Port Moresby residents. First Table 5 shows that Malalauas have a lower proportion of unskilled workers and a higher proportion of semi-skilled workers than in Port Moresby as a whole. With wages related to skills this suggests higher-than-average average wages. Second, the same tendency in average wages is evident in the fact that 50.0 per cent of Malalaua males and females aged 15-44 years live in rented low-covenant

<sup>1</sup> Because the district variable was not recorded for older persons in the UHS.

<sup>2</sup> Figure to the nearest whole number from UHS Table 4.7.

Table 5

Manpower categories for employed persons aged 15-44 years

Manpower categories	Per cent of employed males	
	Malalauas in Port Moresby <sup>a</sup>	Population of Port Moresby as a whole <sup>b</sup>
1. Managerial	-	1.1
2. Sub-professional	3.1	2.5
3. Skilled	23.2	22.4
4. Semi-skilled	49.5	34.6
5. Unskilled	24.2	39.3
All categories	100.1	99.9
Sample size	95	361

Note: excludes 'don't knows' and 'no replies' because not available for population of Port Moresby as a whole.

Sources: <sup>a</sup> Malalaua tabulations.

<sup>b</sup> Unpublished UHS frequencies supplied by Richard Curtain.

houses that are not within the means of those on low wages. In Port Moresby as a whole only 33.5 per cent of households (not individuals) were in low-covenant houses.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the Malalaua advantage in average wages per wage-earner is likely to be completely offset, as in the case of the urban villages, by the high numbers of dependents.

The Malalauas are probably more disadvantaged than urban villagers since they have virtually no access to urban subsistence resources. Even when they live on land owned by traditional villagers, as do the Uritai at Vabukori, they do almost no gardening (Dawn Ryan, personal communication 1979).

The Malalauas have another disadvantage in relation to many other urban residents. Many of them send food and money home to older people, particularly parents, in the village. They also provide hospitality to

<sup>1</sup> From unpublished UHS frequency supplied by Richard Curtain. Excluded from the comparison are traditional villages because they include few migrants and industrial areas because there were no overall Port Moresby figures for this category.

visitors in town. The net flow of benefits between many Malalaua urban households and village households is commonly in favour of the rural households (see Morauta and Hasu 1979; Morauta 1979a). This is particularly the case because the Malalauas, like other permanent urban residents, are not subsidized by the rural economy in so far as their wives and children do not remain in the village and they themselves do not expect to rely on village resources when they are old, ill or unemployed.

Overall then the picture that emerges of permanent urban residents is not a bright one. There may be some senior public servants and national businessmen who will end their days in town in comparative luxury. But living and dying in town and relying totally on the urban economic system is a much broader phenomenon. Permanent residence in towns is a fact of life for thousands of ordinary people. In a number of ways these people are less well-off than the average townsman. It is not simply that they have lower incomes per resident and more overcrowded homes. Their very permanence disadvantages them: they receive little or no support from the rural economy and, most important of all, have no opportunity to move away from town when poverty, rising unemployment, old age or social disorder make life in town difficult or unpleasant.

In the face of these shared conditions, permanent urban residents have problems and interests that are to some extent distinct from those of other people in town. Some writers have recognised this when they have discussed the possibility of the emergence of an urban proletariat in Papua New Guinea (Amarshi and Blaxter 1975; Curtain 1977, especially p. 24). These common interests have found a strong political outlet in the Papua Besena movement in Port Moresby. Support for this movement in town is based to a large extent on the desire of permanent urban residents to protect their economic interests and way of life in town against newer migrants. Many people are so committed to the movement because they are very dependent on the town for their survival. In this movement two different provincial groups strongly represented among permanent urban residents, Central and Gulf people, have found common cause. This is so much so that in the 1977 national elections the residents of migrant settlements, a large number of them from the Gulf, voted for the Besena candidate from the Central Province rather than for the other major candidate who came from the Gulf (Premdas and Steeves 1978:131).

Recognizing the existence of permanent urban residents: the implications for national and urban policy

I have argued in the two earlier sections of this paper that there are large numbers of permanent urban residents and that, as townspeople go, they are relatively disadvantaged. Government policy, however, as indicated in my introduction, largely ignores this group. If the government wants to tackle overcrowding, poverty, unemployment and lawlessness (to whatever extent this problem exists) among permanent urban residents, then it needs to direct policy measures specifically to these people. Creating formal sector jobs, business opportunities or other income-earning activities that are available to everyone in town will not necessarily solve the problem for the permanent urban residents. Recent or even new migrants may take up the opportunities and the permanent residents who need the opportunities most because they have no rural alternative will miss out again. My suggestion is not that the government should abandon its policies on rural development as a long-term solution to many urban problems, but that it should diversify its approach to take account of differences among urban residents. The rural approach is appropriate for temporary migrants; something else is needed for permanent urban residents.

Note that I am not arguing that the reasons for assisting permanent urban residents are primarily political, although the government's decisions may be affected by such factors. It is not because of Papua Besena or any other form of political pressure from urban residents that I think permanent residents deserve the attention of policy-makers. It is because it is unjust that certain groups in society (even if they are a minority) should spend their lives in difficult circumstances without the government directing a small amount of its attention and resources to them.

There are several possible objections to directing additional services and opportunities to permanent urban residents. The first is a general objection to improving urban circumstances and particularly economic opportunities. Many writers have argued (see Todaro 1971) that increases in the number of jobs or facilities in towns will result in more migrants coming to town and may even worsen overall rates of unemployment. However arguments for assisting permanent urban residents

are not related only to policies on unemployment and migration. They are concerned with other issues such as equity, human welfare and the preservation of social order. The government may have to weigh the costs or at least the lack of benefits in one area of concern (e.g. unemployment rates) against the benefits in other areas of concern (e.g. the welfare of permanent urban residents). It would be necessary to raise these arguments if improved economic opportunities were to be offered to all urban residents whether temporary or permanent. In fact, however, my suggestion is more specifically to assist certain groups within towns, rather than everyone, and in this way to reduce the impact of improved opportunities on the rate at which new migrants arrive or others decide to stay in town.

Another objection refers to the difficulties of directing opportunities to all three categories of urban resident that I have described in this paper. It is probably relatively easy to identify permanent urban residents belonging to the first category--urban villages. People with land rights in these villages can be named by referring to local custom, genealogies and senior members of the clans or other groups concerned. It would thus be administratively possible to direct at least certain forms of assistance to these people. But it seems much less likely that members of categories 2 and 3 could be identified administratively by any process that did not depend on the account given by each individual of his life history and intentions. When particular benefits are involved the government cannot rely on people to identify themselves as eligible to receive these benefits.

A third problem with offering greater opportunities in towns to permanent urban residents than to other urban residents is that it would create advantages among certain groups who, for historical and geographical reasons, have enjoyed advantages in the past--if not in comparison with other urban residents, at least in comparison with many rural people. For example many of Port Moresby's residents from the Gulf Province are permanent because they or their parents had better access<sup>1</sup> to the national capital and more skills to offer in the post-war labour market than most of Papua New Guinea's rural people. This argument does not seem so strong

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<sup>1</sup> Travelling costs were low and the Hiri trade between Gulf and Central Provinces meant many Gulf migrants had friends with land rights in town.

in relation to urban villagers as it does in relation to permanent migrants and the descendants of migrants. The towns have taken over their lives in such a way that it does not seem realistic to compare their condition with that of rural people. I would argue that the problems they face as townspeople who never had an option to be anything else need to be recognised.

I would like therefore to suggest two points. Firstly, I suggest that the government should look for ways to direct opportunities, particularly economic opportunities, to those people who have traditional land rights within town boundaries. Such opportunities might take the form of assistance to home-builders, small businesses, real estate investment or labour-intensive communally-owned industries. I recommend this on the grounds that these people are generally disadvantaged members of urban society and that they have never had any rural options and cannot therefore be compared to rural dwellers. Opportunities, restricted in this way, would not have any effect on the rate of new migration from rural areas or the rate at which migrants decided to remain permanently in town.

Secondly, the government should consider whether or not it can provide improved prospects for permanent urban residents in the second and third categories I have discussed. The government may, in fact, feel that nothing can or should be done to help them. However there seem to be at least two other possibilities. One would be to direct funds and opportunities to the particular rural areas of Papua New Guinea from which many permanent urban residents in my second and third categories come. This is a development of the argument in Garnaut, Curtain and Wright (1977:191) that "there is a strong case for focussing resources as much as possible on areas which are currently both important source areas for migrants and poor, but whose location and land resources suggest they could eventually support relatively high rural standards." It may not be true that it is easy to "support relatively high rural standards" in the homelands of many permanent urban migrants. However if the government is reluctant to offer additional urban opportunities, then perhaps the only alternative is to try to dislodge some of these permanent residents from town. The conditions under which these people would move to a rural area are very different from the conditions under which most migrants would return. Provision would have to be made in

comprehensive schemes for subsistence as well as cash-earning opportunities. Housing, training in rural skills, loans to cover food production as well as new projects to generate cash incomes would have to be provided. In some ways these projects would look like resettlement schemes, except that in this case they are in a homeland context.

On the other hand the government might conclude with Garnaut, Wright and Curtin (ibid.) that in rural areas with poor resource bases, no such attempts are justified. In such a case it may be that certain kinds of additional urban opportunities could be offered to a restricted number of urban residents, although not exclusively to permanent urban residents. It may be possible to concentrate efforts on young people who have been raised in town and offer particular opportunities, for example, to those who have completed all their formal education at urban schools. Perhaps it could be possible to focus employment advice services, business assistance and further training opportunities on graduates of urban schools by building up a service facility attached to each of these schools accessible or mainly accessible only to graduates of those schools and their families. The advantage of this approach would be that it would assist permanent urban residents, among others, and that it would not offer the same opportunities to recent migrants as it does to more long-term residents, and so should not encourage an increase in migration. However it has the disadvantage of benefitting those who through no merit of their own happened to arrive in town first.

Whatever particular suggestions may follow from the material presented in this paper, I hope that it has directed attention to a particular type of urban resident and his problems, and will encourage further discussion of whether and how these permanent urban residents should become a focus of government policy.

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