

## CHAPTER VII--"CONCLUSIONS"

The real meaning of the conclusions which emerge from this study concerning the issues and aspects of directed culture change is to be found in the consideration of the role of the change agent in programs of culture change and development. In this study of the Balim Valley, it was necessary to take into account the facts of the environment and larger society of which the Dani are but a small part. It was necessary to consider the elements through a continuum of time. In addition, the traditional Dani culture had to be presented in sufficient detail so that a description of Dani culture today would have meaning in terms of the changes that have taken place. Only after these topics had been considered, could the raw data be provided on which to base the analysis. The data for a number of agencies involved in the change and development of the Balim Valley were presented with little comment in order that others could reach their own conclusions now and in the future. A relatively complete outline of the actual field experience and theoretical leanings were also provided as an essential part of the study against which the analysis and conclusions could be compared. This allows the reader to assess for himself how and in what manner the investigator might have superimposed his biases on the research. All of the preceding were presented in the earlier

chapters of this study.

In the recounting of the conclusions that have been drawn from this study, it is necessary to consider: (1) the issues and aspects of culture change and development; (2) the result of various attempts to induce change and development, primarily those attempts originating from outside of the Dani culture; (3) the practical and theoretical implications of the study; and (4) a statement about the prospects for the Dani of the Balim Valley.

#### ISSUES AND ASPECTS

Throughout the study, the concern was on the issues and aspects of culture change and development. Special emphasis was given to examining the planned change programs and projects aimed at rapid development. Different responses and kinds of changes were noted. Generally, the Grand Valley Dani have been unresponsive to the programs directed towards these ends. As a group, the Dani have not embraced the new Christian religion, nor have they accepted substantial changes in their way of life. Apart from a few surface-type changes, such as the adoption of certain tools and newer agricultural products, the Dani remain pretty much as they have always been. The people of the Pyramid area, more closely related to the Western Dani and living in what can best be described as a transitional zone, have been responsive to change efforts. The traditional culture has been altered in

significant ways, almost eradicated, in response to the introduction and wide-spread acceptance of Christianity (refer to pages 214 to 215 for the discussion of change at Pyramid stemming from the Christian movement of the early sixties). The differences between the Western Dani and the Grand Valley Dani, while important, are insufficient as an explanation for the differing responses. Differences were also noted within the Grand Valley itself, as for example between Yiwika and Wamena, or Wamena and Pugima, and between these areas and others in the valley (see pages 216 to 217 for a discussion highlighting these differences). Based on the evidence that the Dani are generally flexible in adapting to conditions, and the fact that all cultures provide for change, I am led to support the contention that the lack of motivation (a prerequisite to change) or resistance is not so much an explanation as it is a signal of the failure of the change agent in the interactional situation. The conclusion drawn from this, is that in programs of directed culture change, the major responsibility for the responsiveness of the recipient group and the ultimate success or failure of the innovation process clearly rests with the change agent and not on some "resistant" aspect of the culture as is so often suggested. In the Balim Valley, the lack of substantial success is usually attributed to resistant cultural elements (see pages 230 ff.). I would suggest the actions of the missionaries, government officials and other change agents has caused or initiated the resistance. The

of this program). The strategies utilized up to the present time have not been characterized by such a bridging of the gap between recipient and change agent in terms of directive for learning and teaching or self maintenance of the program, but are mainly directive only (see page 238 for the usual government approach to change, page 241 for that of the C.A.M.A. mission and page 242 for the normal approach of the Catholics). The evidence would seem to support the interactional situation position assumed and confirm the preference and considerations of strategy proposed by Lang (1973).

Normally, when speaking about the forces of change, the reference is simply recounting the barriers and stimulants to change (Foster 1969). It is my contention that the change agent is the builder of barriers and stimulants. Through his actions which reflect his own personality, cultural values and beliefs, and his approach in terms of method, the change agent so structures the interactional situation that the result is predictable (see page 236 for an example associated with law enforcement). Some have argued that studies have shown that traditional leadership, religion, or the existing political structure of the culture have been resistant to change programs and thus have determined the result. I would argue that resistance is, in reality, reaction to the agent and rarely due to some built-in resistance factor of the culture. Any element of traditional culture can become a barrier to change if ignored or misused by the agent attempting to induce change.

resistance of the traditional Dani leaders is an excellent example of this.

Personality, cultural background and strategy are among the more important factors associated with the change agent that have a profound effect on the interactional situation. In programs of directed change, these are normally intercultural or multi-cultural situations. What is communicated, formally or informally, to the recipient group determines the reaction of that group. The strategy or approach assumes a position of special importance. This is made clear by the evidence from the Balim Valley where four different strategies have been utilized (see pages 223 to 228 for a discussion of these four strategies). The most widely relied upon method was shown to be the paternalistic strategy. This strategy was characterized by paternalism, directive in terms of decision making and as requiring small amounts of material input.

It is my contention that whatever strategy is used, it must bridge the gap between the recipient group and the change agent. The Pikke brickworks and the saw mill operations are projects that move in the right direction but fall short of this goal. The C.A.M.A. self-help approach to the native church is perhaps a better example of what can result from such bridging (see pages 240 to 241 for a discussion of this strategy). The resettlement project of the Catholic church around Wamena is another such example (see page 243 for a discussion

For example, Dani leadership is usually blamed by the missions and government alike for the lack of progress in their programs. On closer examination, we found that the government subverts Dani leadership by appointing newer leaders to replace those found to be resistant to their programs. The resistance of these men can be directly attributed to the government's utilization of them. Only orders are passed down through them for implementation. The mission, by creating new leadership roles with pastors and catechists, also appears to be threatening to the traditional Dani leader. In either the government case or the mission case, the traditional Dani leadership reacts to what it considers a threat to their very existence. The change agent is in a position to lessen this resistance if he has considered such factors in his planning and actions. This same concept can be applied to the area of motivation and stimuli. Motivation can be created and stimuli only have to be identified.

Considering these factors of the change agent, a number of propositions seem to be essential to his work. These propositions would seem to be parallel with and confirm, those suggested by Lang (1973:55-59).

- 1) First and foremost, communication is the single most important factor in any program designed to bring about change or development. There are two aspects of communication which are significant; it must be two way, up

from the people as well as down from the administrator; and, its formal and informal aspects must be considered. No one has yet asked the Dani what it is that he wants. To date, they have only been told what they will do. The government and mission directives demonstrate this point quite clearly. It is also true that the change agents in the Balim Valley have considered only the formal aspects of communication. It is not only through words that communication takes place. Actions, which may be conscious or unconscious, communicate something as well. Consider the consequence of missionaries limiting Dani access to their homes. This action contradicts many of the things that are being preached. Consider also, that government and mission programs require the Dani to forsake a great deal of their culture. What is left to allow the Dani some semblance of pride in his culture?

- 2) Participation, in terms of local involvement by the recipient group, should be included in every step of the innovative process. The participation by the local group facilitates the creation of an environment of problem identification and solution. This would appear to be a prerequisite of development, particularly in terms of a positive self-evaluation. It also insures the self-

maintenance of the program which, of course, is the essential condition for integration of the change into the behavior patterns of the people. As of today, the only programs with meaningful and substantial participation on the part of people are the Dani's own project (see page 248 and the mission programs that have been cited).

- 3) Understanding and appreciation of the traditional culture is essential if trust is to be built between the change agent and recipient group. Without trust, there will be no interaction between these groups and change will be more difficult. It may be that without interaction as I have outlined only forced change can occur. The failure of the government and missions to distinguish between the war kaneke and that associated with the well being of the group is a prime example. The orders to destroy kaneke reflect this lack of understanding and appreciation.
- 4) It is essential that the primary purpose of the change agent always be kept in mind; the promotion of human rights. The concern of development agencies with their own well-being first (see page 234), the condescending attitudes of all of the change agencies (see page 235), and the profiteering at the Dani's expense would seem to

indicate this purpose has been forgotten somewhat.

- 5) Motivation is a necessary prerequisite for change and the agent can, by his actions or inactions, create, nurture or destroy it in the interactional situation. Pyramid is a prime example where motivation to change is being ignored. At Pyramid also, the failure to nurture the native attempts to establish their own vegetable operation will adversely affect motivation.

I am inclined to propose one more conclusion in this area of issues and aspects of change, namely, that culture change and development is a complex process, rarely if ever stemming from one action or event. This study has demonstrated that change is usually meshed into a complex matrix of factors, all of which may have influenced the ultimate event. The acceptance of Christianity at Pyramid (see pages 249-250) and the vegetable market of Wamena (see page 237) are two excellent examples of this complexity.

#### CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

In this study, it has been demonstrated that culture change has, and continues to occur in the Balim Valley. The acceptance of new tools and other material culture, the changes involving in marriage patterns, education and housing have already been discussed at length (see pages 212 to 217 for a full discussion of these changes). While these things have demonstrated there has been change, the notion that

development follows is not necessarily true (see Chapter III for the definitions on which this distinction is based). Another way this condition can be expressed or categorized, is "growth without development" (Dalton 1971:214-222). The basis for this conclusion rests on the lack of sufficient jobs for the Dani, the inequality created through condescending attitudes expressed toward them, and the failure, in most cases, to develop the positive self-evaluation necessary to development.

In economic terms, the criterion rests on minimizing the disruption of the traditional society and the people engaging in new cash earning activities. While the Dani are beginning to engage in the new cash earning activities, such as growing vegetables for sale, this has not required much change in the Dani way of life. He has yet to augment his own diet with these vegetables. The resulting income from this activity is still used for old prerogatives and conflicts over resources (land and labor) have developed. The reciprocity and sharing that traditionally characterized social relationships have been disrupted. I conclude, therefore, development is not inevitable while culture change is under contact conditions (see Chapter III for a discussion of the dynamic quality of culture). Without the preferred direction, as I have previously outlined, change is not necessarily going to lead to development.

Considering the prospects of the Dani, it is difficult to

forecast the future. It can be said that a great deal of change has already occurred, a fact which by itself would insure that the inevitable process will continue. The direction of the process is dependent on the persons responsible for the planning and implementation of future programs. Based on my experience and study among the Dani, I would not agree with the conclusion reached by Gardner and Heider that without war, the Dani culture, "could not find sufficient meaning to survive except parasitically as the novelty of missionaries or policemen" (1968:144), nor with Heider's first prediction that the Dani would become "detrribalized parasites" (1970:297). Heider has recently re-evaluated this position (1972a:24). On the contrary, the fact that the Dani themselves have begun to take the initiative in programs aimed at their own development (such as the Dani program for giving financial assistance in furthering education), suggests to me that, given the proper opportunities, they will be capable of a great deal of progress toward the development goal. The successful functioning of the native church in and around the C.A.M.A. areas is also support for this conclusion.

#### PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

It is apparent that there are practical implications of this study. In the analysis of the various programs, their strengths and weaknesses, the descriptions and evaluations should prove to be of real assistance to the agencies involved in directed change and

development programs, especially in terms of their future planning. The rather detailed description of the traditional Dani culture and the recounting of the culture as it was found in 1972 augment the materials that have been available to date. These descriptions should also contribute to the understanding and appreciation of the Dani culture which is so necessary for a successful program in change and development. A number of the points, such as those relating to the change agent, his strategies and actions previously discussed on pages 259-262, may even have application in other areas of the world where the same massive and rapid change is being considered or already underway. Second, an awareness by the change agent of the critical role he has in the ultimate determination of the programs, when combined with adequate resources and materials, should help in the maximization of efforts aimed toward goals that, in many cases, have already been set. The position assumed in Chapter VI on strategy and the interactional situation would seem to have been confirmed.

I believe that the discipline of anthropology could benefit from some of the findings of this study. One contribution is the addition this study makes to the store of knowledge about Irian Jaya, and in particular, the Balim Valley. Up to the present time, little anthropological research has been carried out in this area of the world. Another benefit to anthropology is drawn from its concern with culture change and development. Anthropologists have tended, as culture change

agents have done, to stress the idea of resistance of cultural aspects rather than unresponsiveness as a reaction to the change agent and his activities. I have not minimized the importance of cultural factors in change, but rather, have put the responsibility for their consideration squarely on the agent of change. The complexity of the change process has been stressed throughout and the tendency to represent change in cause and effect relationships, usually on a one-to-one basis, is called into question. The complexity of change has always been realized but seldom is it reflected in the actual reporting, where cause and effect approaches have led to a simplistic kind of interpretation. This also tends to support the position assumed in Chapter VI.

There is also the contribution in regard to the presentation of details surrounding the fieldwork experience and theoretical background of the investigator. In presenting such details, a background is provided against which the result can be compared in attempting to determine the extent to which the investigator superimposed himself on the final outcome of the research. Such a background presentation is as essential to the study as is the data and its analysis.

Some of the small steps of the change process, have been highlighted, usually not possible from the time-lapse approach to the study of change. While these are only reconstructed after some time-lapse in the usual approach, here they have been provided and may eventually contribute to further understanding of the process of change. Once we

as anthropologists understand this process, in any of its variation and parameters, real progress might be possible in facilitating that change process. In this, there has also been a lesson for the anthropologist who may elect to assume an applied anthropology role. In his work, the same factors which effect the outcome of change programs will determine the effectiveness of his attempts to provide anthropological expertise and concepts to the solution of everyday problems.