The Plantation Redistribution Scheme: a case-study of Matupi Plantation in the Madang Province

Malagui Tamilong
December 1979

Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
P.O. Box 5854, Boroko, Papua New Guinea
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Editor's note

During 1979 the Plantation Redistribution Scheme (PRS) has come under close scrutiny from parliamentarians and public servants. Questions are being asked about the design of the scheme and its efficiency in achieving its aims. We feel that this paper can contribute in a number of ways to public debate.

First, the paper reminds us of the origins of the scheme and how, over time, its major emphasis has changed.

Second, it enables us to see how the PRS has worked in practice in one particular plantation, and how the process of acquisition prescribed by the scheme fits social and political realities.

Third, we think the paper will deepen the public discussion by helping us appreciate the complex contexts in which the PRS operates. Attitudes to land, the definition of land shortage and the aspirations of villagers have many dimensions. If we oversimplify these, then we will be unable to foresee how proposals will work out in practice or how schemes such as the PRS can be improved.

This paper is a revision of an essay submitted to and accepted by the University of Papua New Guinea towards an honours degree in geography. Malagui Tamilong was a research officer with this Institute when he did his field research and wrote the original version.
Summary

The Plantation Redistribution Scheme (PRS) was originally conceived to solve problems of land shortages in areas of heavy land alienation. Over time it has become more concerned with the nationalization of the Papua New Guinea plantation industry as a whole.

The paper looks at the relationship between the PRS and land shortage in a case study of Matupi Plantation, Madang. Malagui Tamilong investigates the reasons the villagers desired reacquisition. He presents field data on land pressure in one village and the views of some concerned persons as to how the plantation should be used in the long run.

He concludes that, by lowland Papua New Guinea standards, Siar village, one of the original owners of Matupi, was short of land, although the degree varied among clans. However it is not easy to say whether this was primarily a shortage of land for subsistence farming or cash-cropping.

Furthermore, Tamilong suggests that land shortage was only one of a number of factors that motivated Siar villagers to reacquire Matupi Plantation. He finds it hard to predict the long term use to which the plantation may be put, but suggests that a desire for a commercially viable plantation may be only one element in later decisions on the future of the plantation.
Acknowledgements

Many people have given me valuable criticisms and suggestions.

In preparation for field work I am grateful to the director and staff of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research — especially, Mr Richard Curtain, Dr Murray Bathgate, Dr Hal Colabatch and later Dr Louise Morauta.

I should like to thank staff of the Alienated Land Section of the Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping, especially Nicholas Peta in Port Moresby.

For assistance in my field work, I offer my thanks to the staff of the Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping in Madang, especially Gabriel Bogandi and M. Pesimai; and to the people of Siar, Nis and Nobonob villages, especially Philipus Angmai and Litner of Siar village, Kaumaf Teng of Nis village and Kiatig Bates of Nobonob village.

In writing the thesis I am grateful to Dr Murray Bathgate who tended to remain aloof but whose advice and guidance I counted on, and to Tony Chapelle whom I never met but whose encouraging words in his letter to me just after I returned from the field kept me on the move. He wrote, 'the first thing is to get the words down on paper. Do not labour too much over style at this stage. That can come in later drafts. If unhappy about one section do not dwell on it — just move to the next.'

Finally, I thank my supervisors, Professor Richard T. Jackson and Dr Louise Morauta, for their guidance and assistance in the field work and their encouragement and persistent questioning that made me rethink my original suppositions.
Introduction

The government of Papua New Guinea set up the Plantation Redistribution Scheme (PRS) in 1974 to return expatriate-owned plantations to the traditional land owners. The original proposal for the PRS was contained among other recommendations in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters in 1973.

The scheme originated from the impetus of land shortages experienced in many areas of Papua New Guinea and resentment over the nature of the transactions by which plantation land was acquired in early colonial times. Thus, Prime Minister Michael Somare (Papua New Guinea 1973:2722) said in the debate on the PRS 'It is not surprising that the alienation of land has caused big problems in this country. In some areas such as the Gazelle, where the people have been left short of land, the situation is verging on the intolerable'. Damien Kereku (ibid.) expressed another concern: 'expatriates hold some plantation land which was never bought fairly. This is true not only in the Gazelle but in other parts of the country as well. Small areas were bought with axes, bush knives and waste iron'.

The Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters (1973:45), found that in all districts (now provinces) a great many requests were received for alienated land to be returned to current members of clans that originally held the land rights. The Commission recommended that the government take positive steps to recover plantation land in areas of acute land shortage, by compulsory acquisition if necessary, but only if the return of undeveloped alienated land in the area proved sufficient to relieve land shortage.

In 1974, Parliament passed four bills to establish the PRS. First, The Land Acquisition Act 1974 (Papua New Guinea, Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping 1974) provided powers to the government to acquire plantation land, either by agreement or by compulsory acquisition, and contained provisions for assessing compensation in the event of compulsory acquisition.

Second, The Land Redistribution Act 1974 (ibid.) provided for the appointment of a distribution authority made up of representatives of claiming groups for every plantation acquired or to be acquired under
the scheme. This authority has power to mediate and arbitrate in settle-
ment of claims on the plantations.

Third, The Land Group Acts 1974 (ibid.) outlined a simple procedure
for incorporating customary land-owning groups so that they could
collectively own and manage property.

Fourth, The Land Trespass Acts 1974 (ibid.) protected properties
intended for redistribution in instances where unauthorized occupation
might threaten the distribution process.

In the same year the House allocated 1 million kina to the PRS.
The amount was probably severely underestimated since after four years
a total of more than 'three and a half million kina was spent on
purchasing and redistributing expatriate plantations' (Post-Courier
1978:10). In February 1974 the Plantation Management Agency was set
up in Rabaul to train managers for nationally-owned plantations.

However, prior to the establishment of the PRS some national land
owners were already organizing themselves into effective groups to
defend their interests. Local groups, associations and corporations
had already taken over expatriate plantations through loans from
commercial banks. For example Kabaire Plantation on the Gazelle
Peninsula, East New Britain Province, was taken over by the Mataungan
Association; Mililat Plantation in the Madang Province was taken over
by the Mililat Development Corporation; and Wurup Plantation in the
Western Highlands Province was taken over by the Pipilka Development
Corporation. Thus the PRS appears to have only continued and accele-
rated a process of transfer already begun.

A shift in emphasis in PRS goals

In the original concept of the PRS the acquisition of expatriate-
owned plantations in areas of acute land shortage was the first
priority. However, a widespread demand from other areas for inclusion

1 Priority was to be given to 'the Gazelle Peninsula - East New Britain
Province, Madang Province, New Ireland Province, East and Western
Highlands Province and Manus Province - Western Islands' (Papua New
Guinea, Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping 1976).
in the PRS arose. Not only land-short people wanted to resume expatriate plantations. The goals of the PRS broadened to the nationalization of the plantation industry in Papua New Guinea. This was in line with government thinking as expressed, for example, in the Eight Point Improvement Plan which aims, among other things, to achieve:

1. A rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guinea individuals and groups, and in the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans.

2. More equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement toward equalisation of incomes among people...

3. Decentralisation of economic activity, planning, and government spending, with an emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade, and more spending channelled through local and area bodies;

... 

8. Government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to assure the desired kind of development (Papua New Guinea 1974b:1).

A policy of nationalizing plantations is aimed at reducing foreign dominance in the economy. One scholar has remarked that Papua New Guinea's economy was '... concentrated in the hands of foreign capitalist plantation owners and therefore expropriation and redistribution could ensure a retransfer of economic and political power to the people.' (James 1975:2)

The focus of this paper

To go back to the original concern of the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters, I would like to consider the PRS in relation to relieving land shortage by acquiring expatriate-owned plantations. Since the PRS was established in 1974, more than fifty expatriate plantations have been taken over. However, we know little about how the land owners are using their land: whether they continue in the plantation industry; whether they cut down the coconuts, cocoa or coffee trees to cultivate the land for subsistence farming; or use the plantation land for other purposes. Therefore through a case study of one plantation returned through the PRS to the land owners in a land short area, I examine more closely the relationship between the PRS, land shortage and potential land shortage. I hope to look at the operation of the PRS at the grass roots level.
I initially chose the Gazelle Peninsula of East New Britain Province for the case study for a number of reasons. First, land shortage is a well-recognized problem in the area. Second, a large percentage of land on Gazelle Peninsula, approximately 43 per cent, has been alienated. Third, a large proportion of the plantations acquired and redistributed under the PRS are on the Gazelle Peninsula, and most of these have almost completed repayment of their loans.\(^1\) Fourth, institutions such as the Plantation Management Agency are located on the Gazelle Peninsula and thus convenient to visit.

Yet, I abandoned this proposed study area because of what I sensed were political problems. Land alienation and land shortage are touchy topics in this area and when the politicians and provincial government officers heard about my proposal, they appeared reluctant to give approval for my research. It took so long for the provincial government to give approval that the scheduled time for my field work was overdue. My patience gave out and, finally, contrary to my faith in the anthropological theory that an insider is not well accepted among his own people, I turned to a field site in my home province but outside my home area. I was convinced that nobody would use me as a political football in Madang Interim Provincial Government. Their only request was that the results of my research be made available to them. A national politician from the area was also made aware of my presence and he did not seem to object to the research.

In Madang province two expatriate plantations, Matupi and Mili-lat, have been reacquired by their original landowners. However, since Mili-lat Plantation was not originally repurchased with the assistance of the PRS, I selected Matupi for my case study.

In the next sections of the paper I shall discuss the background of the land group that took over Matupi Plantation, identify the villages and review their land holding patterns and way of life. Then I shall give a brief history of Matupi Plantation up to its take-over by the land group, discuss land use patterns on other land owned by the land group, and describe the use and management of Matupi Plantation. Finally I shall look again at the PRS, land shortage, and to what extent land shortage has been or may be relieved by the reacquisition of this plantation.

\(^1\) With their loans repaid owners presumably have more freedom to determine how they use plantation land.
Physical and social background

Matupi Plantation is located about 1 kilometre north of Madang town along the Madang-Bogia Highway (Map 1). The plantation land east of the Madang-Bogia Highway is situated on a poorly-drained but slightly uplifted coastal plain. It is 2.8 kilometres long and 0.7 kilometres wide. The plantation land west of the Madang-Bogia Highway is situated on the foothills of Mount Nobonob which rises to 360 meters above sea level. This section is 1.8 kilometres long and 1.2 kilometres wide.

The three villages that claim land in Matupi Plantation are Siar, Mis and Nobonob. Siar village is on the coastal plain. It owns most of the small islands, inlets, small bays and fringing coral reef. Siar land on the mainland is used for gardening and planting small groves of coconut trees; the islands are used for settlement and fishing. Mis village is somewhat further inland on the coastal plain and Nobonob village in the foothills (Map 1).

The social structure of Mis, Nobonob and Siar villages is based on small patrilineal land-holding clans, called ater by Mis and Nobonob villages and panudamon by Siars. Hannemann (1944:15) and Morauta (1974:15) write that members of these social groups in Madang villages are usually descended from a common ancestor but through population increase or other means they have become different clans. There are five clans in Mis village: Barwa, Kanulwa, Lamenalgut, Murivra and Taliting. In Nobonob there are eight: Helkud, Hibupfa, Inad, Kuduk, Mommagtub, Mihta, Obonoba and Sasagas. In Siar village there are six: Badalon, Banablau, Digfun, Lilung, Mizimu and Waifun. Most clans in a village have ties of common patrilineal descent, but a few consist of the descendents of refugees and others from outside the main patrilineal core.

The residential pattern of these three villages is of one main village and several outlying hamlets. Marriages are frequent between adjacent villages, although very infrequent between Austronesian and non-Austronesian-speaking villages. In particular Austronesian women as in Siar never marry non-Austronesian men, for example Mis and Nobonob (ibid.:178-180, 251), although there are a few cases the other way round (Morauta, personal communication 1979). Trade occurred in traditional times between Siar and Nobonob, but Siar appears to have
Map 1. Location of villages and study area.

- coastal, Austronesian-speaking villages
- inland, non-Austronesian-speaking villages
--- all weather road
--- highway


had superior goods to Nobonob because Siar also traded with the island people of Karkar and Bagabag and the distant villages of the Rai Coast. They received galip nuts, betel nuts and some carvings from Karkar and Bagabag and wooden dishes from Rai Coast villages.

Despite certain common features of social structure there is quite a contrast in life style between Siar people on the one hand and Mis and Nobonob people on the other. The Siars are coastal and sea-oriented people -- seafarers. Fishing and gardening were their chief traditional occupations. Mis and Nobonob people, further inland, are bush-oriented, chiefly gardening and hunting. The Siars cultivate yam as their staple while the Mis and Nobonob villages cultivate taro. Linguistically, the Siars are among Austronesian-speaking people who probably arrived in
Madang relatively recently by sea, forcing the Mis and Nobonob and other non-Austronesian-speaking people inland while they inhabited the coastal plain region (Map 1). The Bogia highway roughly follows this linguistic division. The Austronesian-speaking village settlements are located to the east of the highway while the non-Austronesian speaking villages are all located inland of the highway. Traditionally, Siar claims all the land, including alienated land, east of Madang-Bogia Highway and 3 kilometres north of Mis River (Map 1), while Nobonob claims all the land in and outside of Siar and Nagada Plantations west of Madang-Bogia Highway. Mis village claims all the land in and outside of Matupi Plantation west of the Madang-Bogia Highway and south of Mis River.

Table 1 shows that Siar village is larger in total population than Mis and Nobonob and that a higher proportion of Siar's population is absent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mis</th>
<th>Nobonob</th>
<th>Siar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absentees</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent absent</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[a\] In this table and elsewhere in the paper the wives of Siar men are counted as Siars, and the daughters of Siar men married to non-Siars are not counted as Siars.

**Source:** Madang District Planning Directory July 1977.

There are other differences between Siar people and those of Mis and Nobonob. Siar is close to Madang town and has a long history of contact with the western world. Although I have no detailed data on this, my general impression is that modernization is Siar village has
been much faster than in Mis and Nobonob. Siars live in houses built out of a mixture of factory-made and bush material. They eat large quantities of trade-store goods rather than depending on garden produce as they used to. Some Siars participate in the town's labour force and are employed permanently as clerical workers both in the government and in the private sector. Others work as casual stevedores on the wharf in Madang. Cash is also received from the sale of garden produce and fish in Madang market, generally sold by women. Other sources of cash income for Siars are the sale of copra and cocoa, remittances from absent relatives (about 38 per cent of the total village population), the village's tourist industry (there are a number of glass-bottomed boats to take tourists around the coral islands), and general tours of Siar village. Last but not least, local trade stores and small business groups are all sources of cash to the Siars. On the other hand Mis and Nobonob appear less integrated into the cash economy. In these two villages there is little wage employment, probably some cash-cropping, fewer village enterprises and a stronger subsistence production sector.

There are also differences between Siar compared to Mis and Nobonob in terms of pressure on land arising from a number of factors. Even traditionally the Siars had less land available than the inland villages (Morauta 1974:2). As Table 1 has shown Siar also has the largest total (although not the largest resident) population. All three villages experienced land alienation in colonial times. Siar lost 334.48 hectares¹ and, according to Morauta (ibid.:30), Mis lost 329.7 hectares² and Nobonob lost 1722.1 hectares of land. Although I have no data on the total land holdings of Mis and Nobonob at the time of contact, the proportion of this area alienated is undoubtedly lower in both cases than the 52 per cent alienated from Siar. For these reasons, and because the Siars initiated the reacquisition of Matupi Plantation, I chose to study Siar village in detail.

¹ Siar's alienated land area has been calculated from Matupi and Siar plantations on graph paper 30 x 40 cm.

² Morauta's figures for Mis and Nobonob's alienated land were originally in acres and I converted these to hectares for comparison.
Land-holding in Siar

I conducted a census of Siar village from 10 to 12 January 1979. This was a general coverage of the population in the Siar community by clans. Table 2 shows that Siar clans vary greatly in size. Half the resident population is in only two clans, Lilung and Waifun. There is also some variation among clans in the proportion of absent residents.

Table 2

Population of Siar village by clan (all ages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both sexes</th>
<th>Absent population both sexes</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Percentages of population absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banabla</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digfun</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilung</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizimu</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waifun</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Twelve residents have been left out because they are not members of clans in Siar village. Clans are listed in alphabetical order. The census was taken by counting each person in a household and those belonging to the household who have migrated elsewhere.

There are sixty-one named plots of land owned by the Siar community and still under customary tenure. Map 2 and Table 3 describe these plots of land and general land ownership data. The pattern of land holdings in Siar varies widely but fundamentally the individual's rights to land are acquired by being born into a clan or several related sub-clans and then inheriting normally through the patrilineal line. Usually the clan is the ultimate owner although individuals have certain subsidiary rights. Morauta (1973:132) writes that:

1 The land boundaries of the named plots reflect my informants' knowledge on where boundaries should be. Trees and swamps were often used as land markes.
Siar land holding pattern

Key:
- Settlement
- Swamp
- Customary land
- Alienated land

Scale 1:20,000

Meters

Source: Same as for map 8 in chapter 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Number (See map 2)</th>
<th>Plot Name</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
<th>Owning Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Patfundamon</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sipag</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Libdamon</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nonoglon</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gelagalten</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bazten</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kasumalan</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wiwoten</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dugapain</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Naip</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mezland</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kadunendamon</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>Mizimiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kuan</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Gabazten</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Meamai and Mujeg</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Malaful</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>Mizimiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mendamon</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Kangazten</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Mizimiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Goloblon</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>Mizimiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Wagdub</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>Mizimiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Gatuz</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bulubal</td>
<td>34.60</td>
<td>Siar village as a whole. Reacquired from Sasagas clan of Nobonob village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Ilojau</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>Mizimiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pazetgaten</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Daladamon</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dalaten</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>Digfun (disputed by Waifun clan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Lipan</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>Waifun, acquired on persuasion from Digfun clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mazezten</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Abef</td>
<td>25.32</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Abefdamon</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Number</th>
<th>Plot Name</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
<th>Owning Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Deb</td>
<td>16.36</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Debsas</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Neamm</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Madug</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dagagmalan</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Tawungdamon</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Tuzigten</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Tizten</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>Waifun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Wadau No. 1</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Wadau No. 2</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>Waifun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Wožon</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Gusei</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Nizaulang</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Wozokai No. 1</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Wozokai No. 2</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>Waifun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Siar Island</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Nuisamindangan Island</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Nui Waudangan Island</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Dagag - Malan Island</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Moktoi Island</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>Digfun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Doalei Island</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>Mizimu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Nuikai Island</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Admelan Island</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Admalan Island</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Banablau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Wazedamon Island</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Delalai Island</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Pana Island</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Peawai Island</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>Mizimu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Peawai Island</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Mazaz Island</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Tab Island</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>Mizimu. Being disputed by Waifun clan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 312.71 hectares
Land rights were inherited within the clan. The land of a clan might be all in one block or, more commonly, interdigitated with that of other clans of the same village. Ownership of land involved a range of rights — permanent and temporary alienation, gathering, hunting, fishing or sago-making. None of these was owned by an individual in any sense unless he was a clan of one man. In each clan there was a land leader who was the senior active member.

When rights to holding or use of land are unclear to other clans, it may be necessary to negotiate with several clans to define a discrete holding. Proprietary rights to land are held by men while women have only rights of use. Land-short Siar clans have been able to make their living because several clans may have equal rights over sago swamps or shell fish in estuaries. Land may belong to one group, but non-members may have access to sago on that land. People frequently have access to gardening land belonging to other clans because they have relatives (e.g. through their mothers) who are members of another clan.

Why the Siars wanted to reacquire Matupi Plantation

The reasons why land owners wanted to reacquire Matupi Plantation relate to perceptions of land shortage and real land shortage, fears about the expansion of Madang town, and villagers' views on the nature of the land transactions between their forefathers and the white men in colonial times. I shall look in detail at each of these topics.

Perceptions of land shortage and real land shortage. In the terminology of modern economics, land is one of the factors of production. Eleven years ago my high school geography teacher said that land is a source of wealth. A person with land is wealthier than a person without land. However, then I thought wealth meant having a great deal of money. But I was wrong and my geography teacher was right. The Siars agree with my geography teacher. They perceive land as wealth, as security in old age, as provision for their born and unborn children, and as a source of the cash they feel they need to survive. Because of these attitudes the Siars say openly that they are short of land.

Further land shortage is particularly feared for two reasons. First, the increase in population would eventually exhaust land now available. Second there is probably very little permanent out-migration by Siars and their desire to return home eventually could make land shortage even more
critical. Although Siars move away for education and employment, they still generally feel that land belongs to them, they never lose rights to it, and will eventually return and settle on it.

My own data on man-land relationships show land is the prime factor in the livelihood of Siar people. Land is used in hunting, food gathering (to a limited extent only), subsistence gardening, cultivation of tree crops for cash sales, settlement, as a source of building and other raw materials and for small scale industries. Most land areas, including swamp, are used. Sago and bamboo dominate swamp areas. Sago is used for food and its leaves for roofs of houses. Bamboo is used in the gardens to make poles for yam vines to climb so they do not occupy space on the ground that could be used for other crops. Bamboo is also used in housebuilding and for musical instruments in the modern 'bamboo band'.

Subsistence gardening in Siar employs the technique of shifting cultivation. The gardens are often planted with mixed crops. Dioscorea (yam) is the staple but Colocasia esculenta (taro), Xanthosoma (taro kongkong), and Musa (banana) are among other crops grown. Most are produced for the grower's own use but some are sold in Madang market for cash. My informal interviews with prominent land leaders of Siar revealed that cash earned from garden produce is spent on food like taro, cassowary meat, and pork sold by other villages and also on trade store food such as rice and tinned food. In addition to garden produce both dry and green coconuts from coconut palms (also grown for domestic use) are sold in Madang market. Fish caught on the coral reefs are also sold for cash. This illustrates the demand for cash among the Siars, and the way they find a cash income.

The results of my field survey of land owned by each clan are shown in Map 3 and Table 4. The table shows the land area owned by each clan.

The clans are listed according to the size of their resident population but their sizes do not correspond to the amount of land owned. Lilung is the largest clan in Siar and owns 21 per cent of the land. Waifun is the next largest clan with 14 per cent of the land. Digaful clan is the third largest but it owns more land than any other clan, 32 per cent of all land. In Siar and elsewhere in Papua New Guinea large areas of land can be owned by small clans. An example from outside Siar is Sasagas clan of Nobonob village. This clan consists of three members but owns most of the land above Matupi plantation.
Table 4

Land owned by each clan in Siar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Population present&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Clan land areas&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; ( hectares )</th>
<th>Percentage of all Siar land owned by each clan&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Population density (person per hectare)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lilung</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>66.12</td>
<td>21.14</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waifun</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>42.36</td>
<td>13.55</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digfun</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.67</td>
<td>32.19</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizimu</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31.80</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banablaue</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.16</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40.60</td>
<td>12.98</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>560</strong></td>
<td><strong>312.71</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.99</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Derived from the result of the population census I conducted on 10 to 12 January 1979 in Table 2.

<sup>b</sup> Derived from the result of my field survey on plots of land owned by each clan in Table 3 -- a sum of all the plots of land area by each clan. The 34.60 hectares owned as a whole is counted with Waifun.

<sup>c</sup> Total land area owned by Siar village divided by total land area owned by each clan.

Table 4 also shows the clan-land relationship in terms of population densities. The clans that appear to be shortest of land are Waifun with a population density of 3.59 and Lilung with a population density of 2.45. The population densities of other clans are lower and rather similar to one another except for Digfun clan which has much the lowest density. These densities correspond with informants' views on man-land relationships. Men from Lilung and Waifun clans say that they are short of land. Men from other clans say they have enough land.

The pressure of population must also be seen in relation to the types of land available. Table 5 presents major land use patterns for the land owned by each clan. Badalon, Digfun and Waifun clans have a lower proportion of their land available for agriculture because a higher percentage is covered by swamp. But in terms of density per hectare of useable land, Waifun clan has much the highest density, Digfun has the lowest density and the rest of the clans have about the same.
Table 5
Major land use patterns for each Siar clan's land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Total land area in hectares</th>
<th>Village and hamlets</th>
<th>Swamp</th>
<th>Coronas</th>
<th>Total not available for agriculture</th>
<th>Coconut palms</th>
<th>Gardens</th>
<th>Bush fallow</th>
<th>Total available for agriculture</th>
<th>Persons per hectare of usable land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lilung</td>
<td>66.12</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waifun</td>
<td>42.36</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digfun</td>
<td>100.67</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizimu</td>
<td>31.80</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banablae</td>
<td>31.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>40.60</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>312.71</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, figures on clan ownership of land do not entirely coincide with land use patterns in Siar. Land can be borrowed by other clans or members of other clans for gardening. Relatives will lend land for subsistence gardening but people do not grow cash crops (even market vegetables) on another clan's land. The original clan still holds right of ownership in every case, which is significant for commercial prospects. Therefore perhaps the overall figure for the village is the most useful guide to the relationship between land availability and land shortages for subsistence production, but clan holdings are most important for cash cropping.

Siar villagers supplement subsistence produce with food purchased at the market and stores. This may help to explain how some villagers, as long as they have cash incomes, can survive with little or no garden land.

In my analysis of land per resident used for different purposes, land areas covered by swamps, villages and coronas pits are excluded. I shall only take into account land areas that support Siar's traditional or modernized economy, those covered by coconut palms, gardens and bush fallow. Table 6 shows the amount of cultivable land used for these different purposes per resident clan member.

Table 6

Area of clan land used for different purposes
(hectares per person present)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Garden A</th>
<th>Bush fallow B</th>
<th>Coconut palms</th>
<th>Fallow: garden ratio (B + A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lilung</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waifun</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffun</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td>0.204</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitzimu</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banablaau</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.388</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.326</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is considerable variation among clans. Digfun has a larger area per resident under coconut palms and a higher fallow: garden ratio. Banablaieu has a larger area used for gardens but a low fallow: garden ratio.

Do these tables indicate that some or all Siar clans are short of land in any sense? I shall look at the fallow: garden ratio, actual garden areas and the availability of land for cash-cropping to answer this question.

To calculate the fallow period from the ratios in Table 6 I used the formula Clarke used in Ndwimba Basin. Clarke divided the area of fallow land by the area of currently cultivated land. 'I take fifteen months (1.25 years) as the life of a garden because after that time secondary vegetation is allowed to develop, even if some food is still removed' (Clarke 1971:157). I estimated that the life of a garden in Siar is about the same as for Ndwimba Basin. In Siar as a whole 181.3 hectares of land was under bush fallow and 24.5 hectares was being used for gardening at the time of my fieldwork. Therefore:

\[
\frac{181.3}{24.5} = 7.4 \text{ is the fallow: garden ratio}
\]

and \(7.4 \times 1.25 \text{ years} = 9.25 \text{ years average fallow period.}\)

A nine-year fallow period is well below the usual fallow period of 10-15 years in lowland Papua New Guinea (Bryant Allan, personal communication 1979). But fallow periods in critically land short areas sometimes reduce to two years and even to one year depending on the carrying capacity of the area being fallowed (Murray Bathgate, personal communication 1979). Table 6 suggests that the fallow period is much less than the average of nine years in some clans. In Banablaieu, which has the largest area of garden per person, the fallow period would be as low as 2.5 years, and in Waifen about four years.

Thus from the garden:fallow ratio I do not feel there is evidence that all Siars are equally short of land. Allan's view on frequency of cultivation cited in Brookfield and Hart (1971:97) is that it shows 'numerically the relationship of crop time to fallow time, but this is impossible for more than a minority of places. Practices in which at least some plots are used only once, then left in fallow, are almost
universal...'. This is indeed the pattern in Siar. Some plots are
fallowed for nine or more years while others turn over very fast, (assum-
ing clan members only make gardens on their own land) perhaps every two
years. Table 6 thus shows the possibility of a very much reduced fallow
period in some clans.

According to Table 6 the area of garden land per resident in Siar
at the time of fieldwork was 0.044 hectares. This can be compared with
estimates of productive garden land per person in Melanesian rainforest
are typically 0.081 - 0.122 hectares\(^1\) of garden land per person. The
Siar area of 0.044 hectares of garden land per person is much lower and
suggests that by Melanesian standards Siars are relatively disadvantaged
and that gardens for its resident population are very small.

There are two cash crops grown in the Siar community -- coconuts
and cocoa. Coconut trees are grown in small groves, usually on fragmented
clan land holdings. Cocoa trees require a considerable amount of shade
so they are usually planted in between coconut trees when the coconut
trees are about eight to ten meters high. Table 6 shows that the area
of land under coconuts per person is very low in Banablabu and Mizimu, and
much higher in other clans. Therefore, some clans may perceive land
shortage partly in terms of a shortage of land for cash crops. On the
other hand, low fallow: garden ratios suggest another form of shortage --
of land for gardens. There is also a trade-off between the two. If
further cash cropping is to be done, it would put additional pressure on
gardening land.

Thus the perceptions of Siar leaders about land shortage are
supported by my empirical data. Both statements by people I interviewed
and the survey data suggest that the pressure on land varies considerably
among clans and that land shortage should be regarded as relating both
to subsistence gardening and cash cropping.

**Fears about the expansion of Madang town.** Another reason why Siars
wanted to reacquire Matupi Plantation was their concern about Madang
town. The implementation of the Madang town development plan by Russell

\(^1\) These figures were originally calculated in acres but for comparison
I converted them to hectares.
D. Taylor and Partners 1972, which includes Matupi Plantation and all coastal land north of Madang town, would mean that in future there will be no opportunity for the land owners to take their land back. This is indicated in the report:

Wohlgemuth and Sasaugas Reserves are awaiting introduction of legislation, to wit, the land (Determination of Trusts) ordinance, after which, the land is proposed to be handed back to the natives; it is recommended that this land, or as much as is not specifically required by the natives, be exchanged for an equivalent area along the foreshore between Mis and Nagada; due consideration is to be given in all detailed design schemes for the land requirements of existing villagers and of other local groups aspiring to establish or re-establish as village settlements; (It is noted that the Siar people are in need of more land) villages and associated primary activities to be regarded as compatible with the general intentions of the foreshore reserves; the recommended land exchange will allow a continuous and more comprehensive form of development to be achieved.

In order to effect the above development, land will either have to be privately developed by negotiation with the government or acquired (or resumed) by the government and subsequently developed through the various existing agencies, (Russell D. Taylor and Partners 1972: 298-9).

The leaders of Siar village in my informal interviews with them said they do not want to become like a Hanuabadan or a Butibum villager. They are well aware of the evidence in Port Moresby and Lae that as the urbanizing process surrounds traditional village areas these villages become more urban-oriented. Traditional culture, social activities, and a truly traditional village cannot exist for long in a predominantly urban environment. Particularly, the village people become land-short as urban activities spread outward. Therefore my informants say their fundamental aim must be to change the title of all the land from alienated to customary so that the land owners can use it whatever way they want now or in future. The Siar leaders emphasised that reacquisition of Matupi Plantation is the beginning of taking back expatriate plantations situated on their land.

The Siar people fear that the government could easily acquire all the alienated land for town expansion (mostly plantations) through the Land Acquisition Acts 1974. Therefore they hoped to take back Matupi

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1 In my brief study I only had time to talk to a few people. Younger villagers may hold different views from the elders to whom I spoke.
Plantation before the government acquired it for town development. They saw the PRS as a way of achieving this.

Indeed, land owners' suspicions of government intentions were justified by the wording of the agreement signed when Matupi Plantation was finally handed over to the land owners. The agreement reads: 'We the trustees of Matupi Plantation referred to hereunder agree that we will negotiate with the government for sale to the state of part of Matupi Plantation required to accommodate the expansion of the Madang Township'. (File 3-6-2/I Matupi Plantation. Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping, Madang). This was signed by three members of the land group (formed to purchase the plantation as required under the PRS) and witnessed by a national politician for the area. Furthermore, members of a sub-committee on land development for the Madang Interim Provincial Government have already visited and discussed alienated plantation land to the north of Madang for possible town development (Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping, Madang, file 5-12-73). Indeed, there will be no more opportunity for the land owners to acquire alienated land if the government decides to implement the town plan.

**Views on land transactions between the Siars and the white man**

Siar post-contact history is full of the white man's involvement with the people and their land. Pacific contact with the white man beginning almost a century ago involved what are now seen as fraudulent transactions in land. But in the Siar community and the villages around Madang, fraudulent land transactions and treatment of land owners undoubtedly offer one of the worst and most extensive cases of this type of land acquisition. It was a bitter experience for the villages and that bitterness persists to the present.

The German rule in the Madang area 1885 to 1914 can be divided into three major periods involving the Germans and the Siar people. The first of these, from 1885 to 1904, may be characterized as the period of revolt and conflict; the second, from 1904-12, the passive resistance period, the third from 1912-14, the period of exile and accommodation. My account follows closely that of Hannequann (1944). During 1885 to 1904 the German New Guinea Company began its work in the Madang area and unscrupulously appropriated land for plantations. Furthermore, the work-
men of the New Guinea Company and private planters acquired land from the land owners, including the Siar community.

Appropriation of Siar land and recruiting of the local men as labourers was intense and offended the land owners. According to their custom they had never been anybody’s servant ‘But now they were fast developing into the labor gang of a handful of tibud’ who came without asking whether the natives would allow them to live there. They had already appropriated much of the island people’s land and were still looking around for more... The whites had come to stay and would demand things from the natives in increasing measure’ (ibid.:26-27). Consequently, the land owners felt the whites were doing everything against their wishes and rose against them in 1904.

The land owners’ objective was to totally eradicate the entire white population of fourteen on their land because they found the impositions on their way of life intolerable. There seemed to be no other means except violence left to protect their rights over land and freedom of choice. The strategy adopted by the Siars and the Grageds was to kill all the whites.

One morning during 1904 the Siar villagers and neighbouring villagers went to Madang as usual to work but hid weapons in their canoes. They planned to steal some guns from the government store before charging the whites. However, one fellow among them raised the alarm and before the Siars and the neighbouring villagers charged, the whites fired their guns at them. The villagers fled to the bush for safety and only a few were shot dead. Some time later many of the Siars and neighbouring villagers who escaped the tragedy were arrested.

Four Siar ringleaders were executed by the German authorities while a good number were imprisoned. Sack (1973:110) traces the events of the 1904 rebellion in Madang:

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1 The Siars thought the whites were spirits of dead relatives reincarnated.

2 The neighbouring villagers who inhabited Kranket island in the Madang Harbour are referred to as Grageds. The Grageds were co-responsible for the uprising in 1904 along with Bilias and Yabobs, who were from neighbouring villages.
On 29 July Stuckhardt arrested the first natives to question them. When they confessed their plans, he began to arrest the ringleaders, to confiscate weapons and to demand fines in the form of pigs and food which were at the same time to serve as peace offerings. On 9 August Stuckhardt sent four prisoners on the New Guinea Kompagnie's vessel Siar to Herbetshoehe and reported that the situation was under control.

In the period 1904–12, the Siars, had 'to give up much of their land, some of their boys, some of the time which previously they had devoted to their own pursuits, much of their freedom and self-rule and their religion' (Hannemann 1944:43). The whites had no respect for the rights of the Siars over tree fruits like betelnut and breadfruit which the Siars had planted on their now-alienated land. In Siar village custom, members of different clans grew trees on other clans' land and every year were allowed to harvest the fruits. But the whites chased the Siars off the land and forbade them to hunt on land sold to the whites.

These actions were insulting and unjust in the eyes of the Siars but the death of the four ringleaders in a public execution quieted them and they sullenly participated in the activities of the white man's regime. Although outwardly, 'the functions of the government officials, the plantations, the activities of traders and Christian Missions were known, but inwardly not one of these agencies had been sanctioned' by the people (ibid.:43). 'They said yes with their mouths but their hearts said no' (Salisbury 1971:5).

The Siars retained this attitude from the time of the 1904 rebellion until 1912. The situation was brought to a head because of Sizau of Graged's wife's infidelity. While Sizau was serving in the police force in Rabaul, his wife had lived with two different men. He discovered this when he returned in 1912. 'In retaliation Sizau took the accessories of black magic, viz part of a burnt coconut, a piece of bush-ropie, ginger and the like which allegedly he found in one of the local Miziab-dazem 1 and told the kiaps (District Officials) that these things had been prepared for a second attempt to kill the whites' (Hannemann 1944:29).

1 This was the men's most sacred house in which they believed the dead spirits were present. Important decisions were also made there.
This time a harsher punishment was inflicted on the Siars as a result of the allegation. The entire population of Siar village was exiled to Megiar on the north coast of Madang, to the Rai Coast and to Rabaul in the East New Britain Province. They were only returned when the military government of Australia took over in 1914. Some forty years later Hannemann saw that 'the German Government by way of punishment confiscated most of the remaining good land. The Mandate Government of Australia took over these land holdings from the Germans but returned some 90 hectares to the Siars, when it became evident that many of their families were at a loss where to plant their food gardens' (ibid.:32).

The German administration, private planters and the Rhenish Mission confiscated the land block on which Matupi Plantation is situated among other land blocks while the Siars were in exile. In view of the Siars' long-held grievance it seemed fitting that Matupi be one of the first pieces of alienated land in the Madang Province to be taken back. Although Matupi Plantation covers land traditionally owned by Siar, Mis and Nobonob villages, the Siars were only interested in taking over the land blocks they traditionally owned.

Siar land reacquisition

Before the days of the PRS, the Siars had made a number of attempts to reacquire their alienated land. They approached the Rhenish Mission immediately after their return from exile, patrol officers and other government officials in the inter-war period, and the Ambenob Local Government Council in the late 1960s. In 1973 they presented their demand to take back Matupi Plantation and other alienated land to the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters. Consequently, when the national government launched the PRS early in 1974, Madang Province was on the priority list.

In the three villages that claimed traditional land-holdings within Matupi Plantation, not every clan had traditional claims within the plantation area. Only Lilung, Banablau and Digfun clans from Siar village; Taliting, Barwa, Kanulwa and Lamenalgut clans from Mis village; and Sasagas clan of Nobonob village traditionally owned land in Matupi Plantation. Since each of these clans had fragmented land
holdings in the plantation, land holdings were counted according to the number of plots each clan owned. Among Siar clans, Lilung claimed three plots, Banablu claimed seven and Digfun three. From Mis, Taliting clan claimed twelve, Barwa four and Lamenalgut two. From Nobonob village, Sasagas clan claimed two plots.

The Siars planned to take back their plots of land without paying any cash compensation to the expatriate owner on the grounds that the land was originally theirs and they had been paid inadequate compensation. But the Siars had to abandon this idea because the PRS ruled that the original landowners must pay a reasonable price for the expatriate plantation. The scheme requires an acceptable deposit and then total repayment of the loan. Therefore, from the mid-1970s the Siars began to raise funds to buy back Matupi Plantation (Madang Provincial Office file 34-2-15). Each of the six clans of Siar village had a passbook and their contributions were banked toward the deposit. The PRS required 20 per cent deposit of the price of Matupi Plantation, which was K55,000. Thus K11,000 was needed. Initially the Siars were unable to raise the 20 per cent deposit.

At the same time one of the more important elements of the PRS — that those people who claim traditional rights to the land alone have priority — was enforced in this case. Since clans from Mis and Nobonob villages had traditional rights to land in the Matupi Plantation, the PRS required that Mis and Nobonob also be involved in the reacquisition. As a result these villages formed a land group named 'Simino' a kind of acronym for Siar, Mis and Nobonob.

Although people from the three villages formed Simono, contributions toward the purchase of Matupi Plantation were mostly from Siar. Their contribution was raised from the sale of fish in the local market, wages, stevedoring, remittances from relatives in other towns, receipts from tourism and informal business. There was no set amount to be raised by each clan member which led to insufficient and unequal contributions. Thus the cash deposit to the PRS still could not be met.

Therefore early in 1978 certain clans from Siar gave up parts of their land to be sold to the Plant and Transport Authority in Madang for coronas pits. The Plant and Transport Authority only bought plots of land from four clans and refused plots from the other two clans because
they were inaccessible. The Plant and Transport Authority calculated the price for each by using a rate of 6 toea per cubic yard or 8 toea per cubic meter, usually measured by truck loads. However the Siars were so anxious to make up the deposit and the normal procedure of buying by the truck load would have taken so long, that they asked the Plant and Transport Authority to give them advance payment so that Matupi Plantation could be purchased. The Plant and Transport Authority used a rather rough calculating technique. They estimated the pits to be about two meters vertically down and multiplied this by the surface area of the pits to work out the price of coronas in the six pits (Table 7).

Table 7  
Plots of land sold to buy back Matupi Plantation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Plot name</th>
<th>Owning clan</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Gabazten No.1</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>1.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Gabazten No.2</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>0.4676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mezdamon</td>
<td>Badalon</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Malaful</td>
<td>Mizimu</td>
<td>0.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Libdamon</td>
<td>Lilung</td>
<td>0.0761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bulubal</td>
<td>Waifun</td>
<td>0.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All plots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Works Authority files 106-B01 to 2 and Nos. NCS/190 and 11.379.*

It took the three villages about three years to raise the acceptable deposit with the PRS. Further, the PRS requirement that a land group comprising three villages be formed, when Siar village initially intended to acquire parts of Matupi Plantation by itself, may also have caused delays and other problems.

Through the sale of 2.07 hectares of coronas the Siars were able to increase their contribution to K9,000. The passbooks of each clan from Siar show that Lilung clan contributed K1,000, Mizimu clan K2,000, Badalon clan K4,000, Banablau clan K1,000 and Waifun clan K1,000 towards the deposit. Digfun clan did not contribute anything. Nobonob village at this stage had raised K2,000 which together with the K9,000 from Siar thus made up K11,000. The PRS accepted the constitution of the Simino
land group and its registration and finally bought the Matupi Plantation and handed it over to the Simino land group on 26 October 1978.

Management of Matupi Plantation under Simino Land Group

Matupi Plantation has a total area of 300 hectares. Of this 255 hectares have been planted with coconut palms and cocoa trees, 41 hectares are covered by swamp, while 2 hectares are covered by buildings and habitation and another 2 hectares are not planted with coconut and cocoa trees. DPI in Madang did a tree count on the plantation from 24 to 28 January 1977. Bayapenu (DPI Officer in Charge, personal communication 1978) found 22,499 mature coconut trees, 104 immature coconut trees and 5,267 mature cocoa trees. Some plantation labourers have gardens under coconut trees.

Since the acquisition of the plantation, the Simino Land Group has taken over responsibility for maintenance and management, with assistance by the National Plantation Management Agency in Madang. Other activities on plantation land and decisions as to what to do with the plantation are to be determined according to the constitution of the land group. Therefore it is worth mentioning the relevant sections from the constitution of the land group (Department of Lands, Environment and Mapping, Madang, file 36-2/1). The constitution was designed by the PRS and the land group only filled in necessary details at particular points.

Of the six sections in the constitution I think the most important is section 3, which deals with the controlling body of the land group. The four subsections of Section 3 are as follows:

1) The affairs of the Land Group shall, subject to any decision of the members in a general meeting, be controlled by a committee of not less than four (4) and no more than six (6) members.

2) The committee shall be composed of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and up to two other members as hereunder:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Philipus Angmai</td>
<td>Siar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Chairman</td>
<td>Gema Urur</td>
<td>Mis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Galuk Duten</td>
<td>Siar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Jatibun Nail</td>
<td>Siar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Secretary</td>
<td>Maul Dakom</td>
<td>Nobonob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Kiatig Bates</td>
<td>Nobonob</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four (4) members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

Members of the committee shall be appointed as necessary by consenus of the members of the land group.

Any deed or document that is required to be executed by the Land Group shall be signed by two (2) members of the committee, one of whom shall be the chairman, such execution shall be binding on the Land Group.

What is striking here is the membership of the controlling body — half the members come from Siar village and the important positions of chairman, secretary and treasurer are all held by Siars. This implies that Siar village will be influential in future decisions.

The Simino land group has kept the previous plantation labourers. However the plantation manager is from Siar village and four Siars from his clan are employed on the plantation. There are altogether 41 labourers plus the manager. Most are from Madang province but four come from Tari in the Southern Highlands Province. These labourers are now paid by the Simino Land Group. The members of the land group have agreed that they themselves will replant coconut trees and cocoa trees killed by lightning. This is to be done free of charge by each of the three villages in turn.

I was anxious to find out how the land group intended to use Matupi Plantation in the longer term. In the short term they will be mainly concerned to pay off the loan. Eighteen prominent members of clans in Siar were interviewed at their homes on separate occasions.1 Ten of these informants indicated that, because of their desire for involvement in the cash economy, they thought the plantation would best be run to make money. Eight men thought that the redistributed plantation land should be used for other purposes than at present. To these informants the most important issue is to transfer the alienated title to customary title so that the clan owners can be at liberty to determine land use.

It is likely that those clan members who favour Matupi Plantation continuing as a cash-crop growing unit do so because their clans did not

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1 'Prominent members of clans' are the senior members or land leaders in each clan. Their names were given to me by Philipus Angmai, the local government councillor for Siar village and the chairman of the Simino Land Group.
originally have any traditional rights to plots of land there. If Matupi is used for other purposes, it would only be in the interest of the clans who originally had rights to those plots of land. Their views may also be influenced by the different degrees of land shortage experienced by different clans.

Conclusions

My aim in this case study has been to look at the PRS in relation to land shortage and potential land shortage. This line of enquiry was suggested by the original proposal of the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters -- that expatriate-owned plantation land in areas of acute land shortage be acquired to relieve land shortage.

Even within the narrow framework of a single case study, there were limitations. Three villages, Mis, Nobonob and Siar, at present jointly own Matupi Plantation as a commercial agricultural enterprise. The time period for my study was a significant drawback to making an in-depth study of the three villages' traditional land holding pattern both within and outside of Matupi Plantation and their land use. I was able to spend only six weeks in field work: three weeks for archival research in Madang and another three weeks for my field survey. Because my research time was so short, bearing in mind the original aims of the PRS, I had to pick one of the three villages to study in detail. I chose the village that was said to be faced with a critical land shortage, namely Siar. A better understanding of my research problem could have been achieved if more time had been available.

In my conclusions I am going to look at the relationship between the PRS and land shortage by answering three questions. First, to what extent were the original owners of Matupi Plantation short of land? Second, how much was land shortage the motive for plantation acquisition? And third what has been the effect of the reacquisition on land shortage?

First, my data show that in comparison with other areas of lowland Papua New Guinea, the Siars were relatively disadvantaged in relation to land at their disposal. This is indicated both by figures on fallow periods and on the area of garden land per resident. Two factors however make the answer more complicated. In the first place land shortage varied considerably among Siar clans, while the PRS required the formation of a
land group embracing them all. The concept of land shortage at the village level is not necessarily as important as at the clan level, especially for commercial purposes. There is also in the contemporary economy a complex relationship between alternative uses of land. The question arises as to what people are short of land for? Is it more efficient or otherwise desirable to expand cash crop or subsistence cultivation? These are the kind of issues raised by my study of Siar.

In examining my second question -- the reasons that motivated the Siars to take over Matupi Plantation -- I found they included: land as security in old age, land for their unborn children, fear of Madang town expansion into Matupi Plantation, and the desire to participate in the cash economy. Indeed it is obvious that it was not only a shortage of land for subsistence farming in Siar that motivated reacquisition.

Third, the effect of reacquisition can be looked at in terms of present use and future use of the plantation. At present the Matupi Plantation under commercial agriculture seems the only possible way of generating sufficient income to repay the PRS loan, so there will not be other uses for the plantation until the loan is paid off. However in the long run other options are theoretically available, such as sub-division, reversion to garden land or use for expanded settlements. At least some members of the Siar community appear interested in seeing Matupi Plantation converted from a commercial agricultural unit to something else eventually. It is too early to predict whether or not they will be successful. What is clear at this stage is that land-owners will respond to a variety of pressures and interests, only one of which will be a concern that expatriate-type plantations be viable economically in the hands of nationals.

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1 In fact several previously viable resumed plantations are now being run at a loss (Post-Courier, 26 May 1978, p. 5; 31 October 1977, p. 3).
Appendix

Recommendations for the PRS arising from this case study

Land boundaries for the three villages are quite distinct within Matupi Plantation. My inclination, for reasons of history, culture, language, land pressure and other social and economic reasons is for Matupi Plantation to be divided into three parts along village lines. These subdivisions should be registered under the village as a whole to ensure that communally-owned land is secured.

It has been proposed that a customary land registration bill will be tabled in the National Parliament in November 1979. It contains a section on the declaration of registered areas under which all redistributed expatriate plantation land will automatically be declared registered areas. Registration not only protects the interests of traditional landowners but also the interests of outsiders who may have bought shares in the form of contribution towards the repayment for the expatriate plantation.

Registration of redistributed plantation land will wipe out the traditional rights of land ownership to plots of land on the plantation concerned. It will reduce the tendency for land disputes because no individual clan can now claim on the reacquired plantation.

The subdivision of plantation land along village lines and the registration of land are especially desirable for active involvement in commercial use by Siars. It could also stimulate Mis and Nobonob in using their land.
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