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A Function of Marriage Ceremony

MICHIO KITAHARA

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article étudie la cérémonie du mariage comme un rite de passage et analyse le changement éprouvé par l'individu après son mariage. Les résultats de cette étude semblent indiquer qu'au moins une des fonctions de cette cérémonie est d'aider l'individu dans une société rigide du point de vue sexuel à s'adapter à un nouveau style de vie.

Since the mid-1950's, several important works on the phenomena collectively known as the "rites of passage" have appeared. However, although there are some exceptions (Eliade 1965:129ff.; Gluckman 1962; Leach 1961:132-136), most of these works deal only with puberty rites (Bettelheim 1954; Burton & Whiting 1961; Brown 1963; Cohen 1964; Henderson 1967; Whiting, Kluckhohn, & Anthony 1958; Young 1965), and it appears that relatively little attention has been paid to other forms of rite of passage. The purpose of this paper is to examine marriage ceremony by generalizing an assumption underlying certain studies of puberty rites.

PROBLEM

One of the basic assumptions found in several studies of puberty rites is that a rite of passage is conducted in order to deal with a significant change or adjustment of some kind on the part of the self. For example, the puberty rite is seen as a means to interfere with the son's strong Oedipus attachment to his mother due to an exclusive mother-infant sleeping arrangement and/or a long post-partum sexual taboo (Whiting, Kluckhohn,

& Anthony 1958) or to interfere with the son's cross-sex identification with his mother (Burton & Whiting 1961), or to let the boy realize that he must become a member of society at large (Cohen 1964). One of the hypotheses in a study by Brown (1963:843) is that in societies in which patrilocal residence is practiced, if there is also an exclusive mother-infant sleeping arrangement, the girl in these societies tends to have an intense puberty rite, because she first envies her mother but after marriage she must live in a male dominated household. In all of these studies, it is assumed that a puberty rite is conducted in order to rectify an adolescent's old attitudes towards the social environment to which he or she has been accustomed until that time. In a sense, then, a rite of passage can be seen as one form of forced attitude change.

Theoretically, this may be stated as follows. One's life may be seen as a series of fairly well defined stages. Each stage is relatively static, and because of this reason, one develops certain attitudes in response to various phenomena in the social environment associated with each stage. The attitudes and social environments are mutually interdependent on each other. Attitudes are reinforced through cognition of the corresponding social environment, and the boundary of each social environment is defined by the corresponding set of attitudes. Certain specific norms of society are enforced on an individual who is in a certain specific stage, and when these norms are properly translated into his cognitive and emotive structures, the norms are internalized as his attitudes. For example, an unmarried girl may develop certain attitudes towards the self, parents, life, sexual behaviour and so on, in accordance with the norms of her society. She thinks and behaves as she is expected to do in terms of the norms of the society.

However, when it becomes necessary for an individual to move to the next stage in his life cycle, where a new social environment and a corresponding set of attitudes are present, because of habituation, he may not be able to discard the old attitudes of the previous stage and to adjust to the new social environment easily. A rite of passage can be seen as a means of moving an individual from one stage to the next, where new attitudes towards the new social environment must be developed.

By forcing an individual to change his old attitudes, society achieves the purpose of transition.

From a purely empirical point of view, in order to reduce or eliminate one's old attitudes, some form of empirical experience is needed. By experiencing certain significant phenomena in connection with a significant change in one's life, one may be able to deal with the transition more easily. A rite of passage may be considered as a category of phenomenal arrangements in which various forms of experience are presented to the individual who is faced with a new social environment. The importance and necessity of sensory experience for the normal functioning of man indicated by the studies of sensory deprivation (see, e.g., Heron 1961) suggest that the presentation of sensual stimuli is a very important means of dealing with an individual's state of mind.

This reasoning further implies that if the change in one's attitudes after the transition must be great, a large amount of energy must be expended in order to create a phenomenally impressive experience. In contrast, if the change is small, only a small amount of energy is needed, if it is necessary at all, in order to create some kind of specific experience in connection with the transition. Therefore, the following postulate may be presented.

Postulate 1: The greater the difference between one's attitudes before and after the transition, the more elaborate the rite of passage which one experiences.

If marriage is seen in terms of Postulate 1, there are several conceivable changes which are significant enough from the standpoint of the self's experience. For example, the girl in an exogamous society may need a more significant change in attitudes as compared with the girl in an endogamous society if she must become a member of a different community after marriage. A similar reasoning may be applicable to the difference between unilineal societies on the one hand and ambilineal, bilateral, or double descent societies on the other, because if one is a member of a unilineal society and is required to discard one's lineage after marriage, a significant attitude change may be

necessary as compared with marriage in an ambilineal, bilateral, or double descent society.

However, a possibility in which a most significant change in attitude is required has to do with the norms of sexual behaviour. That is, if one is strictly prohibited from engaging in premarital sexual behaviour, one is likely to face a difficulty at marriage, because hetero-sexual behaviour is not only permitted but also expected after marriage. In such a situation, a prohibition suddenly becomes a permission and requirement. This entails a most drastic change in attitude towards sex. From this, it may be possible to say that one conceivable function of marriage ceremony is to help the self to go through this change in attitude towards sexual behaviour. In order to deal with such a drastic change, it is conceivable that an elaborate marriage ceremony is practiced in societies in which premarital sexual behaviour is strictly forbidden. In contrast, if society is tolerant or permissive towards premarital sexual behaviour, marriage may not require such a drastic change in attitude. This implies that marriage ceremony does not have to be elaborate in such a society. It may become more or less a matter of formality, and it can be very simple or even completely absent. Since it appears that throughout the world, the norms of premarital sexual behaviour apply either to both men and women or to women only and are not enforced on men only, this reasoning can be expressed as a hypothesis dealing with the norms of premarital sexual behaviour for females.

Hypothesis 1: In societies in which premarital sexual behaviour is strictly forbidden for females, marriage ceremony is likely to be elaborate, as compared with societies in which premarital sexual behaviour is tolerated or accepted.

METHOD

In order to test Hypothesis 1, sample cultures were drawn from the HRAF quality control sample universe (*Behavior Science Notes* 1967:81-88). This sample universe is based on Murdock's 60 culture areas (1957), and one culture was drawn randomly from each culture area. A sample was drawn from

the "A" quality cultures first, and for those culture areas in which only the "B" quality cultures were available, a separate sample was drawn afterwards.

The sample cultures thus obtained were then examined in regard to the degree of elaboration of marriage ceremony through the reading of the HRAF files (Index No. 585). The informations on the norms of premarital sexual behaviour for females were obtained from Column 78 of Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas* (1967). Categories P and V of Column 78 were combined and considered as "strict", and Categories A, F, and T were also combined and considered as "permissive". Category E includes those cultures in which the problem of premarital sexual behaviour is not applicable because of early marriage of females. For this reason, the sample cultures belonging to this category were excluded from the sample. If a given sample culture was inadequate as regards at least one of the two needed informations, it was substituted by another culture of the same culture area whenever possible. In two culture areas (Plains and Prairie of North America) the HRAF files were inadequate in regard to the information on the elaboration of marriage ceremony, and ethnographic monographs on the Cheyenne (Dorsey 1884:260) and the Omaha (Grinnell 1923:142-144) were used for these areas. In this way, 52 cultures were examined for the testing of Hypothesis 1.

The data on the elaboration of marriage ceremony were coded by the author into two categories: (1) none or very simple, and (2) reasonably elaborate or elaborate. The criteria used for this dichotomy were the presence or absence of (1) a bridal procession, (2) a feast, (3) music or dance, and (4) a game or horseplay. In addition, such minor factors as the presence or absence of body painting, special wedding clothes, an oath before a third party such as a priest, and an instruction to the couple were secondarily taken into account. In order to avoid any possibility of bias as much as possible, the coding was done first without the knowledge of Column 78. Practically in all cases, the dichotomization of the sample cultures into two categories was clear-cut. Only one culture (Cheyenne) was on the borderline in this regard.

Two cultures presented a different kind of problem. Among the Navaho, common law marriage is widely practiced, and in this case, there is no marriage ceremony. Normatively, premarital sexual relations are prohibited but weakly sanctioned among the Navaho, and their marriage ceremony is reasonably elaborate. In effect, then, there are two Navaho cultures. One is permissive and does not require marriage ceremony, and the other is strict and requires marriage ceremony. This posed a problem, but since common law marriage can be considered as a deviation from the norm, and since it exists in other cultures as well, the normative aspects of Navaho culture were taken into account.

A similar problem exists for the Ifugao. Among them, commoners need not have any ceremony to start marriage, but four separate ceremonies and gifts to the bride's kin from the groom are required later. In this case, the ceremonies are not contiguous to marriage in time, and the experience derived from the ceremonies may not have the same impact as in the situation in which they are conducted at the time of marriage. In this sense, the Ifugao, as in the case of the Navaho, have two subcultures. Here again, the normative aspects of the culture were taken into account.

For the testing of the significance of correlation, Yates's "correction for continuity" formula was used for calculating X^2 .

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the finding. This is significant at the .025 level by the X^2 test ($X^2 = 3.87$; $P < .025$, one-tailed). A significant correlation exists between the elaboration of marriage ceremony and the norms of premarital sexual behaviour for females, and Hypothesis 1 has been supported.

DEVIANT CASES

According to the assumption underlying Hypothesis 1, marriage ceremony is elaborate in societies in which the norms of premarital sexual behaviour for females are strict because an

TABLE I. — *Relationship between the norms of premarital sexual behaviour for females and the elaboration of marriage ceremony.*

		Norms of premarital sexual behaviour for females		
		Permissive	Strict	
Marriage ceremony:	Trukese	Andamanese	Aleut	
	Kapauku	Tarahumana	Northern Pomo	
	Mataco	Iroquois	Omaha	
	Bororo	Trobrianders	Chippewa	
	Toda	Tallensi	Rwala	
Simple or none	Chukchee	Mundurucu		
	Masai	Tiv	Somali	Cuna
Reasonably elaborate or elaborate	Ifugao	Aymara	Koreans	Wolof
	Ila		Iban	Zazzagawa
	Fang		Tlingit	Jivaro
	Lapps		Navaho	Ahaggaren
	Lau		Bhil	Macassarese
	Tikopia		Yahgan	Serbs
	Nama		Ganda	Kurd
	Yakut		Ashanti	Annamese
	Thonga		Amhara	Malays
	Lepcha		Irish	Cheyenne

$$X^2 = 3.87; P < .025, \text{ one-tailed.}$$

elaborate marriage ceremony helps sexual adjustment after marriage. This does not mean that in those societies in which the premarital sexual norms are permissive, marriage ceremony is necessarily absent or very simple because an elaborate marriage ceremony in such a society is not detrimental to sexual adjustment. This implies that deviant cases are less likely to be found among the strict societies, and indeed that is the case. Among the

strict societies, 81% of them fall in the expected category, but only 48% of the permissive societies fall in the expected category.

An examination of the strict societies having no or a very simple marriage ceremony is instructive. Among the Chippewa, premarital sex relations are prohibited and strongly sanctioned. Yet common law marriage is practiced. In reality, then, this culture should be seen as a more permissive one than the data suggest. This at least implies that the Chippewa are not truly incompatible with Hypothesis 1. Among the Northern Pomo, often a man stays with a woman several nights before he decides to marry her. The ethnographic description is not clear whether or not this is the same as a trial marriage, however. In the case of the Rwala, there is no feast or dance, and often even the relatives of either the bride or the groom do not know that there has been a wedding. Furthermore, neither of the engaged couple needs to be present when a camel is sacrificed as part of the marriage ceremony. But interestingly enough, a procession to the groom's tent is made by the bride and her female friends with songs and shouts. This may or may not suggest the existence of more elaborate ceremony in the past. In the case of the Aleut, although no formal ceremony is conducted, a feast and an entertainment are held in connection with a marriage.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

In addition to the norms of premarital sexual behaviour, there are other factors which can be seen in connection with the extent of the elaboration of marriage ceremony. At least three such factors may be recognized. First, it is conceivable that if one is a member of an exogamous group and is required to leave one's original group at marriage, the change in the social environment is likely to be greater as compared with the situation in which marriage is endogamous. This implies that in exogamous societies, marriage ceremony is more elaborate than in endogamous societies. This "exogamy hypothesis" was tested on the basis of the data from Column 19 of *Ethnographic Atlas* (Murdock 1967). The 52 sample cultures were divided into two categories in terms of these data. The cultures belonging to Categories D and S were combined and considered as endogamous, and the cultures

belonging to Categories C, E, and T were also combined and considered as exogamous. There were 18 cultures belonging to Category A (agamous communities) and they were excluded from the sample. The result was in the expected direction but this was statistically insignificant ($X^2 = 1.68$; $P < .10$, one-tailed).

Second, there is what might be called the "lineage hypothesis". In a unilineal society, the lineage of either husband or wife is not taken into account, and this implies that an individual who loses his or her lineage after marriage experiences a more significant change in the social environment after marriage, as compared with the situation in an ambilineal, bilateral, or double descent society. Therefore, more elaborate marriage ceremony is conceivable in unilineal societies to deal with this change. Column 24 of *Ethnographic Atlas* was used in order to test this hypothesis, involving the same 52 cultures. The cultures belonging to Categories A, B, K, Q, R, and S were combined and considered as ambilineal or bilateral, and the cultures of Category O were considered as unilineal. Afterwards, these cultures were checked in regard to the possibility of double descent on the basis of the data of Columns 20 and 22. Three cultures (Toda, Wolof, and Ashanti) were of this type and they were removed from the unilineal category and transferred to the other category. The result shows there is no significant correlation between unilineal descent and the elaboration of marriage ceremony ($X^2 = .03$; $P < .45$, one-tailed).

Third, it is possible to think that marriage ceremony might be a means to prevent divorce. If one goes through an elaborate marriage ceremony, one may possibly realize the importance and seriousness of marriage, and accordingly, one may not think of divorce easily. In order to test this hypothesis, 62 cultures included in a study of divorce by Ackerman (1963) were used. Twenty two of the author's 52 cultures were also included in Ackerman's sample, and they were examined by means of Finney's table for the Fisher's Exact Test (Finney 1948). The result shows there is no correlation between the rates of divorce and the elaboration of marriage ceremony.

Thus, if Hypothesis 1 is compared with these three other hypotheses, it appears that the norms of premarital sexual

behaviour is far more closely correlated with the extent of the elaboration of marriage ceremony among the sample cultures studied. This does not necessarily mean that one is the direct result of the other. The existence of many deviant cases, especially the permissive societies having elaborate ceremonies is against such a simplistic interpretation. Nevertheless, in view of this finding, it is reasonable to think that at least one important function of elaborate marriage ceremony in strict societies is to help an individual being married to adjust to a new life in which the exactly opposite sexual behaviour is expected. This reasoning automatically entails the problem of "manifest" and "latent" functions (Merton 1957:60ff.) as well as that of "emic" and "etic" (see, e.g., Harris 1968:Chap. 20). Whatever the insiders' knowledge of the function of sexual adjustment, judging from the significant statistical correlation between marriage ceremony and the norms of premarital sexual behaviour, this function appears to be a conceivable one.

In addition to these four factors, namely (1) prohibition of premarital sexual behaviour, (2) exogamy, (3) unilineal descent, and (4) prevention of divorce, two situational factors may be mentioned. By nature, these factors deal with certain specific situations and they may not be applicable to most societies. For this reason, it is not proper to examine them by means of a statistical test and to evaluate their validity.

First, it is possible to think of marriage ceremony as a means to deal with a significant status change. According to Nicolaisen (1963:475), this interpretation is applicable to the case of the Ahaggaren. In this society, cross-cousin marriage is practiced, and man and his future wife maintain a joking relationship until marriage. But at marriage, this relationship must be terminated and wife must show great respect for husband. Nicolaisen says (1963:475): "One of the functions of the wedding ceremony is change of the free behaviour between partners into a respect relation". Furthermore, a husband and wife enter into many in-law relationships as a result of marriage. New joking relations must be established, and at the same time, they must have an avoidance relation with their true and classificatory parents-in-law (Nicolaisen 1963:475).

Second, it may be possible that an elaborate marriage ceremony is given to the conformable girl who has remained chaste until marriage. At least one society is suggestive in this regard. Among the Wolof, if the bride turns out to be a virgin, more festivities are added, and she can demand anything as a reward. This explanation is also compatible with the fact that in societies in which a virginity test is required on the wedding night, marriage ceremony tends to be very elaborate.

CONCLUSION

It should be stated clearly that, by nature, marriage is the basis of an important social institution called the family, which is closely related to the other institutions of society. For this reason, it is not desirable to try to explain the function of marriage ceremony by means of one or two factors deterministically. However, it is also possible to say that the meaning of marriage and marriage ceremony can be seen in terms of the self's point of view as well. In this paper, the emphasis is on the way the self experiences its social environment. If marriage ceremony is seen as a rite of passage, it is possible to focus our attention on the change the self experiences after marriage. The results of this study seem to suggest that at least one function of marriage ceremony is to help the individual in a sexually strict society to adjust to a new life in which a drastically different form of behaviour is expected and required.

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Fishermen of the Middle Mekong

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article tente de fournir des renseignements de base sur les types de pêche pratiqués dans la section du moyen Mekong et ses affluents. L'auteur tente d'inventorier les types de changements que les pêcheurs auront à effectuer pour exploiter leur milieu maintenant modifié par la construction d'un barrage.

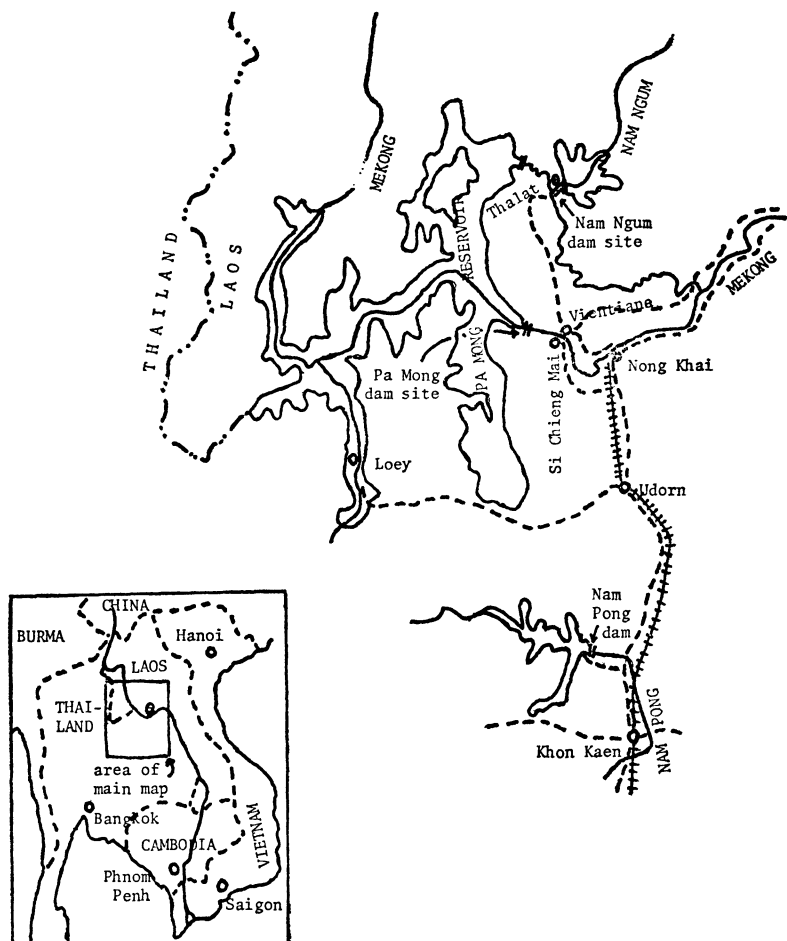
"The Mekong¹ River... one of the mightiest streams in the world is in the process of being harnessed for the advantage of mankind. Either directly or indirectly, some 40 million inhabitants in this corner of Asia stand to benefit from the multiple uses of running water" (Schaaf and Fifield 1963:3). One of the resources of the Mekong River which is of great present significance and of even greater future potential is fish. While some information exists in regard to the organization of human groups for harvesting this resource in the lower reaches of the Mekong (Bardach 1959; d'Aubenton 1962-63; Fily 1962-63),

¹ Field work was carried on during the summer of 1969. The bulk of the time was spent in observing and interviewing fishermen and fisheries advisors along the Mekong itself (from Nong Khai upstream past the proposed Pa Mong dam site to King Amphur Song Kam.) Shorter periods were spent investigating the fishing operations on the Nam Pong reservoir recently created by the construction of the Ubolratana dam in Changwat Khon Kaen, and on the Nam Ngum (in the vicinity of the proposed Nam Ngum dam site) in Laos. Throughout the period of field work attention was given to the economic chains by which the fish pass from fisherman to the ultimate consumer.

The research was supported by a grant from the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, and forms a part of a coordinated program of research undertaken, with SEADAG support, by a group of social and biological scientists who had been meeting regularly during the academic year to discuss with officials from government and various international agencies problems of Mekong development. In addition to SEADAG support, supplemental support for all research activities while in Thailand and Laos was generously provided by the Office of Regional Development of the American Embassy, Bangkok.

little is known of the situation further upstream. This area focused on Vientiane, the administrative capital of Laos, and the Thai town of Nong Khai is of particular interest as it is here that planning for a major, multipurpose dam project is furthest advanced (Bureau of Reclamation 1970). This dam, Pa Mong, will dramatically alter the environment upstream, changing a swiftly flowing river into a reservoir close to 4,000 square kilometers in extent (see figure 1).

FIGURE 1. — *Map of the Mekong Basin, Northeast Thailand and Laos*



The present study is an attempt to provide some base-line information on the types of fishing activity presently engaged in on this section of the Mekong and its tributaries, and to assess some of the types of adaptive changes fishermen will be required to make in order to exploit this changed environment. Unfortunately, socioeconomic survey data on fishermen of this section of the river (Maskasme 1968), although meticulously collected, tend to becloud a factor of fundamental importance in considering the problems of development in the area, that is, the ethnic identity of the groups involved in fishing activities. Perhaps even more unfortunate is the fact that this failure to differentiate between two groups presently exploiting the river's resources has been perpetuated in the *Pa Mong Stage One Feasibility Report* (Bureau of Reclamation 1970:ix,6).

MAINSTREAM FISHING

In general, neither the Thai nor the Lao are full-time or commercial fishermen. Almost every family in the villages along the Mekong (as well as in nonriverine villages) devotes a portion of its daily activity to catching fish. However, the fish are specifically sought as food, not for sale. The family living in a permanent village along the river either owns or has access to agricultural lands, and the pursuit of agriculture is considered the family's chief occupation. For fishing to be undertaken in a systematic, commercial fashion it would require not only releasing one or more productive members of the family from farming, but also would involve capital expenditure for more elaborate fishing gear. Furthermore the farmer shies away from involvement in co-operative ventures, such as would be required for efficient large-scale fishing; he is suspicious of his neighbors, especially when his own financial resources are involved.

Villagers along the river report occasional daily catches for consumption of up to two kilograms per family. However, the average daily catch tends to be only a kilogram or less. Villagers also feel that over the last fifteen to twenty years the quantity of fish caught in the river has decreased significantly. They attribute this to the use by "other villages" of vastly improved gear. If there is any basis in fact to the villagers' contention,

it is probably due to an increased Vietnamese fishing population (see below) rather than to any improvements in fishing gear.

To the Thai and Lao peasant, fishing is an enjoyable pastime as well as a subsistence occupation. Men look forward to making an overnight jaunt to a particularly good fishing site. They also on occasion go fishing to avoid arduous agricultural tasks such as transplanting rice. Groups of children on their way home from school are constantly seen splashing through the smaller rivers and flooded fields in pursuit of enjoyment, and also fish. Groups of women frequently sit together and gossip, relaxing from normal household chores, while working their dip nets in shallow spots in the river or in nearby ponds and fields.

As one moves farther downstream, there appears to be a gradual increase in the rate of villagers' exploitation of river fish. This takes the form of seasonal blocking of larger and larger tributaries and finally, in the area of Khone Falls, the Mekong itself. Tributary damming customarily occurs at the end of the rains when fish are returning to the Mekong after spawning. A catch of six tons at one of these dams is not uncommon. However, as all fish in the tributary are caught regardless of degree of maturity, widespread adoption of this method would have serious consequences for populations of the species concerned. The damming of the river at Khone Falls, although illegal, is done twice a year — as the fish ascend the river to spawn and again at their descent after spawning. The Laotian government is attempting, with only partial success, to prevent this form of fishing in the river.

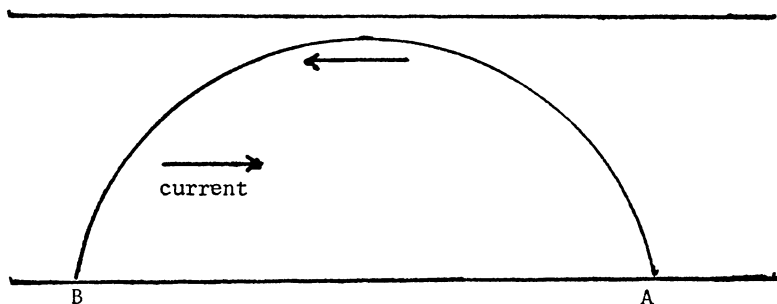
It is reported that the surveyed section of the Mekong annually yields a fish harvest of some 2,300 metric tons (Pantulu and Vardach 1969). This marketable harvest is not produced by the Thai or Lao villager, but by a large Vietnamese population (over 50 per cent of the total population in certain amphurs of Nong Khai). The Vietnamese population is largely on the Thai side of the river, thus explaining the far smaller amount of fishing activity on the Lao side. These fishermen have no permanent villages, but set up temporary camps of river-grass huts on the low-water sand bars of the river, moving, as

the river rises, to higher but still gently sloping ground. Such a camp may consist of only one family dwelling, but more common is a camp consisting of four or five related families, each in its own hut. The largest such camp observed during this study consisted of fourteen houses. In theory, at least, the land on which the camp is erected belongs to a particular permanent village, and the squatters are obliged to pay rent to the village. However, in most cases the rent appears not to be paid. Unlike the fishing camp sites on the islands of the Nam Pong reservoir (see below) the river camps are not physically isolated from the permanent villages, but their social isolation is just as complete. Because they are a migrant, refugee population, ethnically distinct from the Thai villagers, they have no access to the social life of the village, nor to its religious, educational, medical, or protective facilities. Characteristically, even the path leading from the camp to the road on which the village is located and over which the fish must be transported to market does not enter the village but skirts it, even at the expense of involving a greater distance.

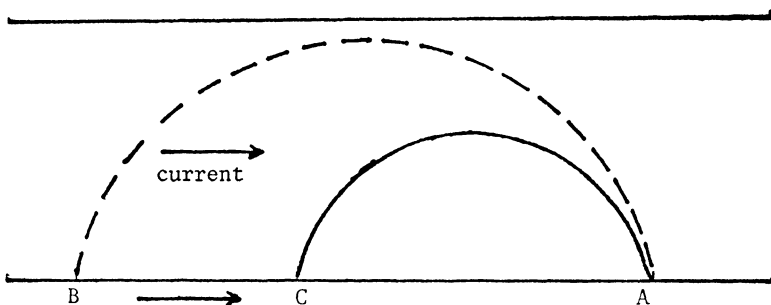
Fishing in these camps is a full-time occupation, except during the time of very high water, when the fishermen go inland attempting to find wage labor. Generally, all members of the camp, if it is small, co-operate in the major operation; if it is a large camp, subgroups of twelve to twenty members (women and children included) are formed on the basis of closeness of kinship to undertake these tasks. On the Mekong itself most of the fishing is done with the *mong* or large gill net (see figure 2), while near the mouths of the tributaries and in two or three sheltered (and more permanent) locations on the mainstream, the Vietnamese fisherman makes use of the *sadung*, a large dip net operated from a floating base (see figure 3).

Two factors tend to differentiate the *mong* fishermen from the *sadung* fishermen. In the first place the working unit is somewhat smaller in the latter type of fishing. A man and wife can manage to operate the equipment alone, but a family of four or five is preferable. If assistance is required from someone not belonging to the nuclear family, he is either given

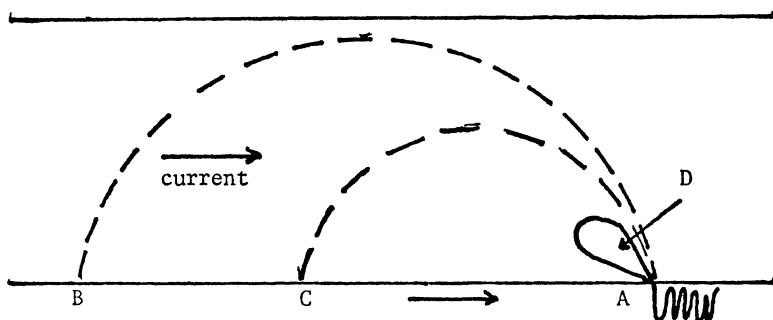
FIGURE 2. — Operation of the mong or Large Gill Net.



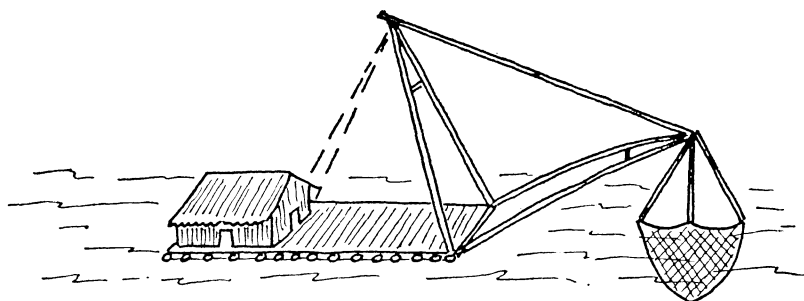
A. Mong secured at point A, paid out from boat in arc to point B.



B. As group hauls in mong at point A, one or two men (C) return along shore toward point A with far end of mong.



C. Far end of mong returned to point A, most of mong arranged on beach, hauling group removes fish from small net circle D.

FIGURE 3. — *The sadung or Large Dip Net.*

an equal share of the catch or is repaid by reciprocal labor (in any case, he is a member of the same camp and, therefore, a relative). The second differentiating factor is that because of the size and basic unseaworthiness of the *sadung*, these fishermen usually live in semipermanent or even permanent camps (they are still considered camps because of the impermanent construction of the dwellings). Such permanence greatly facilitates the exercise of administrative control. One of the least popular measures of control (and apparently enforced only among the Vietnamese fishermen in Thailand) is a closed season on tributary fishing during the spawning season from the middle of June until the end of September. Fishermen thus must run the risk of arrest if they continue fishing, move to temporary camps along the mainstream, or pursue a temporary, nonfishing occupation, such as wage labor or duck raising.

In neither of these types of commercial fishing are the yields particularly great. An average haul of the gill net (which takes about one and one-half hours and involves four to six people constantly with up to fourteen during the hauling in of the net) produces only about four to five kilograms of fish; no fisherman interviewed could recall a haul yielding more than twelve kilograms. The dip net may yield considerably more per haul, particularly when large quantities of fish are migrating up or down the tributary, but the yield is less certain and many hauls produce nothing. Thus each type of fishing probably yields a daily average of no more than twenty kilograms of fish. The fish caught during the day are stored live in submerged baskets

until the following morning, when they are either collected by a wholesaler or transported to market by a member of the fisherman's family.

As is pointed out by Pantulu and Bardach (1969), "fishing techniques and gear are generally inefficient and inadequate, and admit of improvements." By far the most common type of fishing gear in the area of the Mekong surveyed was the gill net. These nets varied in size from small, relatively fine-meshed nets, 40 to 50 meters long that could be handled by a man alone or working with his wife, to large, big-meshed nets up to a kilometer long requiring twelve to fifteen persons to handle. In no case was the gill net of great depth, the deepest observed being less than two meters. Use of the larger nets was confined to the Vietnamese fishing camps, discussed above, and the labor to set and haul them was recruited from the group of coresident kinsmen. Many of the smaller nets, usually set drifting from a small boat, were also operated by Vietnamese; however, a small number of Thai and Lao were also observed using such gear. In all, on the stretch of river between Nong Khai and Si Chiang Mai (a stretch of almost 50 kilometers), 45 gill netting operations were observed in the course of one morning. During the same period, only five *sadung* were noted, located at the mouths of tributaries or in sheltered spots along the river. Because the *sadung* cannot be operated in very swift water, there were undoubtedly far fewer at this time than during periods of lower and slower water in the river; and, of course, as pointed out above, many of the *sadung* (whether operating legally or not) are located slightly up the tributaries, out of sight from the mainstream.

A large number of minor types of fishing gear were observed along the river, and also in the inland ponds and flooded fields. Such equipment as casting nets (used by men), small dip nets (used by women and children), a variety of traps and weirs, and hooked lines suspended from poles in the river are to be found wherever there is water. While by far the most numerous type of equipment, this gear is of little or no commercial importance, although it is of considerable significance in providing the farm family with protein.

Three illegal methods of harvesting fish in the Mekong have been reported as being fairly widespread. The first of these was mentioned above, namely the practice of totally blocking the mouth of a tributary stream, or in places the mainstream itself, and harvesting all the fish moving in either direction. The two other methods, apparently far more prevalent on the Laotian side of the river, involve the use of explosives (dynamite or, more often, hand grenades) and poisons (usually in the form of insecticides.) While all three of these fishing methods result in large marketable harvests, their continued use would obviously be disastrous to long-range fisheries development. Thai fisheries officials working with local police and administrative personnel have been fairly successful in halting the first practice; and totally so, if reports are to be believed, in halting the latter two. In Laos, where the number of fisheries officers is totally inadequate for their manifold tasks, it is alleged that it is the police and military (who have access to the materials) who are in fact reaping the illegal fish harvests.

RESERVOIR FISHING

With the completion of the Ubolratana dam across the Nam Pong in 1965, significant changes began to occur in the patterns of local fishing. Most dramatic was the transition, as the reservoir filled, from small-scale subsistence fishing along the Nam Pong and its minor tributaries to a relatively large-scale commercial fishery on the reservoir in association with a number of sales and distribution points along the shore. Of particular relevance is the fact that these developments were not planned in advance; in fact neither the fishermen nor the distribution points "are supposed to be there" at all. As in the case of mainstream Mekong fishing it is important to differentiate between the commercial fishermen and the subsistence fishermen operating on the Nam Pong reservoir. The latter, again, are primarily farmers living in settled villages and fishing largely for the use of their own families. These part-time fishermen do occasionally, particularly during slack periods in the agricultural cycle, devote sufficient time to fishing so that they produce a marketable

surplus; but evidence indicates that their contribution to the total commercial fishery of the reservoir is relatively insignificant.

By far the most important element in commercial reservoir fishing is the group of migrant, full-time fishermen. Because of the impermanence of their settlements, an accurate assessment of the full-time fishing population and its fluctuations since the filling of the reservoir is difficult to make. On the basis of observations of the present study, there are possibly as many as one thousand full-time fishing families on the reservoir. It is probable that this represents a total decrease in population from a peak in 1966 or 1967. A major factor in this population decrease is the fisherman's dissatisfaction with life on the reservoir. This includes not only the fact that the fishing camps are isolated and lack any form of organized community services, but also the fact that the traditional "good life" is the life of a rice farmer. Thus there has been a large turnover in the reservoir fishing population. At first, the majority of the fishermen were people whose lands and villages had been flooded out by the reservoir. As these people were able to move off onto agricultural land either in a resettlement area or in an established village, their place was taken by others from farther away wishing to acquire money through fishing to enable them to settle permanently as agriculturalists. Today a majority of the people coming to the reservoir as fishermen are moving from the central plains, where conditions of tenancy or loss of land have driven them to seek the same route to permanency.

Because, as on the Mekong, fishing conditions are best on the gently sloping reservoir shores, seasonal water-level fluctuations render it impossible to have villages permanently situated on the shore. In fact, a village which is right at the edge of the reservoir during high water can be as far as three kilometers from the closest access to the reservoir where the most productive fishing is carried on. Consequently, practically all the settlements from which commercial fishing is done are temporary camps composed of tiny, bamboo and grass dwellings, and lacking in any form of sanitation or health facilities, schools, temples, or formal means of social control. Unlike the fishing camps along the Mekong River, however, these camps often

contain up to twenty dwelling units, each housing a nuclear family; but there are no ties of kinship binding the families of a community together. In fact, the resident families of a single camp may come from as many as five different changwats. Arguments are common, thefts of fish from the nets of others or of the nets themselves occur quite regularly, and, unless there is a particularly forceful man who can serve as mediator within the camp, these often lead to violence and the break-up of the camp.

Land on which the fishing camps are situated is for the most part included within the area of the reservoir (at full high water) and as such is the property of the Northeast Electricity Authority. Occupancy of this land is illegal (the fishermen interpret this to mean that they should be paying rent for the use of it); however, the almost impossible task of removing "squatters" has not been, nor is it likely to be attempted. As indicated above, social tensions not uncommonly cause the movement of at least a portion of a fishing camp to another location. Real or imagined shifts in the concentration of reservoir fish also contribute to mobility. The greatest movement occurs during the rice-growing season, when high water reduces the numbers of fishing shoals and when the opportunities for agricultural wage work or other labor are most abundant. The fishermen are generally not happy with their existence on the reservoir. Specific grievances include: (1) the lack of any formal authority to control theft and social conflict; (2) insufficient income, for which blame is placed less on profits taken by various middlemen and relatively inefficient fishing gear than on the government's failure to stock the reservoir with fish; and (3) the forests of trees left standing in the reservoir basin, which frequently cause great damage to nets and which preclude the use of more efficient, deeper reaching equipment.

Permanent villages located near the reservoir edge have felt the effect of the reservoir mainly in terms of loss of rice-growing land. While individuals affected were compensated for what they lost, the gradual decline in water level has caused some of the lost land to be usable once more, leading to numerous disputes over rights to the new lands. Fishing in these

communities has tended to increase considerably, but only as a secondary, subsistence occupation. During low water the reservoir is relatively inaccessible to the village, while at high water, when fish resources are accessible, the population is engaged in heavy agricultural activities.

Fishing gear is similar to that used on the rivers, but the special conditions of reservoir fishing cause some forms to be more popular than others. Subsistence fishing techniques along the shores of the reservoir and in the tributary streams and channels are similar to those elsewhere: small dip nets, casting nets, relatively few traps, and the use of small gill nets no more than two meters in length which can be set by one man across a small tributary or channel. On the reservoir itself, by far the most common type of gear is the drift gill net. These are set by the fisherman from his boat in the late afternoon and pulled in the morning. The fishermen have experimented with daytime netting but find that the larger night yields outweigh the greater opportunities for theft and damage by submerged trees. While these nets are relatively expensive, costing up to three hundred baht (\$15), most of the fishermen fully own their equipment and do not appear to be involved in debt relationships with middlemen or suppliers. Both large dip nets (*sadung*) and long lines have been tried by the reservoir fishermen, but have been found to yield fewer fish than the gill nets; because of submerged vegetation, drag netting has not been attempted. Considerable use, however, is made of "jack-light" spearing of larger fish. As on the river, a certain amount of illegal dynamiting, use of insecticides, and electric shock is practiced on the reservoir. Fisheries officials are concerned about these practices, but are unable to enlist the co-operation of the police in controlling them.

Fisheries officials are presently completing a survey of yields from the Nam Pong reservoir (only the two landing sites in Changwat Khon Kaen, but not the one in Changwat Udorn), and until its publication only rough estimates of yield and their changes from year to year can be made. Bardach (1968) estimates a total annual yield of some 1,400 metric tons per year, while FAO estimates an annual yield of some 680 metric tons in 1965-66, the first year of impoundment (Sidthimunka *et al.* 1969).

Since 1968, both fishermen and fish wholesalers feel the total yields have been decreasing. However, it is possible that this represents in fact a small annual increase in fish population, but a more significant reduction in the population of active fishermen. The fishermen are unhappy and would like to see massive government stocking; the middlemen are quite satisfied as there is no glut on the market and prices can be kept high.

The fishing operations observed along the Nam Ngum, just downstream from the site of dam construction generally conformed to the pattern of Thai-Lao subsistence fishing. Most of the activity on the river involved the use of casting nets operated from boats, and fishing gear for sale in the shops of Ban Thalut consisted exclusively of these nets. Reports indicate that individual fishermen harvest a surplus more frequently than Thai and Lao fishermen along the Mekong. This is sold in the local market, making up the bulk of its fish supply; thus on an average of two or three days a week nonfishing families of the area may be able to purchase fish.

In order effectively to exploit the fisheries resources of the Nam Ngum reservoir when it comes into existence, a number of problems will have to be overcome. First of all, as Laos lacks the degree of population pressure found in Thailand, much of the Nam Ngum fishing activity will probably be in the hands of local fishermen. Judging by the observations of this study, considerable effort will have to be put into training the fishermen in the use of new gear and equipment. (This problem will be less acute for Pa Mong, an area in which, because of the size of the present river, fishermen are already employing relatively sophisticated techniques.) Present fishing activity in the area is on a completely individual basis. It is felt by many officials and advisors, however, that proper exploitation of the reservoir will demand some form of supra-individual co-operation. So far, workers in the area have had little success in producing this type of co-operation in any of their projects (it is reported that the Pathet Lao have had some success in "communalizing" villages in their areas of control). The general problem of tree clearance to facilitate types of deep fishing is complicated in the Nam Ngum reservoir basin by political and security

considerations. It is still uncertain how timber rights (estimated to be worth five million dollars) will be allocated, or if they will be at all. Assuming that they are, the problems of security and access still remain; the reservoir basin is an area of rather firm Pathet Lao control. In order to avoid some of the problems encountered on the Nam Pong reservoir, adequate planning should be undertaken for landing sites with access to major markets. Although a rim road around the reservoir is planned, no thought appears to have been given to fish wholesaling and distribution facilities; in fact, it is rumored that all lands around the reservoir have been, or soon will be, allocated as bungalow sites to elite families from Vientiane.

POND AND FIELD FISHING

Fishing in ponds, both natural and artificial, and in flooded rice fields is widespread throughout Laos and Thailand. While of little commercial importance at present, there is considerable potential for development of these resources, and both the Thai and Laotian governments are encouraging farmers to increase their pond and field production. In general, this fishing is identical to the subsistence fishing on the Thai and Lao farmer along the rivers and reservoirs, relying almost entirely on the natural fish populations and employing the same simple and inexpensive gear. One added harvesting technique, which often produces a surplus for intravillage distribution, involves scooping the fish out of the mud after water has been drained off the rice fields. On some of the natural lakes and ponds in Changwat Nong Khai, "inland fisheries" are somewhat more developed. The equipment is the same, but usually with the addition of a boat from which men operate their casting nets. Such lake fishing is for the most part subsistence oriented, but a small surplus is usually produced which can be marketed directly by the fisherman's wife, or through a wholesaler. The cash returns from this "subsistence-plus" fishing are minimal, but they do provide a slight margin of difference between these people and those who market no fish at all.

Both the Thai and Lao fisheries departments are involved in programs of research, extension, pond engineering, and breed-

ing of tilapia and carp stock. It is anticipated by officials that these activities can be naturally expanded when and if it seems desirable to stock present or planned reservoirs with fish (at Nam Pong this desirability will be assessed, in part, in terms of the findings of the fish census presently nearing completion). The Lao fish propagation stations are expected to become self-supporting after their first year of operation (1970). For instance, the station at Nong Teng expects to produce 1,300,000 carp and tilapia fingerlings for sale to farmers at three kip (approximately 1¢) each, and in addition some 35 tons of adult fish for sale in the Vientiane markets at an average price of 550 kip (\$1.10 free exchange) per kilogram.

Many officials consider that the breeding-extension-stocking programs have been of relatively great success, but in fact little control, or even observation, has been exercised after the farmer has been provided with his fingerlings. The assumption is that the farmer manages his fish efficiently and thus significantly adds to the protein intake of his family (as this is presumed to be a subsistence rather than commercial activity). It is true that a number of private fish farms run by officials and military men, where the fingerlings are carefully protected and maintained, have resulted in handsome profits for their owners (these fish are raised to be marketed). However, some experts seriously question the success of the stocking programs aimed at the farmer. Even the government stations are experiencing fry and fingerling mortality rates often as high as 85 per cent. At Nong Teng an elaborate fence had to be erected around the open tanks to keep snakes and frogs from decimating the fish population. In addition to this, farmers' ponds rapidly become clogged with destructive aquatic weeds. Perhaps the most serious problem of all is the very common practice in both Thailand and Laos of a farmer coming to the fisheries station, purchasing a plastic bag full of fingerlings, and taking them home for his wife to cook for dinner.

MARKETING

The social and economic processes involved in getting the fish from the fisherman to the ultimate consumer are basically the same throughout the area of the present study. The variations

which do occur consist simply of the addition or removal of links in the economic chain, always in the middleman position. While the general pattern is for the fisherman to sell to a middleman-wholesaler who in turn sells the fish to the retailer in the market, fishermen near the market center sometimes sell directly to the retailer (direct sales to the consumer by the fisherman do not occur). On the other hand, particularly where distances from the fishing grounds to the market are great, intermediate boatmen and truckers may be added to the chain. This latter situation will be discussed further below in connection with reservoir marketing problems.

Along the Mekong it is customary for the wholesaler to visit a fixed group of fishing camps early each morning. Here the fish, which have been caught the previous day and stored in basket cages, are sorted according to species and size and bought by the middleman. In some cases the fishermen meet the wholesaler on the village road, at the end of the path leading to the fishing camp, to accomplish the sale. In any event each camp ordinarily deals with only one wholesaler, who thus obligates himself to take all but the smallest and most inferior fish. On the Thai side of the river, middlemen, like fishermen and also the retailers, are usually Vietnamese. In addition to the local supply of fish, most wholesalers receive a fixed daily shipment of fish from Bangkok and Khon Kaen. Only the wealthier wholesalers, dealing with large volumes, import marine fish, but almost all receive at least a small daily consignment of Central Thai catfish. With his local and exotic fish on hand, the wholesaler determines on the basis of quantity and quality how best to dispose of his local fish. Better quality fish, and average fish if there is a local surplus, are passed on to agents for sale in Vientiane; the rest is taken to the local market for retailing. At this stage various types of relationships are possible. The wholesaler may actually hire women to sell his fish; he prefers this arrangement if he can be sure of a large and regular supply, as in this way he can retain a greater share of the sale price. Another arrangement popular with large volume wholesalers is to contract for regular sale a fixed amount of fish at a fixed price to a constant group of retailers. Probably most of the middlemen are content with simply selling their fish on a

competitive basis to any interested retailer. While this method exposes them to the dangers of downward price fluctuation, it does not require them to provide a fixed amount of fish daily. Finally, some of the least well-established wholesalers may market their fish directly to the consumer. This alternative is not a popular one, as all the wholesalers are male whereas the retailers are mostly women. It is probably only resorted to as a temporary expedient when the wholesaler has an extremely small supply of fish.

It is clear that the demand for fish in the markets of northeast Thailand and Laos far exceeds the supply. Fish stalls are almost invariably bare within two hours of the delivery of the fish. Furthermore, from one-third to over one-half of the fish in any major market in the area, including Khon Kaen, has been imported from outside of the area. The proportion of fish from various sources in the Laotian markets is variable, both from market to market and from day to day, but the following daily figures are illustrative. In one Vientiane market total sales included 122 kilograms of sea fish from Thailand, 181 kilograms of pond and field fish from Laos, 170 kilograms of fresh water fish legally imported from Thailand, and another 192 kilograms of Mekong River fish, probably largely brought over informally from the Thai town of Si Chieng Mai. In the larger evening market in Vientiane total sales included 882 kilograms of Bangkok sea fish, 400 kilograms of legally imported Thai fresh-water fish, and 1,077 kilograms of "Lao" fish, including Mekong fish, a portion of which certainly came from Thailand. The situation in Savannakhet is similar; in one market survey it was found that 168 kilograms of Thai fish were sold as compared with only 81 kilograms of Laotian fish. There seems no question that there will continue to be a demand for whatever fish resources can be developed in future reservoirs in the area.

There is considerable variation in the retail price of fish (e.g., from about five baht (25¢) per kilogram for various small fish no longer than about thirty centimeters, to forty or fifty baht (\$2.00 to \$2.50) per kilo for some of the choice large river fish). However, there is relatively little variation in price paid the fisherman, which varies from three and one-half to five baht

(17¢-25¢) per kilogram. For the great majority of fish caught (and sold) the fisherman can expect to sell at four baht (20¢), the wholesaler sells to the retailer at eight baht (40¢), and the consumer pays ten baht (50¢); if extra links are added to this chain, their profit comes from the wholesaler's share. Thus a fisherman with a near maximum catch would have a daily income of forty baht (\$2.00); a large wholesaler with standing orders of twenty kilograms from 25 retailers would receive 2,000 baht (\$100), out of which he must maintain his truck and generally provide ice; and the retailer would make forty baht (\$2.00). Because of the price variation mentioned above, the retailer is often in a position to profit more, as her mark-up on some of the most desirable fish may be as high as ten baht (50¢) per kilogram.

An important difference exists between river fisheries and reservoir fisheries in terms of their location relative to market centers, and this difference is felt most strongly in terms of marketing activity. Many of the market centers in northeastern Thailand and in Laos are situated on rivers; those that are not have well established transportation and communication channels connecting them with river villages. Reservoirs, on the other hand, tend to be located in sparsely populated areas where transportation to market centers is neither well established nor, in terms of distance, convenient. Because a river runs through a populated area, there are multiple points of access to the shore and markets (e.g., the fishing camps along the Mekong can sell their fish at the camp or at various points along the parallel road). Reservoirs have relatively few points of access to shore transportation (e.g., there are only three roads, one of which is mostly paved, linking the Nam Pong reservoir to outside markets), thus requiring that all the fish and all the land transportation converge at one or a few locations.

The situation at Tha Ruea, the major landing site of the Nam Pong reservoir, illustrates some of the problems that can be created by this situation as well as the solutions that are developed to meet them. In the first place, the town itself arose almost spontaneously to meet the demand for a central landing and distribution point. Land on which it is built is either owned

by the fisheries department or the electricity authority, neither of which was consulted before the town started to develop. Its access road out to the paved highway connecting the Ubolratana dam with Khon Kaen and Udorn developed through use; nobody has assumed responsibility for maintaining it. Likewise the town itself, not having been properly authorized, is ignored by government agencies: "it doesn't legally exist." Consequently it has been provided with no public facilities whatever.

However, the town is serving an indispensable function, and one which will have to be served on any reservoir where fisheries are allowed to develop. Through this one center an estimated two or three tons of fish pass daily. The immediate impression is one of utter confusion. Up to five hundred people, struggling through ankle-deep mud to transfer baskets of fish from boat to shore, and then, often fish by fish, transferring them into the baskets of the truckers. In some cases fishermen from nearby camps bring their own fish to Tha Ruea to sell to the truckers, but usually a boatman purchases fish at the fishing camps for resale at Tha Ruea. The majority of the boatmen are not themselves fishermen, and their boats, covered and somewhat larger than the fishing boats, are used as reservoir taxis when not engaged in transporting fish. These boats, particularly when loaded with ten to twelve 100-kilogram baskets of fish, are prone to capsizing when sudden strong winds and rough waves strike the reservoir (by mid-1969 over 100 fatal boat accidents had been reported).

Once landed, the transfer of fish is handled in a number of ways. Among these are direct contractual arrangements between boatman and trucker, a series of such arrangements between boatman and shore agent (often a Vietnamese woman) and agent and trucker, or selective, competitive purchase by the trucker from either the boatman or the shore agent. Once the trucker has purchased sufficient fish to meet the demand of his regular retailers, he departs for his home area, which may be any market center between Korat and Nong Khai (with some subsequent distribution from there to Vientiane). Part of the task of the trucker is to insure that the fish reaches the market in good condition. Thus he is careful to pad his baskets with banana

leaves and to pack in sufficient ice to prevent spoilage. Both the leaves and the ice are brought in by the trucks from Khon Kaen (until recently ice had to be imported from Korat). A small proportion of fish landed at Tha Ruea is purchased by local residents for drying, slating, smoking, or fermenting into fish paste — all industries which have developed at the landing site.

The marketing situation, as well as the physical aspects of the town have been criticized by many observers. Their feeling, probably justified, is that there are far too many small economic transactions going on for any hope of efficiency. Various government agencies have plans on the one hand to make major improvements in the town, including concrete landing aprons and a cold storage plant, and on the other hand to close the town altogether. A major problem involved in establishing any kind of permanent improvement is again that of fluctuations in reservoir level; the flat ground where landing and economic transactions take place during low water is at least five meters under water at flood period. With present temporary constructions and most activity conducted out of doors, it is relatively simple to adapt to changing water levels; however, a concrete apron or paved selling area suitable to one season would be useless the next.

Traditionally the decision-making processes in Thailand and Laos have been based on chains of relationships running from the very top of the bureaucratic (or royal) hierarchy down through series of intermediaries to district and village officials. Each link in these chains is essentially an asymmetrical dyad of patronage and clientage. Chains may be reformed when an intermediary link breaks with its patron and attaches to another who seems to offer greater advantage — but always the structure of single strands joining the very top to the very bottom remains — and authority and decision-making continue to flow in the same direction. The implications of this traditional pattern for political decision-making today are obvious. In any one agency operating at the village level, decisions have to be made or at least cleared by the responsible minister or head of the agency in Bangkok or Vientiane before local action can be taken. Thus horizontal communication and joint decisions between local development agencies involved in the same or closely related

areas becomes almost completely impossible. Also, given this one-way flow of authority, inputs from the local level concerning village needs, problems, and even important resources, rarely figure in decisions concerning the implementation of programs.

Two broader consequences of this form of organization, though not directly related to the problems discussed in this paper, have to do with support of alternative political regimes, and with the formation of international alliances. Given the essentially patronage-clientage nature of social and political relationships, and the relative ease with which chains may be broken at any level and relinked to a new patron, it is important for the individual at the top end of a series of chains to maintain the impression that he (and the intermediate links below him) can provide more resources down the chain than can any potential rival. Historically, monarchs used the allocation of districts and provinces including all of their resources to noblemen for this purpose. Even today in Laos the situation is not altogether different. Military control of particular territories enables the head of the controlling government to allocate its resources (though not as blatantly as in the past) down his chain of authority. The fact that one of the contesting factions calls itself "communist" and the other "democratic" is essentially irrelevant in terms of support of the regime — both operate and compete on the basis of the traditional patron-client chain of relationships. In this same light the formation of international alliances may be seen as a means of bolstering the impression of the regimes ability to provide resources down the chain of authority thus minimizing the fragility of the component links.

CONCLUSIONS

The present survey of the organization of fishing activities and the marketing of fish in selected areas of northeastern Thailand and Laos has indicated that there is little commitment on the part of the villager toward fishing as a way of life. Fishing is widely carried on by the Thai and Lao, but as a subsistence activity in addition to the primary agricultural occupations. The major exception to this generalization was the

numerous groups of Vietnamese located along the Mekong primarily in northeastern Thailand who, through choice or necessity, engage in fishing and fish marketing activities as a full time occupation. The situation on the Nam Pong reservoir seems to fit this generalization as well, for, although the fishermen on the reservoir are Thai, they themselves consider their fishing occupation to be purely temporary until such time as they can re-establish themselves as farmers.

The fish marketing situation throughout the area can be characterized simply as one in which the demand far outruns the available local supplies. Even the importation of fish from outside of the area cannot meet the local demand. The economic chain from fisherman to consumer is similar to that found throughout Southeast Asia, with the probably insignificant difference that in parts of the surveyed area economic roles ordinarily taken by Chinese belong to Vietnamese. It is true that middlemen here, as elsewhere, tend to reap profits which may appear to be more than equitable. This is in part balanced by the middleman's usually far greater capital investment in his segment of the chain.

On the basis of the data presented, it is possible to predict in very broad outlines the kinds of exploitative arrangements which might be expected to develop with the creation of reservoirs in northeastern Thailand and adjoining Laos. Table I indicates how these may develop and lists the chief factors influencing the outcome. It must be emphasized, however, that these developments are predicted only in the absence of strong pressures by the governments concerned or other agencies to alter the patterns. For instance, the anticipated expansion of Vietnamese fishermen into the Pa Mong reservoir would certainly not occur if the Thai government effectively restricted the movement of the Vietnamese out of the areas in which they now live and on to the reservoir.

The initial force in determining who will make use of reservoir resources and how they will go about it is quite simply one of population pressures in relation to exploitable resources. This pattern was clear in the development of Nam Pong reservoir fishing. The first people to take up this occupation were those who had just been displaced from their homes and lands by the

TABLE I. — *Changes Expected in Exploitation Patterns after Reservoir Impoundment*

<i>Location</i>	<i>Pre-impoundment pattern</i>	<i>Post-impoundment pattern</i>	<i>Factors involved</i>
NAM PONG	Subsistence fishing by Thai farmers	Commercial fishing by transient Thai	Population-land pressures
MEKONG below Pa Mong	Commercial fishing by mobile Vietnamese	Exodus of bulk of fishing population. Some subsistence fishing remains	Sharp decrease in fish population after dam construction
MEKONG above Pa Mong	Subsistence fishing by Thai farmers	Commercial fishing by: a) transient Thai b) Vietnamese	a) displacement from land b) displacement from downstream
NAM NGUM	Subsistence fishing by Lao farmers	Subsistence fishing by Lao farmers	Absence of: a) population-land pressures b) Vietnamese

impounded water. As they were gradually able to relocate on new agricultural land or in urban, nonagricultural occupations, their place on the reservoir was taken by other Thai from ever increasing distances who had also, for one reason or another, been deprived of their exploitative agricultural rights to land.

In seeking to apply an admittedly oversimplified pattern such as this to future developments on the Mekong River, a complication is introduced in that two types of fisheries exploitation presently exist on the river, whereas before impoundment of the Nam Pong exploitation of its resources had been of one common, subsistence type both above and below the dam site. From a point about half-way between the Pa Mong dam site

and Vientiane and extending downstream well past Nong Khai, the predominant fishing activity is carried on by the Vietnamese with relatively sophisticated equipment for commercial sale. This, of course, is related to the fact of accessibility to market. Upstream from this point, out of effective reach of market centers and not accessible by road, the main form of fishing is for subsistence, carried on by Thai and Lao with simple and inexpensive gear. Construction of the Pa Mong dam not far from this dividing point would serve to reinforce the division through creation of a significant ecological difference between reservoir above and river below. Moreover, as Pantulu and Bardach (1969) point out, a sharp reduction in numbers of fish for some distance below the dam can be expected at least for the first several years after impoundment, while significant increases should occur in the newly forming reservoir.

The construction of the Pa Mong dam, then, will have two immediate effects on the fishermen downstream from the site. The first is that the fish population available to them will be sharply reduced, and the second is that good roads will by then connect the dam site with marketing centers (probably on the Laotian side, security conditions permitting, as well as on the Thai side of the dam). Because these Vietnamese fishermen are not now settled in permanent villages, and show a very sensitive response to changes in the river environment, it is almost certain that they will make up a major part of the impounded area's first fishermen. As the reservoir gradually fills, permanent Thai villages in the basin and their agricultural lands will gradually have to be evacuated. While most of these villagers will desire relocation in lowland areas where they can continue practicing their agricultural occupations, it is highly improbable that the vast majority can be so accommodated. Even though evacuation will be gradual, the total numbers that will have to be relocated are conservatively estimated at over 200,000. A figure of half a million is probably a more correct guess.

Therefore, it can be expected that within a few years of the construction of the Pa Mong dam, two distinct populations will be attempting to gain a living from the reservoir's resources. Certainly in the beginning, the Vietnamese fishermen will have

a competitive advantage because of their present pattern of mobility, their reliance on kin-based co-operation, their commercial orientation, their more sophisticated gear, and the fact of their probable priority on the reservoir. The Thai fishermen will probably have little difficulty in adapting to more suitable techniques and equipment for use in the reservoir, particularly if government assistance is available; however, judging from the present situation on the Nam Pong reservoir, they may not as readily adapt to the requirements of greater mobility and co-operation. Assuming that this will be the case and that, like the Nam Pong fishermen, their ultimate objective will be to re-establish themselves on the land, it seems reasonable to predict that during the course of the decade or so after the construction of the Pa Mong dam the Vietnamese fishermen will come to dominate the reservoir fishing. Also, as Thai wishing relocation are accommodated, those that remain will probably become more or less permanently settled as the water level of the reservoir is stabilized and slowly revert back to subsistence rather than commercial fishing.

The situation in the area of the Nam Ngum dam site in Laos is quite different from that discussed above. In the first place, Vietnamese refugees have not been provided even as limited a haven in Laos as they have in Thailand, as is clear from their absence on the Laotian shore of the Mekong. In the second place, the population pressures on the land in Laos nowhere near approximate those in Thailand, nor will any significant population have to be relocated from the reservoir basin. It seems likely, unless considerable initiative and organization are provided by whichever government is in control of the reservoir when it is created, that patterns of fishing will not change dramatically from what they are today on the river. If transportation facilities connecting the reservoir with Vientiane are improved, a noticeable increase in the amount of time devoted to reservoir fishing by nearby farmers may occur. This would produce a greater surplus which would be readily marketable in the city. However, it seems unlikely that any of the fundamental social readjustments seen among the Thai of the Nam Pong reservoir, and probably among the Thai fishermen of the Pa Mong, would occur on the Nam Ngum.

Judging from the situation at Nam Pong, problems of reservoir landing sites and transportation of fish to market centers will take care of themselves with a tolerable degree of efficiency even in the absence of any advance planning. The middleman role on the Thai side of the Mekong is now largely taken by Vietnamese, there seems little reason to predict that this will not continue to be the case, again barring government intervention. Traditionally in Laos, as in most other areas of Southeast Asia, Chinese dominate the middleman position, and, with Vientiane serving as the market focus of both Nam Ngum and the north bank of the Pa Mong reservoir, it would be safe to assume that transportation and wholesale fish operations would naturally be developed by Vientiane Chinese, again assuming the absence of explicit policies to the contrary.

Future developments in the patterns of fish harvesting and marketing on newly created reservoirs may well be significantly affected by programs undertaken by government or international agencies. The most critical area for agency action appears to be in providing necessary controls over the interaction of exploitative technology and numbers and distributions of fish populations. The needs, present and potential, for this aspect of ecological control are spelled out in detail by Van Cleve (1970). They are aimed primarily at biological protection and need not be reiterated here. At present, government agencies involved in fisheries research, extension, and management-control, while generally staffed by capable and often dedicated men, have produced results which are uneven at best. The reasons for this situation are not unique. First there is the broad question of what agency has jurisdiction over a particular area, project, or portion of a project. Often confusion over this issue results in complete inactivity. Perhaps of more basic significance is a second problem, communication. Traditionally, in Thailand and Laos, communication has been largely up and down single chains of authority. However, in matters of regional development, this is not enough. Within two kilometers of the office of the chief fisheries officer of Laos, the Thai fisheries officer at Amphur Si Chiang Mai is working on identical problems of research and extension, yet neither is even aware of the other's existence. Likewise, on the Nam Pong reservoir which is situated in two

changwats, the fisheries officers from Udorn and Khon Kaen have never met; and the Khon Kaen officer is attempting to compile a census of fish yields from the reservoir with no control over the yields landed in Udorn.

While problems such as these are serious and, as development proceeds, will undoubtedly be solved in large measure, it is important to realize that fishermen and fish marketers will form a relatively small proportion of the people affected by the development of Pa Mong and other reservoirs in the area. The effects on these people will largely be positive, in terms of greater yields and consequently more profit and in terms of increased fish supplies in regional markets. The role of government agencies, therefore, would be for the most part in *maximizing* these positive effects. However, for the majority of the population, particularly those deprived of their lands, the effects of the reservoirs will be negative, and government agencies' roles would be to *minimize* these effects. While maximization of aspects of economic development such as fisheries is of great importance socially, nationally and regionally, it would not seem to deserve quite the same force of priority as minimization of social disruption and human suffering.

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Anthropologie politique

Des communautés paysannes de la Sierra Norte de Puebla (Mexique). Deux villages de basse montagne*

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SUMMARY

This paper is a political analysis of two peasant communities of Mexico. It focuses on the different modalities of the "linear model" of hierarchy empirically observed in those communities. The main point of this article is to show the relevance of historical materialism as an approach — long disregarded by anthropologists — for the study of politics.

La discussion des structures politiques des communautés paysannes méso-américaines a porté jusqu'à maintenant sur la forme de l'appareil institutionnel d'État d'une part et sur les fonctions explicites des structures observées d'autre part. Aucune synthèse ne semble encore être sur le point de se faire, la plupart des hypothèses pouvant être infirmées par de nombreux exemples. La principale faiblesse des interprétations réside, croyons-nous, dans le fait qu'aucune ne s'inscrit dans un cadre théorique suffisamment large pour permettre certaines généralisations. Et aussi longtemps qu'on en restera à cette "ethnographie comparative", aucun développement majeur ne pourra avoir lieu.¹

* Cette recherche a été réalisée dans le cadre du projet "Organisation socio-économique des Indigènes de la Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexique" subventionné par le Conseil des Arts du Canada. Les données utilisées ont été recueillies au cours de terrains effectués en 1969, 1970 et 1971.

¹ Voir les différentes interprétations de Buchler (1967), Camara (1952), Cancian (1965), Carrasco (1967), Nash (1967) et Wolf (1966, 1967).

Inspirées par les concepts propres au matérialisme historique,² nos propositions de base sont les suivantes:

1 — Le *politique* est un niveau social plus vaste que le seul donné institutionnel, ce qui correspond à la distinction marxiste entre *appareil d'État* et *pouvoir d'État*. Le pouvoir n'est pas conçu ici comme un type de relations interpersonnelles mais comme un phénomène de classe correspondant à "la capacité d'une classe sociale à réaliser ses intérêts objectifs spécifiques" (Poulantzas 1971 I: 107). Il en découle une conception particulière de l'État qui "ne représente qu'en apparence l'intérêt général et défend en fait les intérêts particuliers de la classe dominante" (Godelier 1970:23). Ceci implique qu'une distinction doit s'établir entre la fonction explicite du politique (fonction d'intégration) et sa fonction latente, implicite mais déterminante par rapport à la première (fonction de domination, i.e. de reproduction des rapports d'exploitation).

2 — La structure du pouvoir et les pratiques qui la caractérisent, ce qui constitue l'essence même du politique, ne sont explicables que dans l'articulation des différents niveaux de la réalité sociale, entre autres l'économique, ici déterminant; (cf. Marx cité par Balibar 1971: 107).

3 — Aussi longtemps que l'anthropologie s'attachera à étudier les segments dominés des formations sociales, elle devra tenir compte dans ses interprétations de cette relation de domination-subordination qui se concrétise dans tous les domaines de la vie sociale, le politique compris. Plusieurs sociologues de la Mésomérique ont insisté sur cet aspect (Stavenhagen 1969; Gonzalez Casanova 1963; Guzman et Herbert 1970) mais jamais personne n'a encore tenté de concilier ces points de vue plus généraux et la perspective "communautaire" qui jusqu'à maintenant a été le propre de l'anthropologie.

Notre étude porte sur les modalités d'existence du "modèle linéaire" de hiérarchie, que nous avons pu observer empirique-

² En particulier ceux élaborés par Lénine (1969; 1^{re} éd. 1899) et Kautsky (1970; 1^{re} éd. 1900) sur la paysannerie, par Poulantzas (1971) sur les structures politiques et par Rey (1973) sur l'articulation des modes de production.

ment. Mais nous voulons avant tout démontrer la pertinence de concepts jusqu'ici mis de côté par l'anthropologie pour rendre compte du champ politique.

Les communautés à l'étude

Les deux communautés totonaques sont situées dans la zone de basse montagne (entre 600 et 1200 mètres d'altitude) caractérisée au plan agricole par la prédominance de la culture commerciale du café.³

Ecatlan possède une population d'approximativement 690 personnes, toutes d'origine indienne, réparties parmi 142 groupes domestiques. Au plan politique, Ecatlan appartient au municipio de Jonotla dont le chef-lieu est situé à environ une heure de marche du village. Les relations se sont intensifiées considérablement depuis que Jonotla est reliée au réseau routier.

Les 750 personnes qui résident à Nanacatlan sont regroupées en 162 groupes domestiques dont cinq sont d'origine métisse (ils viennent du chef-lieu du municipio, Zapotitlan de Mendez, situé à une heure de marche du village).

Les deux communautés appartiennent au district judiciaire et fiscal de Tetela de Ocampo mais l'éloignement de ce centre et son peu d'importance au plan économique les font graviter dans l'aire d'influence de Zacapoaxtla qui, économiquement et politiquement (Paré 1973), domine la région.

La différence majeure existant entre les deux villages réside dans le fait qu'Ecatlan est greffé directement sur le système routier de la Sierra, ce qui facilite le transport des marchandises alors que Nanacatlan est situé à six heures de marche de la route (et de Zacapoaxtla).

³ En ce qui concerne l'organisation sociale de la région, trois articles ont déjà été publiés: BEAUCAGE, Pierre "Anthropologie économique des communautés indigènes de la Sierra Norte de Puebla (Mexique). 1: Les villages de basse montagne" in *La Revue Canadienne de Sociologie et d'Anthropologie*, 10 (2), 1973, pp. 114-133; 2: "Les villages de haute montagne" in *La Revue Canadienne de Sociologie et d'Anthropologie*, 10 (4), 1973, pp. 289-307; PARÉ, Louise "Caciquisme et structure du pouvoir dans le Mexique rural" in *La Revue Canadienne de Sociologie et d'Anthropologie*, 10 (1), 1973, pp. 20-43.

I. — LA STRUCTURE POLITIQUE

1. *Les appareils d'État*

La Constitution mexicaine définit trois niveaux administratifs: le gouvernement central (État fédéral), les états et les *municipes*, ces derniers constituant les unités de base de toute l'organisation politique (Estado de Puebla, *Ley Organica Municipal*, art. 1). À chacun de ces niveaux se retrouvent les trois pouvoirs: exécutif, législatif et judiciaire.⁴

Le municipe comprend plusieurs localités dont l'une concentre les fonctions administratives et judiciaires. Le chef-lieu (*cabecera*) est généralement l'agglomération démographiquement et économiquement la plus importante. Viennent ensuite selon le nombre d'habitants les villages (*pueblos*), les hameaux (*rancherías*), les "quartiers" (*barrios*) et les sections (*secciones*).⁵

Le gouvernement municipal, localisé dans le chef-lieu, se compose d'un Conseil municipal (*Ayuntamiento*) comprenant le maire et six conseillers, tous élus au suffrage universel et d'un certain nombre de fonctionnaires nommés par le Conseil (juge, trésorier, inspecteur, agent de police).⁶

La juridiction (fonctions explicites) de ce gouvernement s'exerce dans quatre secteurs principaux: les finances, les travaux publics, le maintien de l'ordre et la justice et enfin l'éducation. (Estado de Puebla, *Ley Organica Municipal*, art. 28). Néanmoins, ses pouvoirs sont très limités. La capacité d'imposition est pratiquement nulle, ce qui a pour conséquence de restreindre considérablement la mise sur pied de politiques cohérentes. Les

⁴ Sur la structure politique en général: GONZALEZ CASANOVA, Pablo, *La démocratie au Mexique*. Paris, Anthropos, 1969, 370 p.; GUNDER-FRANK, André, "La démocratie mexicaine du docteur Pablo Gonzalez Casanova" in *Le développement du sous-développement. L'Amérique latine*. Paris, Maspéro, 1970. pp. 290-302; LAMBERT, Jacques, *Amérique latine. Structures sociales et institutions politiques*. Paris, P.U.F., 1968, 486 p.; PADGETT, Vincent, *The Mexican political system*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966.

⁵ Il y a de plus l'*Agente del Ministerio Publico* nommé pratiquement à vie par le procureur général de l'État. Cette nomination constitue une des formes de contrôle du gouvernement de l'État sur les municipes.

⁶ Pour plus de détails, voir DURAND, Pierre. *La Reproduction Economique et Politique d'une Communauté Paysanne Mexicaine*, Thèse de maîtrise, Université Laval, 1973, 317 p.

véritables politiques relèvent des niveaux supérieurs et les officiers municipaux sont chargés de les appliquer.

Dans les villages (*pueblos*) du *municipio*, on retrouve un appareil administratif quasi identique: la "mairie adjointe" (*municipio auxiliar*).

Ce type de gouvernement est le seul qui soit officiellement reconnu. Il s'oppose ainsi aux formes traditionnelles d'autorité qu'il contribue d'ailleurs à éliminer. Les organisations villageoises ont donc très peu d'autonomie puisque dans l'ensemble, elles sont régies par les lois de l'état et du pays (Scott 1964: 594) et soumises aux exigences d'un pouvoir extrêmement centralisé (Lambert 1968: 386; Gunder-Frank 1970: 287).

Les particularités locales

Les appareils politiques formels de Nanacatlan et d'Ecatlan diffèrent peu de la structure prescrite par la *Ley Organica Municipal* pour les communautés ayant le statut de "municipio auxiliar".

Au sommet de la pyramide se trouve la *Junta Auxiliar* (le "maire adjoint" et ses quatre conseillers) élus pour trois ans au suffrage universel. Viennent ensuite les "fonctionnaires": le secrétaire (dont la durée du mandat n'est pas déterminée), le trésorier, l'inspecteur (chargé du recensement annuel), le juge de paix (nommé par le Conseil Municipal) et l'*Agente del Ministerio Publico*.

Il existe aussi deux comités permanents: le comité de l'école qui relève du conseiller à l'éducation et joue dans ce secteur le même rôle que le trésorier par rapport aux finances et le comité des améliorations (*de mejoras*), sous la juridiction du conseiller aux travaux publics. Ces deux comités possèdent la même composition: un président, un secrétaire, un trésorier et deux conseillers (*vocales*). Au bas de la pyramide, nous retrouvons les comités spéciaux mandatés pour une tâche et une période déterminées: collectes d'argent, élaboration de listes de producteurs, etc... Ils sont composés la plupart du temps de deux membres.

À côté de ces postes "constitutionnels", il en existe d'autres qui apparaissent à première vue comme des "survivances" du système traditionnel. Toutefois comme nous le verrons, cette interprétation culturaliste ou diffusionniste ne saurait suffire puisque ces postes où la participation populaire est forte s'inscrivent à l'intérieur de pratiques politiques de classes. Il y a d'abord le comité d'entretien de l'église (*Junta Vecinal*) qui vient se greffer, apparemment du moins, à la structure proprement politique. En fait, les autorités religieuses sont indépendantes des autorités civiles et en dehors de la nomination des membres de ce comité, le "maire adjoint" n'a aucun droit de regard sur les affaires religieuses. Les *fiscales* — c'est le nom que l'on donne aux responsables locaux du culte — nomment eux-mêmes ceux qui seront chargés des fêtes les plus importantes (*mayordomos*) et voient à l'organisation matérielle de toutes les manifestations religieuses. Il existe toutefois des différences majeures sur ce point entre les deux villages. À Ecatlan, le comité qui est dirigé toujours par les mêmes personnes⁷ comprend trois membres alors qu'à Nanacatlan il y en a cinq. De plus, il y a douze *mayordomias* importantes à Ecatlan alors qu'il n'y en a que deux à Nanacatlan. La nature et l'importance des responsabilités sont également différentes. À Ecatlan, on peut parler de *mayordomias* traditionnelles (le détenteur de la charge doit défrayer lui-même une partie des coûts) alors qu'à Nanacatlan, c'est toute la communauté qui fournit de l'argent et ce sont là les seuls revenus de l'organisation.

À Nanacatlan, nous retrouvons deux autres groupes de postes traditionnels: les *mayores de policia* et les *semaneros*. Les premiers sont au nombre de quatre, nommés pour une période d'un an, et doivent assurer le maintien de l'ordre. Ils sont responsables devant la *Junta Auxiliar* et reçoivent leurs ordres du "maire adjoint". Dans la Constitution, cette fonction du maintien de l'ordre est assumée par un seul homme, l'agent de police, dont la durée du mandat n'est pas spécifiée (Carrasco 1969: 594).⁸

⁷ Cette stabilité semble liée aux relations de compérage entre le curé de Jonotla et le président du Comité de l'église d'Ecatlan. (Le curé est parrain d'un des enfants du président).

⁸ L'idéologie de la classe dominante nanacatèque interprète la présence des *mayores* comme un indice du traditionalisme local puisqu'à Zapotitlan, il y a un agent de police "moderne".

Les *semaneros*, messagers de la mairie, sont au nombre de trente, mais chacun d'eux ne travaille que deux jours par mois. Entre autres choses, ils sont chargés de rassembler les hommes du village pour les corvées (*fænas*). Comme les *mayores de policia*, ils sont nommés pour un an.

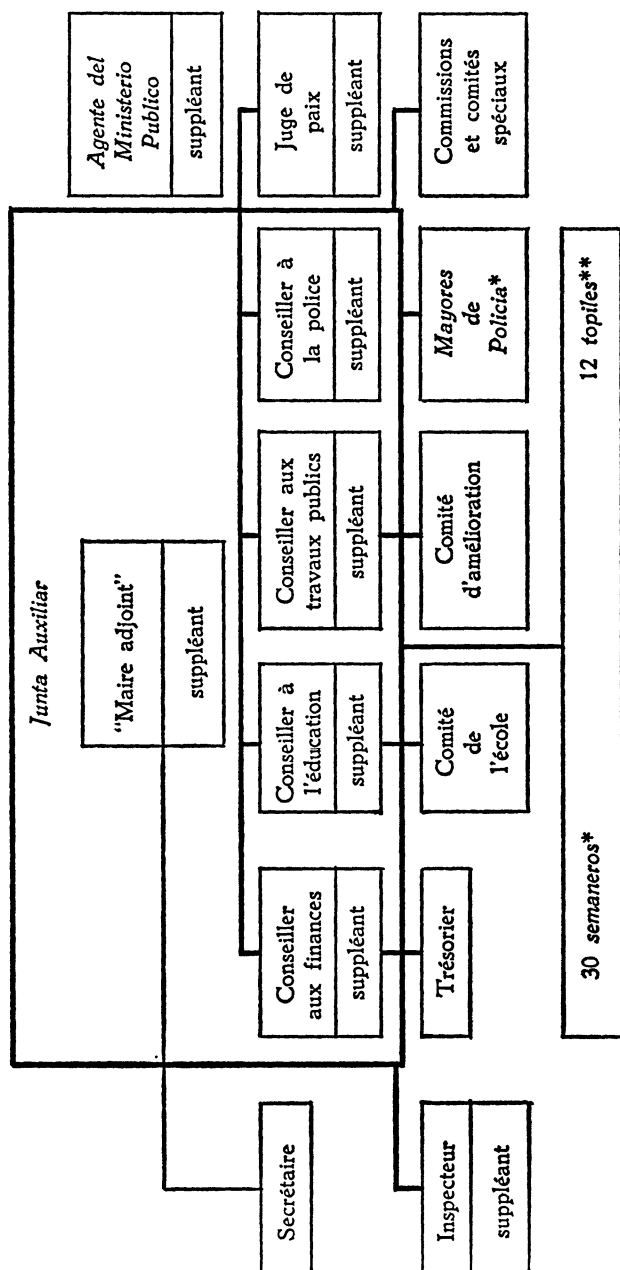
À Ecatlan, nous ne retrouvons qu'un groupe de postes politiques traditionnels, les *topiles*, qui, au nombre de douze, remplissent les mêmes fonctions que les *mayores* et les *semaneros* à Nanacatlan.

À la suite de cette description des postes politiques, deux conclusions apparaissent. 1) Nous sommes en présence de deux structures qui se rapprochent beaucoup de celle prescrite par la Constitution. L'absence totale de gouvernement traditionnel, celui des *Principales* ou Anciens, témoigne de l'orientation et de la forte institutionnalisation des appareils gouvernementaux des deux communautés. On y voit également la subordination étroite du gouvernement local aux niveaux politiques supérieurs entre autres du fait de la nomination de l'extérieur des officiers aux postes de juge et d'*Agente del Ministerio Publico* et du type de relations qui s'établit entre les autorités du "municipe" et celles des villages (v.g. le budget des "mairies adjointes" doit être accepté par l'*Ayuntamiento*, les autorités municipales assistent aux élections locales, le juge de paix est nommé par le chef-lieu, etc...) Peut-être pourrait-on rattacher le "modernisme" des structures politiques municipales aux profonds bouleversements qui ont affecté la région lors de la guerre contre les Français (1865) et la Révolution (1910-1921). Dans les deux cas, des leaders de la région ont joué un rôle de tout premier plan. De plus il y eut création de plusieurs municipes, destitution violente des autorités antérieures, etc... 2) Nous pouvons d'ores et déjà poser que les deux structures observées correspondront davantage au modèle "linéaire" de hiérarchie tel que défini dans la littérature anthropologique (Carrasco 1967; Buchler 1967; Camara 1952). La place relativement peu importante occupée par la structure religieuse en est le meilleur indice.

Les règles de promotion

La structure politique de Nanacatlan totalise 67 postes: 33 postes "officiels" et 34 de type "traditionnel" (ceux de *mayores*

FIGURE 1. — Organigramme de la structure politique à Nanacatlan et à Ecatlan.



* A Nanacatlan

** A Ecatlan

et de *semaneros*) A Ecatlan, nous en retrouvons 50: 38 postes "modernes" et 12 traditionnels (*topiles*). Si nous greffons à ceci la structure religieuse, la différence dans les deux totaux s'amenuisera considérablement, le nombre total de postes pour chacun des deux villages étant sensiblement identique compte tenu de la dimension de ces communautés: le nombre de postes par 100 habitants est de 9.4 pour Ecatlan et de 9.9 pour Nanacatlan.⁹

La différence majeure se situe donc dans l'importance relative des postes religieux par rapport aux postes politiques, ce qui peut être considéré comme le reflet de différences idéologiques. Comment l'expliquer? Nous croyons que c'est la présence des métis à Nanacatlan et le rôle qu'ils jouent dans cette communauté qui rend compte de la place réservée à la structure religieuse. Les métis en effet distinguent complètement les deux domaines: ils se perçoivent comme membres de l'État national dont ils connaissent, dans les grandes lignes, les structures et le cadre. La domination du politique sur le religieux au plan national explique leur préférence. Dans la mesure où ils domineront la scène politique locale, ils imposeront donc leur idéologie.

Leur présence ne suffit pas à expliquer la division politique-religieuse puisque celle-ci est inscrite dans les lois de développement du mode de production dominant, mais elle peut rendre

TABLEAU 1. — *Nombre et importance relative (%) des postes politiques et religieux à Ecatlan et à Nanacatlan.*

	Postes politiques	Postes religieux	Total
Ecatlan	50 (76.9%)	15 (23.1%)	65 (100%)
Nanacatlan	67 (90.5%)	7 (9.5%)	74 (100%)
Total	117	22	139

⁹ Considérant l'exemple d'une autre communauté totonaque de la Sierra, nous sommes portés à croire que ce rapport tend à baisser quand le nombre d'habitants augmente. A San Juan en effet, où il y a près de 2,000 habitants, le rapport se situe aux environs de 8%.

compte du degré atteint par cette division. Autrement dit, les métiers ne sont pas à l'origine de la différenciation fonctionnelle et structurelle qui se généralise, mais ils servent à en accélérer la réalisation.

Au plan méthodologique toutefois, il nous est possible de considérer séparément, pour l'analyse des règles de promotion, la structure politique et la structure religieuse, de par l'autonomie formelle qui les caractérise. Une telle distinction n'est pas arbitraire mais totalement justifiée pour une analyse visant à découvrir les relations de pouvoir qui, dans la structure linéaire, sont manifestement concentrées au sein du secteur politique.

Le "modèle conscient" de hiérarchie est utilisé à titre d'instrument pouvant permettre de découvrir les lois qui régissent la promotion politique. La première constatation qui s'impose a trait à l'importance numérique de chacun des groupes de postes. Si nous ne tenons compte que des postes qui demeurent "ouverts" (dont les officiers ne sont pas permanents), nous obtenons deux structures totalement différentes: ce sont les postes intermédiaires qui permettent la plus grande participation à Ecatlan (27 postes sur un total de 44) alors qu'à Nanacatlan, ce sont les postes inférieurs, (30 sur 63).

	Postes inférieurs	Postes intermédiaires	Postes supérieurs
Ecatlan	12 (28%)	27 (61%)	5 (11%)
Nanacatlan	30 (48%)	24 (38%)	9 (14%)

Les auteurs précités ont utilisé deux critères principaux pour rendre compte de la promotion politique dans les sociétés indigènes mésoaméricaines: l'âge et le statut socio-économique. En ce qui concerne l'âge, il apparaît que dans les deux villages, la carrière politique commence à 18 ans (poste de *semanero* à Nanacatlan et de *topil* à Ecatlan). Les autres postes deviennent accessibles à partir de l'âge de 21 ans et on ne retrouve personne dans la structure ayant plus de 60 ans.

On pourrait croire que les citoyens montent dans la hiérarchie à mesure qu'ils avancent en âge (Ichon 1969). Or un examen très rapide des données nous indique que si ce facteur joue, il ne saurait en aucune façon être déterminant. Le nombre de postes permanents (surtout à Ecatlan) et les nombreux retours qu'effectuent les mêmes personnes à certains postes en témoignent clairement. Il nous faut donc faire intervenir le deuxième

MODÈLES ÉMIQUES DE HIÉRARCHIE POLITIQUE

	Ecatlan	Nanacatlan
↑ Postes supérieurs	Maire adjoint + <i>Agente del Ministerio/ Publico</i> + Secrétaire de l'A.M.P. + Juge de paix + Secrétaire du juge + Trésorier Conseillers (quatre) + Secrétaire	Maire adjoint + <i>Agente del Ministerio/ Publico</i> + Secrétaire de l'A.M.P. Juge de paix (Secrétaire du juge) Trésorier Conseillers (quatre) + Secrétaire Président de l'école + Secrétaire de l'école
Postes intermédiaires	Inspecteurs (deux) Suppléants de la <i>Junta</i> (cinq) Comités permanents/ (dix postes) (Comités spéciaux**)	Inspecteurs (deux) (Suppléants de la <i>Junta</i>) (cinq) (Comité de l'école)/ (trois postes) <i>Mayores de policia/</i> (quatre postes) (Comités spéciaux**)
*	<i>Topiles</i> (12 postes)	<i>Semaneros</i> (30 postes)

* Postes inférieurs.

+ Postes dont les officiers sont permanents.

() Les postes compris entre parenthèses sont ceux sur lesquels nous n'avons pas d'informations précises.

** Environ 10 postes.

facteur, soit le statut économique.¹⁰ Pour ce faire, nous utilisons pour les deux villages une division en quatre groupes économiques, en prenant pour critère la propriété foncière.¹¹

Une analyse des carrières politiques à Ecatlan nous révèle l'existence de quatre groupes ou niveaux de postes (incluant les postes dont les détenteurs sont permanents). Avant d'en entreprendre l'étude, il faut mentionner que les gros propriétaires (groupe I) ne sont jamais présents aux postes "transmissibles". Ils semblent donc qu'ils échappent aux lois de la promotion.

Les quatre niveaux que nous observons constituent une véritable structure de sélection permettant aux individus les plus à l'aise parmi les petits propriétaires d'atteindre le sommet de la hiérarchie et bloquant les plus démunis à la base. La figure 2 représente cette dimension. Nous y voyons clairement les retours systématiques aux postes de *topiles* et de suppléants à la *Junta Auxiliar* en plus des issues bloquées que constituent les postes de trésorier, de secrétaire du juge de paix et de juge de paix.

Le fait que le poste de trésorier, théoriquement important, soit réservé au groupe inférieur indique de façon manifeste qu'il s'agit d'une fonction administrativement "accessoire", qui ne compte que très peu dans la structure du pouvoir. Ceci nous permet d'affirmer que les ressources financières de la communauté ne sont pas assez substantielles pour que leur utilisation entraîne un contrôle direct de la part des groupes supérieurs. Il en est de même pour la fonction de juge de paix ce qui témoigne ici du rôle considérable joué par Jonotla dans cette aire de juridiction.

¹⁰ Dans le cas de Nanacatlan, l'appartenance "ethnique" (le critère est linguistique) semble déterminant pour la carrière politique des individus; les unilingues totonaques ne sont que *semaneros* et ce, quelque soit leur âge. Toutefois, ce critère culturel ou ethnique possède une connotation économique, l'unilinguisme étant caractéristique des individus économiquement faibles.

¹¹ Il n'est pas nécessaire de discuter la pertinence de ce critère quand nous étudions des sociétés paysannes où la terre constitue le facteur de production déterminant.

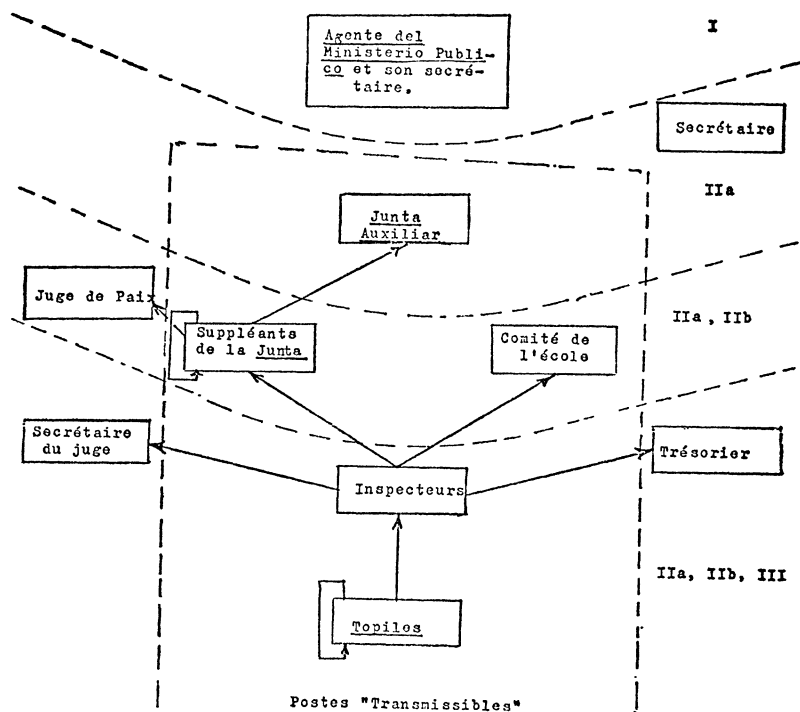
Groupe I: 2 hectares et plus

Groupe IIa: 1.0 à 1.9 hectare

Groupe IIb: 0.1 à 0.9 hectare

Groupe III: paysans sans terre.

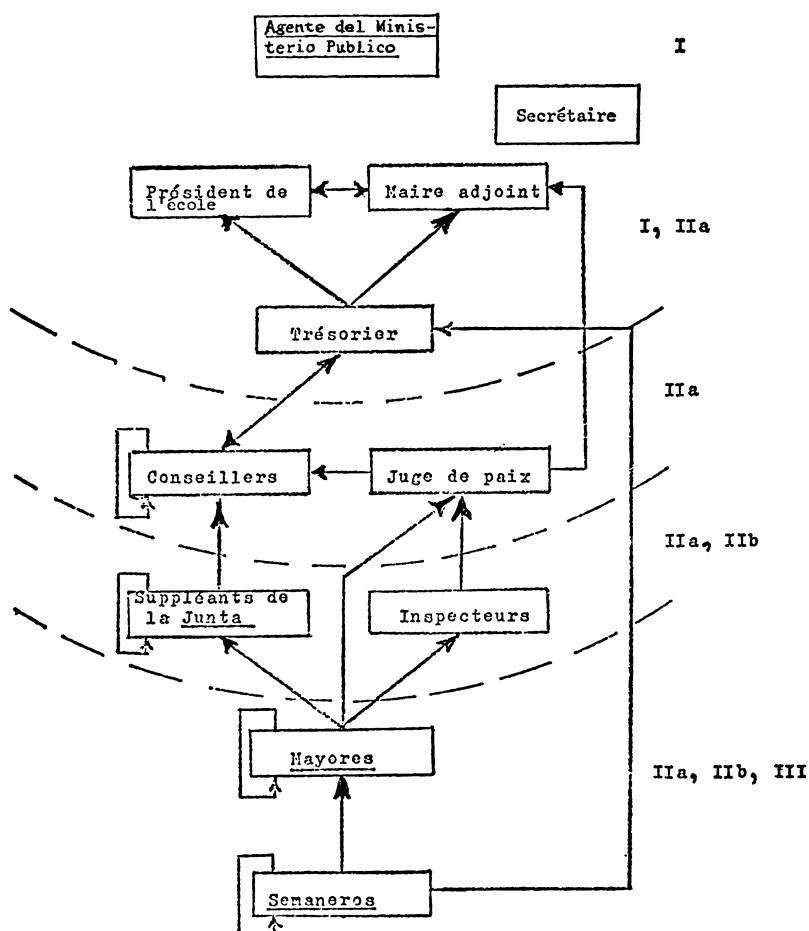
FIGURE 2. — Promotion politique à Ecatlan.



Ce sont les propriétaires moyens qui détiennent les postes de maire, de conseillers et de secrétaire et sont donc responsables officiels du fonctionnement des affaires publiques locales.

La promotion à Nanacatlan est peu différente, pour l'essentiel, de celle que nous observons à Ecatlan. Les postes se répartissent en "niveaux" où bloquent systématiquement les petits producteurs au fur et à mesure qu'ils tentent de monter dans la hiérarchie (Figure 3) : ou bien leur carrière politique se termine rapidement, ou bien ils occupent à intervalles réguliers les mêmes fonctions.

La différence majeure consiste dans le fait que les gros propriétaires participent activement à l'appareil administratif en partageant avec certains propriétaires moyens (Groupe IIa) les postes de maire, de trésorier et de président de l'école, ce qui té-

FIGURE 3. — *Promotion politique à Nanacatlan.*

moigne d'une fonction différente de ces deux derniers postes. À cause du faible nombre de postes dont les détenteurs sont permanents, la hiérarchie est ici davantage ouverte à la participation. Il faut mentionner toutefois que le poste d'*Agente del ministerio Publico* est toujours occupé par un producteur aisé et que le poste de secrétaire échappe complètement aux règles de promotion: il a toujours été occupé par quelqu'un de l'extérieur (le secrétaire

actuel, qui réside à Zapotitlan, occupe le poste depuis près de vingt ans).

Trois conclusions majeures apparaissent. 1) Nous observons pour les deux villages un modèle de hiérarchie politique qui se rapproche du modèle linéaire mais nous ne pouvons parler de linéarité absolue là où les individus ne gravissent pas tous les niveaux certains revenant constamment aux mêmes postes et certains autres ayant accès aux postes élevés sans devoir franchir tous les échelons (existence de "raccourcis").

2) L'appareil administratif des deux communautés résulte d'une combinaison de postes modernes (sommet de la hiérarchie et postes intermédiaires) et de postes traditionnels (postes inférieurs) permettant une participation massive de tous les citoyens à l'organisation politique. Ces postes traditionnels sont réservés de fait aux paysans sans terre.

3) Les paysans aisés n'ont pas la même participation à l'appareil officiel dans les deux villages. À Ecatlan, leur attitude est absentéiste. À Nanacatlan, ils jouent un rôle actif. Mais dans les deux cas, le poste d'*Agente del Ministerio Publico*, non transmissible et articulé aux niveaux politiques supérieurs (gouvernement de l'état), leur est réservé. Ceci nous amène à parler de la structure de pouvoir qui fonctionne à travers cette structure d'autorité.

2. *La structure du pouvoir*

Il semble que les auteurs qui ont étudié les structures politiques mésoaméricaines se soient limités à une analyse de l'appareil d'État comme si ce seul aspect épuisait la totalité du champ politique. Or pour reprendre les concepts de Lénine, il faut distinguer entre *appareil d'État* et pouvoir d'État, ce dernier correspondant à "la classe sociale ou fraction de classe qui détient le pouvoir" (Lénine cité in Balibar 1971 I: 121). C'est donc la fonction politique de domination qui nous intéresse ici et non plus les seules fonctions explicites de l'appareil administratif.

Devant l'efficacité partielle de l'appareil politique formel à assurer la reproduction sociale, il est fréquent de voir apparaître des structures "informelles" qui contrôlent directement les appa-

reils d'État tout en servant à promouvoir les intérêts de la classe dominante qui autrement ne pourraient être adéquatement défendus. Ceci est d'autant plus important que les communautés paysannes ne constituent pas des entités autonomes fermées sur l'extérieur et qu'une importante différenciation économique s'est déjà effectuée à l'intérieur. L'uniformisation des appareils politiques à l'échelle du pays a pour fonction principale de reproduire la relation de domination-subordination qui s'établit entre les différents segments de la société. Mais la reproduction des différences à l'intérieur des communautés peut ne pas être assurée par ces appareils.

À Ecatlan, le pouvoir local semble très peu structuré. La communauté dans son ensemble est greffée sur le chef-lieu du municipe (Jonotla) où le pouvoir est concentré. Le groupe des gros propriétaires fonciers assure son contrôle de la politique locale par la présence continue d'un de ses membres au poste d'*Agente del Ministerio Publico*. C'est cette centralisation du pouvoir à Jonotla (liée à la proximité des deux localités) qui explique selon nous la non-participation des gros propriétaires à l'appareil politique d'Ecatlan, puisque le pouvoir décisionnel qui peut s'y exercer est trop limité. À défaut de pouvoir local, ils feront jouer leur influence auprès des autorités municipales.

À Nanacatlan, la situation est totalement différente. Toutes les décisions importantes sont prises par un groupe de gros propriétaires fonciers qui, occupant ou non les postes importants, contrôlent l'allocation des ressources et les politiques communautaires.¹²

Il y a donc au-dessus de l'appareil officiel une structure de contrôle composée de trois producteurs importants (l'un d'eux est l'*Agente del Ministerio Publico*) et du secrétaire, qui doit son pouvoir au fait qu'il est permanent. Toute tentative d'analyse de l'appareil d'État ne peut se faire qu'en tenant compte de ce groupe qui possède le pouvoir.

Pour tenter d'expliquer ces deux situations, nous privilégions le facteur économique. Et pour ce faire, une analyse de la base

¹² Contrairement à Ecatlan, la mairie nanacatèque possède des ressources relativement importantes provenant surtout des revenus de la caisse municipale de crédit (Durand 1972).

économique des deux villages est essentielle. En effet, si le politique a une fonction de reproduction de la base économique, ce n'est que dans une étude détaillée de cette dernière que nous pourrions trouver l'explication véritable du fonctionnement de la structure politique.

II. — LE FONDEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DES CLASSES SOCIALES

Seule une analyse en terme de *classes* nous paraît apte à rendre compte d'un phénomène justement caractérisé par le primat du social sur l'individuel. À l'intérieur de ce cadre, nous isolons le fondement économique des classes sociales pour tenter de découvrir les formes de son articulation avec le politique.

1. *Deux structures de production identiques : présence de trois modes de production*

1) De par la distribution du sol (tableau 2), il est clair que d'une part une quantité importante de producteurs est désormais dépossédée de ses moyens de production (51.8% à Nana-catlan et 32.4% à Ecatlan). D'autre part les grands propriétaires fonciers sont incapables d'assurer leur production sans recourir à une main-d'œuvre extérieure à leurs groupes domestiques. La structure même de la répartition du sol, son utilisation et les contraintes techniques des cultures commerciales rendent impossible ou du moins très sporadique l'échange de travail de type *mano vuelta* (échange réciproque de travail). D'où le travail salarié permettant l'extorsion d'une plus-value qui trouvera sa réalisation au moment de la vente des produits. C'est par le biais de cette circulation que le capitalisme domine dans les petites communautés.

2) La petite production marchande (Servolin s.d.: 9), caractérisée par le fait que le producteur est propriétaire de ses moyens de production, s'y articule directement puisqu'elle est complètement intégrée à la circulation capitaliste des produits agricoles. Les commerçants de Jonotla et de Cuetzalan représentent en effet le seul débouché pour le café produit à Ecatlan.

TABLEAU 2: Répartition du sol entre les chefs de familles, Nanacatlan et Ecatlan, 1971 (Nombres absolus et %)*

	Catégories (Hectares)	Nanacatlan				Ecatlan			
		Nombre de producteurs	% des producteurs	Surface (Hectares)	% des surfaces	Nombre de producteurs	%	Surface (Hectares)	%
III	0	84	51.8	0	0	46	32.4	0	0
IIb	0.1 - 0.9	33	20.4	18.1	14.4	61	42.9	23.4	17.1
IIa	1.0 - 1.9	28	17.4	34.2	27.2	22	15.5	29.1	21.3
I	2.0 - +	17	10.4	73.2	58.4	13	9.2	84.4	61.6
	TOTAL	162	100	125.5	100	142	100	136.9	100

* Ce tableau ne tient pas compte des terres appartenant à des propriétaires de l'extérieur. Dans le cas de Nanacatlan, il s'agit de 26 hectares dont 11 sont loués aux gens du village. A Ecatlan, 30 hectares environ appartiennent à des habitants de villages voisins. Dix hectares sont loués à des producteurs du village.

Zapotitlan et Zacapoaxtla jouent le même rôle pour Nanacatlan. Ces petits producteurs, qui constituent la classe intermédiaire des deux communautés que nous étudions, en plus d'assurer la reproduction du capital commercial régional, vont parfois travailler pour les gros producteurs locaux, une fois terminés les travaux sur leurs propres terres, ce qui les intègre encore une fois au mode de production capitaliste et confirme la tendance à la prolétarianisation.

3) Le fait que les paysans sans terre à Ecatlan et à Nanacatlan utilisent des lopins pour cultiver surtout du maïs révèle la présence d'un rapport de production féodal: la rente foncière (Kautsky 1970: 101 sq; Rey 1973: 37 sq).

Les terres louées à Ecatlan et à Nanacatlan représentent respectivement 15% et 25% de l'ensemble des terres utilisées. À Ecatlan, l'emprise des propriétaires de l'extérieur est manifeste. Dans l'ensemble ils vont louer plus de terres aux gens d'Ecatlan que la classe dominante locale (46% vs 41% de la surface totale louée). À Nanacatlan, la classe dominante locale contrôle près de 60% des terres en location alors que les propriétaires de l'extérieur se limitent à 30%. La location des terres a pour fonction immédiate de fournir aux propriétaires fonciers un revenu net, sûr, qui ne nécessite aucune avance de capital et de donner aux paysans sans terre la possibilité de produire eux-mêmes une partie de leurs moyens de subsistance en s'employant entre les récoltes de café. Mais comme ils doivent payer une rente en argent ils sont forcés de vendre leur force de travail moyennant un salaire maintenu très bas justement du fait qu'ils produisent eux-mêmes une partie de leurs biens de consommation. La reproduction de la main-d'œuvre étant assurée partiellement par la culture sur des terres louées, les capitalistes n'ont qu'à combler la différence. Même si le rapport féodal constitue une combinaison à un niveau de productivité moindre des facteurs de production, il n'en est pas moins avantageux pour les capitalistes qui s'assurent ainsi la présence d'une main-d'œuvre indispensable et des coûts de production peu élevés.

Cette articulation (figure 4) qui donne naissance à trois classes distinctes se fait surtout par la *circulation des produits agricoles, contrôlée par le capital commercial régional*.

2. *La circulation capitaliste: lieu de la domination du mode de production capitaliste*

A — *Le café*

La mise en marché du café constitue la condition essentielle de la réalisation de la plus-value et c'est par elle que s'exerce la domination du capital commercial régional sur le capital productif local. C'est donc par ce biais surtout que les communautés à l'étude s'intègrent aux structures sociales régionales et nationales et c'est ici qu'elles vont se différencier l'une de l'autre.

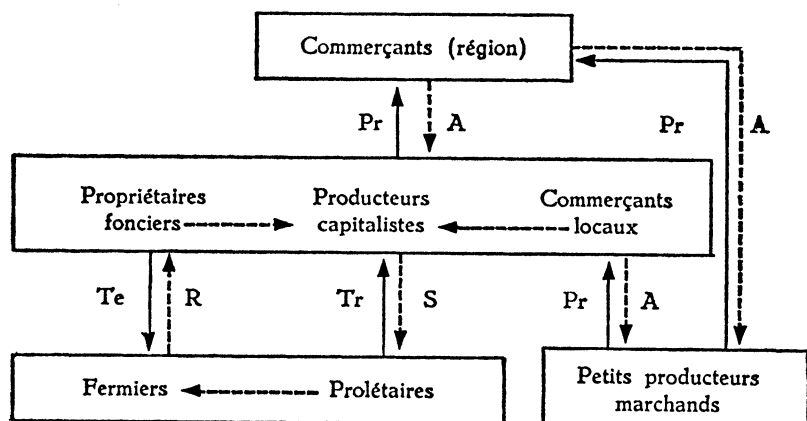
Les contraintes relatives aux transformations que doit subir le café à partir du moment où il est cueilli jusqu'à son entrée sur le marché des biens de consommation donnent naissance à une structure extrêmement élaborée d'intermédiaires commerciaux qui assurent une partie du processus de transformation (Paré 1970: 40).

Celui-ci requiert une technologie très développée inaccessible au petit producteur à cause de l'investissement considérable que nécessite son acquisition. Certains commerçants et gros producteurs possédant le capital suffisant pourront se doter d'un équipement leur permettant d'obtenir un prix plus élevé pour leur produit et aussi d'acheter une partie de la production des petits caféiculteurs. Quoiqu'il en soit les producteurs locaux sont toujours soumis aux instances régionales puisqu'ils sont incapables d'influencer de quelque façon que ce soit les mécanismes de détermination des prix.

Le facteur distance jouera ici un rôle déterminant dans l'intégration des communautés à cette structure. Les producteurs d'Ecatlan peuvent aller vendre leur café directement à Jonotla ou Cuetzalan puisqu'ils peuvent le transporter eux-mêmes diminuant d'autant les frais d'exploitation. Les gros producteurs locaux, qui effectuent les premières transformations, ne peuvent rivaliser avec les prix offerts par les acheteurs des deux centres régionaux, ce qui ne leur permet pas de jouer le rôle d'intermédiaires et de tirer un profit commercial.

L'importance économique de Jonotla est relativement récente; auparavant c'était Cuetzalan qui drainait toute la production de la région immédiate. Toutefois le développement de

FIGURE 4. — Articulation de la rente foncière féodale de l'agriculture capitaliste et de la petite production marchande: La circulation capitaliste.



Légende: ———> Circulation de la valeur sous sa forme marchandise.
> Circulation de la valeur sous sa forme argent.

Te: usage de la terre
 R: rente foncière
 Tr: force de travail
 S: salaire
 Pr: produits agricoles (surtout le café)
 A: argent

la route vers Jonotla a entraîné la venue des commerçants de Zacapoaxtla ce qui leur a permis de mieux concurrencer ceux de Cuetzalan.

La montée de Jonotla s'inscrit directement dans le développement de la domination régionale de Zacapoaxtla puisque le café produit dans la région subit les dernières phases de sa transformation dans cette ville, le café accaparé par Cuetzalan étant expédié directement de là à la Côte.

Cette domination du chef-lieu de la terre froide s'exerce depuis longtemps dans le cas de Nanacatlan. Toutefois les mo-

dalités en sont complètement différentes. La structure de transformation et de mise en marché du café combinée à l'éloignement des centres qui caractérise le municipe de Zapotitlan se traduit par l'impossibilité des producteurs locaux d'entrer en contact direct avec les gros acheteurs et rend nécessaire la présence de certains intermédiaires. Le procès de circulation tel que défini régionalement permet à certains individus de devenir eux-mêmes intermédiaires en achetant une partie de la production locale pour ensuite la revendre ce qui a pour effet de limiter l'exploitation directe de l'extérieur puisqu'ils accaparent une partie du profit marchand total. Ceci est d'autant plus important qu'à Nanacatlan comme nous l'avons vu, la classe dominante ne contrôle pas autant la production de café. Elle a alors intérêt à en contrôler la circulation.

C'est la structure régionale elle-même qui donne naissance à la classe dominante locale dans la mesure où celle-ci peut participer au capital commercial régional et ainsi limiter son exploitation.¹³

Dans le cas d'Ecatlan la proximité de Jonatla ne permet pas l'apparition d'intermédiaires locaux, tous les producteurs étant en mesure d'entrer en contact direct avec les acheteurs de café. La relation de base est donc la domination qu'exercent les commerçants de Zacapoaxtla (autrefois Cuetzalan) sur Ecatlan *pris dans son ensemble*. Par contre à Nanacatlan la circulation du café est l'un des principaux éléments servant à assurer la domination de la classe supérieure locale sur les autres, puisqu'elle sert de catalyseur des relations économiques avec l'extérieur.

B — *Le commerce de détail*

La circulation des biens de consommation, presque entièrement intégrée au capitalisme, est nettement secondaire par rapport à celle du café, compte tenu surtout des faibles dimensions du marché local. La plus-value qui se dégage du commerce de détail

¹³ Dans la Sierra la mise en valeur prioritaire du capital commercial (monopoliste) est le frein majeur à l'accumulation capitaliste dans l'agriculture: le profit ou surplus de l'exploitation agricole est toujours dépendant du profit marchand et le producteur doit se contenter d'un taux bien moindre de rémunération.

est négligeable. Ici encore c'est à la reproduction régionale et nationale que participent les habitants des petites communautés. Mais il n'en est pas moins important pour comprendre la situation actuelle des classes.

À Ecatlan, c'est une fraction de la classe moyenne qui contrôle le commerce de détail ce qui, à notre avis, est un indice significatif de l'importance des commerçants de Jonotla et de Cuetzalan dans la distribution des biens de consommation chez les habitants de cette communauté. La proximité des deux gros centres fait que le paysan écatèque trouve avantage à aller y faire affaire profitant de l'occasion pour entretenir ses relations (éventuellement avec celui qui achète son café).

Les propriétaires des trois boutiques de Nanacatlan sont d'importants producteurs de café. De plus deux d'entre eux sont aussi acheteurs, ce qui montre bien que le commerce de détail ne devient profitable que combiné à d'autres activités. En plus de permettre la réalisation d'un profit marchand régulier, le commerce permet d'accaparer la récolte de certains producteurs tantôt au moyen de l'endettement (les avances de biens de consommation étant payées en café) et tantôt par la pratique de la *venta al tiempo* rendue possible par l'existence permanente d'un fonds de roulement.¹⁴

C — *Le capital financier*

Dans de nombreux cas la circulation du capital financier, rendue obligatoire par le besoin périodique d'argent liquide, lui-même lié à la répartition inégale des revenus pendant l'année, détermine les relations entre centres régionaux et communautés périphériques, surtout si la classe dominante locale ne peut accumuler le capital nécessaire pour prêter de l'argent.

À Nanacatlan la mairie dispose d'un fonds "communautaire" (17,000 pesos) que l'on prête aux producteurs. Sans entrer dans les détails de cette institution (Durand 1972), mentionnons que c'est la classe dominante locale qui l'a mise sur pied vers 1930

¹⁴ La *venta al tiempo* consiste pour le petit producteur à vendre une partie ou l'ensemble de sa production avant la récolte au moment où il a besoin d'argent. Il ne touche alors que 50% du prix estimé de sa production.

et l'a toujours contrôlée administrativement et/ou en termes d'utilisation. L'exigence même des garanties foncières élimine plus de 50% des chefs de famille qui devront aller voir des particuliers et payer un taux d'intérêt très élevé (jusqu'à 10% par mois alors que la mairie prête à 3%).

La présence de cette institution implique deux conséquences économiques importantes. 1) La décomposition progressive de la classe moyenne est assurée par l'accès discriminatoire au crédit qui tend à polariser la société en deux groupes opposés: les entrepreneurs capitalistes et les prolétaires. 2) La classe dominante locale a su contrecarrer une partie de l'exploitation qu'exerce sur la communauté les usuriers des centres régionaux. Il découle de ceci que le contrôle politique de l'institution de crédit est de la plus haute importance puisqu'elle constitue un élément primordial de la reproduction de la domination de la classe supérieure, et aussi de la reproduction de l'appareil politique puisque une partie des intérêts perçus sert à défrayer les coûts de l'administration (le salaire du secrétaire, l'achat d'équipement, etc...).

Pour Ecatlan, nos données sont beaucoup moins précises. Il existe bel et bien un fonds communautaire (évalué à environ 8000-9000 pesos) mais on l'utilise d'ailleurs de façon très sporadique, la quantité d'argent disponible étant insuffisante pour satisfaire les besoins de tous les chefs de famille. Ce sont surtout les commerçants des centres importants qui prêteront, ce qui vient confirmer que Ecatlan est davantage intégré à ces centres que Nanacatlan peut l'être.

CONCLUSION : STRUCTURE POLITIQUE ET CLASSES SOCIALES

L'imposition d'un appareil d'État uniforme à l'ensemble du Mexique correspond à des impératifs nationaux précis: il s'agit pour la bourgeoisie d'étendre les conditions politiques du capitalisme à l'ensemble du pays. Le monopole qu'elle exerce au moyen du parti dominant (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) et par des formes particulières de pouvoir régional comme le caciquisme (Paré 1973) lui permet d'effectuer l'intégration politique de toutes les composantes de la formation sociale. Apparaît-

sent ici de façon très claire les fonctions d'intégration et de domination des appareils d'État et dont il faut tenir compte, au plan national, pour bien saisir la réalité sociale des segments dominés, puisqu'ils en dépendent directement. De ce point de vue, les appareils politiques locaux servent à reproduire les rapports de production dominants au plan national mais les particularités de la base économique dans les communautés entraînent des aménagements spécifiques ayant pour fonction d'assurer la reproduction des conditions locales de la production, donc des intérêts de la classe dominante locale.

Nous avons vu qu'une des caractéristiques principales de l'économie de la Sierra réside dans la séparation du capital commercial (concentré dans les centres régionaux) et du capital productif. Ceci implique que les classes dominantes locales, elles-mêmes issues de l'introduction de la circulation capitaliste, sont dominées (vente des produits agricoles, commerce de détail, accès au crédit).

Au plan politique, le seul appareil d'État est insuffisant pour assurer globalement la reproduction de la domination de classe à l'intérieur des communautés. L'intégration des différents niveaux de gouvernement (central, de l'état et municipal) au contraire place les communautés paysannes dans leur ensemble dans une situation de domination.

A Nanacatlan, les gros propriétaires fonciers — entrepreneurs capitalistes ont besoin d'une structure informelle qui d'une part contrôle directement l'appareil d'État (par les règles de promotion) et d'autre part leur permet d'entrer en contact direct avec les niveaux décisionnels significatifs: pour la communauté, Zacapoaxtla est politiquement et économiquement beaucoup plus important que Zapotitlan, non pas au plan de la structure officielle mais dans les faits. Autrement dit, la fonction "intégration" du politique est réalisée par l'appareil formel mais son incapacité à assurer seul la fonction "domination" entraîne l'apparition d'une structure informelle qui va s'en charger.

A Ecatlan, la proximité du capital commercial et du capital productif combinée à l'emprise économique et politique du chef-lieu sur le village entraîne un tout autre type de structure. Au plan politique, Ecatlan possède beaucoup moins d'autonomie que

Nanacatlan, les décisions importantes venant de Jonotla. Il s'ensuit que même la fonction "intégration" du politique est davantage assurée par le chef-lieu que par la "mairie adjointe", ce qui nécessite moins une participation de la classe dominante à la hiérarchie. Celle-ci est donc laissée aux classes inférieure et "moyenne" bien que la classe supérieure se réserve un certain contrôle (par la présence permanente de l'*Agente del Ministerio Publico*). Toutefois la proximité et l'importance de Jonotla rend inutile une organisation locale du pouvoir bien structurée.

Nous voyons que la forme même des appareils politiques ne peut être exclusivement interprétée en terme de tradition-modernisation. Les formes "modernes" répondent d'une part à des impératifs nationaux précis (entre autres l'extension du capitalisme) et reproduisent d'autre part les relations de domination-subordination entre les segments de la formation sociale. Les postes "traditionnels" sont maintenus pour assurer la reproduction de l'appareil administratif local, et ce à très bon compte. Les règles de promotion dans la hiérarchie réservent à la classe dominante ou à une fraction de celle-ci le contrôle des postes décisionnels significatifs pour la reproduction de la domination de classe. (C'est le cas de Nanacatlan). Mais il se peut que ces "postes significatifs" ne soient pas présents dans la structure locale. Quand la domination de l'extérieur est trop forte et quand les ressources "communautaires" locales sont inexistantes. L'absentéisme politique de la classe dominante correspond à cette situation (c'est le cas d'Ecatlan).

De façon plus générale, nous pouvons dire que l'homogénéisation administrative nécessaire à la centralisation bureaucratique correspond à l'expansion de la domination de la grande bourgeoisie monopoliste industrielle et financière. Toutefois les variations locales se maintiennent pour reproduire les intérêts de la petite bourgeoisie rurale, agraire et commerçante, intérêts qui sont conflictuels par rapport à ceux de la grande bourgeoisie.

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The White-Robed Army: an Afro-Guyanese Religious Movement¹

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RÉSUMÉ

La *White-Robed Army* ou *Jordanite Movement* est un mouvement religieux afro-guyanais de revitalisation, à la fois syncrétique et très marqué de fondamentalisme protestant. Cet article s'efforcera surtout de montrer comment ce mouvement reflète la société guyanaise dans laquelle il s'est développé et se perpétue.

INTRODUCTION

Religion, and religious movements in particular, have long been the subject of intensive study by sociologists and anthropologists, and in the past few decades in particular, anthropological interest has lighted upon revitalistic movements among colonial and former colonial peoples and on religious activity in Black societies in the New World. While there is an abundant literature on Afro-American religious activity, there have been few analyses of the revitalistic aspects of Afro-American religion. The majority of studies have focussed on the cultural and social-psychological significance of Afro-American religion.² Moreover, there has

¹ Research was conducted in Guyana from September 1969 — September 1970, with the support of The Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University; The Research Institute for the Study of Man, New York; and the Canada Council, and again from July-September 1973, with the assistance of a University of Waterloo Summer Research Grant. The support of these agencies is gratefully acknowledged.

² Some notable exceptions are studies of the Ras Tafari Movement of Jamaica (e.g. Simpson 1955, 1962; Smith *et al.* 1960; Nettleford 1970), the Black Muslims of the United States (e.g. Lincoln 1961; Essien-Udom 1964), and the role of *vodun* in the Haitian Revolution (Courlander & Bastien 1966).

been very little discussion of religion among Guyanese of African descent.³

The White-Robed Army or Jordanite Movement, the subject of this article, possesses many features which are of interest: it is a syncretic, millenarian, fundamentalist-Protestant Afro-Guyanese religious movement. It is revitalistic and charismatic in nature and has remained so despite societal change and two successions to leadership since the death of the prophet-founder. Finally, the movement is indigenous, peculiar to Guyana, and in many ways characteristically Guyanese. In this article I shall look at, among other things, some of the many ways in which the White-Robed Army reflects the wider Guyanese society in which it developed and continues to exist.

THE SOCIAL SETTING: GUYANA

Before I turn to discussion of the movement itself, let me present some features of Guyanese society which are relevant to an analysis of the White-Robed Army.⁴

Guyana, the former British Guiana, was a British colony until independence in 1966. Despite its location on the northeast shoulder of South America it is closer in history, culture, and social, economic and political structure to the territories of the Caribbean than to the countries of South America. The population of Guyana is about 740,000. The ethnic composition of the population is as follows: Africans (the descendants of slaves), about 30%; East Indians (those derived from indentured plantation labourers from India), about 51%; "Mixed" (a catch-all category), approximately 12%; Portuguese (also the descendants of indentured labourers), about 0.9%; Chinese (again, derived from indentured labourers, but whose numbers have been augmented in recent years by immigrants from China), about

³ The topic receives attention in R. T. Smith's (1956) *The Negro Family in British Guiana* and in Skinner 1955 and 1960. There are also descriptive accounts by interested Guyanese (Cameron 1950; Abrams 1970) and occasional newspaper and radio treatments of folk religion in the Guyanese media.

⁴ See Despres 1967, Jagan 1972 and Lewis 1968 for detailed discussions of Guyana.

0.6%; Europeans (foreign and local-born whites, excluding Portuguese), about 0.4%; and Amerindians, the aboriginal inhabitants of Guyana, about 4.6%.

Guyana has been termed a pluralistic society. While the concept of pluralism is fraught with conceptual difficulties and its utility can be questioned, it can be said that in Guyana the two major ethnic groups, the East Indians and the Africans, are to a degree involved in separate geographic, socio-cultural, political and economic spheres. For the past 15 years or so there has been a tendency to ethnic voting, with East Indians supporting the People's Progressive Party (PPP) under the leadership of Dr. Cheddi Jagan, and Africans supporting the People's National Congress (PNC) of Forbes Burnham, which has formed the government since 1964. The members of the White-Robed Army are strong in their support of the predominantly African PNC, the government, and Prime Minister Burnham.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WHITE-ROBED ARMY

The movement is an evangelical one and an assembly of white-robed people at a streetcorner, roadside, or market square has been a familiar feature of Georgetown and village life over the 60 or so years of the movement's existence. Those outside the movement tend to characterize as "Jordanite" any religious activity conducted by black people in white robes. While all 'gatherings' of the White-Robed Army have been influenced to some extent by the teachings of Nathaniel Jordan (hence the popular name "Jordanite"), there is considerable variation among gatherings with respect to doctrine.

The White-Robed Army comprises about 80 gatherings whose average membership is between 20 and 50 members, though some have fewer than 20 and some as many as 100. The movement's total membership is very difficult to determine, but I estimate it to be about 2,500. There are gatherings throughout Guyana, but the movement is concentrated in those villages on and near the coast which are predominantly African

in population. The movement is particularly strong in the county of Demerara and in the Greater Georgetown area.

The movement consists virtually entirely of people of African or predominantly African descent, and the members come typically from the lower socio-economic levels of Guyanese society. Those male members who are employed work as sugar-estate or construction labourers, or are self-employed farmers, tradesmen or craftsmen. The female members who are employed work as domestic servants or are self-employed market vendors. Some members own the houses and perhaps the land they inhabit; some own other property in addition. Nevertheless, with some variations, the life-style and cognitive framework of almost all the members of the movement are those of the lower socio-economic strata.

The majority of the members are older people between the ages of 45 and 90, but within the past few years the movement has been attracting some young adults. There is a somewhat higher number of females for the movement as a whole, with variation among gatherings, but most gathering-leaders are male. Except for those whose parents were members of the movement, all faithists were members of some other Christian denomination or sect prior to joining the White-Robed Army. Many have also been members of gatherings other than the one to which they belong at present.

THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

There is a paucity of historical materials on the movement and I have had to rely upon the folk history given to me by informants. The account which follows comes from various versions of the history told to me by a number of informants.

The beginning: MacLaren to Jordan

In 1882, the story goes, a young Grenadian named either Lowloodas or Joseph MacLaren who was working in Trinidad as an overseer on a plantation met a native of India named either Baghwan Das or Chatto Maharaj. The two men discussed

religion and the interpretation of the Scriptures, and MacLaren, an Anglican, became interested in a new faith, apparently founded by Maharaj. On March 15, 1882, MacLaren underwent baptism by immersion. In 1895 he visited Guyana and began preaching in the county of Berbice where he baptized 65 people. He annointed one of these, a Barbadian named Bowen, Elder of the gathering and returned to Trinidad. Nothing more is known of the movement under MacLaren and Bowen.

Around 1917 Nathaniel Jordan, a middle-aged man, was at work in a cane-field on the East Coast of Demerara one day when a voice told him to look up in the clouds, and warned him to leave his job. Hoping to evade the warning voice he collected his belongings and began to look for work elsewhere. Passing a house, he noticed a man looking at him through a window, and was astounded to recognize the face he had seen in the clouds. The stranger, Elder Bowen, interpreted Jordan's visions to mean that Jordan was a "seeing man" and was meant to do God's work. Jordan began to preach for the Church of the West Evangelist Millenium Pilgrims (WEMP), as the gathering begun by MacLaren was called, and Bowen returned to Barbados. By all accounts it was under Jordan and not MacLaren or Bowen that the body of belief and ritual which now characterizes the movement was built up, and it was under Jordan's leadership too that the White-Robed Army came to the notice of the people of Guyana.

The foregoing is what can to some extent be considered the "official" version of the birth of the faith, having been told to me by Jordan's successor and other members who knew Jordan. There are other versions, some of which exclude Maharaj, MacLaren, or Bowen and some of which do not.⁵ It is notable, of course, that the official history of a cultural-nationalist movement

⁵ There is one written account — a small blue booklet reputedly "edited" by a non-faithist some 30 years ago (Anon. n.d.). This seems to have been prepared and published by Elder Klien, Jordan's successor. The version of the early history presented here, with accretions from oral accounts, is found in the blue booklet but it also represents the common thread running through most of the accounts of older members. By "version" I mean not just informant-differences, but recurrent variations. See Roback 1973 for a detailed account of the history of the movement.

reports a non-indigenous origin. One possible partial explanation is the importance of legitimacy in the definition of "true Jordanites". As important a criterion as doctrinal orthodoxy, legitimacy derives from baptism by a legitimate Elder whose legitimacy comes from his having been baptized and anointed by Jordan, Klien, Furry, or another legitimate Elder. The authors of the movement's history might not have felt a self-created religion with a self-baptized, self-anointed founder to be legitimate within the movement's own definition, so the early history includes a series of baptisms and anointings by somewhat shadowy figures to give legitimacy to the baptizing and anointing of Jordan. All versions of the history give Jordan full credit for developing the body of doctrines and the movement itself in Guyana, thus providing a local designer/promoter of the religion. It should be noted too that while the official history does include foreign founders, all three — Maharaj, MacLaren and Bowen — were non-white inhabitants of the West Indies.⁶ In other words, the history tells of a religion created in the West Indies by West Indians, not one introduced by foreign White missionaries.

Soon after Bowen's departure Jordan had a vision which told him to spread the faith. But public scorn for the WEMP and opposition from the Roman Catholic Church because of pologists, and in the past few decades in particular, anthropological Jordan's criticisms of Roman Catholic doctrines, led a reluctant Jordan, hoping to escape the persistent voices, to move to the East Bank of Demerara. One day he suffered what appeared to be a stroke and a voice told him that "spiritual sicknesses" would continue until he resumed his "work"; he obeyed (though he limped thereafter).

In 1921 he settled in his wife's village of Agricola, where he remained until his death on April 7, 1928. (Agricola is still the headquarters of the WEMP.) At its peak, around 1928, the WEMP's membership was reportedly around 500.

Harassment of members of the faith and their leaders in particular, continued and on several occasions Jordan and other

⁶ Given the date 1882 it is likely that the "native of India" had been taken to Trinidad as one of the Indian indentured labourers who replaced the African slaves freed in 1834.

members were arrested.⁷ Jordan was once charged with sedition against the King of England: he pointed out to his listeners at the roadside meeting that the title page states clearly that the Bible was *revised* under the authorization of King James and contended that material had been omitted from the revised version because the King had wished to keep certain truths from the people. For this message Jordan was arrested, but after reportedly convincing the Police Inspector of the validity of his argument he was released.

James Klien

James Klien was born in 1900, with a caul; to the caul he attributed some of his spiritual powers. In 1922 Klien took sick and one night he had a vision in which The Master said He would heal Klien if he would do God's work. The following week, much to the astonishment of the doctors, Klien was well enough to be released from hospital. Seven days later Klien was drawn to a roadside meeting where he heard Jordan preach. That Saturday Klien attended Sabbath service at Agricola and he was baptized the following day. He rose swiftly in the WEMP hierarchy and within the year it was Klien who took over when Jordan had to be away. On April 4, 1928, Jordan told Klien that he (Jordan) would die on Saturday and he wanted Klien to succeed him as Elder. Klien demurred for two reasons: (1) he was the junior in years of membership and age to many other men in the WEMP and (2) he could not swim and therefore could not perform baptisms. Jordan was able to persuade him, however. Jordan's prophecy of the date and time of his own death was realized and he died on the afternoon of April 7, 1928.

As Jordan had also prophesied (Skinner 1955:134) and as Klien had feared, there was a struggle for leadership and control of the WEMP after Jordan's death, and five men vied with Klien for the leadership, despite the fact that he had been designated by Jordan himself to succeed him. There was a schism, and the

⁷ I was unable to find newspaper accounts of any of these arrests, though I was told of them by members and non-members alike.

result was four new White-Robed gatherings. There have been many more instances of segmentation since, and there are also individuals who are "called" to establish gatherings, but there is a recognition by almost all the leaders and members that they form a movement with a common founder — Nathaniel Jordan. Until the time of his death, on May 31, 1972, Elder James Klien devoted his life to strengthening and spreading the faith in Guyana.

Ferdinand Furry

Ferdinand Furry joined the faith in June 1928 and was in the first group baptized by the new Elder Klien. Furry worked on a cane-grinding estate near Agricola and a faithist woman who passed up and down the road selling bread asked him whether she could use his house for her afternoon prayers. Furry agreed, and got into the habit of questioning her about her faith. When Jordan died Furry went to the burial ground, simply out of curiosity to see the man who had correctly prophesied the time of his own death. Shortly after he had a dream in which The Master and Jordan appeared and The Master asked Furry whether he could identify Jordan; Furry did so. The Master then asked whether he would know Klien, and Furry said yes though he had never seen him. Three men were brought and Furry correctly identified Klien. The next day Furry recounted the dream to the woman; as he was leaving the house to return to work Elder Klien was entering, and the two men looked at one another. The woman told Klien the dream and Klien suggested Furry take baptism the following Sunday, June 28, at Agricola. Furry said perhaps the following year, as he still had a lot of "sportin'" left to do. He attended the baptism and somewhat to his own surprise, underwent the ceremony himself. Furry became close to Klien over the years, as Klien before him had to Jordan (and Jordan to Bowen, and Bowen to MacLaren), and Furry often stood in for Klien at church and elsewhere. On July 9, 1972, at the service held forty days after Elder Klien's death, Furry was chosen by the members to succeed Klien.

The White-Robed Army is no longer subject to harassment by members of the public or officialdom. The movement received

official acknowledgement in May 1966 when Elder Klien was among religious leaders invited to official Independence Day ceremonies. In November 1969 he was one of those invited to the State Funeral for Guyana's only Governor-General and in February 1970, to Republic Day ceremonies. As leader of the White-Robed Army Elder Klien was one of the Chaplains to the Prime Minister and to the African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA), a cultural nationalist organization. Extensive newspaper coverage was given to Klien's death and funeral and to the selection of his successor. Since then the black cultural nationalist policy of the Burnham government has continued apace and combined with the White-Robed Army's vocal support for the government this has meant, in addition to more publicity for the movement in the space of one year than in the preceding 55, the legalizing of the faith's marriage ceremony through the appointment of five faithist marriage officers; the incorporation of the WEMP as a church which means, *inter alia*, the removal of property taxes; and the establishing, at the government's suggestion, of the Guyana Council of Faithists, an organization of all White-Robed gatherings throughout the country. Each of these moves is, for most faithists, the partial fulfilment of a dream of many years.

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE WHITE-ROBED ARMY

It is not easy to make an analytical distinction between beliefs and practices in faithist doctrine — beliefs are reflected in practices and both are justified by reference to sacred texts. The major sources are the *King James Version of the Bible*, the *Apocrypha*, *The Lost Books of the Bible* and the *Forgotten Books of Eden*, *The Kosmon Bible* or *Oahspe*, *The Acquarian Gospel*, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, and *The Church of England Book of Common Prayer*, as well as books on astrology and other aspects of the occult, a host of books and pamphlets on religious subjects, and the inspirations of Nathaniel Jordan. The teachings of Jordan, who was illiterate, were later found by his literate followers in some of the written sources mentioned. This is held out as additional proof that Jordan was truly inspired.

There is considerable variation among gatherings within the movement with respect to doctrine. I shall discuss here some of the beliefs and practices which are the common denominator of the movement as well as some which represent important points for disagreement and segmentation. By their doctrines faithists set themselves apart from non-faithists and assure themselves of inclusion among the select on the "Last Day".

Dress

The mark by which faithists are most easily identified as "lawkeepers" and distinguished from the misguided members of "Sunday churches" is their white clothing. One variation among gatherings, aside from idiosyncratic variations in style, is the wearing of some coloured piece of clothing. Men as a rule, wear white robes, trousers, turbans, and fringed "mantlepieces" similar to the prayer-shawls worn by Jewish men. The women wear white dresses and either white "veils" — mantilla-like headwear falling over the shoulders — or white or blue headties like those worn by many Guyanese women. All faithist women wear their skirts at least several inches below the knee, if not longer. Around their waists and necks faithists wear tasselled cords which are white as a rule, but may be blue or gold in gatherings which "wear colours". Male faithists, with few exceptions, wear beards and do not cut their hair. The bases for these are the examples of the Nazirites who neither shaved nor cut their hair, and texts like Leviticus 19:27: "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard". Faithists also observe the strictures against scarification and tattooing in Leviticus, and Jordan frowned upon the "pressing" or artificial straightening of hair for female faithists. Anyone entering a faithist church must remove his shoes, because in Exodus 3:5 Moses was commanded to remove his shoes because he was on holy ground.

There are numerous references in various sacred texts to being garbed in white as a mark of being a lawkeeper. Texts are also used as the basis for particular items of apparel and to rail against the present immodest form of dress, namely "mini skirts". Cameron (1950:138-139) reports that Jordan had had the

faithist garb revealed to him in a dream and that Jordan believed it to be an African form of dress, according to description given him by Guyanese who had been in Africa during World War I. A recommendation frequently given by faithists for the wearing of a costume for worship is that it is uniform and simple, providing no outward sign of social status differences among members. They also feel strongly that modest, sober, unadorned garments are most suitable for worship, and many add to their criticism of the conventional denominations that their members seem to attend church primarily to show off their new clothing and best jewellery.⁸

Sabbath worship

Faithists take support for their observance of Saturday as the Sabbath from the Old Testament. Throughout, they say, it says Sabbath was observed on the seventh day of the week, and one has only to look at a calendar to see that Saturday, not Sunday, is the seventh day of the week. Sabbath is observed from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Strictly speaking, no faithist should work on Sabbath but it cannot always be avoided, and those who must work are excused by the Elders and members. Those who of their own volition violate the Sabbath are liable to "spiritual sickness" as punishment. Elders say that ideally faithists should be self-employed so as never to be obliged to work on the Sabbath. Dress and Sabbath worship identify faithists as lawkeepers; entry to the ranks of lawkeepers is marked by baptism.

Baptism

Baptism by total immersion is practised by all White-Robed gatherings. Although each gathering has children associated with it, children are not baptized members of the faith. The minimum age for baptism, in theory, is around 18; in practice, however, children who have grown up in the faith might be

⁸ Turner (1969), in his discussion of liminality and *communitas* in millenarian movements, also mentions this social levelling aspect of dress.

baptized at an earlier age. When an individual makes the decision to take baptism and has chosen a gathering, he begins to take teaching in the faith and when he is adjudged ready by the Elder, he is baptized. Faithists find ample support in the New Testament for the practice of baptism by immersion. Biblical terms which are seen as synonymous with "baptism" are "birth", "resurrection", "burial", and "circumcision".⁹ Membership in the White-Robed Army entails adoption of a totally new way of life and the sloughing off of the former life. The conceptualization of baptism as spiritual rebirth is not considered to be contradictory to that of baptism as burial, for death and burial must precede resurrection and rebirth. In the ritual of baptism by total immersion in the ocean or a river the convert is symbolically buried and emerges a new person — a faithist. The three doctrines which faithists see as the distinctive features of their faith are Sabbath worship, Baptism, and Sacrifice, which means abstinence from certain foods and from alcohol and tobacco.

Food taboos

Vegetarianism — This issue is a contentious one which along with a few others is important in the distinction of "true Jordanites" from other White-Robed people and has played a part in schism. The "true Jordanites", the WEMP and some other gatherings, are strict vegetarians, abstaining from *all* animal food, including fish with or without scales, eggs and animal fat, and the flesh of all domesticated and wild animals. In this way they depart from Old Testament proscriptions, which specify categories of animals, fish, birds and insects. There are gatherings which allow the use of fish and poultry but forbid beef, pork and shell-fish; others regard vegetarianism as a matter for individual decision though the Elder is a vegetarian, while in still others there is no taboo or encouraging of vegetarianism. Vegetarian faithists claim that they are strong, healthy and long-lived

⁹ Colossians 2: 11 & 12, often quoted by faithists in this connection, embody all these concepts: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead".

because they eat only "pure food". Space does not permit mention of the many Biblical texts cited with respect to vegetarianism. To give just one example, Numbers 11:33: "And while the flesh was yet between their teeth..., the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people...", is quoted as proof of God's opposition to flesh-eating. Non-vegetarian faithists in their turn quote the Bible to justify flesh-eating.

Other food taboos. — Some gatherings say that when Eve had her first menstrual period she buried her bloodstained cloth in the ground, and from this "uncleanness" grew onions, garlies and shallots, so these foods are polluting and tabooed. Some gatherings abstain from coffee and what in Guyana is called "green tea", as they are stimulants, but "bush teas" brewed from local plants are used. Hard liquor is abstained from in many gatherings, but wines made from local fruits are permitted. Some individuals do not use salt, either after Jordan's example or as the result of personal visions, but this is an individual matter.

Other taboos. — Smoking is tabooed, as are "vulgar" dancing (stately dances like the quadrille and "African" dances are acceptable) and cinema-going. In view of the bare subsistence level at which many faithists live taboos against costly activities such as tobacco use and attending dances and the cinema would seem to be adaptive. Similarly, the abstention from coffee, tea and hard liquor and the approved use of bush teas and homemade wine encourages the use of local plants which need not be purchased and points up one of the important benefits of the movement to participants on the cognitive level — it provides a positive sociocultural self-image and a mode of accommodation to low socio-economic status.

Beliefs and practices relating to death

Faithists do not take dead bodies into the church: a dead person cannot worship God and therefore has no place in a sanctuary, but more important, a dead body pollutes the building and those in it. Any faithist who handles a dead body or is in a building with a body is excluded from attending church for seven days afterwards. He must purify himself by bathing

thoroughly and washing all the clothes worn to the funeral. At the end of the seven-day period, before crossing the threshold of the church he must be sprinkled with water. Biblical support for these practices is Numbers 9:6-9, Ezekiel 44:25&26, and Haggai 2:13.

When a faithist dies a forty-day service is kept, for the spirit of the deceased is believed to ascend to Heaven forty days after death.¹⁰ The numerous wicked spirits abroad in Guyana are the spirits of non-faithists which remain on the earthly plane after death. A death is greeted with a sense of personal loss, but this is tempered by the conviction that the soul of the deceased will soon rejoin the living, based on the belief in reincarnation.

Reincarnation

Faithists believe that the body is only a garment for the soul and when the body dies the soul returns to its place of origin. When God feels that the soul is ready it is sent back to earth in another physical manifestation. That is why, for example, people often feel that a particular child "looks just like ——— who is dead"; in faithist belief the child could well be ——— in a new physical form.¹¹ To take a specific case, faithists believe that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of the prophet Elijah, whose return to earth is prophesied in Malachi 4:5&6, for both

¹⁰ Guyanese folk tradition, which is predominantly African-based, observes a forty-night service.

¹¹ An interesting aspect is that reincarnations are not held to be confined within racial boundaries. When I was introduced to Elder Klien, for example, he said to his wife: "I wonder if she's our Judith come back". The reference was to a daughter, Judith, who had died about fifteen years earlier and who would have been about my age, had she lived. Klien's remark was made facetiously, but the possibility of a reincarnation transcending racial lines was entertained. I was told, too, of an African child who was a member of the WEMP many years ago, who one day protested at being treated like a child, saying "I am a big 'ooman. I had four children in Madras. Y'all doubt me? Look at me ears. Yo' ain' seen the marks from the earrings?" The implication is that the "child" had been an East Indian woman in a previous existence. There are obvious discrepancies, such as pierced ears enduring from one manifestation to another, but these and other inconsistencies in faithist doctrine, and doctrinal disagreements within the movement, do not appear to faithists as contradictions, conflicts, or inconsistencies in the set of beliefs, practices and behaviours to which they subscribe. Flexibility is a dominant feature of faithist belief and practice.

Elijah and John lived in the wilderness on locusts and wild honey. In practical terms, reincarnation means that "every action has a reaction", and that one seals one's own fate. By "living right", practising Sabbath worship, baptism, etc., faithists are preparing for better manifestations the next time. There are other ways in which faithists receive indications that they are successful in their pursuit of divine favour: visions, dreams and signs and in some gatherings, "shaking and speaking in tongues".

The importance of visions, dreams and signs

Faithists believe that God speaks to man through visions and dreams, so dreams are invested with considerable meaning and are interpreted as prophetic, admonitory, didactic, etc. Visionary experiences are frequently central in the conversion of faithists. The theme of a service, the texts used for exposition, and so on, are frequently revealed to a preacher before or even at the time of the service. Sudden illnesses and deaths, unusually heavy rain, floods, solar and lunar eclipses,¹² the waterspout which occurred in the Demerara River on July 24, 1970, comets, etc., are felt to constitute divine warnings and to presage disaster.

"Shaking and speaking in tongues"

More than flesh-eating and the wearing of colours, Pentecostalism is the cause of friction, feuding and factionalism within the White-Robed Army. Dispute centres on the correct interpretation of Acts 2:1-18 — whether the tongues referred to are "other tongues" i.e. foreign languages, or "unknown tongues", i.e.

¹² According to one Elder, a solar eclipse portends "ecclesiastical worries" and a lunar eclipse, political troubles. He did not elaborate on the nature of the former but he pointed out that there had been a lunar eclipse on the day before the suspension of the British Guiana Constitution by the British Government on October 9, 1953. I made two attempts to verify this. In an almanac for the year 1953, although it was reported that there would be five eclipses that year, there was no eclipse, lunar or solar, for October. From the Dow Planetarium in Montreal I learned that on October 8-9, 1953, there was a new moon, at which time only a solar and not a lunar eclipse can occur. The Planetarium informed me that there was in fact a solar eclipse on October 9, 1953. I am unable to account for the discrepancy in the information from these three sources: the Elder, the almanac, and the Dow Planetarium.

glossolalia.¹³ There are Elders who vehemently oppose Pentecostalism, those who tolerate it in their gatherings but do not themselves practise it, and those in whose gatherings it is the norm and highly valued.

Observance of the doctrines discussed above and of others not dealt with here (See Roback 1973 for fuller discussion) is designed to ensure for faithists salvation on the "Last Day".

The Last Day

Faithists millenarian beliefs are based on Biblical prophecies and on contemporary signs. Though the precise day has not been prophesied faithists believe the world will probably end within the lifetime of the present generation, because its behaviour is so remote from God's commandments. Faithists say there have been numerous signs in Guyana alone presaging the Last Day (e.g. it seems it rains more frequently and more heavily than it used to), yet people take no heed. By their obedience to God's wishes faithists are assured that they will not suffer on the Last Day, and by their proselytizing activities they hope at very least, to augment the number of those saved and at best, to forestall the event by increasing the number of lawkeepers and cooling God's wrath. They feel that these are vain hopes, however, as the people of Guyana go about their lawless ways, uninterested in joining the White-Robed Army, being loath to give up flesh-eating, rum-drinking and carousing.

What is significant about the White-Robed Army, making study of it more than just another description of Afro-American religion, is its very close relationship to its Guyanese socio-

¹³ Those who espouse Pentecostalism quote the aforementioned verses and I Corinthians 12-14 in support. Those who vigorously oppose it cite Acts 2:6 — "...the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak his own language" — to support their contention that the tongues referred to are intelligible languages, not glossolalic utterances. Moreover, they point out, in I Corinthians 14 Paul states that prophecy is a greater gift than speaking in tongues because the latter is intelligible only to the speaker while the former benefits the whole church. Dow (1964) and Stagg *et al.* (1967) express the view that the tongues referred to in Acts 2 are intelligible ones while those referred to in I Corinthians 12-14 are unintelligible. There seems to be much room for interpretation on the subject.

cultural context. Many of the White-Robed Army's unique features as an Afro-American religion derive from distinctive features in Guyanese society and culture. The movement may be seen as, in some respects, a microcosmic reflection of Guyanese society. Three examples will be given here: faithist attitudes to marriage, syncretisms, and the relationship between faith doctrine and ethnic relations.

ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES RELATING TO MARRIAGE

The White-Robed Army differs from conventional denominations in its conception of marriage,¹⁴ for it views marriage as a union with cohabitation which occurs solely because the man and woman wish it. Legal sanction is not deemed necessary and the marriage ceases to exist when one or both partners cease to wish it. In theory, faithists accept polygyny, which was practised by the Hebrews in ancient times, but I do not know of any case of polygyny among faithists either at present or in the past. While plural marriage is not legal in Guyana, there are men with more than one family. Until July 1973, when five Elders were registered by the government as marriage officers, the faithist marriage service was not legally recognized, and some faithists married by Elders had their marriages "solemnized" or registered afterwards, though others did not. Though there is no negative sanction on non-legalized unions faithists make a nominal distinction between "married" (whether in a legal or faith ceremony) and "living" or "living home" (the Guyanese terms for consensual union). Religious-group endogamy is preferred though not prescribed. If an Elder were to attempt to prevent a marriage between a member of his gathering and a non-faithist the probable outcome would be either that the prospective spouse would agree to take baptism or the faithist would leave the gathering. In most marriages both partners are

¹⁴ It is commonly held that the conception of marriage among lower-class Africans in the New World differs from that of the conventional denominations. See, for example, Frazier 1939, Herskovits and Herskovits 1947, Henriques 1953, and R. T. Smith 1956, to name just a few.

faithists and either were before marriage or one took baptism upon marriage.

SYNCRETIC ELEMENTS IN FAITHIST DOCTRINE

Much of Afro-American religion is characterized by a syncretism of African and Euro-American elements. The White-Robed Army is distinctive in combining elements from European (Judæo-Christian), East Indian (Hindu and Muslim, and generalized "Indian" cultural features), and Guyanese folk tradition, which is itself syncretic. It is this unique syncretism, among other things, which makes the White-Robed Army distinctive and characteristically Guyanese.¹⁵

Judaic elements

Faithists lean so heavily on the Old Testament that Judaic elements are almost innumerable, and I shall mention only some of the more obvious correspondences. Faithists consider themselves to be closer in doctrine to the ancient Jews than to contemporary so-called Christians: they adhere closely to the commandments of God, as they see them; they pay homage to Jehovah, though they differ from Jews in worshipping Christ as well, and in reading both Testaments. Some Judaic practices in faithist observance are: segregation of the sexes in the temple; exclusion of menstruating women from the temple for a stated period of time; the presence on the altar of the seven-branched candelabra; the wearing by men of a fringed scarf;¹⁶ the wearing of headcovering in the temple by both sexes; the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath, with the taboo against working on the Sabbath; the taboos on pork and shellfish; and the observance of certain festivals, such as Passover. While faithist observance might differ from Judaic observance (the number of Jews in Guyana is negligible and the faithist source for Jewish tradition

¹⁵ There is an East Indian cult in Martinique (Horowitz & Klass 1961) which combines elements of South Indian Hinduism and Roman Catholicism, but the Euro-African element is absent.

¹⁶ The scarf for men is seen also among Hindus in Guyana.

is the Bible, not observation of rituals), what is important is that faithist believe they are following Judaic rites.

East Indian elements

The official history of the faith identifies an Indian as founder. Whether the apparently East Indian elements derive from that, or from the fact that from the inception most of members have been rural Guyanese with considerable contact with East Indian ways, or from some other factor, it is difficult to say. The fact remains that many faithist practices resemble East Indian ones. Again the list is long and I shall give only some examples. The Hindi(?) term *puggrie* is often used for the turban of male faithists, and seven-day feasts are often called by their Hindi(?) name, *baghwat*. The doctrine of reincarnation, while reinforced by belief in the resurrection of Christ, resembles the Hindu concept of a series of reincarnations whose nature is influenced by conduct during one lifetime. There is also, however, belief in reincarnation in West African religion, and it should be noted here and elsewhere that the determining of the provenience of faithist practices is not a simple matter. When the first rafter of the new WEMP church was laid in 1970 a white flag was planted in the yard — this resembles the ritual of *jhandee* prevalent among Hindus in Guyana, in which flags are planted after successful completion of a venture. The WEMP ritual included spilling wine on the ground; Afro-Guyanese folk tradition includes pouring libations whenever a new bottle of rum is opened. Skinner (1955:260) reports that East Indians cleanse themselves after attending funerals. While faithist observance with respect to pollution from corpses is probably derived from Old Testament strictures, it is possible that Jordan's consciousness of purity and pollution came from contact with Hindus. Finally, much of faithist cuisine resembles Indo-Guyanese cooking; it seems logical that vegetarian faithists have adopted dishes from the culinary repertoire of vegetarian Hindus. Vegetarian faithists have adapted other Guyanese dishes to their diet as well: pepperpot (Amerindian), chow mein (Chinese), and mettagee (African), to name a few. Correspondences of faithist and East Indian practice should be seen against the background of anti-

East Indian sentiment by members of the White-Robed Army in religious and secular contexts. The subject of African-East Indian relations in Guyana is a complex one and before I turn to it, let me look at syncretisms from Guyanese folk tradition.

Elements from Guyanese folk culture

As I have said, Guyanese culture is an amalgam of several cultural traditions — African, European, Amerindian, East Indian, and Chinese, with an African-European syncretism predominating. I do not wish to take up here the controversy over "Africanisms"; there are elements in Guyanese folk culture which seem to have counterparts in West African culture, others with parallels in European culture of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (the time of intensive colonization of Guyana), and still others of different or uncertain provenience. While it would be absurd to itemize influences from Guyanese folk culture in the daily lives of members of the White-Robed Army, I shall give some examples of religious beliefs and practices which seem to come from Guyanese folk tradition.

Baptism by immersion is found in African religions (Herskovits 1967; Sundkler 1961), as well as in the New Testament and in fundamentalist Christianity among Whites. The significance given to dreams is common to Guyanese of all races and religious persuasions, and a dream of a dead person is believed to indicate that the deceased has a message for the one whom "he dreams". The belief that being born with a caul imparts spiritual powers is also a Guyanese folk belief. Forty-night services are still held by Africans in some Guyanese villages. One faithist woman, in telling me of the death of her son, said she had not gone to the burial ground as it is believed that a mother who does so will "bury all her children" (i.e., all her children will predecease her).¹⁷ Folk beliefs about jumbies (ghosts), Baccoo (a dwarflike spirit which is mischievous but can be beneficent if well-treated), and Fair Maid (lightskinned

¹⁷ Clarke (1966: 218) mentions the same belief for Jamaica, whose population is predominantly African, while Skinner (1955: 242) reports that East Indian women in Guyana do not go to burial grounds either.

sirenlike spirits which inhabit Guyana's rivers and creeks) have been incorporated into the faithist belief system.¹⁸ Finally, the faithist attitude to marriage reflects the attitude of many lower-class Afro-Guyanese: there is no negative sanction on non-legalized union and little stigma on children born outside legal marriage.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

The White-Robed Army is a distinctively Guyanese religion which reflects Guyanese social, cultural, inter-ethnic, economic and political conditions, and its doctrines express Guyana's cultural diversity and syncretisms. As I shall now show, there is a relationship between member's attitudes to the various ethnic groups in Guyana and faithist religious beliefs.¹⁹

"Explanations" for the slow progress of Afro-Guyanese

Afro-Guyanese, especially those in the lower socio-economic strata, often express the view that Africans in Guyana as a group have not advanced as far as they should relative to other ethnic groups. The two major classes of "explanation" are to blame one of the other ethnic groups — East Indians for being dishonest, corrupt and servile, thus ingratiating themselves with Europeans; Europeans for being arrogant, repressive and deliberately keeping Africans in inferior positions — or to blame Africans themselves. A commonly heard complaint in Guyana and the West Indies is "black people like crabs in a barrel" — they climb upon one another and push each other down in their attempts to get out of the barrel which is life, unsatisfactory social position, etc., with the result that none succeeds in getting

¹⁸ Belief in Baccoo is said by Guyanese to have diffused from Surinam. Herskovits (1967:254-5) describes a Surinamese belief in a similar spirit called *bakru*. It has been suggested by some writers that Guyanese beliefs in water spirits might have been borrowed by the early slaves from the Amerindians, who have such beliefs. Beliefs in lightskinned, sirenlike water spirits are found also, however, in Caribbean territories with far less Amerindian influence than Guyana has, and in West Africa.

¹⁹ Attitudes related to ethnic relations which reflect the personal, more secular beliefs and experiences of members are discussed in Roback 1973.

out. Afro-Guyanese blame members of their own group for not being sufficiently enterprising, group-minded and so on to improve the group's status. I once heard a faithist at a roadside meeting preach that "our ancestors came here through disobedience [to God]". This statement reflects the preacher's belief that sin brings punishment — and forcible removal from one's homeland and slavery are harsh punishment indeed — as well as her interpretation of Biblical passages like Noah's curse on his son Ham and his descendants that they would be servants (Genesis 9:25), and God's prophecy to Abraham that his descendants would be servants in a strange land (Genesis 15:13). Another common view is expressed in the following:

Ham saw his father's nakedness and did not cover it. We [Afro-Guyanese] expose each otha' nakedness. We laugh at one anotha'. We cuss one anotha'. That is why we have to get jobs from [members of other ethnic groups, especially East Indians and Europeans]. Chineese man come from Hong Kong poor poor; the rest help him. ... They cover their brotha' nakedness.

The implication is that if Africans were to show the same spirit of solidarity, they would advance as do other ethnic groups in Guyana. Skinner (1968) reports exhortations by faithist preachers to Africans to raise the status of their group by emulating East Indians and supporting strongly endeavours of their own group.

Attitudes toward East Indians

Members of the White-Robed Army exhibit a range of attitudes toward East Indians, depending on the situation.²⁰ A faithist might say he feels no differently toward East Indians than toward any other Guyanese ethnic group, that any 'nation' may join the faith, and that there is no real ethnic separation in Guyana. "All a we is one", I heard a faithist preach. "Don' worry black cuss coolie²¹ and coolie cuss black; a coolie is a

²⁰ This is not unlike the attitude of African Guyanese in general — their opinions and behaviour may vary with the level of social relations they are operating on (e.g. interpersonal, economic, local-level political, national political, etc.) and other facets of the situation.

²¹ Derogatory term applied to East Indians, though East Indians themselves use it as well.

black man — only de hair [is different]". But faithists also make negative comments about East Indians. They viewed the statue of Mahatma Gandhi erected in Georgetown's Botanical Gardens as a "graven image", in direct contravention of the Second Commandment, and they reacted strongly. Several faithists pointed out that "from the day they put up the image, what happen — so many men dyin' ". There was a period of a month or so around that time when three prominent Guyanese, including the Governor-General, died. Faithists were not alone in remarking upon what was considered a curious coincidence but they were the only Guyanese, to my knowledge, to associate the deaths with the erection of the statue.

Faithist doctrine then, highlights the Guyanese situation — the ethnic and cultural diversity reflected in the syncretisms; the communalism alongside flexibility and adaptation to situations as they arise. Flexibility is an important structural feature too, and it has contributed to the strength, growth and persistence of the movement.

STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS

Segmentation, with the absence of organizational unity and of formalization are structural features of the White-Robed Army which, rather than having weakening effects, have provided flexibility and have facilitated persistence and expansion. Two themes related to segmentation and flexibility which are expressed in the movement's doctrines and in its structure are (1) identification of members and definition of boundaries of the movement and (2) group purity and definition of "true Jordanites".

Definition of the movement is a complex issue. Members of the public tend to identify all white-robed people as Jordanites, but for faithists it is not so simple. Hitherto there has been no formal unity (though a formal unification has begun in recent months); there has been only a loose aggregation of independent gatherings, the majority of whose leaders and members acknowledge as unifying principles the teachings of Jordan and personal links between gatherings. Not all claim to be Jordanites and not

all are acceptable as Jordanites to those who see themselves as true Jordanites and who establish the criteria, but there is recognition of participation in one White-Robed movement.

Recruitment and membership

The major objective of holding public meetings is proselytization. Members are usually recruited in one or a combination of the following ways.

1. They are favourably impressed as the result of looking on at a roadside meeting.
2. They are reared in the faith from childhood.
3. They have a vision and perhaps some knowledge of the White-Robed Army, so joining the movement is interpreted as the correct response to the vision's message.
4. They are introduced to the faith by a friend or relative.

The movement is sufficiently widespread geographically and its membership is homogenous enough with respect to ethnicity and socio-economic status that many members of the lower class are at least aware of its existence and nature, and many are acquainted with faithists.

Definition of Jordanites is, as I have said, based on adherence to particular beliefs and rituals and on the idea of legitimate succession from Jordan. Here too, however, as in other domains of faithist and Guyanese ideology and activity, flexibility is evident, and tolerance of those who consider themselves Jordanites/faithists without fitting the strict definition of legitimacy varies. Flexibility is brought into play by factors such as degree of adherence to Jordan's doctrine by the Elder in question; the circumstances of schism; the situation in which definition is being discussed — a harangue by members of the WEMP against "counterfeit Jordanites", planning and executing a movement wide activity, a discussion of possible unification, etc. Perception by members of a single White-Robed movement does not negate the importance of segmentation in the growth of the movement.

Segmentation

There are four major categories of gatherings, classified according to the way in which gatherings have originated:

1. The WEMP and its branches, led by legitimate "Jordanite" Elders;
2. Gatherings formed as the result of schism in the WEMP;
3. Gatherings formed by persons influenced by the teachings of Jordan and branches of these gatherings;
4. Gatherings formed as the result of schisms in gatherings in Category 3.

In all cases of segmentation members of other gatherings might join a newly formed one. Actual schisms occur for many reasons; some examples follow:

1. Disagreement with a particular doctrine, like vegetarianism, espoused by an Elder;
2. Personal disagreement with an Elder;
3. Expulsion from a gathering for persistence in a belief or practice, such as "shaking and speaking in tongues", rejected by an Elder;
4. Desire for personal power and leadership;
5. Personal call to leadership of a separate gathering through visionary experience.

Relationships among gatherings

Due to the frequency of segmentation and the importance of kinship and friendship networks in membership recruitment, gatherings are linked by persons who have been members of more than one gathering. Personal ties do not always mean good relations, and inter-gathering relations range from close and cordial to distant and discordant, depending on factors like whether there has been a schism and the reason for it, the personalities of the principals, etc.

Through the maintenance of gatherings at a size permitting face-to-face interaction and personal relations within the movement, segmentation and the networks which link gatherings can provide for members a feeling of personal involvement with gathering and movement affairs which is provided also by the elaborate organizational hierarchy.

*Organizational hierarchy*²²

1. Bishop — male; overall leader of gatherings with branches; the title is used on formal occasions.
2. Defender of the Faith — male; must answer questions and criticisms; holds another office as well, such as Priest.
3. Elder — male; leader of a gathering; qualified and authorized to perform baptism.
4. Priest — male; acts in the absence of the Elder; in gatherings led by a Mother the Priest has more importance; some branch-gatherings are led by a Priest, sometimes assisted by a Priestess.
5. Priestess — female; essentially the same as Mother; the Priestess is found where the Priest has prominence.
6. Captains — male; lead their own "bands" or gatherings but cannot baptize; mainly take bands out for roadside meetings.
7. Mother — female; wife of Elder and/or widows "in fact or in deed" (i.e. older women who are past menopause and/or are without male partners and therefore less likely to be led from the spiritual path); gatherings may have more than one Mother, each with a set of duties. Where a Mother

²² The hierarchy presented here is to a degree an ideal-typical one, containing most of the offices to be found in hierarchies within the movement, though all the offices may not be found in a single gathering. Under Klien there were some important differences between the hierarchy of the WEMP and that of other gatherings. The office of "Mother" was absent in the WEMP under Klien, though it was utilized by Jordan and is now again by Furry. Under Klien, too, the "Bishop" was simply the leader of all WEMP gatherings, except from the point of view of those outside the movement; under Furry and the trend to a working unity and formal unification in the White-Robed Army, the title "Bishop" carries the implication of leader of the entire movement.

leads a gathering she usually has a Priest to assist her. Women cannot baptize.

8. Evangelists, Apostles, Readers — male and female; they go with Elder, Priest or Captain, or on their own (usually as a group), to roadside meetings.
9. Sick visitors — female; they visit and give solace and assistance to the sick, faithists and non-faithists.
10. Brethren — male and female; those who have been baptized.
11. Initiates²³ — male and female; those who are "taking teaching" preparatory to baptism; they may attend services during this period, which usually lasts 3-6 months but may be longer or shorter, depending on the baptizer's and the initiate's estimation of the state of readiness.

The proliferation of offices described here may be noted for other Afro-American religions in the Caribbean area (e.g. Simpson 1956) and the United States (e.g. Fauset 1971), and for associations in Africa (e.g. Banton 1960, Sundkler 1961). Space does not permit discussion of the many possible interpretations of this phenomenon, so I shall simply outline some which come from my own study.²⁴

1. A leader has as an instrument of control the power to reward and punish members by granting and withholding appoint-

²³ This is my term.

²⁴ See Roback 1973 for a fuller discussion. Some of the other possible approaches are (a) that the elaborate hierarchies are evidence of survivals of socio-cultural patterns from the highly stratified West African societies from which the slaves were brought to the New World. See Herskovits (1967) for "African survivals" views and Bastide (1967), Roback (1973), M.G. Smith (1960), *inter alia*, for discussion of the inadequacies of such an explanation; (b) in terms of historical factors, culture contact and diffusion — Protestant missionary churches active in Africa and the New World might have served as structural models for independent religious organizations. See Curtin (1970), Sundkler (1961); (c) the aspect of "performance" noted by Abrahams (1970), Kochman (1970) and Reisman (1970), among others, as characteristic of Afro-American speech behaviour might be applied to participation in associations, with respect to fondness for titles and other badges of office; and finally (d) Talmon (1965) mentions non-conformism and individualism as factors in both the attraction of members and the fissiparous tendencies. Many of the members might also be people with organizational and leadership aspirations and abilities for which greater expression is provided in small sects than in large churches. It is likely that some combination of interpretations is the most satisfactory.

ment or promotion. The leader does not have complete freedom in this: there is possibility of pressure from members over an inequitable promotion or denial of promotion, and the set of titles is relatively established, with little recent innovation. Nevertheless, the leader can satisfy desires for prestige and importance with the large number of available titles. Moreover, through the relative certainty that some will follow in the event of segmentation, a faithist can create a position of leadership, while some of those who follow will be given offices they might have aspired to.

2. Organizations such as the White-Robed Army constitute, in stratified societies, social subsystems with their own status structures (See also Cook 1971) which provide a sense of importance and participation for members not afforded by their low status in the wider social system. Involvement and other satisfactions are greater in the small indigenous gatherings than in the larger, more formal, impersonal churches of which many have been members.
3. Related to the above is the view of Turner (1969): he sees the elaborate hierarchies and key roles for women in terms of reversals of secular status, and sees this symbolic promotion as a central feature of the liminality of people of low status.
4. The ideology of an elaborated structure with titles and offices, duties and privileges, might be seen as providing legitimacy for the activities conducted by participants. That is, in view of the importance of personal networks in the White-Robed Army, many interact on a fairly regular basis outside the movement. The ideology of offices and the activities associated with them gives to the interactions and acts a significance broader than the mere fact of interacting with people with whom one already has relationship and of performing activities one might perform anyway in these relationships.

"Charisma", leadership, authoritarianism and succession

In Weber's terms (Weber 1964b) there has been "routinization of charisma" in the White-Robed Army: Jordan was a

"prophet", i.e., "a purely individual bearer of charisma, who... proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment" (Weber 1964a:46) while any leader since has been a "priest" who "lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition..." (Ibid.). Charisma is an attribute of a social relationship between leaders and followers, not of an individual's personality²⁵ but it is also, in my opinion, a quality of members of religious movements like the White-Robed Army, as evidenced by visionary experiences, possession behaviour, and success in proselytization. In fact, with the frequency of segmentation in millenarian movements, many who begin as followers become leaders. Recruitment of members and selection of leaders are based on charismatic considerations, despite a degree of routinization.

The leader is the pivotal figure of a gathering and gatherings are identified by their leaders. For example: "what church do you go to?" "I go to Elder _____ in Albouystown". The leadership appears somewhat authoritarian in character, and members look to leaders for advice, assistance and arbitration in disputes, as well as spiritual guidance.²⁶ In part this is a result of the conceptualization of the role of leader and the qualifications for it — the leader has divinely legitimated authority; religious leaders are depicted in the Bible as somewhat dictatorial; and successful leaders tend to have forceful personalities. Nevertheless, it could perhaps be said that the White-Robed leader is a paternal/maternal figure rather than a patriarchal/matriarchal one, and leader-member relations are, on the whole, warm, affectionate and relaxed. The kinship metaphor used by faithists in terms of address and reference is perhaps relevant here: female members are called "Sister", male members "Brother", female leaders "Mother" and male leaders "Elder" but by some, on

²⁵ See Singham 1968:309-311; Weber 1964b:359 and Worsley 1968: xi-xviii for a discussion of this.

²⁶ The strong central position given to the leader in independent religious movements in Africa, and among Africans in the New World could be attributed to survival of an African pattern of leadership, to the authoritarian position of the father in the family, to the lack of the father as an authority figure in the lower-class Afro-American family, or to the "matrifocal family" pattern among lower-class Afro-Americans and the strong position of the mother. All of these could be posited by way of explanation (Herskovits 1967; Kerr 1963; Singham 1968; and Sundkler 1961 all suggest such lines of thinking) and are open to investigation.

occasion, "Daddy". While I do not think too much should be read into this usage, it is associated with leader-member relations which are more egalitarian and personal than they appear at first glance.

The leader then, is the focal point of the gathering by virtue of his personality and not just the definition of his office. There are no explicit criteria regarding the qualities and qualifications for leadership, but I was able to cull what faithists consider to be desirable characteristics from observation and discussion. There is no theological training for leaders, but leaders should have: a sound knowledge of faith doctrine and of the sacred texts; a forceful personality; facility with language and a flair for preaching; behaviour which provides a model for members; strong convictions, the courage to carry them out and the ability to convince others; diplomacy; the ability to give advice and guidance. Some of these qualities can be taken care of by divine inspiration while others are those which strike a responsive chord in people and thereby provide the basis for leadership.

Most of the leaders are the first generation, as it were, but there have been successions; successors have either been designated by the out-going leader after a revelation or chosen by members according to some accepted procedure. In either case the successor has legitimacy. An important feature of the White-Robed Army is that notwithstanding its long duration, succession crises, schisms, and fluctuations in membership, the movement has not undergone any formalization of its structure or any diminution of its charismatic character.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The White-Robed Army is not, as many of the millenarian movements described in the literature seem to be, explicable as an "anti-colonial", "anti-White" or "proto-nationalist" movement. The White-Robed Army would seem to belong to a class of movements which is distinctive in a number of respects and whose analysis should incorporate three dimensions to account for a movement's persistence and growth: historical and contemporary social-structural factors; cognitive factors among

a movement's members; and organizational factors relating to the movement itself.

Though not a "crisis cult", the White-Robed Army does represent a response to societal conditions and in some measure, a protest against these conditions and a quest for change toward a personal and collective ideal: change for members and ultimately, for the total society and world. An important element in such an ideology is change in the members' image of themselves as individuals and as members of one or more social, cultural, economic, etc., categories. For faithists cultural, social, economic and political circumstances have always been unsatisfactory; they have not suddenly become so,²⁷ and it is likely that the movement originated from, and continues to be based on, enduring fundamental dissatisfaction with enduring unsatisfactory conditions.

The White-Robed Army provides participants with a positive socio-cultural identity and a mode of accommodation to the exigencies of low socio-economic status. Both aspects are important in the multiracial society of Guyana. The movement's ideology and activities provide these things in many ways, e.g., through involvement of participants in black cultural nationalist activities and ideas — interest in endeavours of Africans in Guyana and elsewhere and encouragement of the belief that Africans as a group are at least equal in potential to other ethnic groups in Guyana. These beliefs are articulated within the framework of the faith's religious ideology. The positive socio-

²⁷ In this respect the picture is different in the Caribbean region from that in, for example, Africa or Oceania. With the exception of the Amerindians the ancestors of the inhabitants of Guyana came to the area with colonization, so although Guyana was a colony until 1966, the White-Robed Army cannot be seen as a protest against the sudden incursion of foreigners and disruption of tradition. The members' only experience has been with European political, economic and cultural domination. There is no "Golden Age" to which they wish to return, though they can of course envisage a future state preferable to present conditions. The White-Robed Army, of course, is not unique. There are other religious movements which do not seem to have developed in a crisis situation but rather are fostered by a more generalized negative situation. Such movements tend to be of long rather than short duration. In the cases of *vodun*, in Haiti, revivalism and Rastafarianism in Jamaica, the Nation of Islam in the United States, and the independent churches in South Africa, whatever the circumstances of the emergence of the movements, the movements persist with the persistence of the unsatisfactory situations in which the adherents live.

cultural image of members is buttressed by their commitment to the movement's doctrines and by their conviction that they are pursuing the right and true course in keeping with God's commandments. Opposition from non-members — which has never amounted to actual suppression, though faithists have been arrested — serves to reinforce the conviction of members and to maintain the vitality of doctrines and of interest in doctrines through the necessity for discussion and debate with non-faithists. Doctrinal differences within the movement contribute to this vitality as well.

The doctrinal and personal differences which have led to schism have been a strength rather than a weakness, for through schism the movement has been able to expand geographically, to increase the number of gatherings and to increase the total number of members within the movement, as new gatherings gain members through the defection of members from other gatherings and through recruitment of new members, and the lack of formal organization fosters this growth by permitting flexibility.

The importance of personal networks of kinship, friendship and acquaintance enters here, for recruitment is frequently along lines of already-existing relationships with faithists. Personal relationships are important also in the maintenance of ties between gatherings. Schism is a strength also in that it allows the maintenance of gatherings at a size permitting face-to-face interactions among members and between leaders and members. This is important structurally, and also in that it contributes to the social-psychological satisfactions gained through participation in the White-Robed Army. The elaborate organizational hierarchy, with the factors mentioned above, contributes to the feeling of direct involvement with the doctrines, structure and activities of the gathering and the movement as a whole. The White-Robed Army, as a result of the foregoing structural features and the maintenance of an ideology of opposition to the wider society, has been able to remain a dynamic, charismatic movement.

In conclusion, the dominant ideological and structural themes of the White-Robed Army are (1) definition, creation and maintenance of the movement's boundaries and its identification as distinctive vis-à-vis the outside and (2) the maintenance of

a state of purity (spiritual, physical and organizational) and avoidance of pollution. These concerns reflect some of the problems faced by members as faithists and as Afro-Guyanese. The doctrinal and structural flexibility of the movement, the uncertain place of the movement in the wider society, the ethnic-group uncertainty of identity as Africans, and the complexities of Guyana's social/racial/political situation are all manifested in the concerns with boundaries, definitions, rules, and purity which provide structure and distinctiveness.²⁸ I have tried to show here the many levels on which the White-Robed Army is integrated with and reflects its social context, and is distinctive among Afro-American religious movements in many ways.

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²⁸ See Mary Douglas (1966) for a full exegesis of this line of analysis. I plan to develop it further in an article on the system of taboos of the White-Robed Army.

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