

## *Family Organization in Five Types of Migratory Wage Labor*<sup>1</sup>

NANCIE L. SOLIEN DE GONZALEZ\*

*University of California, Berkeley*

FEW anthropologists doing fieldwork today can ignore the phenomena brought about by the process of acculturation. Both tribal and peasant societies in most parts of the world are undergoing internal changes brought about by an increasing contact with industrial civilization. The industrial system impinges upon different societies in different ways, and its effects seem to be highly variable.

In some areas the primary mechanism by which natives become introduced to the material and immaterial aspects of civilization is incidental trade, or the performance of domestic labor for resident foreigners. In others, technical assistance experts may assist the people in growing cash crops or at least in producing a larger marketable surplus for sale in their respective national markets. Finally, there are the large, in many cases foreign-owned, plantations, mines, and factories which require and depend upon native labor for their operation. These last in turn stimulate the building of roads, railroads, airports, all of which must be constructed and maintained by a fairly large labor force.

Often the natives are actively recruited through various techniques to labor in such enterprises, and in other cases the desire for money, or land-pressure in their own territories, leads them to seek out wage-paying jobs. Occasionally the work may be obtained fairly close to the native settlements, but in many cases the people must migrate some distance to reach the job. Obviously there are a great many theoretical problems arising from these various situations which may concern the social anthropologist attempting to interpret the relationship between these new patterns of behavior and various aspects of the indigenous sociocultural system. The literature on migratory wage-labor alone is growing rapidly, and the terminology, definitions, concepts, and problems deriving from just this single aspect of the acculturative process have resulted in a confusion which often makes comparison on a cross-cultural level difficult or impossible.

It is the purpose of this paper to make an initial and exploratory attempt to classify various types of migratory wage labor and to suggest some of the probable effects of each type on family organization. The nature of the period of absence from the home village has been used as the principle of classification, for this variable characteristic seems most significant for our purposes. The categories discussed include the following:

\* Research Anthropologist, Institute of Nutrition of Central America (INCAP), Guatemala, C. A.

- I. Seasonal migration
- II. Temporary, nonseasonal migration
- III. Recurrent migration
- IV. Continuous migration
- V. Permanent removal

### I. SEASONAL MIGRATION

Seasonal migrants are those who travel once a year, either as complete or partial families or as single adult individuals, to areas in which great numbers of workers are needed temporarily in such occupations as harvesting or processing of raw food items. Within the United States this pattern occurs among various ethnic groups such as Negroes, Anglo-Americans, American Indians, Japanese-Americans and Spanish-Americans, as well as among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans who enter the country to obtain seasonal work.

Although in the United States it is common for families to migrate as units, one also finds instances in which the husband alone, or the woman with her children, leaves the other members of the family to find work during the harvest season. Hathaway suggests that this breaking up of families, even for relatively short periods, leads to instability in the relationship between husband and wife, and consequent permanent breakup of the family unit (1934:3-4). This view is not shared by most sociologists, since the factors leading to marital instability—especially in the United States—are so numerous and interrelated that it is difficult or impossible to assess the relative importance of each.

Children are an economic asset to their family in seasonal labor, since it most often takes place during the summer months when school is not in session. Also, in many types of labor, such as berry-picking, children are able to perform well enough to make a real contribution to the family income.

Seasonal migration by families is fairly common among many American Indian groups (Dobyns 1950; Hanks 1950; Oestreich 1948; Randle 1951; South Dakota University 1958). Dobyns' description of Papago labor migration indicates that the traditional extended family continues to play an important role in the economic sphere. Although the biological, or nuclear, family is the main unit working for wages, members of the extended family remain on the reservations to care for the animals and small children and to maintain the farms and homesteads (1950:82).

On the other hand, he points out that increasing numbers of Papagos no longer own animals or farm land on the reservation. In such cases there is a tendency for the extended family to break up permanently into smaller nuclear families. Some of the latter have severed their reservation ties more or less completely, now living in labor camps all of the time (Dobyns 1950:25, 79-80, 82). Such would constitute continuous migration, to be discussed below.

Outside of the United States, seasonal migration, generally of men alone, occurs in most areas of the world where there exist large plantations. Throughout the Caribbean large numbers of workers are needed for the harvesting of sugarcane and other crops (see Crist 1948; Cumper 1954; Huggins 1953;

ously unstable among certain social classes in the Caribbean, and despite Hathaway's suggestion previously noted that even the temporary separation of husband and wife tends to have this effect, other evidence suggests that we cannot attribute marital instability to seasonal migration alone, for there are many societies in which such a pattern is found consistent with a high degree of marital stability. A good example is that of the Guatemalan highland Indian societies whose men have journeyed to the coffee *fincas* yearly for generations (Wagley 1941:30, 74-75).

It appears that seasonal migration per se has little or no determining effect on family organization. It occurs among societies exhibiting a wide range of family and household types, none of which appear to be any more or less compatible with this sort of migration than any other.

## II. TEMPORARY, NONSEASONAL MIGRATION

This category is represented by patterns especially widespread in Africa south of the Sahara and in Oceania. The migrants rarely travel in family groups, and most often consist of young unmarried adults. In Oceania these are almost without exception males, but in some parts of Africa and among United States southern Negroes many women are included. In Central America and, it is suspected, in other parts of Latin America, there may be as many young women as men who migrate as temporary, nonseasonal workers. Reasons given for migrating are remarkably similar regardless of the part of the world concerned. The young people wish to see something of the world, learn about Western ways, earn a certain amount of cash with which to purchase goods especially valued by their own culture, and gain prestige among their fellows.

It appears likely that in many societies today a labor surplus exists at all times. This is especially true in those groups which have available to them a few technological improvements of the Western world, but which nevertheless are based primarily upon a subsistence economy. There are various ways in which such a surplus might manifest itself in the social organization. New leisured classes might develop, based upon age, sex, heredity, or certain personal characteristics. On the other hand, labor-consuming or wealth-consuming institutions might make their appearance or become intensified. Another avenue for draining off a labor surplus is temporary, nonseasonal migration. If this labor surplus is channeled into activities which increase the flow of wealth into the society, the general level or standard of living will probably increase, even though the economic base remains the same.

Temporary, nonseasonal migration, however, cannot completely support the home society. Traditional economic pursuits must continue as before. From the point of view of the home village, the labor migration brings in added luxuries and new ideas. To the migrant, his period away from home takes on the character of a personal adventure. He sees new peoples, places, and cultures and has new experiences, all of which he can recount to his friends and

kinsmen back home. In addition, he will acquire many new objects for personal adornment, or to be used as gifts when he returns home, or he may use his wages or goods purchased with these wages to secure a bride. The important point here is that the migrant's experiences take on meaning primarily in relation to his own village or the sociocultural system in which he was born and brought up. Margaret Mead, in regard to Manus, points out that, "Away from home they [i.e., the migrant workers] were essentially in the custody of some individual enterprise, as an employee of a firm, a mission or of a government department. Their social or ethnic identity, as opposed to their work identity, remained tied firmly to their own village" (1956:516).

Typical of temporary, nonseasonal migrants in Africa are the Nyakyusa. According to Gulliver, in areas of heaviest migration up to 90 percent of the migrants are bachelors (1957:46). The usual custom is for young men to make two to three trips to earn money for cattle, clothes, taxes, and bicycles, after which they return to their villages to settle down. Schapera reports that in South Africa the total number of unmarried absentees is more than double the number of married ones. However, among the men between the ages of 15 and 29 there are an equal number of bachelors and married men. In general then, there is a tendency for a man to migrate during his youth, whether married or not, and later to return to settle permanently in his home territory (Schapera 1947:41).

In the Pacific prior to World War II many natives were gainfully employed away from their home villages and islands on a "semi-compulsory" or even forced labor basis. Several sources suggest that the customary procedure involved the absence only or predominantly of the younger, unmarried men (see Decker 1940; Groves 1935; Thompson 1940; Useem 1946). Most of these men were employed on copra or rubber plantations, in mines, as deckhands, and engine boys on schooners, as stevedores, or in various government centers as messengers, janitors, or domestic servants. Even today large numbers of young men are employed in such occupations, but on a purely voluntary basis. It should be noted that even before World War II the number of voluntary migrants had increased to the point at which the Japanese felt that semi-compulsory labor might become unnecessary (Yanaihara 1940:287).

Examples of this type of migrancy are plentiful. Solomon Island youths leave home to work when they are about 17 or 18 years of age. Most are away for at least four years, but some for ten. The majority postpone marriage until they return (Hogbin 1939:160-61). According to Taylor (1933:42) Mexican migrants to the United States during the 1930's tended to be single men in their 20's. Their length of stay for purposes of working varied from a few months to eight to ten years.

The Caribs of Dominica travel to Guadaloupe seeking wage labor. ". . . almost every Carib man can recount one or more such ventures in his youth" (Banks 1956:77).

The most frequently mentioned effects of temporary, nonseasonal migration are as follows:



2) New ideas and wants are brought back to the village. This tends to perpetuate the system, since money is needed constantly and in increasing amounts to satisfy the new wants.

3) The traditional means for gaining prestige are undermined. Young men returning home with cash gain status out of proportion to their age and experience within their own culture. In many cases this fact interferes with the authority structure which often placed greatest responsibility in the hands of the oldest men.

4) The available supply of labor to carry on pursuits necessary to the traditional way of life is diminished. This places a heavier burden on the older men, the women, and in some cases, children. However, often the result is that items formerly manufactured are purchased instead. These include foods, as well as technological implements. In addition, the introduction of steel tools for use in agriculture has decreased the amount of labor needed to effect the same results as formerly (Richard Salisbury, personal communication in regard to the Siane of New Guinea. See also Salisbury-Rowswell 1957). It is probable, as mentioned above, that a labor surplus exists in most such societies.

5) The removal of so many young men creates an imbalance in the sex ratio. In some cases this results in a delayed marriage age for both sexes, with possible effects on the birth rate. In others, it merely creates a wider gap in the ages of husbands and wives, the returning men marrying women perhaps ten years younger than themselves. On Yap, the migration of large numbers of men is not thought to have affected the birth rate adversely (Hunt et al. 1954).

So long as this type of migrancy prevails, it seems to prevent total disruption of the aboriginal or traditional social organization. Certainly, changes occur, but in general they are of a gradual, nonviolent nature. Any disequilibrium resulting in the social system seems to be compensated for by rapid adjustments within the native cultural framework itself. Again, the evidence suggests the conclusion that family organization is little affected by temporary, nonseasonal migration.

### III. RECURRENT MIGRATION

In a sense, recurrent migration may be viewed as merely an intensification of temporary, nonseasonal migration. It does appear that in some areas where a large amount of wage labor is available, and where acculturation has proceeded to the point where native peoples desire more and more of the goods of the Western world, that recurrent migration has replaced a previous pattern of temporary, nonseasonal migration.

In recurrent migration men make irregular journeys, of varying lengths of time, to obtain wage labor throughout their productive years. The social effects of this type of migration are quite different from those noted in the previous section, especially in regard to family organization. In most cases the migrants have wives and families who are left behind in the native villages. The men may return at frequent intervals throughout the year, or they may

be absent for several years without returning. The frequency of return hinges upon several factors, including the distance which must be traveled to obtain work, the amount of job security offered to the migrant, and the amount of economic return. These points will be further discussed below.

It is difficult to base a typology upon the time factor, since we are dealing with a continuum ranging from daily return at one extreme, to virtual abandonment with final return delayed until old age precludes manual labor on the other. Wilson distinguished between "migrant labour" and "temporary urbanisation," using the time factor as his basis. Thus, if a man spends between two-thirds and one-third of his time in his home village, and the remainder of his time at the labor center, Wilson termed the pattern "migrant labour." If the figures were reversed, he called it "temporary urbanisation" (Wilson 1941:46). Wilson's own work, which was re-emphasized by Read (1942:610), indicates that in either case the man tends to maintain links with his native village. For this reason, I prefer to emphasize this factor and group Wilson's categories together, as opposed to permanent removal in which the man's social identity becomes nearly divorced from his home area. If and when he does return, it is as a visitor, and not as a resident who has been temporarily absent.

Recurrent migrants tend to return home as often as possible, and especially for important native rituals and ceremonies, family crises, etc. In addition, many may feel obligated to return to help with various economic and domestic activities such as clearing fields, harvesting, fishing, house-building, and slaughtering. From the point of view of management, a worker who frequently leaves the job to return home on visits is a less desirable employee than one who works steadily for longer periods of time. For this reason, workers are often encouraged to travel farther away than the nearest labor center to obtain work. They may be lured by the promise of higher wages, free one-way transportation, and other supposed benefits. Obviously, the farther away a man is from his home, the less often he will be able to return there. Sometimes the labor market in a particular area may be so flooded by the importation of large numbers of workers from a distant area that local residents may be unable to secure any job, and they too will be forced to travel to obtain work.

Recurrent migration can support the home society if there are enough jobs available in comparison with the number of men seeking work, and if the economic return is great enough. Depending upon the degree of acculturation to Western civilization, and the amount of dependence of the group as a whole upon wage labor to secure the goods they consider necessary, there will be great variability in the distance a man will travel to obtain work and in the frequency with which he returns to his home village.

Regardless of how long the recurrent migrant laborer is away from home, the outstanding fact about this category is that the men are absent not only during their youth but for periods of varying lengths after they have reached maturity. They remain linked to their home villages in various ways, but primarily by the fact that their wives and children continue to reside there. The effects of this type of migratory labor include all of those listed under the previ-

ous section, with probable intensification of each, as well as other effects generally not found in other types at all.

The most frequently mentioned of these concern family and household organization, especially in regard to changing relationships between (a) husband and wife, and (b) members of contiguous generations.

In regard to the first set of relationships, it must be noted that very few recurrent migrants take their wives and children with them to the labor centers. It has often been pointed out in regard to Africa that in the towns a family is an economic liability, rather than being an asset as in the village. Opportunities for women to become employed are limited, although this depends a great deal on the particular labor center. In the Caribbean port towns, many women are able to contribute to the family income by working as domestics, taking in laundry, baking bread or candy for sale, or working as seamstresses. When the women do take on employment which takes them outside the home, some provision must be made for care of the children. Since rarely does the entire extended family of the village move into the town, this may often cause quite a problem. In some cases the children are sent home to the villages to be reared by grandparents or other relatives. In others, unsatisfactory arrangements or none at all are made within the town itself, and it has been suggested often that this fact is becoming something of a social problem in many of the labor centers of Africa today.

Such evidence as exists suggests that it may be more often possible for the Indian migrant to bring his wife and family to the city than for Africans in general. Although the majority of Indians in one study conducted in Bombay (Prabhu 1956) must be considered as recurrent migrants, the pattern there exhibits some important differences from those found elsewhere, especially in Africa. The women and children are sent home at intervals for visits to the village. They return far more often than the man himself—indeed, it is largely through his nuclear family and the money he sends home that the wage laborer retains his ties with his native area.

In response to questions concerning family and marital happiness in the city as opposed to the village, more than half of the workers interviewed felt that their domestic happiness was as great or greater in the city than in the rural areas (Prabhu 1956:86). Unfortunately, we are unable to say at the present time what may be the social effects of migration in those areas of India in which husbands leave their wives in the villages.

When the wife and children of the migrant remain in the village, other sorts of problems arise. There seems to be a great deal of disagreement as to whether migratory labor per se can be said to be contributing to a higher rate of divorce in Africa. Some writers insist there is no more divorce now than formerly, especially among matrilineal groups. Others point out that even though divorce may not be increasing, adultery has become a problem in many societies where men are absent from their wives over long periods of time. Still others see the problem of instability of marriage and family life as being related to the general lack of sanctions to enforce stability and sexual faithfulness

under the new patterns of living which include labor migration. Phillips has put his finger on one source of difficulty in arriving at any conclusions in regard to this problem. He says, "It would be valuable to know more accurately whether the customary restraints have been weakened to the same degree in those regions where husbands are not obliged to be separated from their wives for long periods as in those where the migratory labour system makes such separation a normal incident of married life" (1953:154).

In addition to labor migration, other changes in the general culture pattern of many African societies have occurred as a result of colonial rule and missionary influence. For example, women can no longer be held by force, the right of recourse to physical violence by the injured party in case of adultery is no longer permitted, and the sanctions provided by the indigenous religious beliefs are no longer so effective in preventing sexual transgressions. Thus, it cannot be assumed that the mere fact of separation of husbands and wives leads to marital instability, infidelity, or both. It does appear that the greatest breakdown of traditional mechanisms for maintaining stability has occurred in precisely those areas where recurrent migration has become common, however. Marriages, formerly primarily the concern of the larger family, lineage, or clan, are now increasingly arranged by the individuals themselves. Such marriages often lack the traditional sanctions including bride-price or bride-service, and the kinsmen of each spouse are less effective in helping to maintain the stability of the union.

In order to understand this point, it is necessary to consider the changes which have occurred in the relationships between members of contiguous generations. The authority of parents and guardians over their adult children has decreased tremendously wherever migratory wage labor occurs. This has been mentioned above as being one of the effects of temporary, nonseasonal migration, though it apparently never reaches the same height as under recurrent migration. Young men are no longer so dependent upon their fathers or uncles in getting a start in life, since an alternative way of earning a living is present in wage labor. Conversely, these same young men are increasingly reluctant to divide their cash wages among a large group of people according to traditional customs of distribution along kinship lines. In some cases the total amount of cash wages received by a worker is simply insufficient to support himself in town and a family in the village. Much less is there enough to disperse to relatives outside his own nuclear family. A woman whose husband has left her in the village generally must live with some other adults who form a cooperative group for carrying on domestic affairs. If a worker has achieved a position which offers him a great deal of job security, as well as a fairly high income, he may be able to support a nuclear family in the village so completely that the woman can afford to be independent of kinsmen in all economic affairs. Due to the very nature of industry in most of the areas we are discussing, which depends upon a large source of cheap labor, such positions are achieved by natives very rarely. I have observed isolated cases among the Black Carib of Guatemala in which the husband is employed as a white-collar

worker and is able to send home money in large enough amounts to permit his family to live in comparative luxury. Such families neither farm nor fish, purchasing all items necessary for living, but they are rare.

There are three different types of household in which a woman with an absent husband generally resides. Among the African patrilineals, the wife is often left with her husband's relatives. This arrangement may cause difficulties in regard to regulation and distribution of finances within the household. Barnes notes that among the Ngoni a woman will remain with her husband's relatives as long as he continues to send money and gifts to the household. But if there is little contact and money forthcoming, she may return to live with her own family (1951:84-85). A woman among the patrilineal, patrilocal Ewe always feels more closely linked to her own relatives than to her husband and his family (Westermann 1949:49). The Iru of Ankole are largely dependent upon recurrent wage labor. Among these patrilineals, women turn for economic cooperation to other women—especially their mothers, sisters, and neighbors in the absence of their husbands (Phillips 1953:71). Wives of Alur migrants sometimes stay with their husband's people; others go home to their mothers (Southall 1954:157).

It appears that without the husband, who forms the link between his family of procreation and his family of orientation, the wife is more prone to turn to her own relatives for cooperation and assistance. There are, of course, social mechanisms which tend to alleviate or compensate for the possible disrupting effects of such psychological stress on the marriage bonds. Among these might be mentioned the custom of paying bride-price which must be returned in whole or in part by the woman's patrilineage in case of divorce. In such cases, her kin would apply pressure for her to remain with her husband's group.

Another such mechanism is sororal polygyny. Radcliffe-Brown points out that "Marriage with the wife's sister is, on the whole, more frequently found in association with the patrilineal lineage and what may be called father-right marriage, and it is precisely in such circumstances that it functions most effectively to maintain or strengthen the relationships set up by a marriage" (1950:65). He suggests that in such systems, exemplified by the Zulu, the unity of the sibling group, as well as the solidarity of the lineage, are emphasized.

In India, where migration from the villages has been occurring for well over a century, men often leave their wives and children living with the large patrilocally extended families for long periods of time. Although little has been written concerning the effect of such labor migration on the family organization in the villages, there does not seem to be much evidence of the breakdown of the traditional forms.

Another type of household in which the woman whose husband is absent may reside is the matrilocally extended family household. This is most frequently found today in Central Africa, among traditionally matrilineal cultures. In spite of the fact that this sort of household would appear to be highly functional under recurrent migration, there is some evidence to indicate that

matrilineality is on the decline in Africa (Westermann 1949:52). M. Read feels that the patrilineal Ngoni are more stable than the Cewa matrilineals under migration (1942:624-25). It may be found that other factors related to increasing acculturation have an effect here, but again, there is insufficient evidence upon which to base any general conclusions.

Finally, there is a third type of domestic group which I have termed the consanguineal household, and which others have variously called the matri-focal family, the matriarchal family, or the maternal family. Such household arrangements appear to exist most commonly, although not exclusively, in the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean regions. Smith (1956) has the most intensive treatment of a social system incorporating this type of household (see also Clarke 1957; Henriques 1953). The consanguineal household is a co-residential cooperative group, ordinarily containing no married pairs, the core of which is made up of persons related to each other through consanguineal ties. As among the matrilineal Ashanti and Nayar, married couples customarily live apart—each one residing with his or her natal group, the children staying with the mother. Thus, the mother's consanguineal group functions to maintain and socialize the children, even in the continued absence of the father. The woman too is incorporated into a cooperative group larger than merely the nuclear family. This group usually contains some adult males even though others ordinarily belonging to it may be absent. These men occupy the position of son, brother, or uncle, rather than husband or father, in relation to the women of the group. Other men may occasionally join the group as husbands, but with the great amount of marital instability generally found in these societies, the sibling group is the solid, enduring unit. Men, whether they hold wage-paying jobs or not, are expected to contribute to the expenses of not only the household in which they are living, but also of those in which they have children.

In almost every society mentioned in the literature, if husbands fail to return home or send remittances fairly regularly, the wife returns to the household of her parents. It would appear that where uncertainty of return is very great, such as in much of the Caribbean area, the consanguineal household would provide greater security and stability for the women and children left behind. If the man must return to the village penniless, having lost his job, he is more readily accepted into the household of his mother and sisters than into that of his wife.

It has been noted above that even in recurrent migration the workers retain ties with their home villages. Despite this fact, it should be noted that, in contrast to temporary, nonseasonal migration, the recurrent migrant laborer usually becomes established in an organized social matrix distinct from that of the village. His social identity can no longer be separated completely from his work identity. He enters into many new sorts of social relationships at the work center. In some areas "bachelor's quarters" are provided by the management, and numbers of men live in these. Groups of men may cooperate in domestic affairs, or hire one woman to cook, wash, and keep house for them. She may also serve their sexual needs, but is not considered a wife.



In other cases, the migrant may reside with friends or relatives in the city as a star boarder, who may actually be considered a part of the family. Another pattern reported fairly often in Africa and the Caribbean is that in which a man maintains one wife and family in the labor center and another in the village.

Evidence from Central and South Africa suggests that recurrent migrants in these areas are lately more often accompanied to the labor centers by wives and families acquired in the village (Barnes 1951:20; Hunter 1936:459-60; Wilson 1941:59). This also occurs to a certain extent in the Caribbean area (Smith 1956:38). In some cases the entire family may return to the native village occasionally as well as ultimately. On the other hand, it appears likely that in many cases such families may remain in the town permanently, establishing new contacts and new patterns of living. In such cases, of course, the pattern would fall into the category of Permanent Removal, to be considered below. Probably we can expect such situations to become more numerous as the entire society gradually becomes dependent upon wage labor as the sole source of income. The fact that industrialization and migrant wage labor have existed longer in South and Central Africa than elsewhere in the continent contributes to this view. In such cases, horticultural and pastoral activities will be abandoned, and the original sociocultural system will eventually dissolve—its members becoming dispersed and incorporated into other social and political units. The British have termed this phenomenon "detribalization." Such movements are not possible in most areas, however, until wages and job security are great enough to allow a man to maintain his family without the aid of subsidiary economic activities, such as horticulture. The overwhelming evidence from Africa and the Caribbean is that when stabilization occurs in the towns and cities the nuclear family becomes the basic social unit.<sup>2</sup>

In summary, recurrent migration is clearly not consistent with a social organization which stresses the nuclear family as the basic domestic group except under very special circumstances. On the other hand, the nuclear family increases in importance and may become the most effective functioning unit when it is possible for the migrant to take relatives with him to the labor center.

Neither does it appear that the matrilocally extended family household is particularly functional under recurrent migration. But the consanguineal household seems to serve very well to alleviate some of the effects of a system in which the men must be absent during many of their productive years, but which nevertheless provides little job security and a low economic return for their labor.

Patrilocally extended family households may also be effective, provided they exist in a system with strong patrilineages in which traditional sanctions continue as controlling mechanisms.

#### IV. CONTINUOUS MIGRATION

In this, families, usually nuclear, travel together from job to job, living in temporary quarters of some type or another at each location. It should be noted

at the outset that this class must be considered somewhat differently from those above since, by the very nature of the migration, no home village is involved. Thus, the effects noted concern solely the migrants themselves. In all of the other classes we have been primarily concerned with the interrelationships between migration and social organization in the home villages.

Continuous migrants in the United States are those whom the government has called constant, or habitual, migrants (U. S. Dept. of Labor 1939, quoted by Ryan 1940:14). These usually follow customary routes within the country to work in the harvest of various fruits and vegetables, in canneries, and sometimes in other seasonal occupations such as clam-digging. Most studies of such groups were done during the 1930's and concentrated on social problems such as child labor, poverty, poor housing, and disease (Anderson 1940; Hathaway 1934; Ryan 1940; Webb 1935; 1937; Webb and Brown 1938; Wilson 1930). To my knowledge, there have been no studies of such groups conducted from an anthropological point of view, although Goldschmidt (1947) includes some material on migrants in his consideration of a California agricultural community.

Hathaway's study suggested a few points pertinent to the present discussion. She noted that children under 15 in this group were a definite economic handicap, since the opportunities for their employment were limited by (a) the nature of much of the work and (b) the necessity of keeping the children in school most of the year (Hathaway 1934:50). In addition, small children are a burden in moving about and in living under the conditions provided. She also found that families who traveled together in this manner were less likely to break up as social units than those in which the husband-father left the other members in a settled location while he traveled in search of work (pp. 3-4). Anderson confirmed these observations in 1940 (105-106), adding the fact that such families tended to migrate under the direction of an employable head—usually the husband-father. The role and position of the aged, whatever it might be, is apparently not that of family head.

Goldschmidt gives us the following generalizations concerning farm laborers, including migrants:

Aside from a few churches, the farm workers had no social institutions. The degree of social isolation of the average farm worker is very high. The absence of community feeling, the failure to participate in social decisions, the lack of representations in the machinery of government and of quasi-official agencies, all converge to create a sense of personal frustration and above all of inferiority. Coupled with these isolations is the effect of a migratory life, the impermanence of residence that results from a constant search for work opportunities, and the resulting failure to form strong social attachments of an informal nature (1947:260-61).

Within the United States there is also a large group of single workers who fall into this category. These, however, are generally adult men and women with no family ties. As such, this type of employment apparently would not affect the institution of the family. Hathaway tells us that groups of unmarried workers of both sexes sometimes travel and live together as a unit (Hathaway 1934:7), but there are no systematic sociological data on what would appear to be a rather unusual type of human grouping.

Outside of the United States, continuous migration, whether of families or

of individuals, does not appear to be common. Poole, referring to Puerto Rico, mentions a group of poor Whites termed "jibaros" who have become largely dependent upon wage labor. He says: "Family ties are loose among these floating laborers and illegitimacy is common" (1951:83). However, it is not clear whether these "floating laborers" should be classified with other migrants having no home base. Neither do we know whether this group commonly travels in family units or as individuals.

It is interesting to note that the ethnic classification of most continuously migrating families in the United States is lower-class Anglo-American. There do appear to be continuously migrating *individuals* of different ethnic and racial backgrounds in the farm labor pool, but Negro, Indian, and Spanish-American families who migrate tend to do so only on a seasonal basis.

Although I am considering here only migration which takes place for purposes of obtaining unskilled wage labor, it would be interesting to compare this phenomenon, especially in regard to its effects on family organization, with certain other patterns of continuous migration or nomadism. The nuclear family as a solitary, socially isolated group occurs among some of the most primitive hunters and gatherers, such as the Paiute, Australians, and Eskimo, as well as among gypsies, and in certain types of show business (circus, carnival, vaudeville) in both Europe and America. As such, it appears that the relevant factors include not only the fact of continuous migration, but the absence of inheritable productive property such as herds and/or land, and an economically precarious existence from hand to mouth, as it were.

In summary, to my knowledge, continuous labor migrants occur only within the United States, and the cultural and racial background of such groups is predominantly lower-class Anglo-American. As such, this particular phenomenon may probably best be explained in relation to the peculiar economic and social situations of the social system of the United States as a whole. The pattern seems to have first appeared on a large scale during the depression of the 1930's, largely stimulated by the two factors of drought in the southern Great Plains area and the increasing mechanization of agriculture, both of which uprooted large numbers of families formerly earning a living on small parcels of land. Goldschmidt (1947:72-73) indicated that most such families desire to settle down and do so when economic circumstances permit. The value system of American culture has never provided a niche for transient workers. They tend to be discriminated against by the larger community wherever they reside. Despite the fact that such families place a high value upon owning their own land, becoming rooted in a community, and having their children educated within the American school system, it appears that they place an even greater emphasis on keeping the family together, even if this requires moving their home from three to twelve times per year (Hathaway 1934:5). The nuclear family, generally small in size (five or less total members, according to Anderson 1940:106), seems to be the most functional in this type of migration. Not only is this the basic economic and socializing unit, but it also seems to be largely self-sufficient in many other matters as well. Social

contacts rarely extend outside the camp of migrant laborers itself (Hathaway 1934:179-83), and the composition of the latter is constantly changing as workers move about. As Goldschmidt has shown (1947), these families rarely are included in other supra-familial organizations and activities common in American culture.

#### V. PERMANENT REMOVAL

Permanent removal includes all those patterns in which workers move from their home areas to other specific locations which offer more opportunities for employment and in which they settle more or less permanently. Sometimes such workers are accompanied by their wives and families, in other cases they go alone. There are a tremendous number of examples of this type of migration in the literature, most of which can only be barely mentioned here. Within the United States several different population movements on a large scale have been described. Throughout the history of the country and continuing to the present time there have been movements from the east to the less settled western states. In addition, there has been a constant migration from rural areas to cities. During the 20th century there has been a marked migration of southern Negroes to northern cities. Most of these migrations have been related to the rise of industrialism, especially in the northern states.

Before 1900 natives were recruited throughout the Pacific for labor on plantations growing cotton, coffee, copra, cacao, and other tropical crops, as well as in mines and on the guano islands off the coast of Peru. Theoretically, the plantation owners were to repatriate the workers after a specified number of years. Although many or perhaps most of the men so removed from their villages were never in fact able to return, unfortunately we have no statistical data from which to extrapolate actual patterns. As Oliver says, "Then came the blackbirders, who removed thousands of natives to work in the mines and plantations of Latin America; but to give these gentlemen their due, one cannot hold them overmuch responsible for the foreign ideas which were introduced into the islands, since so few of their victims survived to return home" (1951:144).

Also in the Pacific, as well as in the Caribbean, South America, and East Africa, numbers of indentured laborers from various parts of eastern Asia were brought in during the past one hundred years. Among these were included Chinese, Javanese, Indians, Japanese, and Filipinos.

In addition, large numbers of people from various European countries have emigrated to other parts of the world—largely since 1850. Although there are many studies which outline various aspects of the life of these transplanted ethnic groups in their new homes, material is more scarce on the effects of their removal upon their home areas. The Arensberg and Kimball material on the Irish countryman (1948), and the work of Thomas and Znaniecki on the Polish peasant in Europe and America (1920) provide some interesting data on this subject. Most of the laborers who have emigrated to find work in the past century have come from countries in which over-population, scarcity of agri-

cultural land, lack of industrialization, and low standards of living are problems. Undoubtedly, the migration of such large numbers helped to alleviate some of these problems from the national demographic point of view. In addition, remittances from relatives working in foreign lands have often been important in supporting those who remained at home. We know little, however, of the patterning of such migration on the behavioral or social level, especially in regard to the Asian countries mentioned.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the main assumption of this paper has been that any society in which some members regularly leave home to obtain money or goods must have special institutions to handle the needs of daily life in the absence of these members. Many writers have been especially concerned with the effects of migration upon marriage and family life. However, from the extant descriptions of migrant wage labor it seems clear that there are several essentially different patterns of behavior which are usually lumped together. An effort has been made here to reduce the apparent diversity in this phenomenon to manageable categories, and to assess the effects which each type of migrancy appears to have upon the institution of the family. The main conclusion is that migrancy will be reflected in the social organization in different ways depending upon the nature of the sociocultural system affected, as well as upon the type of migrancy itself. Some types of migrant labor appear to have little, if any, effect on the family, regardless of what the traditional family form may be. Other types of migrancy apparently are more compatible with some forms of family and household organization than with others.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge the helpful criticisms and suggestions of Professors Richard Salisbury and David M. Schneider, both of whom read early drafts of this paper. Nevertheless, the author alone is responsible for conclusions reached and opinions expressed.

<sup>2</sup> I am using the term "stabilization" in Mitchell's sense. He says: "A population becomes stabilized in town when people no longer make intermittent journeys back to their rural homes" (Mitchell 1956:695).

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