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MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE CULTURAL
ECOLOGY OF A FRENCH VILLAGE

by

Daniel C. Clay

A DISSERTATION

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is based on an in-depth study of migration and rural development in Montaut, a relatively remote, relatively depressed, one-time peasant community in southwest France. Information was gathered from public records, census materials, government archives, and through interviews with outmigrants living in nearby urban centers, their families still residing in the community, local officials and several key informants. Increasing penetration of the outside market economy has created a situation of scarcity and ecological disequilibrium in Montaut, necessitating an adaptive shift in the means by which the population exploits its surrounding natural environment. For Montaut, as well as for many other farming communities in southwest France, this has entailed a shift from the traditional form of subsistence agriculture to full participation in the highly differentiated market economy. The process of occupational differentiation, however, has been accompanied by a spatial redistribution of Montaut's working population. In order to meet

the locational exigencies of the development process, Montaut has institutionalized systems of migration to several nearby cities, effectively extending its outer boundaries into the urban habitat.

In other words, by focusing on the community in the interactional sense rather than in the territorial sense, it is observed that rural-urban migrants often continue to play a very significant part in the rural communities from which they migrate. Their social and economic lives in the city become a reality for those still living in the home community, and influence their needs, wants and expectations accordingly. To the extent that outmigrants continue to maintain ties with families and friends in the rural area, then, their departure represents a veritable extension of the community boundary system. Simultaneously, the new occupational roles they perform in the city must be viewed as a contribution to the differentiation and development of the rural home community.

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INTRODUCTION

Societal development, in virtually every context in which it has occurred and throughout the course of time, has been inextricably coupled with migration, the spatial movement of people. Despite its undeniable importance in the development process, however, contemporary theories of social change have tended to neglect the spatial, distributional aspects of these transformations. Theories of migration, too, have failed to establish even a reasonable degree of integration with prevailing sociological perspectives on societal development. Clearly, there is need for a more useful conceptual approach capable of dealing with, in a single paradigm, the processes of social change and the patterned redistribution of people in space.

The thesis developed in the following chapters aims to bridge this fundamental conceptual chasm. It endeavors to bring together functionalist and ecological perspectives on institutional change so as to better understand the relevance of man's spacial distribution in the development of his social order. A "grass roots" approach is formulated; the relationship between migration and development is explored at the levels of family and community, where

institutional changes are more visible and where their effects are more immediate. Special care is taken to relate this in-depth analysis to the broader, structural context in which the relationships are observed.

Central to my inquiry is Montaut, a once traditional peasant community in southwest France. My focus is on the families of Montaut, the means by which they make a living from their environment, and how the organization of their sustenance activities has been changing in response to the demands of a growing market economy. Indeed, the penetration of the urban market has created an imbalance in the relationship these villagers maintain with their land, in the ecology of this once traditional peasant community, and in the role relationships that make up the family structure.

It is postulated here that ecological expansion of the community system, via a broader differentiation of work roles and the institutionalization of migration within the fabric of everyday life, has been Montaut's primary adaptive reply to mounting pressures from the urban market. A fundamental objective of this research is to demonstrate, on one hand, just how important these two factors, migration and differentiation, have been to the maintenance of Montaut as a community system, and on the other hand, how these adaptive mechanisms have been instrumental in actually fostering community change.

Although something must be said about peasants in general, both in France and elsewhere, I concede that such

generalizations have major limitations. The many important sociocultural and environmental circumstances that can and do set Montaut and southwest France apart from other communities and regions must be taken into account. Montaut's climate, for example, or the land tenure system, average farm size, religious and political orientations, or kinship patterns, are but a small sample of the kinds of factors that, if not given due consideration, can invalidate even the simplest of generalizations. But in examining differences among communities across variables such as these, it is clear that Montaut is not altogether unique either. In fact casual observation of other communities in the general surrounding area reveals a set of circumstances very much akin to those found in Montaut. Marked community differences first begin to appear only where environmental conditions are unlike those in Montaut--in the mountain areas to the northeast (Massif Central) and to the south (Pyrenees), and in the coastal regions 50 or 60 miles to the east and west.

Communities are not randomly different from or similar to one another. Rather, there are distinct patterns among communities that often allow us to say that communities tend to resemble those around them more than they do those in less proximate locations. In other words, communities can be meaningfully grouped into geographical regions on the basis of whatever criteria are deemed appropriate for whatever purposes (political, cultural, economic). To be sure, the delineation of regional boundaries is a difficult

undertaking, for judgments must be made as to whether a given community has more in common with those within the region than with those outside it. By definition, then, regional boundaries are somewhat imprecise and often result in more or less "hazy," or marginal zones where they intersect one another. Nevertheless, to the extent that a given region is "consistent" with regard to the principal variables that define it, and that these variables contribute to that which the investigation seeks to explain, the region is a reasonable intermediate level to which generalizations can be legitimately directed.

It has been the task of many social scientists, agriculturalists and politicians to partition France into what each perceives to be a relatively homogeneous and distinct set of regions (as defined by the particular criteria they judge to be of some relevance to the purposes at hand). One common delineation, particularly from the historical and linguistic points of view, is the north/south split which follows a rough imaginary line from LaRoche on the Atlantic coast to Besancon on the northern Swiss border. In terms of economic production, France is ordinarily dichotomized along a diagonal from Le Havre on the English Channel to Geneva, Switzerland. In the northeast portion a large segment of the rural population is employed in industry; to the southwest, agricultural production continues to be very strong in the rural areas. France has also been segmentalized on the basis of such criteria as level of

urbanization, religious and political affiliation, demographic evolution and mode of agricultural production.¹

In their comparative study of social change in rural French communities, Jollivet and Mendras confront the problem of extensive regional diversity.² By combining and condensing many of the grands contrastes mentioned above, they have delimited ten relatively distinct and independent "socio-cultural" regions in France. From each of these ten regions, one rural community bearing the predominant sociocultural dimensions of the region in more or less representative proportion, was then selected for an in-depth analysis of community change. One of the ten regions identified was that known as the Sud-Ouest (Southwest); the community selected from the region was Montaut.

Reaching the decision to look toward the Southwest region of France for the present study was a multifaceted process. To begin with, since one dimension of the research problem emphasizes the transition rural communities undergo as they move from the traditional peasant order into an integrated part of the modern industrial society, consideration was given to areas where this transition had not yet been completed. In order to satisfy the "transition" requirement, only a relatively remote, rural and highly agricultural region would suffice, since most rural communities in the more central and industrialized regions have already become an integral part of modern France in virtually all respects. A second guideline that was followed in choosing a study site involved the degree of agricultural

specialization. An attempt was made to avoid areas of highly specialized production, such as Bourgogne and other wine producing provinces, or the Paris basin which specializes in cereal production. The reason for choosing a region with a more diversified system of agricultural production is that it would otherwise be necessary to go back to the last century and in some cases even earlier in order to trace the relatively early penetration of the market economy in areas of more specialized agricultural production.

The communities to which these general selection criteria lead, can be found predominately in the Southwest region, and particularly in the centrally located department of Gers. Not only is Gers the most rural and agricultural department in France, but a diversified system of crop and livestock production (polyproductive farming) has traditionally been the common practice there. After settling on the appropriate region for study, the problem of narrowing the field down to just one community was next. It was then reasoned that there might be a distinct advantage in doing a restudy of the Southwest community studied by Jollivet and Mendras fifteen years beforehand. The advantage of a restudy is in the longitudinal perspective it can provide. Although the difficulties in assessing changes over time never seem to disappear completely, the prevailing thought was that a solid foundation of benchmark information could be extremely helpful in overcoming many of the major obstacles.

Montaut is the commune, or rural township, from the Southwest region that was originally studied in 1964 by Jollivet and

Mendras. Although the thrust of their inquiry was directed at some of the changes in the structure of agriculture that had been occurring in the community up until that time, a good deal of attention was also given to the community's demographic evolution, and to an ethnographic account of the kinship system and of recent changes in the political, religious and social lives of the villagers. Similar community studies were carried out in the nine other regions observed by Jollivet and Mendras and these, along with Montaut, comprise the subject matter of their comparative analysis of rural communities in France.

My decision to do a restudy of Montaut was made in the summer of 1976 while in Paris working with Professor Henri Mendras and his rural sociology group at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). In addition to the selection of the research site, this opportunity in Paris also allowed me to become better acquainted with current research needs and growing issues in French peasant studies, and to work with my colleagues at CNRS in refining the theoretical and methodological approach I would later use in my study of Montaut. I concluded my work in France with a brief visit to Montaut and the Southwest to get a general feeling for the village and its surrounding region and to be certain of its suitability as a research site.

Through the following year in East Lansing, efforts were focused on working out a detailed research plan for studying Montaut and on securing the level of funding needed to carry the research for a duration of one year beginning in

the fall of 1977. A Fulbright research fellowship supplemented by a comparative research award from the Sociology Department at Michigan State University provided the necessary project support, and that September, as planned, I and my wife, Suzanne, again travelled to France. Before moving into the field, I felt it would be to my best advantage to visit once more with my colleagues in Paris. In two weeks there I received much useful counsel in smoothing out some of the theoretical and methodological "rough edges" of the project. In completing our stay in Paris we managed to acquire a 1971 Peugeot -- a light blue 204 -- which seemed to meet our transportation needs quite well.

Our first week in Montaut was spent getting acquainted with various members of the local population and searching for a suitable place to take up residence. As tourism in Gasconne has risen substantially in recent years, the restoration of abandoned homes and unused outbuildings in the area, for occupancy by summer vacationers from the city, has become increasingly common practice among local farm families. During the remaining months of the year, from September through May, these residences are ordinarily left vacant and not opened again until the start of the next summer season. It was into one such vacation home (a restored outbuilding, once the farm hands' living quarters) situated on a farm outside the village, that we eventually managed to settle.

My entrance into the community was facilitated in several ways. A general letter of introduction written for me by Professor Mendras proved to be a very useful source of legitimation on numerous occasions, as it justified my work in Montaut and clarified my affiliation with the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris. Second, I am not the first sociologist to have studied in Montaut. As described earlier, Montaut was initially studied about fifteen years ago as a part of a larger comparative project under the direction of Professor Mendras. For this reason, the people of Montaut had a prior understanding of what to expect from me, and showed a great deal of trust in my confidential treatment of the information they gave. A third important facilitating factor was the close working rapport I managed to establish in a relatively short period of time with the mayor of the commune, the village clerk and the proprietor of the village cafe. The persons are well known in the community and, in general, are highly respected by the villagers. In addition to their willingness to work long hours with me as informants, these individuals were helpful on innumerable occasions in introducing me personally to other members of the community. Within a very short period of time I came to know a great many of the residents of Montaut. With some, a small number, friendships were developed that have been maintained even since our departure; acquaintances with many others were more casual.

The farm on which we lived was worked by a respected Gascon family. Of the family's seven children only one daughter and the youngest son still lived at home with their parents. Including the son's wife and their child, an infant, there were six in all living on the farm. There is little doubt that my experience on this farm, and my closeness to the family, their problems, their sentiments and their plans for the future have had a significant influence on my understanding of farm family life in Montaut and of the importance of the urban market economy in its transformation from subsistence to production agriculture. As five of the children of this family have left the farm and are now living with their own families in the city, I have likewise had the opportunity to observe, first hand, how much a part of the family and community, these migrants continue to be, despite their wide geographical dispersion.

On the more quantitative side of my study, through a grand barrage of letters to the local, regional and national archives directors, I was successful in gaining access to the local and departmental archives. During the early months of my stay in Montaut, a great deal of time was spent extracting bits of information from such sources as the village census records, the public register (births, deaths, marriages), the village cadastre (which includes all land holdings and property transactions), the file of building permits, etc. A large segment of these data, especially observations pertaining to individuals and their

families, I have recorded on an index-card file system. A separate card was made for each person ever to have been included in one or more of the five censuses since World War II. Standard information recorded for each person at each point in time includes sex, age, marital status, family situation (relation to head of household), place of birth, nationality, and occupation. Although there have been scarcely over 500 inhabitants of the commune at any given time during this thirty year period, the total number of persons to have lived in Montaut at one time or another during this period amounts to over 1200. And this excludes all those who may have come and gone between any two of these censuses! As births and deaths (natural movement) account for only a small proportion of this turnover, the balance is in the community's vast number of in- and out-migrants. With the help of my informants and of the families and friends of those who have migrated from the village, I was able to find the whereabouts of nearly every outmigrant, and the previous residence of nearly every immigrant to Montaut.

In my original research plan I had hoped to compare my findings in Montaut to patterns of migration and development in a second community, one from the more traditional, Catholic and politically conservative region of Anjou. Time constraints were such, however, that the potential breadth to be gained by investigating a second community could not outweigh the depth of understanding that was eventually

achieved by investing all of my time and resources in Montaut. The major advantage to continuing with my study of Montaut was that the months put into identifying the out-migrants from Montaut and their current whereabouts could only be capitalized on during the later stages of the study when time became available to interview many of these migrants in the urban setting. A second advantage was that in staying through the spring and summer I had the opportunity to follow the farming system of Montaut through the complete growing season which terminates in July and August with the harvest of the primary grain crops.

In the interest of gaining a clearer perception of life in the bourg, or village center, we moved to an available residence there in the late spring. Where family life predominates on the farm, community life seems to concentrate in the bourg. The village merchants, artisans, civil servants and their families experience a community life quite different from those on the farm. They are physically close to one another, of course; but more, their lives have a certain interdependence, both economic and social, that is less common among the relatively isolated and self-sufficient farm families. Where the community life of farm families does converge with that of families in the bourg is at the village cafe, the forge, the salle des fêtes, the terrain de boules and in the church of Saint Michel. These are the institutional settings that give a real sense of place to the community of Montaut, and which attracted much of

my attention while residing in the bourg.

In the following chapters an attempt is made to create an understanding of the transformation of Montaut by integrating the empirical and the conceptual sides of this study as described above. The beginning chapters describing Montaut's history, the evolution of its population and how family and community life have been transformed over the years. From there, I shift to a broader consideration of peasant communities and their transition from subsistence to production agriculture. The theoretical approach is developed next, looking first at the "forces" and then at the "mechanisms" of change. Eventually the discussion returns to Montaut and a new perspective is used to help explain how migration and differentiation have simultaneously contributed to the community's growing integration with modern French society.

CHAPTER I

MONTAUT IN TIME AND SPACE

Situated in the heart of Gascogne, an historical province in southwest France, the agricultural commune of Montaut is rapidly making its way into the fast-moving stream of modern French society, profuse with the fruits and the vestiges of its past. Montaut is an old village in some respects; there are cultural artifacts that go back over a thousand years--buildings and sculptures, for example, that reflect a community of another age, a pattern of life that had endured the gradual twisting and distortion of its evolutionary trail. But today Montaut's appearance is deceptive, for in recent decades the traditional order of centuries past has come to an abrupt close, clearing the path for a new way of life now shared with those once outside the tightly drawn boundary of the commune.

Along the crest of the canton's highest ridge and interspersed among the treetops, the angular brick-red tiled roofs of the village extend their randomly jagged silhouettes into the hazy, sometimes opalescent horizon. They blend naturally into the gently rolling countryside of which they are a part, much in the same fashion today as they have since their original construction during the Middle Ages. Typical of many Gascon villages, Montaut has preserved its medieval heritage. Closed to the outside, houses in the "ville" stand adjoined side by side facing inward onto the Place de la Mairie and along the main street which runs the length

of the village from east to west. At the west end of the main street is the principal entrance to the village, identified as such by an impressive arched gateway built in the 13th century. Traces of a similar yet apparently less prominent gateway can be found at the entrance to the east. On the exterior of the "ville", which runs along the hillside, a steep embankment falls off on the south side into a long and narrow pool of water, the only remaining evidence of a moat that once encircled much of the "ville" for defense purposes centuries ago.

The feudal chateau, fortified residence of the first seigneurs of the manor, the Counts of Fezensac who gained jurisdiction over the entire province in 1286, stands prominently near the center of the "ville." Adjoining the chateau and opening onto the Place de la Mairie is the church of Saint-Michel. Originally given in 1069 to the abbey of Cluny by the Archbishop Guillaume de Montaut, the church was later acquired by the monks of Saint-Orens who used it as a priory.³ Today the church of Saint-Michel is enclosed by a small garden which runs along its perimeter, and it makes its presence known to the local residents as the hours of the day are chimed from its belfry. The chateau has remained in the family of the last seigneur of Montaut, most of whom have lived in Toulouse since World War II and find the time to use the place during the summer months only.

The street leading from the main gate slopes gently downward along the ridge and is lined on either side by

houses, a few small shops and a post office; it then comes to a dead-end few hundred yards beyond. This lower quarter of the village is referred to as the "Barry," and although not separated from the "ville," it has remained through the years the commercial center of the village.

Together, the "Barry" and the "ville" comprise the bourg, the only major concentration of households in Montaut, and account for roughly a third of the village population.

There are two other quarters in the commune, Biane and Malartic, both of which were considered autonomous municipalities up until shortly after the collapse of the First Empire under the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte in the year 1815. Today, however, Biane and Malartic can perhaps be best described as independent "neighborhoods," both of which have been administratively annexed by Montaut. Although no apparent "clustering" of households is discernible, Biane, to the north, can be said to center around an ancient chapel and cemetery, and Malartic, to the south and west, about its remarkable 14th century Gothic manor, currently occupied by a large landowner and farmer in the commune.

The households in these two neighborhoods, as with the rest of the farm population in Montaut, are widely dispersed throughout the countryside and account for the remaining two-thirds or so of the total population in the commune. Unlike many other regions in France, parts of the southwest and of Gasconne in particular are noted for the dispersion

of their rural population. Historians and geographers agree that this form of dispersed habitat extends from the original organization of the territory and corresponds to the fundamental autonomy of the Gascon peasant and the unity of his farm. Farm houses are separated by 200 to 300 yards and are usually situated toward the center of the estate amidst an assemblage of necessary outbuildings used to store equipment and to house the farm animals.⁴

The principal administrative unit under the French national government is the département (department) of which there are 95, each with a chef lieu (capital city), and averaging about 50 miles across. Montaut is centrally located in Gers, the most rural of all the departments in France, with 65 percent of its inhabitants residing "à la campagne" compared with the national figure at 27.3 percent. Gers is also the most agricultural department in the country with about 36% of its working population engaged in agriculture compared with only 9.3% nationally.⁵ Of the 175,366 inhabitants of Gers, 23,185 (13.2%) reside in Auch, the largest city in the department and the second smallest chef-lieu in France. Apart from the city of Auch, Gers contains eight smaller commercial centers, none of which exceeds 8,000 inhabitants.

The terrain of southern and central Gers is said to be "accidenté" (hilly) as it extends into the foothills of the Pyrenees, the jagged snow-capped mountain range that forms a natural boundary between France and Spain. In relief, rolling

farmland is characteristic of the region, diffused with a succession of river valleys that radiate from the mountains to the south and feed into the Garonne River to the north. Going east is Toulouse, the regional capital, then the medieval city of Carcassonne, and the fertile farmlands and orchards of the ancient province of Roussillon which eventually run into the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Off to the west of Gers are the flatlands of Aquitaine, and farther on, the Atlantic Ocean.

As farming constitutes the principal economic activity in Gers, it is not surprising that the strength of the Gersois economy is in agriculture, especially in the production of cereals and poultry, but also of wine, fruits, tobacco and some beef cattle. The department's remoteness and its absence of sources of energy on the other hand have not favored the development of industry. And of the four largest industrial enterprises in Gers, none of which employs more than 300 workers, two are agriculture-related; the first being a large dairy processor and the second a farm implement manufacturer. The two larger firms not related to agricultural production are a metal-works company and a building supplies factory. By comparison with France as a whole which employs 39.7% of its active labor force in the industrial sector, the industries of Gers employ only 19.6% of the department's working population, or half the national percentage.

Major paths of communication are few in the entire region and none goes directly to the commune. The network

of national highways enters the department from all directions and converges at Auch. Getting to Auch from Montaut means following the one and a half lane departmental road a hilly and winding three miles westward to the Gers River valley where it meets the national highway 21 on its way south from the city of Agen, and ultimately from Paris, eventually arriving at Auch another five miles up the valley. Of the fifteen miles or so of roads in the commune, most have been either tarred or stoned in the last decade, with the exception of a few smaller dirt roads which connect some of the more remote corners of the commune. Although hard and brick-like during the hot, dry summers, these dirt roads become muddy and often impassible during the rainy winter months.

As more and more families either have cars of their own or can ride along in a neighbor's car, the only form of public transport, a small bus going to Auch and back twice a week, has been recently discontinued. And before automobile ownership became so prevalent it was common, especially on market days, for at least one member of each household to either make the trek to Auch by bicycle, or to walk or bicycle to one of the neighboring villages serviced by the railroad on its way from Toulouse or Agen. Although these trains still operate on a daily basis, they no longer stop at the smaller towns and villages along the way.

CHAPTER II

POPULATION CHANGE IN MONTAUT

All populations change. The life process replaces the aged with the young and, inevitably, for those who move out there are always some who move in. A community's population may turn over in this way, yet like many other populations, its size and composition rarely stabilize. Those who enter a community often do not match up with those who leave, either in terms of occupational skills or in sociocultural orientations. Nor do the young automatically accept the ways of the old. Even aggregate numbers can change. A population's basic structure can be radically transformed through this gradual process.

POPULATION CHANGE IN FRANCE

The history of population change in France is an anomaly against the backdrop of demographic transition theory and the experience of the rest of Western Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Decline in the level of mortality and then in the level of fertility occurs in connection with industrialization and modernization--or so state the principal hypotheses of demographic transition theory. And evidence from most Western European populations lends empirical support for this postulate; the high vital rates during the pre-industrial period were indeed substantially reduced as nations industrialized. But the relationship is a complex one and by no means automatic or universal. For this reason it must always be viewed in the overall social,

economic, political and technological context that surrounds it.

In France, the decline in fertility did not begin with modernization and the growth of industry. To the contrary, the birth rate first started to fall off late in the eighteenth century, in the shadow of the French Revolution, while economic growth did not build up momentum until sometime after, in the nineteenth century. Fertility in France continued to decline at a relatively gradual pace well into the twentieth century and did not rise until the country had pulled out of the Great Depression in the late 1930's.⁶ Although a great deal of speculation continues to surround the early decline in marital fertility in France, the explanation that seems to have gained the widest acceptance involves the traditional pattern of equal family inheritance practiced by the French peasantry. Put simply, the theory states that in order to prevent the subdivision of their landholdings among too many heirs, which would result in a lower standard of living, peasants limited the size of their families.⁷

The decline in the birth rate in France was paralleled by a reduction in mortality, yet with the exception of those years when France was at war (viz., wars with Russia in 1855, with Prussia in 1871, World War I and World War II), births have exceeded deaths at nearly every period of time since the French Revolution. The consequence has been a relatively steady natural population growth in France over the past 200 years; the population has expanded from approximately 28 million inhabitants in the year 1800 to about 54 million at

present.

To some degree the balance of immigration and emigration in France has also contributed to population growth. In fact, Dyer observes that the foreign population in France has been increasing over the last 100 years and especially since World War II. For the most part this increase has been due to the arrival of large numbers of "pieds noirs" repatriated from Algeria, and immigrants from Portugal, Spain and Italy who have sought employment in French factories, farms and mines. The proportion of foreign born residents in France reached 6.8 percent in 1972.⁸

POPULATION CHANGE IN MONTAUT

Population changes in Montaut, as in most other parts of rural France, contradict demographic trends at the national level; deaths have continually outweighed births and apart from the recent turnaround, post-World War II migration patterns have reinforced the depopulation of the commune. Census enumeration sheets filed in the departmental archives yield a precise account of population change in Montaut since 1836. The population totals in Table 1 chart the course of almost a century and a half of decline; Montaut today is inhabited by less than half the number of men, women and children living there in the early 1800's. And the decline has been no less precipitous among the non-farm population residing in the bourg than among the farm families dispersed throughout the countryside. The concentration of residences

Table 1. Elements of Population Change in Montaut,
1836 to 1978

Year	Total Population at End of Period	Births	Deaths	Total Population Change	Nat. Incr.	Net Migration
1836	1028					
1837-1841	942	83	122	-86	-39	-47
1842-1846	897	78	82	-45	- 4	-41
1847-1851	933	73	87	36	-14	50
1852-1856	936	82	95	3	-13	16
1857-1861	901	82	89	-35	- 7	-28
1862-1866	864	79	97	-37	-18	-19
1867-1872	848	95	139	-16	-44	28
1873-1876	872	68	76	24	- 8	32
1877-1881	812	83	82	-60	1	-61
1882-1886	823	56	79	11	-23	34
1887-1891	769	40	94	-54	-54	0
1892-1896	695	62	84	-74	-22	-52
1897-1901	654	41	71	-41	-30	-11
1902-1906	657	36	58	3	-22	25
1907-1911	643	42	58	-14	-16	2
1912-1921	515	55	142	-128	-87	-41
1922-1926*	540	48	54	25	- 6	31
1927-1931	564	41	50	24	- 9	33
1932-1936	563	29	51	- 1	-22	21
1937-1946	553	76	101	-10	-25	15
1947-1954	548	71	73	- 5	- 2	- 3
1955-1962	533	68	51	-15	17	-32
1963-1968	474	31	37	-59	- 6	-53
1969-1975	433	42	60	-41	-18	-23
1976-1978	462	10	17	29	- 7	36

*Figure for the 1926 total population is estimated.

in the bourg continues to embody about thirty percent of the commune's population. The number of households, too, has fallen to only half the families enumerated in 1836.

A HISTORY OF POPULATION DECLINE

It is not readily apparent whether the historical trend of population decline in Montaut came about as a consequence of a natural decrease (fewer births than deaths), or because more families moved away from the community than families moved in. More likely it was a combination of the two movements, with one or the other of the components taking the major role at various points in time. Available information permits an analysis to be made of the relative contributions of fertility, mortality and migration in the evolution of the population. By merging early census records with the village register of vital events, trends in births, deaths and net migration in Montaut can be traced with a high degree of accuracy and continuity as far back as 1836. Unfortunately, insufficient and unsystematic recording of the commune's population size and vital events prior to 1836 does not facilitate the extension of demographic analysis to earlier points in time.

Although the pattern of birth and death rates in Montaut has by no means stayed constant over the years, fluctuating in accordance with some of the more dramatic historical events, such as the Prussian War, the two World Wars, and the Great Depression of the 1930's, Table 1 demonstrates that

deaths have outnumbered births for virtually every census period on record, with the exception of the post-World War II "baby-boom" era. In other words, in the aftermath of the demographic transition, the crude birth rate has dropped a notch lower than has the crude death rate, resulting in a relatively continuous dwindling of the population. As noted above, however, the reverse situation-- a lower death rate than birth rate-- has applied to France as a whole.

Despite the continuing excess of deaths over births, Table 1 reveals that the overall pattern of population decline in Montaut has been interspersed with frequent but brief periods of growth. In fact, for the twenty-four census periods since 1836, the population increased during seven of them. The factor which accounts for these occasional spurts of growth, as well as for the proportion of the populations's long-term decline not attributable to its natural decrease, is the net balance of migration flows to and from the commune. Net migration is derived in Table 1 for each census period simply by subtracting the difference between births and deaths from the total change in the size of the population.

But just as the closing figure on the daily stock exchange does not reflect the volume of the day's trading, net migration estimates capture surface level changes only, and ignore the large-scale movements that often occur underneath. For example, an in-depth analysis of the volume of migration between 1946 and 1975 reveals that migrations to and from Montaut exceed 900 during this period while the net exchange

registers a loss of only 111 persons. Nevertheless, the net outmigration of farmers and villagers has been partly responsible for the decline of Montaut's population at various periods in time. Then, too, there have been times when the flow of migration has contributed to the populations growth, or at least to counterbalancing its natural decrease.

PATTERNS OF NET MIGRATION

There are four time periods in Montaut's history in which patterns of net migration have taken on a change in direction, viz., pre-World War I, the years between the World Wars, post-World War II, and now, the past few years of the present day. Not surprisingly, these changes coincide with historically significant periods of social, cultural and economic transformation in French society. Table 2 summarizes the changes in net migration in relation to changes in the total population during these four segments of history. First, the pre-World War I period, which covers a lengthy stretch of time from 1836 to 1921 (the first census year after the war), saw a 50% decline in the population, from 1028 to 515 persons. For the most part, this decline was attributable to the difference between births and deaths; net outmigration reduced the population by 22%, or 113 persons.

Then, during the interim years leading up to the Second World War, the population of Montaut grew to 553, despite the natural population decrease of 62 persons. Offsetting this natural decrease and accounting for all of the commune's

Table 2. Contributions of Net Migration and Natural Increase/Decrease to Population Change in Montaut During Four Periods of Time, From 1836 to 1978.

	Change in Total Population	Natural Increase/Decrease	Net Migration	Natural Increase/ Decrease as a % of Population Change	Net Migra- tion as % of Population Change
1836-1921 (Pre WWI)	-513	-400	-113	78%	22%
1921-1946 (Between Wars)	+38	-62	+100	0%	100%
1946-1975 (Post WWII)	-120	-9	-111	7%	93%
1975-1978 (Present Day)	+29	-7	+36	0%	100%

growth during the period was the net gain of an even 100 migrants. As the latter years of this period were marked by a severe economic depression, it is likely that the bulk of these migrants were responding to "hard times" in the city by returning to the "security" of the land. Goodrich, et. al. note a similar trend in their classic study of the relationship between migration and economic opportunity.⁹ They describe the movement of people from poorer areas to more prosperous ones during the 1920's, and the general flow of "back-to-the-land" migration during the depression years. More recently, in an in-depth study of the ties that Appalachian outmigrants maintain with the home community and the importance of the homestead as a "haven of safety," Schwarzweller et. al. observed that for over two-thirds of the migrant families in their study population, "return to the family homestead exists as a real and meaningful alternative to waiting out a prolonged period of unemployment and economic recession in the city." For many, they found, "the family homestead notion serves principally as a psychological 'cushion' during the transitional adjustment process."¹⁰

Revitalization of the economy, a dramatic push toward the modernization of industry and of agriculture, redistribution of the population, expansion of the work force, and greater urbanization are some of the characteristic changes in French society since the end of World War II. Between 1946 and 1975, the year of the most recent national census, the profile of demographic trends in Montaut made a complete change of face from the twenty-five years previous. Births

in the commune increased during the period, almost to the point of counterbalancing the number of deaths, and at the height of the post war "baby-boom" in France, which falls in the census period 1954-1962, births actually outnumbered deaths by seventeen. Migration, too, took a new tack from its pre-World War II net growth to a rapid and sustained exodus for nearly thirty years, a movement that was paralleled in rural areas all over Western Europe and the North American continent.

The rural exodus in France has been contingent upon the evolution of the French occupational structure away from agriculture and into the industrial and service sectors. Table 3 demonstrates this shift in terms of the percent of the working population employed in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy at the five census years since the Second World War. Notably, in 1946 employment was distributed almost equally across the sectors, but in 1975 the population employed in the primary sector (comprised largely of those employed in agriculture, but also includes those in fishing, mining and other extractive industries) had dwindled to just one in ten, while the proportion employed in the industrial sector had grown to 40 percent, and those in the service sector had jumped to one half of the total work force in France. As most industrial opportunities and the majority of the service jobs have been concentrated in urban areas, so has the flow of migration turned toward the cities. In 1954 about 44.0 percent of the population lived in the

small towns and villages of rural France. By 1975, despite an increase in the total population, the proportion in rural areas had fallen to 27.3 percent.¹¹

More recently, however, the population of Montaut has again turned around. Figures show that the continued natural decrease in the population has been overshadowed in the past three years by the arrival of a large number of migrants, predominately from nearby cities, but also from Paris and other regions of France. A fuller interpretation of this

Table 3. Proportion of the Working Population in France by Occupational Sector, 1946 to 1975.

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Tertiary</u>	<u>Total</u>
1946	34%	31%	35%	100%
1954	28%	36%	36%	100%
1962	21%	39%	41%	100%
1968	16%	39%	45%	100%
1975	10%	40%	50%	100%

Source: Institut National de Statistique et d'Etudes Economiques.

reversal is discussed further on, but suffice it to say at this point that it is part and parcel of the large-scale migration turnaround that has begun to revitalize rural communities in many other regions of Western Europe and the United States. Some of this new growth may be a reflection of a higher rate of rural retention; some is undoubtedly a genuine relocation of families from cities and suburbs into

the countryside. Although employment opportunities in manufacturing and service industries has been effective in attracting migrants to many of these turnaround areas, the dominant motivational orientation of the migrants seems to involve "quality of life" incentives, such as the "simple life" and "natural environment" perceived to be so characteristic of rural communities.

THE EFFECT OF AGE ON POPULATION CHANGE

The drawback to relying on crude rates of fertility, mortality and migration in assessing demographic trends over relatively short periods of time, is that the effects of a changing age structure are not taken into account. Age specific rates, to be sure, would give a more detailed picture of the demographic evolution of Montaut, particularly with regard to the natural movement of the population. Regrettably, the reliability of age specific rates is restricted in this case by the small size of the population. Nevertheless, the age factor can be incorporated into the analysis of general demographic trends, simply through a systematic observation of shifts in the age pyramid, since the age structure is effected by, but also exerts an influence on such trends. For example, as births and deaths decrease through time, there is generally an aging effect on the population; fewer young people enter the population and those who do enter it live longer lives. In turn, the long-term consequence of an aging population, all else equal, is a lower birth rate and a higher

death rate, since the relative size of the population beyond the child-bearing years (over 45) becomes progressively larger.

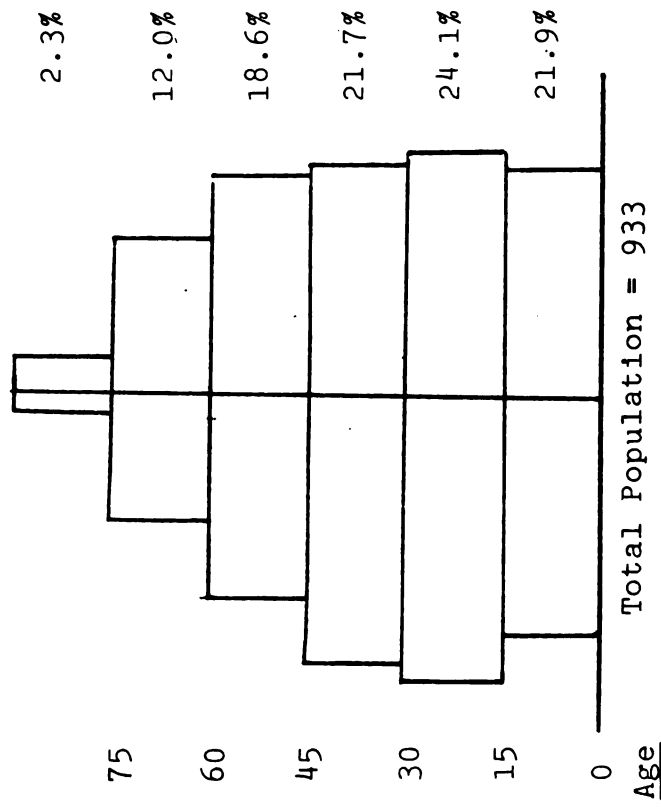
Since migration rarely occurs randomly, it too can alter the age structure of a population. There are significant patterns, and changes in patterns of migration across time and space. One such regularity often generalized in the social sciences, is simply that migrants may be distinctively set apart from those who do not migrate on a number of important sociological characteristics. Migration, in other words, is selective; and it is for precisely this reason that we are wont to explain it. Goldscheider suggests that since migrants do not represent a cross section of the population they leave or the one to which they move, their movement has patterned social, economic, and demographic determinants and consequences.¹² Indeed, it is the selective feature of migration that links it to broader societal change processes, such as economic growth and decline. The outmigration of large numbers of young people, for example, exerts an aging effect on the population in which it occurs both directly and indirectly. The direct effect is obvious, fewer young people causes the average age of the population to rise; indirectly, the departure of the younger age cohorts (those in their child-bearing years) reduces the number of children born into the population. Naturally, the reverse effect would obtain from the net immigration of young people.

It is quite certain that trends in births, deaths and

migration in Montaut have been shaped, to some degree, by changes in the commune's age structure, and that these demographic trends have, in turn, contributed to the transfiguration of the age pyramid over time. And the age pyramid of the population of Montaut has indeed taken on new forms at various points in time, as demonstrated in Figure 1. It is apparent that the age structure in Montaut midway through the nineteenth century was one of a gradually declining population approaching stability. By 1901, half a century later, the population had stabilized. Although the declining birth rate had leveled off, with each birth cohort resembling the one before it, the proportion of the population over forty-five years of age had swelled in size and thereby prevented the crude death rate from dropping to a level commensurate with that of the fertility rate. It was observed earlier that during the period between the world wars, deaths continued to outnumber births, but that heavy net immigration had caused the population to grow. The 1946 age pyramid does, in fact, show signs of growth, and as it might be expected, the bulk of the immigration during the preceding period appears to have been concentrated in the younger age cohorts, they being the only ones to have grown in proportion during the period. The resultant effect of a growing number of young people in the population is a drop in the death rate and a rise in the birth rate. Were it not for the subsequent exodus of young people following the Second World War, the two probably would have equalized one another for the first time

1851

Male Female



1901

Male Female

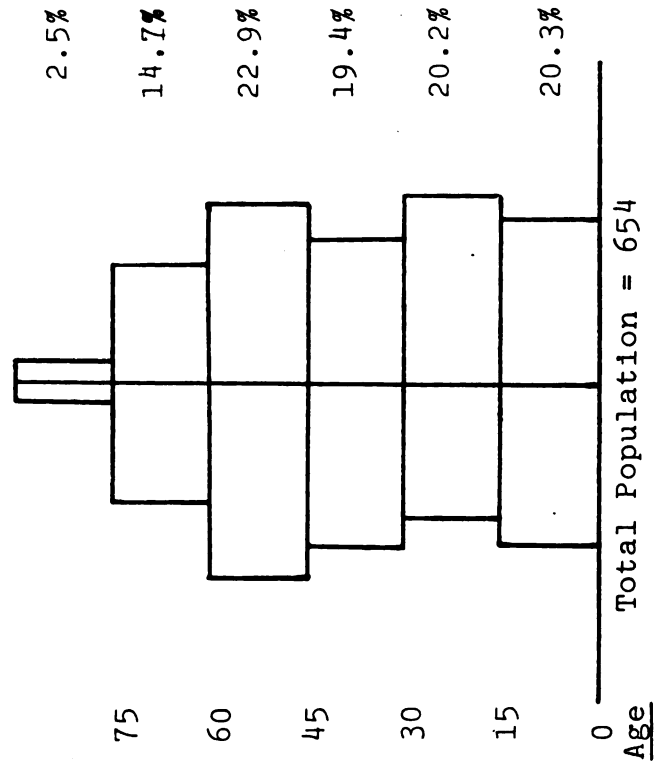
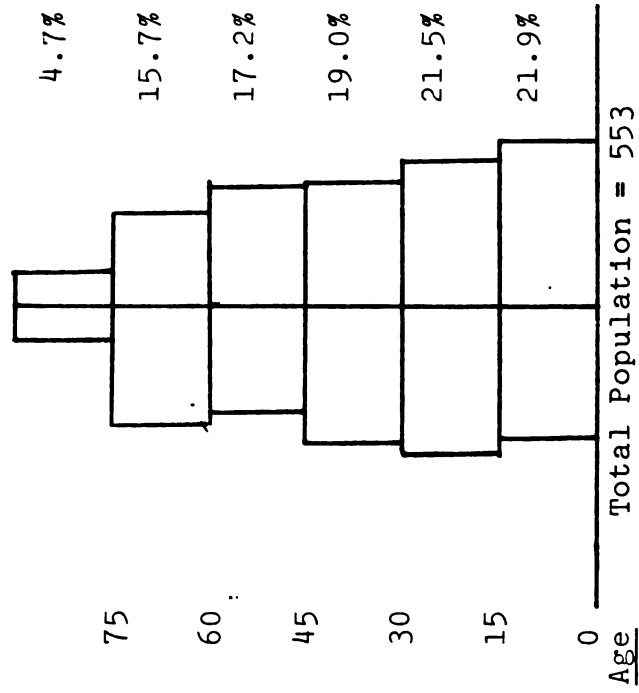


Figure 1. Population of Montaut by Sex and Age in 1851, 1901, 1946 and 1975

1946

Male Female



1975

Male Female

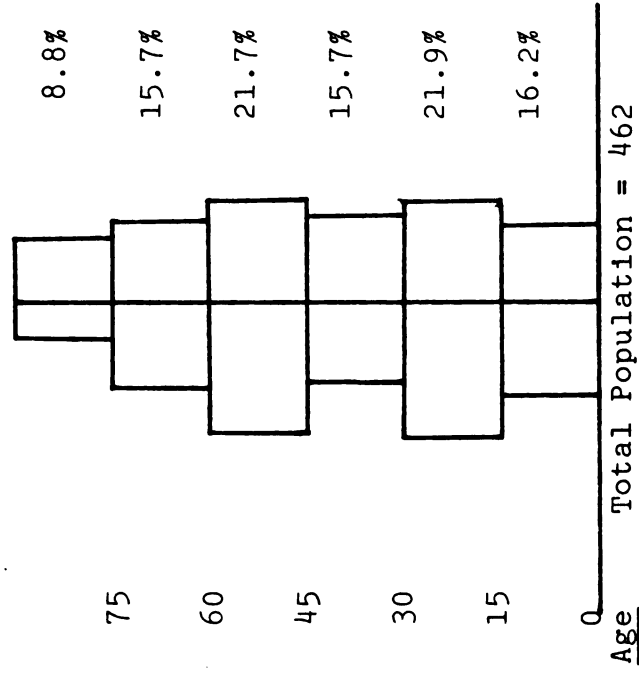


Figure 1(cont'd).

in over a century and a half. The age structure in 1975 reflects the outmigration of young adults and, concomitantly, a decline in the birth rate. Cohorts over forty-five comprised a startling 46.3 percent of the total population. In short, then, this discussion has shown that fertility, mortality and migration trends in Montaut can begin to be adequately understood only in the light of the changing age structure of the population.

The demographic history of Montaut is not unlike that of many other communes in the department of Gers, or, for that matter, in agricultural communes all over the southwest. The population of Gers experienced a relatively sharp decline from the middle of the nineteenth century until the end of the First World War. Since that time, as Figure 2 indicates, the department has maintained a more gradual decline in population, at a rate of about one percent every five years.¹³ As Figure 2 includes both the urban and rural population of Gers, the rural exodus that has diminished the population of Montaut and other rural communes since World War II has been partially off-set by urban growth in the department. In point of fact, the population of rural Gers has declined at a rate of about one percent a year, while urban Gers has grown in population during this post-war period at about a half a percent a year. The 1975 census provides an answer to the question of whether the recent population growth in Montaut has been duplicated in other rural communities in the area. Despite the overall population decline in rural Gers from 1968 to 1975, including

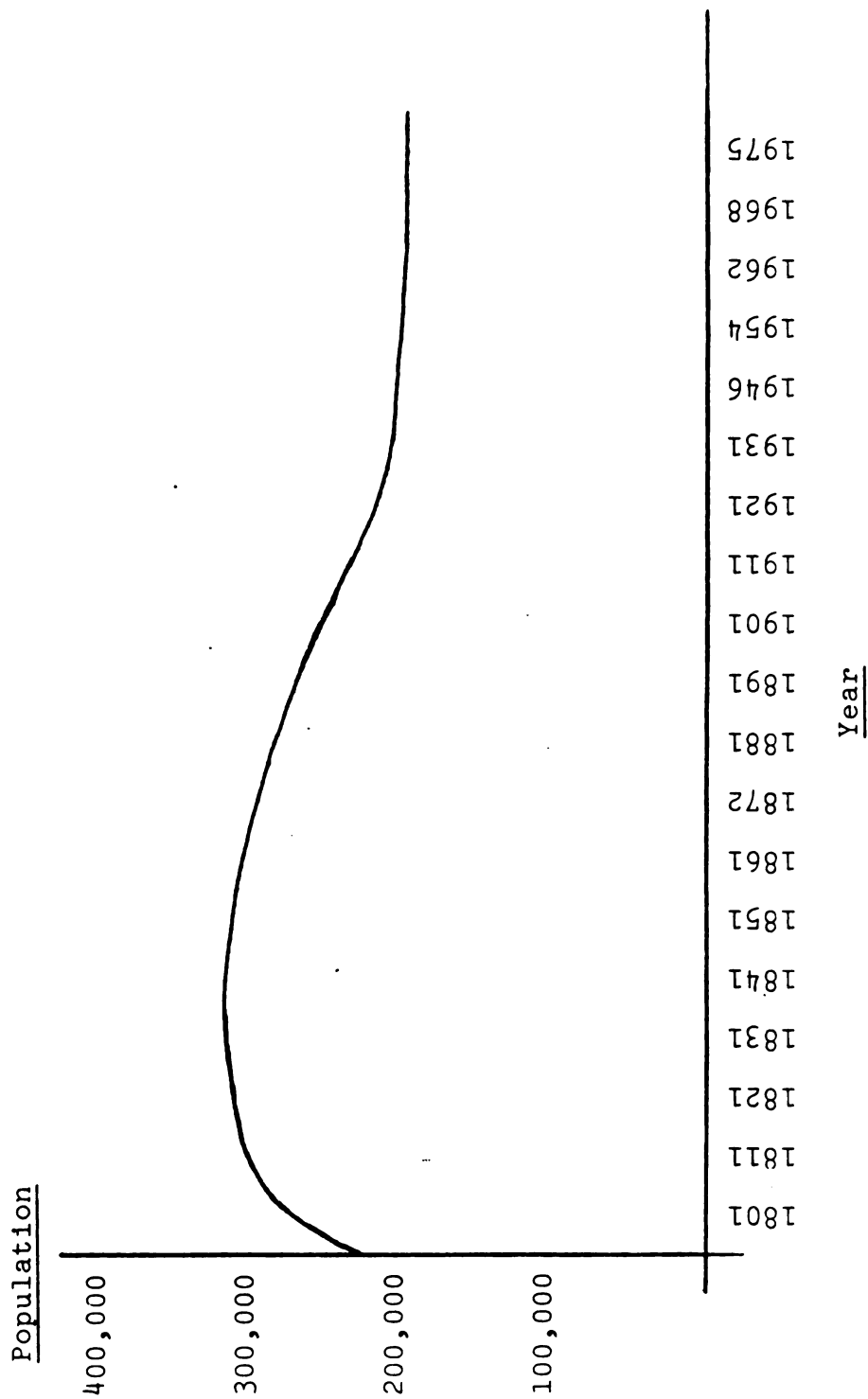


Figure 2. Population of Gers, 1801-1975

the population of Montaut which did not show a net increase until after 1975, many communes in the department had indeed already begun to turn around. Naturally, the first communes to experience population growth were those located in close proximity to the larger market towns and the national highways that connect them.

As this chapter has evidenced, population changes in Montaut are clearly linked to some of the major historical movements at the regional and national levels. But in order to comprehend the full nature of Montaut's demographic transformation, a great deal must first be understood about the cultural and organizational make-up of Montaut the community. Family structure, for example, the farming system, transportation and communication; these are all vastly important integrated elements of a changing sociocultural system--the broader context from which the population changes described here have emerged and to which, in turn, they have contributed. Partly in the interest of gaining a deeper understanding of the organizational setting that lies at the root of Montaut's demographic evolution, the chapters that follow take a close look at peasant community life, how it has centered around the family, and how the traditional peasant order has gradually faded into the past.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN MONTAUT: A PORTRAIT OF CHANGE

The traditional culture of Montaut has in recent decades been vastly transformed in character as, steadily and pervasively, virtually every aspect of community and family life has become integrated into the urban, industrial mainstream of French society. Described in this chapter are some of the areas in which this evolution has become particularly noteworthy both in contrast to earlier accounts of rural life in Gasconne, and through the continuing side by side existence of the multiple generations of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that make up Montaut today. Beginning with changes that have occurred in the ways by which families meet their requirements for food, shelter and clothing, the focus then shifts to how generations differ in terms of the types of living arrangements they adopt. The discussion concludes with a brief look at the continuing importance of egalitarianism as a strong and guiding principle of family life in the community.

FEEDING THE FAMILY

Although most farm families in Montaut are still largely self-sufficient in terms of the food they produce on the farm, some fruits and vegetables, bread, cheeses, and occasionally a cut of meat are now purchased from local merchants. Kitchens are busy during the canning season as produce from

the garden and orchard is preserved for consumption during the year. In early winter, each family gathers together for the slaughtering of a pig. This is an occasion in which all members of the family participate; the men take responsibility for butchering the pig and the women and children assist in the preparation and preserving of pates, sausages and other charcuterie. Today most farms have a large freezer so that much of the labor that goes into salting, drying or smoking meats, and the canning of fruits and vegetables has been eliminated. Families living in the bourg and other non-farm families often grow a small vegetable garden in the summer, but by and large their meals are prepared from foods purchased from the local shopkeeper, market or supermarket.

The traditional diet in the region was very simple: normally consisting of a thick vegetable soup based on cabbage or green beans with piece of lard or sometimes goose fat, lots of bread rubbed with garlic, and wine. There was never any dessert. On holidays and other special occasions the soup might be followed by grilled or roast pork and sometimes a turkey, chicken or goose, with sugared crepes for dessert. The Gerso's diet is now a great deal more varied than it once was, primarily because families can afford to supplement the foods they produce at home with foods that come from other parts of the country and sometimes from other countries of the world. It is common now for the woman to make a weekly trip to one of the four large supermarkets in Auch where a wide variety of meats, produce, dairy products,

desserts, wines and liquors can be purchased. But for the most part, people are aware of the hazards of overeating and high cholesterol and therefore try to eat lightly. Sundays and holidays are the exception to this rule, however, when a meal often includes a soup, several different meats, a green salad, a rich dessert, plenty of wine, and then coffee and armagnac, the regional brandy which is usually consumed in a cup still warm from the coffee.

It is no longer entirely true that in order to feed the family and to buy market products the woman is responsible for earning the money herself by selling the products of her barnyard. On most farms now the expenditures for household goods has surpassed the income a woman can generate on her own, and the need for this extra income, which is so vital to the small subsistence operation, is becoming less exigent as farms continue to expand and specialize. For those farm wives who do still vend a portion of their farm produce, there are several active area markets to which they can go. Eight miles to the east along the national highway 124 is Gimont, the site of the weekly poultry and egg market. The market is open to the public but the most serious buyers are the wholesalers who come with oversized trucks to transport their merchandise often as far away as Paris. The farm woman finds a space to display her goods while the merchants pass by and throw out a price. If in passing by a second time the offer is accepted, the transaction is made, if it is rejected, there is no sale. Veal is marketed in a similar fashion

every other week twelve miles north of Montaut in the town of Flurance.

Some wine is also produced locally but, in general, it is of mediocre quality. In earlier times, nearly every farm had at least a small vineyard from which enough wine could be rendered each year to meet the family's needs. But the process required of each member of the family many long and punishing hours of labor, and the mechanization of viticulture has been economically efficient for the large-scale, specialized wine growers only. Consequently, most families find it less burdensome (and less expensive) to simply buy the wine produced by the larger growers. Montaut's vineyards accounted for 140 hectares of land in 1954; by 1975 this figure had dropped to 85 hectares and today it is even less.¹⁴

SHELTER

Excluding the chateau at Malartic, farm residences in the commune seem to have little diversity. As a rule, homes reflect the natural environment of the region. To this day, stone and stucco are the principal building materials used in the area and the internal structure of most buildings is of wood. Heavy oak beams and rafters are almost always visible on the interior. The walls are of stone (usually about eighteen inches thick), which helps keep the home cool beneath the hot summer sun; on the outside they are covered with a light brown stucco that, with age, often chips away in spots, exposing the stone and mortar. The inside walls are smoothly

plastered and painted white. All roofs are constructed of heavy red clay tiles; most have been partially discolored by the moss which seems to thrive in the cracks between the tiles. The stable, barns, and other outbuildings are closely grouped and similarly constructed. The largest barn is unlike the others in that it is open and shelter-like. Perhaps it can be better described as a solid wooden frame supporting a tiled roof. Originally built to keep hay and straw for livestock, it is more often used nowadays to house the tractors, combine harvester and other large farm equipment.

The adjacent living quarters once used by farmhands or sharecroppers and their families have fallen into disrepair and now serve only as additional storage. There are a few ambitious farm families, however, who have installed a full plumbing system and made other necessary renovations to convert this building into a summer residence for vacationers from the city. In fact, the French government has for quite some time encouraged this latter course of action through a program referred to as the Gîte Ruraux. In brief, the government assists the peasant family in renovating a portion of their home, or an annex to it, in order to promote tourism in the area and to provide rural families with some additional income. The advertising and bookkeeping is then handled by the government, who, in collecting the rental payments from vacationers, skims a ten percent service fee off the top and forwards the remaining ninety percent on to the owners of the

gîte. Maintenance and management of the gîte fall into the woman's domain of activity.

Access to the farmyard from the public road, often a long distance, up to several hundred yards, is accomplished by a narrow driveway of small off-white stones (cailloux) tightly packed into the dry earth. In years past, before this stone pavement was a cost farmers could afford, accessibility was subject to seasonal variations in the rainfall. For most of the year, during the dry months, the dirt drive was baked hard by the sun, but during the winter months the earth's wetness often became rather unmanageable.

Houses, shops and other buildings in the bourg are constructed of the same materials used in the countryside--mostly stone, wood for the frame and tile on the roof. Architecturally, they differ some from farm buildings in that they are adjoined side by side along the village streets in a "row house" style. But most villagers do have a sizable garden plot off the back sides of their homes from which they derive a large part of the fruits and vegetables they consume throughout the year. Although a few of the buildings in the bourg have become dilapidated over many years with little or no maintenance, most families seem to have come up with the wherewithal in recent times to improve the physical condition of their homes. Those who have not invested much money in the up-keep of their property are mostly the older, often widowed members of the community. They are the ones with the least motivation to renovate, and also the ones who

can least afford to. Nevertheless, even the old and the tired and the poor and the lonely manage to do a little something to enhance the appearance of their homes in the spring and summer months; some plant flowers in boxes out front, others plant them in pots along their windowsills.

DETERIORATION AND RESTORATION

A long history of outmigration and fertility decline in Montaut has reduced the number of families living in the commune from 259 in the year 1836 to 125 families in 1975, the year of the most recent national census. As families have become fewer, dwellings have been left unoccupied, both in the bourg and scattered throughout the countryside of Montaut. The vast majority of these homes were once needed by the families of sharecroppers and farm laborers before they were replaced by mechanized agriculture. Some of these dwellings have since been converted either to storage or into summer cottages for vacationers. Others, however, have been abandoned for so long that they have deteriorated almost beyond repair. The roof falls through in spots, the foundation begins to crumble and before long the owner of the property is cultivating clear to the doorstep.

But in the past few years a growing number of these unoccupied dwellings have been bought and refurbished by a wave of newcomers and returned migrants who have opted to take up residence in Montaut. Alternatively there are many newcomers, and some long-term residents as well, who find it

more in their interest to build a new home than to restore an older one. The lack of incentive and the poor availability of capital prohibited families from either building or restoring a home prior to 1960 (see Table 4). Later, during the 1960's, the money supply improved and the demand for better housing on the part of both local residents and new comers brought on a precipitous rise in housing construction and restoration. Since 1972 the housing situation in Montaut has been upgraded dramatically; many new residences have appeared on the scene, and gradually the abandoned and other deteriorating peasant homes are being restored to life. About a third of these more recent residential improvements has been the work of permanent residents; the other two thirds have been undertaken by immigrants either before their arrival or shortly thereafter. More often than not, these newcomers are previous outmigrants currently returning to Montaut to be closer to parents, siblings and other kin and friends. If they build, invariably it is on a corner of the family farmstead; if they restore, it is the home in which they spent their youth.

CONDITIONS IN THE HOME

Family life in Montaut converges in the warm openness of the kitchen, a spacious, windowed room leading to the outdoors via a well-used side entryway. It is here, infused with the aroma of the day's cooking, that the family gathers to share their experiences, express their concerns and air

Table 4. New Homes Built and Old Homes Restored in Montaut,
1940-1977

	<u>Residents</u>		<u>Inmigrants</u>		Total
	Farm	Nonfarm	Farm	Nonfarm	
1977	1	1	0	2	4
1976	0	0	0	7	7
1975	2	1	0	2	5
1974	3	0	0	1	4
1973	1	1	0	3	5
1972	0	0	0	5	5
1971	0	0	0	1	1
1970	0	0	0	0	0
1960-69	0	9	0	4	13
1950-59	1	1	0	0	2
1940-49	0	0	0	1	1

Source: 1970-77, Record of Building Permits; 1940-69,
Informants.

their differences with one another. Adjacent to the kitchen is a large salon, where guests are entertained on a more formal basis and where the Sunday meal and other celebrations take place. A second formal salon is commonly found in a larger home. In this case one is used principally for dining while the other serves as a general living area. Because of difficulties in heating these rooms, one or the other may be closed off through the months of winter. The main entrance of the residence opens into the central hallway of the house, usually a sizable room, sparsely furnished, with a wooden staircase leading to the bedrooms on the second floor. Last, most households also have a combined pantry and utility room off the kitchen in which canned goods are stored, meats are hung to dry, firewood is stacked, and household utilities and other provisions are kept out of the way. If the family has a freezer, washing machine, or clothes dryer, it too will be located there.

The traditional kitchen is dominated by a grand fireplace of brick or stone that commands nearly one entire side of the room. A heavy caldron of the day's soup, suspended from a metal hook or settled on a sturdy iron tripod, stews above a low wood fire at the center of the hearth. Beside the fireplace sits a small pile of wood and a long hooked fire poker wrought from iron. Off to one corner is a stone sink and an enameled basin, but there is no running water, hot or cold. A long wooden kitchen table surrounded by benches or rush-seated straight-back chairs occupies the kitchen center.

One or two buffets are used to store the cooking and dining utensils and constitute the only other furniture in the room.

But today there are few housewives working in kitchens quite as traditional as this. In 1964, after a communal water system was installed in Montaut, there were only a dozen or so households left without running water. Before that time, a number of families had already taken the first step in modernizing their homes by investing in small electrically powered water pumps to provide running water.

The kitchen is always the first part of the house to be modernized, it being the center of family life and the housewife's principal "work room". Then come the bedrooms and an indoor flush-toilet. Always the last to be brought up to date is the exterior of the house: walls are resurfaced and a narrow walkway may be laid down around the house.¹⁵ The modern kitchen, be it newly constructed or a traditional one remodeled, leaves the rural housewife with little to envy of her urban counterpart. She has hot running water, a gas stove (sometimes a fuel-oil or wood cook-stove), an enameled sink, a refrigerator and other such amenities. Walls are often tiled and in older kitchens the exposed beams are either hidden by planks of wood or accentuated through the use of a special wood stain as the rustic "country" appearance becomes increasingly fashionable. In the mid-1960's the level of modernization in the home varied a great deal from one household to the next. At that time, there were ten or twelve of the traditional type and a dozen or so on the "modernized"

end, with all the rest somewhere in between. Today there is just a handful who have not completed the process.

Prerequisite to other aspects of household modernization is the development of an electrical power system in the commune. The electrification of Montaut began its evolution in 1932 when the Syndicat d' Electricité was created in the rural areas surrounding Auch. Three years later, the first electrification system was completed, reaching the households of the bourg and a large number of the farm families residing in the immediate countryside. Six transformers were installed at that time serving an average of about fifteen to twenty households each, which translates into roughly two thirds of the community. More than twenty years passed before the needs of farmers and rising expectations about the minimal level of comfort necessary in the household became forceful enough to effectuate a second wave of electrification. In 1958 the community pushed to have electricity extended to all farms, even to those in the remotest fringes of the commune. It was not until 1964, however, that this drive was actually accomplished through the installation of two additional transformers.

In the past ten years or so the demand for electric power in Montaut has more than doubled, expanding the number of transformers to a total of sixteen. Officials at Electricite de France (EDF) estimate that about a half of this expansion has been needed to supply electricity to new homes and businesses in the commune, while the other half has

served simply to keep pace with the increasing farm and household consumption on the part of established customers. And there is no indication that the use of electricity will level off at any time soon as EDF's plans for the near future include the installation of another four transformers in Montaut.

Unlike urban dwellers, rural residents are widely dispersed and therefore obliged to organize and meet a portion (15%) of the total cost of electrification on their own; it is for this reason that rural areas lag far behind urban areas on this aspect of modernization. Rural communities commonly finance electrification projects through a bank or other lending agency and then pass the debt on to consumers according to individual household use.

Since the great majority of the homes in Montaut were built in the nineteenth century or earlier, such conveniences as plumbing and central heating have only been an afterthought for most families in the commune.¹⁶ Although virtually all households now have running water, many homes still lack the comfort of a bath or shower. A flush-toilet, on the other hand, ranks high on the list of household improvements and can be found now in nearly any home—although it is just about as likely to be located in an outdoor shed or garage as anywhere inside the house. Central heating is a feature found almost exclusively in newer dwellings, those in which it is a part of the original design. Thus, during the winter, most families in Montaut reside in but one or two rooms (the

kitchen and the salon) which they heat locally with a wood or fuel-oil cook stove. The relatively mild winter does not require that bedrooms be heated in the nighttime, but insulation from the cold is necessary and is ordinarily accomplished in this region of France by spreading a goose down coverlet over the bed at night.

In the larger, departmental context too, many household conveniences are still far from universal in Gers (see Table 5).¹⁷ Full bathroom facilities including an indoor

Table 5. Proportion of Dwellings in Gers Equipped with Selected Facilities in 1975

Facility	Percent
Running Water	94.4
Bath or Shower	66.0
Central Heating	30.1
Indoor Toilet	67.0

Source: Institut National de Statistique et d'Etudes Economiques.

toilet and a bathtub or shower are absent in a third of the households in Gers, and in the rural areas alone this figure is likely to approach fifty percent. Central heating is found even less frequently and is undoubtedly concentrated in the large apartment complexes in the city of Auch. The presence or absence of running water, on the other hand, has ceased to be a useful indicator of household modernization,

as only one family in twenty is lacking in this respect. In terms of household appliances, the average housewife in Midi-Pyrenees is at a level equal to that of the average housewife in France as a whole. Although most households are still without a freezer, a dishwasher or a color television, the drudgery of doing the laundry by traditional means, i.e., boiling and scrubbing by hand, has for the most part been eliminated.

The telephone is another symbol of modern living in Montaut. It was not until 1925 that the evolution of the telephone system in the commune first got under way. One telephone was installed at that time, and served as the sole telephone in Montaut until 1932 when the system was expanded to two. A third was added in 1933, and then a fourth in 1934. It has been reported by de Gaulejac and Duplex that of the five "initiators" in the the commune, four were wealthy and powerful families, either noble or bourgeois, and the fifth was a local merchant who later became one of the premier entrepreneurs in the area.¹⁸ By 1977, there were 43 telephones in Montaut, a growth of about one client per year since the beginning stages of the system's development. Although these telephones were located disproportionately in nonfarm households, the discrepancy had begun to balance out by 1978 as twenty-seven new telephones were installed that year in both farm and nonfarm households. The expansion of the telephone network in Montaut has been paralleled, it seems, throughout the entire department as the number of telephones in Gers

increased by 98% from 1970 to 1976.¹⁹

Of the 140 households in Montaut, 70 of them (or 50%) are now equipped with a telephone. Those still lacking a telephone are disposed to make use of a neighbor's or of one of the public phones located in the post office and village cafe. Judging from the volume of unfulfilled requests for a telephone made by residents of Montaut, this growth is expected to continue over the next few years. In France, the telephone system (the Agence Commercial des Télécommunications) is owned and operated by the national government. For the average family, a telephone can be obtained only by making a formal request and a steep payment to the French government; following the request, it can be up to two years before a telephone is actually installed. Despite the high cost and long delay involved in acquiring a telephone, the people of Montaut are rapidly discovering that as a means of communication the telephone has become indispensable to their social and economic lives in present day France.

Like the telephone, the growth of automobile ownership has had the enormous and simultaneous effects of reducing the isolation of households in rural areas and minimizing the spatial separation of rural and urban communities. Regrettably, precise information on the development of motorized transportation is not available at the local level through the national system of motor vehicle registration. But in the light of its recency and the remarkable impact it has had on the average rural family, the history of car ownership in

Montaut can be derived with a reasonable degree of accuracy simply on the basis of personal accounts by those individuals who have been active in community life since its early stages about forty years ago.

It is estimated that automobiles in the commune at the close of World War II were somewhere around eight or ten in number, and were owned for the most part by relatively wealthy families, both farm and nonfarm. From this point on, unlike the growth of the telephone system, car ownership has spread swiftly through the commune. By the mid-1950's there were some 30 cars in all and by the early 1960's at least every other family then had one. Because of their remoteness from the center of community life in the bourg, and their need to transport products from the farm, few families living in the countryside were without a car by this time. Toward the end of the decade, the public bus service to and from Auch had been discontinued, and all households were in possession of one automobile and a great many of them owned two.

In Montaut today, the pace of life has meshed with that of city people in Auch, and spheres of work, family, and social activity in these rural and urban communities now tightly intersect. As both cause and consequence of their intensified linkages with Auch, the residents of Montaut have become increasingly reliant on the mobility that automobile ownership brings to them. More and more young adults are commuting to work in Auch and other nearby towns, and the attraction of Auch as a growing commercial center for the

area draws many others on a regular, nearly daily basis. To achieve this level of personal mobility, the average family in Montaut now owns at least two cars, and in larger households where children are working outside the commune, it is not uncommon to see four or five automobiles parked in the driveway in the evening. And this mobility is by no means restricted to the immediate vicinity. The elderly as well as the young are now capable of travelling greater distances at a lower cost to visit places, relatives and friends in all corners of the country. Far more than ever before leisure time is being spent away from the home and away from Montaut, and for a growing number of families the notion of a weekend is best defined as a two day visit with parents or children living elsewhere in Southern France.²⁰

STYLES OF DRESS

One area in which modernization occurred relatively early on in Montaut, before most other forms of sociocultural change became manifest, is the way in which people dress. The traditional garb of the Gascon farmer including his characteristic wooden shoes and loose blue work-shirt can be seen today only at an exhibition of traditional Gascon culture; the same holds for the woman's wool petticoat and dark neckerchief worn about the head and tied below the chin. At the turn of the century, clothing materials were no longer produced in the home and most garments were made by the local tailor or seamstress. Dress at this time began to move in

the direction of the current fashions worn in the city.

Nowadays, the desire to be up with the styles is as apparent among the women of Montaut as among their urban "rivals" in Auch. Indeed, as many of these women, particularly the young and unmarried, spend the greater part of their working and social lives in the city, they feel compelled to disconfirm any suspicions about sophistication and refinement in the countryside. On Sundays, special occasions, and while in the city, clothing from one of the small boutiques or the fashionable Nouvelles Galeries department store in Auch is worn, and hair is always stylishly coiffured. A simple but colorful house-dress and sometimes a flowered apron usually suffice in the context of the village or home.

Even in 1965, de Gaulejac and Duplex observed very little difference in dress between rural and urban women; and they note, too, that magazines, such as "Modes de Paris" and "Femmes d'Aujourd'hui" were at that time already highly popular among the women of Montaut. Men, on the other hand, were not fully in tune with the fashion trends of the 1960's, as they continued to favor the dark wool jackets and shapeless trousers of times gone by.²¹ In Montaut today, only the younger men have developed a real awareness of fashion; the oldtimers, in contrast, lack both the interest and the means to update their style of dress. Although many elderly women do try to keep up with the times, there are some, the poor and the widowed in particular, who dress entirely in black,

in keeping with the peasant tradition.

As for the young children of the commune, their mothers take a great pride in seeing to it that they are outfitted for school in a way that appropriately reflects good taste and the family's ability to meet the expense of such things. Secondary level students travel each day to school in Auch where they rapidly learn the importance of dress, and the cost involved in following the fashions. Boys as well as girls are at this age obliged to bear most or all of their personal expenses on their own; this means part-time employment after school or on weekends at a shop or cafe in Auch or on a neighbor's farm during the summer harvest season. Casual dress is now preferred by young people: blue jeans and knit pullovers head up the list. Hair is always professionally styled.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Although the cohabitation of several generations under the same roof is still quite common in Montaut, there is a growing predilection on the part of young married couples to detach themselves from the antiquated lifeways of their parents and grandparents. Some couples simply transform an unused section of the farmhouse into an independent apartment, while others may build an entirely separate dwelling in the vicinity of the old homestead. More often than not, the husband or wife (or both) will be employed outside the commune and the couple will take up residence in the environs of the

work site. One effect of these changes, naturally, is a reduction in the number of three-generation households, a phenomenon that has been occurring in France and other developed nations for quite a long while. Since World War II, extended families in Montaut have dwindled as a proportion of all families in the commune from 30% to 17%.

Postmarital residence patterns in Montaut follow something of a matrilocal tradition, although frequently in the past couples have also moved in with the husband's parents, depending on the circumstances. In general it is thought that it is less troublesome for the husband to adjust to his wife's family since he often works away from the home, than for the wife to try to share household responsibilities day in and day out with her husband's mother (and possibly his grandmother). In the event that the husband plans to stay in farming, the couple will take up residence where their prospects appear most attractive. As a matter of competition for farm leadership it is usually in the farmer's best interest to work the farm with his son-in-law, who as a newcomer poses less of a threat to his authority than does his son.

In that fewer and fewer young men are opting for a life in farming, there is no longer the potential for strains between the father and son (or son-in-law) regarding leadership on the farm, yet tensions can and do mount in the household among the women. Thus, it is entirely understandable that couples who do not create a household of their own, have in recent years become more partial to moving in with the wife's

family. Of the 44 couples since 1946 who continued to live with parents immediately following their marriage, nearly two-thirds have shown a preference for the wife's household (See Table 6). The trend over time seems to be moving even further in this direction as the proportion of patrilocal first residences has dramatically waned and matrilocal residence has clearly become the preferred arrangement.

Table 6. Residence with Parents After Marriage

Residence	1946-1961	1962-1977	Total (1946-1977)
Husband's Parents (Percent)	12 (42.9)	4 (25.0)	16 (36.4)
Wife's Parents (Percent)	16 (57.1)	12 (75.0)	28 (63.6)
TOTAL (Percent)	28 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	44 (100.0)

EGALITARIANISM IN THE FAMILY

Family relationships in Montaut are distinctively egalitarian. Norms about farm succession and the inheritance of property do not favor one sibling over another in terms of age or sex.²² If a sibling has the aptitude for or an interest in a career off the farm, parents (the mother in particular) will usually be supportive of his or her pursuits in whatever way they can be. If the farm has a viable future, there will be pressure from the parents for one of their children to make a life of farming. At the time of marriage, the father gives

to the son or daughter who is to succeed him a portion of the farm (usually about a quarter of it). As de Gaulegac and Duplex speculate, this measure is probably less to assure that the couple will remain on the farm as to recognize their non-subordination vis-a-vis the farm's management.

In time, as the father's leadership diminishes, the enterprise is transferred in its entirety into the hands of his successors. But this shift in leadership rarely occurs all at once. It is a gradual, sometimes painful process in which, at times, it is impossible to know who is the true head of the operation. The principal determinants in the change-over are the father's physical ability to keep up with the farm work, and his familiarity with modern farming practices. As the farmer approaches the age where he can no longer put in a day's work in the fields or if he cannot keep abreast with the latest in farm technology, he will slowly give way to his younger, stronger, more adept partner in the enterprise.

As with the farm, the young couple also acquires a certain amount of authority over how the family budget is disbursed. Equally, if other children are still living at home, a sizable portion of their earnings are pooled in the family reserve and they, too, have a say in where it goes. All things considered, it is probably fair to say that the women in the household have greater control over expenditures than do the men, at least once the major farm outlays such as seed, fertilizer, payments on a new tractor, and taxes are covered. Income derived from the sale of eggs, poultry and other

products of the farmyard always falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the wife, and serves to cover much of the household's running expenses. Any revenue that remains after the basic needs of the family and farm have been met, is saved up for the purchase of a television, a refrigerator, or to renovate a section of the house, a bedroom perhaps, or maybe the bathroom. Although the women of the household seem to be the most successful at laying claim to any unused resources, it is generally felt that all who contribute to the family budget should have some voice in how it is spent.

CHAPTER IV

FARMS, FARMERS AND FARMING: FROM SUBSISTENCE TO PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE

The relationship between a city and the many smaller settlements located in the surrounding countryside is cast in many forms. Sometimes dichotomized, sometimes viewed as polar opposites between which runs a lengthy continuum, the concepts of "rural" and "urban" (whether applied to people, communities, or societies), are frequently used to help define this relationship. But definitions of what is rural and what is urban are many, varied, usually confounding, and always incomplete. Quite apart from their definitional looseness, these concepts generally go no further than to describe the differences between rural and urban communities. The discovery that people living in urban communities tend to be less family oriented, live longer lives, go to more cocktail parties, etc., than do those from rural communities is only a first step toward an understanding of the elaborate interrelationships between rural and urban social systems. After all, can the essential qualities and precise meaning of the relationships between a man and a woman, the sun and the earth, be captured through an account of how they differ?

The present chapter begins by probing at some of the specific factors that come into play in developing a useful conceptual understanding of this relationship. Particular attention is paid here to the role of market exchange and to how the peasant farmer organizes his world in relation to the

market system. The discussion then considers how the ecology of peasant agriculture changes its orientation from subsistence to production over the course of time vis-a-vis the external market and, finally, how this deep-rooted transformation ultimately enters the sphere of the peasant farmer's family life, differentiating his role as farmer from that of husband and father.

PEASANT SOCIETY AND THE CITY

The city, a complex social system, is inseparably bound to its agrarian forebears. Deep beneath the surface of this union, at its essence, lies the concept of the "market," a crucial fact of peasant society that enters into rural and urban life equally as a state of mind and as a guiding principle to one's day-to-day activities. What makes the peasantry distinct from other, primitive and agricultural societies, however, is that it is a part of the larger compound society yet, simultaneously, maintains a degree of autonomy vis-a-vis this broader social system; in Redfield's words, a peasantry is a "part-society" definable only in relation to the city.²³ Elaborating on this conceptualization, Mendras comments that complete autonomy is characteristic of more primitive, archaic societies; the absence of autonomy, on the other hand, might describe local groups, or rural "classes," but not a peasantry. "If there is no city there is no peasant, and if the society is entirely urbanized there is no peasant either."²⁴

In peasant society, the primordial link between rural communities and the city is commercial market exchange. As the market economy penetrates deeper into the traditional system of agricultural production, the economic activities of peasant farmers begin to conform to the logic of the larger industrial society. Farm and family are differentiated and, in time, the farmer learns that he is no longer simply the head of this household; he is also the operator of a business enterprise.

It is the market, in one form or another, that pulls out from the compact social relations of self-contained primitive communities some part of men's doings and puts people in fields of economic activity that are increasingly independent of the rest of what goes on in the local life. The local traditional and moral world and the wider and more impersonal world of the market are in principle distinct, ... In peasant society the two are maintained in some balance; the market is held at arms' length, so to speak. We may see the intermediacy of the peasant community in this respect also if we suggest a series of societies in which the separation of the world of the market is progressively greater.²⁵

The peasant economy, before the penetration of the market, is commonly founded on a system of local patron-client relations. As the outside market works its way into this complex of relationships, the system is transformed into a more fragmented pattern of single interest relations involving individuals with goods for sale.²⁶ The exchange of agriculture surplus on the commercial market affects the peasant both through the goods he produces and through the major factors of production, i.e., the land he rents and the labor he supplies.

In a word, the precarious balance of subsistence endured by the peasant family is shifted from the control of the landlord to the vagaries of the external market.

It is evident, however, that peasant communities share with the broader society something more than just market interest. Other aspects of the outside world often permeate even the remotest of settlements; the legal system, formal education, and the predominant theological and ideological orientation, for example, all have origins outside the local community. Peasant societies therefore are bipolar, or compound, consisting of two interdependent sociocultural traditions; Redfield refers to them as the great tradition and the little tradition. The two are not discernible in primitive tribal collectivities, and in highly industrialized nations the great tradition is as much a part of rural life as it is of life in the city. In the course of cultural evolution, the pervasiveness of the great tradition begins to fill even the most distant corners of the rural countryside, while the prominence of the local culture loses much of its distinctiveness and assumes a secondary position in the rural community.

THE CHANGING ECOLOGY OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE

From an ecological standpoint, it has been observed by Wolf that there exist two general systems by which peasants exploit the energy resources of the environment in the production of agricultural goods. The first system, the

"paleotechnic ecotype," employs human and animal labor as principal energy inputs in the production process; the second, or "neotechnic ecotype" is characterized by an "increasing reliance on the energy supplied by combustible fuels and the skills supplied by science."²⁷ As Wolf notes, the first ecotype is an offspring of the First Agricultural Revolution, which dates back many thousands of years. The neotechnic ecotype, on the other hand, emerged as a part of the Second Agricultural Revolution which initiated in Europe in consort with the Industrial Revolution.

Today, the economic organization of peasant agriculture in many areas of the world, particularly in those cultures where industrialism has diffused into the agricultural sector, can be subsumed in one form or another under the general definition of the neotechnic ecotype. A predominant feature of this ecotype is its increasing dependence on external sources of energy and higher levels of technology; the resultant effect is a reinforcement of linkages with the market economy, the transformation of agriculture into an economic enterprise, the disappearance of subsistence farming, and the relegation of the peasantry to the background in society.

"The earmark of such an ecotype, then, is the tendency to produce crops which are not necessarily consumed by the cultivator himself. The products go into the market for sale, with the proceeds then underwriting the peasant's several traditional funds."²⁸

Although Wolf makes no conjectural remarks as to the future

of the neotechnic ecotype of peasantry, it is clear that the intensification of market ties through more specialized production and technological advance will erode the relative autonomy of peasant society to a point where it is no longer a "part-society," and therefore no longer a peasantry. Agriculture in France, as well as in other countries of Europe, has over the course of the last half a century rapidly progressed through the neotechnic "stage." With the exception of some of the older farmers and some from the more remote rural communities, the French peasantry is fast becoming a thing of the past.

Contemporary French farmers are suspended between the opposing forces of tradition and change. For all farmers there is a feeling of security, a certain predictability about old ways of managing the farm enterprise. Generations of practical experiences, successes as well as failures, provide the knowledge and skills that the peasant farmer draws on in making and implementing his judgments regarding the future of his farm. But as the organizing principles of the industrial world begin to take hold of the peasant economy, and as the demand for more and cheaper food takes over as the raison d'être of the farm operation, the viability of the traditional farming system is of doubtful promise. For some french farmers, those able to adapt to the market structure, there is a future; for others who are unwilling to relinquish their ties to the past, termination can no longer be prolonged. No generation of younger farmers will succeed them.

Because peasant agriculture in France has been primarily oriented toward the subsistence of the farm family rather than toward making a profit on the commercial market, the farming enterprise is, as a rule, "polyproductive." That is to say, the farmer produces a variety of agricultural goods instead of specializing in one; the specialized farming system is referred to as "monoproductive." For the peasant farmer whose first concern is his family there is enormous uncertainty in the economic rationale that encourages specialization. As families consume a large part of their produce and exchange any surplus on the open market, the production of several different kinds of goods, such as grains, meat, poultry, vegetables, and dairy products, is essential to their subsistence. A shift to specialized production for the market, while creating the potential for peasant families to achieve a higher standard of living, also places a great deal of importance for these families on the success of just one particular crop, both in terms of its yield and the price it can fetch on the market.

Production for the market is also accompanied by other changes in the family and the farming system. As Mendras observes, there is no distinction in traditional agriculture between production and consumption, between economic and family life.²⁹ Family and farm are coincident, and the peasant farmer is at one and the same time the head of his family and the head of his enterprise. Other members of the family, too, share this unified conception of their lives. The daily activities

of the wife and children are not segregated as to their relevance to the continuation of the household rather than the farm, or vice versa. The farmer's son is an apprentice to his father; he learns simultaneously what it means to be a good father and a good farmer. The terms are synonymous, the roles are inseparable. In this respect, then, the peasant family is a highly integrated institution. Family roles are defined, to be sure, some more subtly than others, but never do these roles dissociate economic and social life. Family roles are prescribed largely on the basis of age, sex and kinship.

In order to compete favorably in the commercial market several adaptive changes in the farming system need to occur. Specialization in production has been described as one such adaptation. Specialized agriculture, however, cannot develop on its own in the context of traditional peasant society, a full transformation in the structure of agriculture must also be accomplished. As Wolf has remarked, the utilization of new sources of energy and the adoption of more efficient agricultural technology make up a significant part of this transformation. In the past, the primary energy sources used in French peasant agriculture were human and animal labor. Farmers were skilled in techniques of breeding, training and managing draft animals. Teams of horses or oxen provided the energy input necessary to till the land, harvest the crops and to transport heavy cargo. In the interest of economic efficiency the use of draft animals has been superseded by an

arsenal of highly sophisticated farm machinery. An astute farmer nowadays is compelled to acquire the mechanical skills and knowledge called for in the operation and maintenance of a tractor, a harvester-thresher, a binder and other kinds of mechanical equipment.

Mastery of these new forms of farming hardware is, however, merely an initial step in the traditional farmer's "socialization" to modern commercial agriculture; the "software" must also be accepted and ultimately internalized. The nonmaterial adaptations required of the peasant farmer are understandably slower in coming than are those more physical in nature, for they require a vast reorganization of the peasant's world view. He must come to know his farm from a scientific perspective: his soil, the crops he grows, the animals he raises, and even the climate of the region in which he lives. He must learn to make judgments about the plant varieties, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other chemical treatments best suited to his soil and climate conditions. And, when the occasion arises where he lacks the necessary knowledge on which to base such judgments, he must be prepared to call in an expert, someone more capable than he in assessing the potentiality of the land that has been his family's source of livelihood for generations.

In addition to scientific expertise, the peasant must be versed in the economics of his enterprise. He is both a buyer and a seller, and in order to meet with any success in his dealings he must be a shrewd businessman. The farmer's

understanding of the concept of credit, and of the intricacies of the many and sundry lending institutions from which he can borrow is essential. His ability to make a well-reasoned investment in new machinery or additional land will determine the future of his enterprise in a very real way. While the French peasant's purchases are frequently contracted with the assistance of a farm credit agency (principally Crédit Agricole), so, too, are his sales handled by an intermediary farm organization of one genre or another. Of course some produce is always sold directly to the merchant, either at the public market, the fairgrounds, or when the merchant stops at the farm to buy. But the complexity of the market, its fluctuations on the national and even international scale, and the farmer's seemingly immediate need for cash oblige him to turn over his produce at the going rate to the local cooperative whose management lies in the hands of those more proficient than he in negotiating a fair market price.

THE DIFFERENTIATION OF FAMILY AND FARM

The intersection of farm and family structure is so tight in traditional peasant society that nearly any change in one must have repercussions on the other. The head of the household performs at one and the same time the dual role of father and farmer, and it is not difficult to see how the internal consistency of this role is essential to its perpetuation. At the moment when the farmer begins to conform to the normative expectations imposed on him from the broader society, that is,

as his economic activities become production oriented rather than consumption oriented, the integration of the father-farmer role begins to unravel. The man who farms to feed his family and the man who produces to meet the demands of the market are two very different farmers indeed. The transition from one orientation to the other has a dramatic effect on the family role structure. It is at precisely this point that the social and economic structures of the family are differentiated and in the broader societal context, a new, specialized role in the food production system is established. In turn, this newly created role becomes functionally interdependent with other specialized units in the social system. Although the farmer now supplies food for the sustenance of those in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, he comes to rely on the goods and services these sectors provide in exchange, notably the agricultural technology necessary to keep his farm enterprise in business.

The farmer's son, once his apprentice, finds that much of the training he will need to carry on in his father's footsteps, if he so chooses, must be acquired elsewhere, off the farm. Specialized knowledge in the science of agriculture, biology, chemistry, economics, and accounting is requisite in modern day production agriculture. Paradoxically, such training, which nowadays is most often obtained formally through a system of specialized agricultural and technical schools, although enhancing the potential of the farm enterprise, can also be a source of tension in the balance of family

relationships. The strain lies in that there is a "role reversal" in the traditional line of paternal authority. The pride, experience, and prudence of the farmer, a product of the older generation, who has learned his trade over the course of many years as an apprentice to his father, clash head-on with the technical expertise and radical views of his son. There exists a subtle and continuous vying for command of the enterprise. Between father and son, "there no longer exists a clear division of labor, and it is well-nigh impossible to give the customary precise definition of their reciprocal positions. They work together most of the time, and their personalities confront each other in a continuing game in which it is impossible to discern the son's influence on the decisions of his father."³⁰ In the past, throughout most of France, the son has not taken over leadership of the family and farm until the death of his father. A common occurrence today is that the farmer faces the fact that he has been outstripped by technological change in his profession and that the more sensible course of action is to surrender his authority to his son at an earlier age.

The peasant woman, too, feels the dislocation between her family and economic lives. Her responsibilities vary some by region, but on the whole her role as farmhand and farmwife is fundamental to the family farm unit. Care for children and other daily domestic chores such as preparing meals and keeping the house in proper order fall into her exclusive domain of activity. She also takes charge of the farmyard: the pigs

and chickens must be fed, cows milked, eggs gathered, vegetable garden tended to, and so on. And if an extra hand is needed in the fields or vineyard, she is obliged to assist her husband there too. Keeping the farm ledger up to date is another task often designated to the wife. Her book-keeping responsibilities are instrumental to the farm's management, particularly in the production side of the enterprise, and as the farm moves more in the direction of the market economy, so her authority and participation in major farm decisions grow stronger. The net effect on the family role structure is immense. Where the woman's role was once subordinate to her husband's, she is now a full-fledged partner in the business. And like the father of the household, her family and economic responsibilities are no longer totally fused. The readjustment of family roles, then, is a fundamental aspect of the ongoing transformation of the peasant farming system. In short, "... the position of the father is no longer as central and dominant as it used to be. Equaled or dominated by that of the mother, it is limited to its economic aspect, and even this is gradually subordinated to the influence of the mother and the children."³¹

Coming back to the ecology of peasant agriculture, it is evident that adaptation to the exigencies created by a progressively influential market involves a great deal more than a mere upgrading of the traditional forms of farm technology. Technological change is a process that must be viewed in the sociocultural context in which it occurs. Indeed, it emerges

along side and in a manner that is compatible with changes in the organization of the total farming system. The reordering and differentiation of family roles, the appearance of specialized cooperative associations organized to help farmers cope with the complexity of the market, and the internalization of a system of norms and values that undergirds economic rationality and a scientific approach to agriculture are all important structural transformations that have intertwined with the advancement of farm technology in the vast and multifaceted evolution of French agrarian society.

CHAPTER V

FORCES OF CHANGE: THE EVOLUTION
OF A PEASANT COMMUNITY

French peasant communities have through the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries been engaged in a radical social and cultural evolution. In previous chapters I have tried to detail some of the more fundamental trends that distinguish agricultural communities of today from their precursors of thirty years and one hundred thirty years ago. There has been an emphasis on the farm family and the exigencies it has faced over multiple generations in developing a new life and work orientation that stresses market production and relegates subsistence activities to the background. In Montaut, and elsewhere in France, the major factors of agricultural production have been restructured in a way that conforms to the logic and satisfies the basic food and labor needs of the industrial sector. But the factors of production do not stand alone in this transformation of French agricultural communities. The social organization of the peasant community, its relationship to the city, its socio-demographic background and cultural heritage are all intricately connected with and immensely important in the overall pattern of change.

To this point, however, my analyses of traditional Montaut and modern Montaut have been somewhat fragmented, at best, and rather in need of a broader, more inclusive perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to work toward this end in developing a more unified conceptual framework that can help improve

our understanding of the principal mechanisms of change in Montaut in an explanatory sense. What are the root forces of change and in what capacity does the peasant community respond to these forces? — These are the guiding questions to which the perspective developed in the following pages is addressed.

EVOLUTIONISM, ECOLOGY AND ADAPTATION

My approach to these questions emerges from the depths of cultural and social evolutionism, and from the related but more recent work of anthropologists and sociologists in the areas of cultural and social ecology. The application of evolutionary ideas to human institutions was first undertaken by historians and social scientists in the middle of the nineteenth century. Under the stimulus of Darwin's contributions to biology and other sciences, sociologists such as August Comte and Herbert Spencer along with other nineteenth-century writers in the field of Anthropology, L. H. Morgan and E. B. Tylor in particular, put forward a set of evolutionary schemes that placed societies and cultures in various stages of a universal sequence.³² An accumulation of evidence by twentieth-century researchers has, however, rejected such theories of unilinear evolution and forced contemporary, neo-evolutionary scholars to "shift their frame of reference from the particular to the general, from a universal scheme into which all individual cultures may be fitted to a system of broad generalizations about the nature of any culture."³³ While neo-evolutionary

theories of development appeared in their purest form in the anthropological literature during the 1950's, sociological thought at that time also adopted a neo-evolutionary perspective that found a natural attraction in the field of human ecology. The common denominator of evolutionary and ecological theories of development is their shared contention that change takes place for specifically adaptive reasons and that development occurs as a series of adaptive responses to the changing ecological balance between man and his environment.

Populations require sustenance. At the bare minimum this means food and shelter, and it is from the environment that these basic needs are derived. If the environment changes, so too must man's means for acquiring sustenance change. This relationship between man and his environment is captured in the concept of adaptation, the substance of all evolutionary theories of development. A population that has adapted to its habitat is one that is able to achieve and maintain a viable relationship with that habitat. In more specific terms, adaptation denotes "the securing and conserving of control over environment...the orienting process of the specific evolution of both life and culture."³⁴

Man is a member of a biological species and of a human group; from one he receives his genetic constitution, from the other, his culture. In adapting to its habitat, a population is biologically dependent on the genetic transmission of chromosomes, and socially dependent on the transmission of

culture. The necessary biological mechanism is reproduction, the social mechanism is learning. In the evolution of man, cultural adaptation has surpassed biological adaptation. Culture, Y.A. Cohen asserts, is man's most important instrument of adaptation. In its culture, a population has, "energy systems, the objective and specific artifacts, the organizations of social relations, the modes of thought, the ideologies, and the total range of customary behavior that are transmitted from one generation to another by a human group and that enable it to maintain life in a particular habitat."³⁵ Only through the evolution of culture has man liberated himself from the circumscription of his own organic endowment.

In the face of a changing balance between its size and the resource base from which its sustenance is extracted, a population does not passively accept the somber dictum of its biological destiny. Between man as a biological organism and his physical environment lies a "cushion of culture," a responsive system of ideas, techniques and institutions that is tailored by man himself to fit the climate, geography and combination of plant, animal, and mineral resources of his particular habitat. If a population exceeds the carrying capacity of the environment under one cultural system, this system can be adapted, through creating, restructuring or otherwise modifying institutions and technologies in such a fashion as to restore a degree of equilibrium to the population's relationship to its habitat.

Man's first step in his cultural evolution, at that threshold between exclusive dependence on genetic adaptation and an

adaptive system based on culture, was the development of the fundamental elements of a cultural system. Talcott Parsons describes four such "evolutionary universals." 1) religion, an orientation toward sharing, 2) communication, a system of language to mediate this sharing, 3) social organization, kinship being the most elementary form, and 4) technology, appearing in its most undifferentiated form as a synthesis of empirical knowledge and practical techniques. These four universals, Parsons asserts, comprise the very beginning of all human societies. "No known human society has existed without all four in relatively definite relations to each other. In fact their presence constitutes the very minimum that may be said to mark a society as truly human."³⁶ In terms of a population's relationship to its habitat, these four features are the simplest and most basic cultural adaptations to evolve in a situation of ecological strain; they provide a "cushion of culture" at its most rudimentary level.

Evolutionary universals are those features of society that are entirely vital to the adaptive capacity of a population, for without them a population would be unable to obtain higher levels of adaptive capacity. The principles of natural selection are no less forgiving of human groups than of any other form of life. It has been man's development of culture, even in its most elementary form that truly distinguishes him from other species. To be sure, however, man is biologically different from other primates, and it is only because of these differences, notably in the development of the human brain,

the human hand, and bipedal locomotion that man has achieved the necessary potential for social and cultural evolution.

Beyond the development of evolutionary universals, human populations have, in order to deal with the enduring problems of ecological imbalance, exercised their adaptive capacities in the direction of more complex social institutions and cultural patterns. It is maintained here that the survival of the human group is contingent upon its capacity to develop a system of institutionalized behaviors, a social order. Institutions delineate the rules and expectations for acceptable behavior, and carry the sanctions and legitimation necessary to assure conformity among members of the group. They are a complex of lasting relationships organized in the interest of meeting the particular challenges and problems that endanger the group's persistence. On the importance of institutions in the process of evolution, Cohen stresses that we must study institutions "as instruments of adaptation because without institutions there can be no human adaptation, and the study of man's cultural evolution is inseparable from the study of the evolution of his institutions."³⁷ Roles and role sets emerge in response to need. Human groups are confronted with problems that can be solved only through collective action. Certain patterns of behavior are developed and institutionalized because they answer the purpose "better than other ways, or with less toil and pain."³⁸ Thus all role relationships among individuals are groomed so as to enhance the future survival and functioning of the group.

The study of the adaptation of human collectivities through institutional means has been a major subject of interest in the field of human ecology, and it is at precisely this point that the concerns and subject matter of human ecologists and cultural evolutionists converge. According to Hawley, the institutional adaptive efforts of a population culminate in the form of community organization. The community, in other words, is viewed as the system of relationships that is the most effective in adapting a population to its local habitat.³⁹ Thus, the fundamental problem of human ecology is "to determine the nature of community structure in general, the types of communities that appear in different habitats, and the specific sequence of change in community development."⁴⁰

The juncture of cultural evolutionary thought and developments in the field of human ecology has contributed to the establishment of the hybrid sub-discipline of study termed cultural ecology. Rather than deriving general principles about the cultural adaptations of populations to their environments at all times and in all places, in the manner of its cultural evolutionary ancestors, cultural ecology seeks to determine the particular cultural patterns and social institutions that have been adapted in different types of habitats. The fundamental problems of cultural ecology, Julian Steward emphasizes, "is to ascertain whether the adjustments of human societies to their environments require particular modes of behavior or whether they permit latitude for a certain range

of possible behavior patterns."⁴¹ The focus of attention is directed more at the sociocultural side of the equation than at the environmental side. In particular, cultural ecology wants to say something about the organization of work, for it is in their pursuit of subsistence that human groups experience the most intensive interaction with their environments. The division of labor, the system of land tenure, and the specialization and spatial concentration of work roles are all important aspects of the overall organization of production, and all emerge in relation to the surrounding environmental setting.

THE CULTURAL ECOLOGY OF A PEASANT COMMUNITY

For the purposes of the present inquiry into the evolution of French peasant communities, it will be instructive to examine, briefly, the cultural ecology of such communities in their traditional form. Then a bit further on, in the following chapter, an effort will be made to explore some of the ecological conditions and adaptive mechanisms that have brought these peasant communities into sync with industrial French society as we know it today. Special attention will be given to the institutional organization and techniques employed in peasant agricultural production. Since there are several different types of peasant agriculture it is important to specify that "Eurasian grain farming" is the focus of interest here, in contrast to a swidden or a hydraulic system of cultivation.⁴² Eurasian grain farming is characteristically a

short-term fallowing system in which a plow drawn by draft animals is used for the cultivation of cereals. Land is exploited for one or two years at a time and then left fallow for a year to regenerate. Livestock raising is also integral to this type of agriculture as the animals provide manure for the fields and other products such as meat, milk, hides and wool for direct consumption.

Traditional peasant agriculture in the Gascogne region of France possessed the basic characteristics of Eurasian grain farming as outlined above. The principal productive unit was the family farm, and its orientation toward life and land was geared to its own subsistence. Farming was diversified and highly labor intensive. Since most of what was produced was consumed on the farm, there was little room for specialization in the production process. As most families were engaged in agriculture, the division of labor in the community was basic and uncomplicated. Social, cultural and economic homogeneity was the rule in the traditional peasant community and social integration was accomplished on the basis of a shared likeness, or "mechanical solidarity," among its members.⁴³

Communities were small, both in population and in total land area; villages were rarely more than two or three miles apart. The spatial configuration of households also reflects the cultural ecology of the peasant community. There was a need for all members of the community to journey to the village on a regular basis: the church, local market, the blacksmith and other artisans were located there, then later on a school

was erected and children were obliged to go the distance almost daily. Since traditional means of transportation and communication had not evolved beyond the horse-and-cart stage, households were situated in relatively close proximity to the village.

Equal in importance to geographical proximity in the peasant community ecology was the balance between population size and the resource base, or the availability of farmland. Traditional farm technology required that a large proportion of the population be employed in agriculture and that the land area cultivated by each farm family be small. As most farm production was still at the subsistence level, there was little agricultural surplus and therefore only a small nucleus of persons employed in nonfarm activities, most of whom resided in the village proper. There existed a simple interdependence between the farm and nonfarm families. The villagers relied on the farmers for food, leather, wool, and other farm products while those in agriculture periodically exchanged their surpluses for the nonfarm goods and services provided by the merchants, artisans and others employed in the village.

As nearly all social and economic needs were met by the family and other institutions in the community, (institutions that had evolved in the context of the community specifically in response to such needs), there was little interaction with those on the 'outside.' Although peasant communities developed an economic tie to the city and a political one with the state, these relationships were held at a distance, and the edges of

the community remained distinct and relatively impermeable. Community boundaries were maintained largely because communities were self-sufficient and self-contained. To a degree they were as Marx imagined, resembling "potatoes in a sack."⁴⁴ The key to their self-containment was that the community as a social entity coincided with the community as a spatial, or geo-political unit. The many work roles that together comprised the community occupational structure were carried out by members of the community. Those who lived in the commune, in other words, also worked there.

Social networks, too, were concentrated within the boundaries of the commune. Naturally there were some, those situated the farthest from the village center, at the fringes of the commune, who developed attachments in neighboring communities. More frequently these 'marginal' members of the community grouped together in smaller hamlets or neighborhoods, often with a chapel and perhaps even a cemetery of their own. It was noted earlier that Biane and Malartic are two such relatively independent neighborhoods in the commune of Montaut. Although they originally evolved during the Middle Ages as distinct and separate communities, later on, probably in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Biane and Malartic began to participate more fully in the larger community of Montaut. Early in the nineteenth century they were administratively brought under the legal jurisdiction of Montaut. That no solid evidence exists on the integration of these settlements with Montaut is regrettable. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable

to surmise that the "consolidation" occurred as an adaptive response to the changing ecology of these smaller communities. Their growing populations, technological improvements stimulated by the Industrial Revolution, and a decline of the old feudal order may have permitted them to employ the services of the nonfarm sector of Montaut, services that did not and could not exist in their own smaller communities.

Interpersonal ties were not only internal to the community, but they evolved, on the basis of frequent face-to-face interaction, into a closeknit network of "many-stranded" role relationships. Many-stranded relationships are those in which there is an intertwining or fusion of two or more strands (roles) into a single, undifferentiated "cord."⁴⁵ The traditional peasant household, for example, was both a social group and an economic enterprise, and this was reflected in the coincidence of the male's roles as father and farmer. Indeed, the integration of family and subsistence activities can undoubtedly be viewed as an evolutionary universal, apparent in even the most rudimentary forms of civilization. Relationships based on the exchange of goods and services too were multistranded, often they were inseparable from ties of friendship, kinship, or neighborliness. The various dimensions of such multiple roles invariably emerged simultaneously in response to the same set of circumstances, and were for this reason consistent with and supportive of one another.

SCARCITY, COMPETITION AND MARKET PRODUCTION

To say, as the cultural ecologists do, that community or societal evolution proceeds as a process of functional adaptation to the environment, is to describe in the most general terms only how collectivities persist, or maintain themselves. An analysis of the mechanisms and patterns of adaptation does not constitute a theory of evolution. Evolutionary theories must also answer the question of what sets of conditions are responsible for effecting adaptive changes in the system. Functional adaptation is a consequence, not a cause. Working backward from the premise that all sociocultural systems emerge out of man's relationship to his environment, the question can be specified and reworded to ask: Under what particular circumstances of this fundamental relationship do social institutions and cultural patterns evolve?

Man makes his livelihood from exploiting the natural resources of his habitat. He differs from other living organisms in that he has developed special technologies and patterns of work to aid him in dealing with his environment. Beneath this "cushion of culture," however, human populations are subject to the reality that neither the resources of the environment nor their ability to exploit them are unlimited. Indeed, it is only because of these restrictions that the tools, knowledge, and work institutions of human cultures have come into being. In short, under any given system of exploitation there is an upper limit to the size a population can grow to and continue to maintain itself in its habitat. A delicate

balance is achieved between a population's demand for resources and the environment's ability to supply them. The fulcrum on which this balance rests is the system of production man uses in transforming resources from their natural state to one in which they are fit for his own consumption. A population that has developed a stable relationship with its environment, one in which the methods of production allow the demand and supply of resources to meet in harmony, can be described as a population that has achieved a state of ecological equilibrium. Richard Wilkinson elaborates on this notion, commenting that:

The concept of an ecological equilibrium is meant to cover any combination of a method and rate of resource use which the environment can sustain indefinitely. It may refer to a situation in which the population restricts its demand for resources to a level which the environment can supply naturally, or it may refer to a balance struck on the basis of particular culture patterns of resource management by which the environment's production of particular renewable resources is artificially increased.⁴⁶

In the event that either the population's demand for resources increases or the environment's ability to supply resources decreases, the ecological system will be thrown out of kilter. There is a major disturbance created by growing population pressure on the environment that threatens the standard of living and, for populations whose production is at the subsistence level, endangers the very survival of the system. In order to return the system to a state of equilibrium, an adaptive change must occur that either reduces the

size of the population or increases the supply of natural resources needed for subsistence. The fundamental state of affairs that marks a system in ecological disequilibrium, and that impels the system to seek adaptive measures to cope with the problem, is a condition of scarcity.

The problem of scarcity has long been recognized by sociologists as a major source of strain in any social system. Durkheim for example viewed the evolution of mankind as a necessary adaptive outgrowth of increasing population density and concomitant pressure on scarce resources.⁴⁷ Demographic imbalances and universal scarcity situations, Wilbert Moore observes, are a dominant source of inherent strain to the social system, and insofar as the system can adapt to these strains and achieve a new equilibrium, social evolutionary change has occurred.⁴⁸ There is an emphasis there on the degree to which system disturbances that upset the initial equilibrium and carry it to a new equilibrium state are sufficient to overcome forces that seek to maintain the original structure of the system. A social system that successfully curbs the source of strain and restores its earlier structure, instead of adapting to the disturbance, cannot be described as having changed in any meaningful way. This distinction, Parsons asserts, must always be considered in the analysis of change in social systems.⁴⁹

Scarcity is a problem that periodically confronts species of all kinds. In a biological sense, the constant push of population growth often extends beyond the carrying capacity

of the environment. This situation can be described as a "natural scarcity," and constitutes a necessary condition for processes of biological adaptation and evolution. Scarcity engenders what Darwin called a "struggle for survival," the outcome of which, the process of natural selection, is the basis of evolutionary change.

Among human populations, however, scarcity is not simply a biological phenomenon. The process of human evolution, it has been established, takes place through cultural as well as biological mechanisms. The transmission of culture through learning has extended man's adaptive capacity beyond the confines of his biological constitution. In that cultural adaptation is the dominant mode of evolutionary change in human populations, it is not sufficient to define the concept of scarcity strictly in biological terms. The meaning of scarcity takes on quite a different effect depending on its cultural context. In all certainty there is a lowest common denominator, a situation to which the term scarcity applies under any conceivable definition, and it is likely to revolve around the concept of biological necessity, excluding all but those living below the minimum subsistence level. But scarcities that occur above this level are not a matter of subsistence, and in the most general terms, they refer to any situation in which a population's demand exceeds the environment's supply of certain resources. It is in the social nature of these demands that they are set apart from the subsistence requirements of the population. They are the perceived, or

felt needs that arise vis-a-vis the normatively defined standards of living prescribed by the social system. They are a form of relative deprivation that are felt collectively, and in the face of limited supply they translate into a "social scarcity" situation often with as much potential force toward adaptive change as a natural scarcity can produce. Unlike natural scarcities, however, it is possible for social scarcities to arise irrespective of changes in the balance between population size and the supply of resources from the environment. In other words, an ecological system in a state of equilibrium can be structurally (rather than demographically or environmentally) hurled into disequilibrium by the strain of a social scarcity. In reequilibrating the system the disturbance must be either adapted to or eliminated; the former implies social change, the latter does not.

The demands made on the environment by the traditional French peasant community have been described above, largely in terms of agricultural ecotypes. Emphasis was placed on the self-containment of farming communities in peasant society, and the equilibrium that evolved in their limited relationship with the external, urban economy. Since most farming was oriented toward family subsistence, stability in the relationship between population size and land area was vital to the welfare of community residents. An increase in population or a depletion of necessary resources meant scarcity, or famine, and therefore a potential decline in the overall standard of living if not counterbalanced through

institutional means.

Wolf observes that peasants are always subject to the potential pressures of the environment, pressures that can be controlled only partially or not at all. Such pressures include times when "drought parches the fields in areas of insufficient rainfall, or floods rage in the areas of overabundant rainfall, or locusts invade the land, or birds consume the plants."⁵⁰ The constant swelling of the population, too, gives little relief to communities whose sustenance is uncertain and highly variable from one harvest season to the next. But natural scarcities are not the extent of their problems. In that peasant communities share, albeit at an arm's length, in the "great tradition" of the larger society, they are open to forces of two kinds. These forces emanate from the outside and are responsible for producing a scarcity situation in the peasant economy. The first involves the penetration of the market economy and the peasant's shift to production agriculture, the second relates to the peasant's subsequent demand for a higher standard of living from a limited parcel of land.

In an earlier discussion of the relationship between the city and the agricultural communities in its surrounding hinterland, emphasis was placed on the general notion of "great tradition—little tradition" and the mechanics of the peasant community's shift from a paleotechnic to a neotechnic type of ecology. Changes both in the factors of production and in family role relationships were pointed to as fundamental

aspects of the transformation. Little reference, however, was made to the underlying circumstances that originally gave rise to the abandonment of the traditional techniques and relationships in favor of a market orientation to production. In the following paragraphs attention will be given to the concepts of scarcity and ecological disequilibrium as they relate to the process of market intervention in the peasant economy.

The expansion of the commercial market into the peasant community affects the rural population both in terms of the goods and services it supplies and the demands it makes for agricultural products. As city-based enterprises seek to create a rural market for their manufactured goods and urban services, rural residents are made increasingly aware of their inability to share in the benefits and life style brought by and associated with this market. There is a gradual realization that the standards of living experienced on the farm differ from those in the city, and even from a small number of their relatively advantaged neighbors who have had a better opportunity to participate in the urban market. Because of the farmer's subsistence level operation and his vulnerability to environmental pressures, the peasantry is relegated to a secondary position in the economy.

In order to participate in market exchange farmers are obliged to produce a surplus of agricultural goods above and beyond the minimum caloric intake required to sustain themselves and their families. But in a stable ecological system

in which the population of a peasant community is balanced with its land base so as to assure at least a minimum level of subsistence, there is only a limited amount of surplus produced, even in a good year. Consequently, in the light of growing market expectations and aspirations about improving their lot in life, peasant farmers 'artificially' evoke a scarcity situation in which land becomes the center of attraction. The demand for land is intensified, while the supply is fixed. The subsequent strain in the system can be alleviated only through a decline in the farm population or an adjustment in techniques and work patterns used in exploiting the land, or both.

Not only does the external economy create a higher level of aspiration and felt needs among the peasant population, but additional strains come to the surface as market forces begin to dominate nearly every aspect of the traditional economy. The demands of the market dictate to the farmer both what he will produce and the price he will get for it. Since the market place sets the price farmers receive in return for their surplus, it also determines the value of their land and labor. In order to compete successfully on the open market and to maintain a reasonable standard of living, farmers are required to make the most efficient use of their land and labor possible. If competition reduces the farmers' income to the point where their needs can no longer be satisfied, there is scarcity, a disequilibrium in the system. Again, the maintenance of the agricultural community depends on its ability to

adapt to the circumstances through whatever institutional changes are deemed necessary.

An immediate implication of the "scarcity hypothesis" might be that competition is the guiding principle by which the peasant community system adapts to the exigencies created by the market economy. A "struggle for survival" in the classic Darwinian sense, it is presumed, carries over into the ecology of human groups as well. In reflecting on early writings in human ecology, Hawley states that the assignment of the concept of competition to a key role in human ecology is, in fact, premised largely on the biological interpretation of the subject. The steps which lead to this inference may be simply stated. "Struggle, of which competition is but a refined expression is the law of biological nature and the circumstances out of which all order arises. Competition is therefore a biological phenomenon."⁵¹ Park, for example, asserts that competition is the "elementary, universal and fundamental form" of social interaction, and the driving force behind the evolution of all species, including mankind.⁵² The predominance of competitive interaction was later reiterated by Gibbs and Martin in their construction of a theoretical framework for human ecology. Selective survival, they posit, is the underlying mechanism that connects the variables of the ecological system; independently of the valuational and motivational aspects of evolutionary change, selective survival is the backbone of most ecological theory.⁵³

It is the position of the present thesis, however, that

competition should not be viewed in a causal sense as the source of adaptive change. Competition, rather, is one form of interaction that emerges in the context of scarcity. It is the "natural" means by which species of plants and animals respond in a situation of resource scarcity. There are winners and there are losers; some persist, others do not. Equal in importance to competition among human populations, however, is their ability to cooperate.⁵⁴ Indeed, it is in precisely this capacity that man is emancipated from his biological constitution and subjugation to the natural laws of selective survival. To be sure, competition and conflict do continue to play a significant part in the evolutionary process and are in many instances overtly encouraged. In other words, the community system in ecological disequilibrium can adapt to strains through either competitive or cooperative mechanisms or a combination of the two.

Put in the context of the peasant community and its adaptation to the selective pressures of a growing market economy, environmental change, or population growth, Wolf observes two general courses of action; one is based on competition and the other on cooperation. The path taken in most areas of continental Europe where, under mercantile domain, the traditional agricultural system has evolved into a system of production oriented, capital intensive agriculture, has been "to let the selective pressures fall where they may, to maximize the success of the successful, and to eliminate those who cannot make the grade."⁵⁵ In contrast to forced

selection, peasants have an alternative direction in which they move, one that involves their ability to counteract selective pressures by entering alliances with one another. The creation of cooperative institutions enables peasants to reduce strains in the community system in two ways. One is to diffuse the impact of a scarcity situation so that no one family will be particularly hard-pressed compared to the others. This is accomplished by developing reciprocal obligations for sharing resources in times of need.⁵⁶ The other is to meet the challenge of the competitive market system by entering into cooperative associations that achieve appropriate economies of scale. In pooling their resources, farmers are able to realize the technological, managerial, and financial scale economies necessary to restore equilibrium to the system and to continue making a living in agriculture.⁵⁷ Wolf notes further that these alternative paths represent extremes and seldom occur in isolation. Most peasantries fall somewhere between the two, seeking a solution to their problem through both cooperative and competitive means.

The fact must be observed, however, that competition in the capitalist market place as well as in many other arenas takes place in a normative context. As a process it is legitimated and highly institutionalized, and receives strong consensus as the most expedient means to achieve desired ends. Therefore it is erroneous to assume that competition and cooperation are polar opposites, for competition is also cooperative, at least in its institutional manifestations.

Perhaps, then, the essential question in this matter probes at the major changes in community structure that develop in response to disequilibrium, and the nature of these adaptive responses in terms of the degrees of competition and cooperation involved. What are the adaptive alternatives open to the traditional peasant community? Through what mechanisms do these alternatives emerge and develop? At what points in the change process do conflict and consensus among individuals and groups come into play? These questions are the focus of attention in the following chapter and are addressed both in broad conceptual terms and as they relate to the specific adaptive changes that have developed in the community structure of Montaut.

CHAPTER VI

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE: THE EVOLUTION OF A PEASANT COMMUNITY

Under the selective pressures of ecological disequilibrium, the peasant community has before it several possible courses of action in its struggle to maintain the welfare of its members, and, ultimately, its viability as a social group. In the crudest of terms these alternatives include the following: first, the community can reduce the size of the population living in its habitat; second, it can increase in the resource base (habitat) from which its population derives its sustenance; third, it can develop a more intensive exploitation of its existing resources; the fourth alternative is for the community to adopt an appropriate composite of any or all of these changes.

It has been on the subject of how populations develop more intensive means for exploiting their environments that social scientists have been the most attentive. Indeed, it was observed in the previous chapter that virtually all evolutionary theories of social change look first to the successive patterns of work and technologies that emerge in order to deal with recurrent scarcities in the system. And from an ecological perspective, the social and cultural means by which populations adapt to their environments were shown to be the key to understanding community formation and development.

In the following paragraphs consideration is given to the major sociocultural processes that bring about a progressively

more intensive exploitation of resources, and to how these processes are linked to the other two response alternatives noted above, namely, a decline in population size and an expansion of the resource base.

DIFFERENTIATION OF SUSTENANCE ACTIVITIES: AN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE

The essential organizational process by which a population is able to better exploit its environment and thereby alleviate the stress of a scarcity situation is the division of labor. The first and most thorough sociological treatment of this subject is found in Durkheim's nineteenth-century work, The Division of Labor in Society. The evolution of society, Durkheim postulated, is embraced in the progressive division of labor, a process that arises from the concentration of people both in a physical sense (material density) and in terms of their concomitant intensification of interaction (dynamic density). In his own words, "the division of labor varies in direct ratio with the volume and density of societies, and, if it progresses in a continuous manner in the course of social development, it is because societies become regularly denser and generally more voluminous."⁵⁸

The density of human populations is essentially an ecological concept that summarizes the numerical balance of a population's size and its resource base. As the population grows, or resources diminish, there is a relative concentration of individuals and, therefore, scarcity. In order to minimize the selective pressures of scarcity, sustenance activities

become differentiated and specialized.

An industry can exist only if it answers some need. A function can become specialized only if this specialization corresponds to some need of society. But all new specialization results in increasing and improving production. If this advantage is not the division of labor's reason for existing, it is its necessary consequence. Therefore, advance can be established in permanent form only if individuals really feel the need of more abundant products, or products of better quality.⁵⁹

The "felt need" Durkheim has referred to in this passage is a manifestation of scarcity, as described in the previous chapter. In response, the division of labor allows populations to cooperatively produce more goods without expanding the resource base. In this way societal evolution proceeds from homogeneous, undifferentiated pursuits integrated on the basis of likeness, to a diversity of specialized interests and activities held together by their functional interdependence. Differences among members of the system in their sustenance activities often emerge in relation to differences in the characteristics of the members. Characteristics such as sex, age, social class and territorial location, Gibbs and Martin remark, are the "bases" that determine the kinds of activities that individuals will be engaged in and the nature of their functional interdependence.⁶⁰ Synchronization of these emergent occupations is ordinarily accomplished in the creation of organizations formed to produce specific types of goods and services.⁶¹

The process of structural differentiation is not, however, restricted to the occupational sphere (the division of

labor), but extends into nearly every institutional setting of the social system. In fact the thrust of the neo-evolutionary movement of the sociological functionalists conceived of societal evolution as a process of increasing differentiation of political, economic, religious and stratification subsystems out of kinship and the specialization of function performed by these subsystems.⁶² Differentiation, properly speaking, refers to the process whereby "a unit, subsystem or category of units or subsystems having a single, relatively well-defined place in the society divides into units or systems (usually two) which differ both in structure and in functional significance for the wider system."⁶³ Young and Young have taken this narrowly defined concept of differentiation and infused it with a "cultural dimension," producing a hybrid definition of the process that emphasizes the differentiation and specialization of all "social symbols," including clusters of values, beliefs and artifacts in addition to institutions and roles.⁶⁴ In the context of ecological disequilibrium, this expanded "sociocultural" conceptualization of differentiation is perhaps the more useful of the two for it corresponds both to functionalist theories of social change and to the theory of cultural ecology. Thus the emergence of new forms of sustenance organization and more advanced forms of technology can be captured in a single, more versatile concept.

As an adaptive response to structural strains, differentiation renders a system of increasingly higher adaptive capacity. Much as biological diversity contributes to a species'

ability to adapt to the exigencies of its environment, differentiation gives breadth and resilience to the social system's capacity to cope with its problems. Darwin's "principle of divergence," that the greatest amount of life can be sustained by the greatest diversification of structure, may be aptly applied to sociocultural systems. "Culture, differentiating into cultures by adaptation, has made possible the exploitation of the great variety of the earth's resources."⁶⁵ With regard to sustenance activities, the food supply in particular, ecological anthropologist Donald Hardesty concludes that the greater the volume of interrelationships among organisms, the lower the likelihood that system disturbances will cause severe problems. "On the one hand, feeding diversity reduces the chances that a particular organism will suddenly lose its food supply and become extinct; on the other, if an organism does become extinct, plenty of species in an ecological system decrease the probability that the loss will have a significant impact."⁶⁶ As a concept in general systems theory, too, the elaboration of structure among complex adaptive systems has been shown to be a necessary condition for survival.⁶⁷ Thus, in order for differentiation to bring about a stable, more evolved system, the adaptive capacity of each newly evolved sub-structure for performing its specialized, higher-order function, must have surpassed the performance of that function in the previous, more diffuse structure.⁶⁸ The enhancement of adaptive capacity through the process of differentiation, is, then, the fundamental means by which a

population restores a balanced relationship with, and asserts greater control over, its surrounding environment.

Differentiation in the traditional peasant community starts with the principal kinship unit, the farm family. At the subsistence level, production and consumption occur in the same context, and the family as an economic and kinship unit are one and the same. Thus, there is little exchange of goods and services outside the family. The peasant's roles as farmer and head of household are fused together both in the activities he performs and in his understanding of his own existence. But as the external market creates an imbalance between a growing demand for resources (land in particular) and a fixed resource supply, the selective pressures of scarcity begin to mount. For farm families and farming communities adaptation means differentiation. Sustenance activities and kinship are pried apart and the peasant's roles as father and farmer no longer coincide. The farming system becomes increasingly specialized as it turns from subsistence to market production. Farmland is consolidated and its cultivation specialized, relying on the energy supplied by combustible fuels and the technology supplied by science. The need to produce a surplus and the quest for capital soon take command at virtually every step in the production process. Although all peasants, even those operating at the subsistence level, are hopeful of producing a surplus of agricultural goods, it is in how the surplus is used that marks the threshold between peasants, who farm as a "way of life," and farmers,

who engage in farming as a "business." In short, where the traditional peasant exchanges his surplus to purchase goods and services required to maintain subsistence and the social status of his family, the farmer reinvests his surplus with the aim of expanding his business enterprise.⁶⁹

Family activities become specialized too. The removal of economic activities from the kinship system permits the family to specialize in other areas such as emotional gratification and the socialization of children.⁷⁰ Yet progressive differentiation of the occupational structure necessitates an equally specialized system of education, thus families must yield to the schools in providing their children with the training required to fill the many, sundry and often highly technical work roles found in the industrial economy. In one sense, then, as Parsons suggests, there is a loss of function of the family as economic activities and the occupational socialization function are carried out by higher-order institutions.⁷¹

The subject of this chapter up to this point has been the differentiation of sustenance activities, the principal organizational response forwarded by conventional cultural ecological theory through which populations are able to reduce the structural strains of ecological disequilibrium. A second response to this disequilibrium, one not heretofore explored by cultural ecologists as an organizational response, is the institutionalization of migration systems. An examination of this response comprises the subject of the

following section.

MIGRATION: AN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE

A surge of interest has developed in recent years in the field of human ecology which has begun to explore the importance of migration as a response through which a population can maintain an equilibrium between its size and sustenance organization (or level of differentiation).⁷² Despite good intentions and a clear need to relate migration processes to changes in other aspects of the ecological system, research in this direction has run swiftly aground. There are three inter-related fallacies, or misconceptions in this regard that have stood in the path of migration research from an ecological perspective.

The first fallacy is the belief that migration is simply a demographic event rather than an organizational change, that it is a mere numerical shift in population size rather than an institutionalized process. Indeed, it is argued in this thesis that surrounding the individual migrant and his family is a vast constellation of normative expectations, and that the patterning of these expectations over time contributes to the institutionalization of migration as an important adaptive process. The misconception of migration as a "demographic" variable, which excludes its significance to community organization, is particularly evident in Duncan's specification of the principal axes of the "ecological complex" (population, organization, environment and technology) and the flurry of

work that has followed in its wake.⁷³ Ecologically, Sly asserts, "migration is viewed as a component of areal population change and, as such, it can be considered the other than natural increase or decrease in areal population size between two points in time."⁷⁴

The second stumbling block (a derivative of the first) is the fallacy that migrants sever all ties with the home community, effectively terminating their membership in that community. A sociological approach to the problem must consider the entire migration system which involves an enormous volume of interaction between migrants and their home communities. This interaction includes visiting patterns, telephoning, writing, exchange of money and various goods and services, and all of the constraints the family and community exert on the migrant after his departure. The most thorough account to date of migration as an extensive interactional system can be found in a study of Appalachian migrants to the Ohio industrial belt by Schwarzweller, Brown and Mangalam.⁷⁵

Third, there has been a tendency for social scientists to emphasize "territoriality," rather than patterns of human interaction, in their conceptualization of community. This has been an analytical distinction of some concern to the current generation of community researchers as well. Gusfield comments, for example, that there are two major usages of a community, one relates to its territorial properties, and the other to its "relational" aspects, or the quality and character of human relations, without reference to location.⁷⁶

The two usages are neither exclusive, nor coincident. Thus, the fact that the territorial dispersion of migrants does not cut off their ties with the home community suggests that a definition of community based on locale is insufficient and misleading. Contingent upon the strength of the solidarity maintained between the migrants and the home community, an accurate conceptualization of community must be "stretched" to include these geographically separated yet interactionally close migrant groups. In correcting for these three conceptual weaknesses, a clearer understanding of the importance of migration in the process of community adaptation can be obtained.

Thus, insofar as migrants to the city continue to play a part in the rural community, their movement outward represents an extension of the community boundary system. As the migrant leaves home, takes up residence and finds employment in town he, in effect, expands the ecological niche of his home community. In other words, the traditional notion that rural out-migration relieves pressure on scarce resources by reducing the population size of a community must be turned completely inside out. The suggestion here is that the rural exodus, in certain circumstances, ought not to be viewed as a demographic decline, but instead as an organizational mechanism by which the population enlarges its sustenance base. In biological terms, the migration of communities of organisms (plants in particular) into areas in which environmental conditions are more favorable is referred to as "invasion." The principle

of invasion is applicable to human communities as well. If the resources of the local environment no longer meet the requirements of the community population, there is an outward movement into the surrounding areas in search of a more sustaining environment.⁷⁷

Evidence reported by Redfield in his study of the ecological system of the Maya is suggestive of the invasion hypothesis.⁷⁸ As the population pressure of the Maya bush settlement reaches its upper limit and resources become increasingly scarce, the villagers are obliged to go longer distances in search of additional lands on which to plant corn. In the course of time, however, those forced to cultivate the remotest properties often cluster and develop social ties among themselves as strong or stronger than their ties with the home community. Like the swarming of bees, Redfield analogizes, this outward movement of the population can take the form of a "hiving off" from the original settlement. But to the extent that social bonds and allegiances are maintained with the source community, it is more accurate to conceive of this process as an expansion of the community boundary system than as a method of population control. Undoubtedly the maintenance of kinship and community ties is a function of the migrant's proximity to the home settlement, the predominant means of transportation and communication, and the importance of kinship and community solidarity in the wider sociocultural system. As Hawley remarks, on the territorial pattern of collective life, "improvements in transportation and

communication reflected in reductions of the time and cost components permit a wider scatter of an interrelated population without loss of contact."⁷⁹

The process of migration, then, emerges as an adaptive organizational response to ecological strains in the community system, a hypothesis applied by Schwarzweller, et al., to help understand extensive outmigration from rural Appalachia. Their examination of the pattern of migration from the Beech Creek area of eastern Kentucky lead them to the conclusion that,

the migration process is an adaptive mechanism somehow tied in with the sociocultural system and functional in maintaining the Beech Creek family structure... The large scale migration from the Beech Creek neighborhoods and from other parts of rural Appalachia represents a patterned reaction by family-kinship groups to preserve traditionally sanctioned cultural values and to maintain group integrity in confrontation with environmental circumstances⁸⁰ over which they can exercise little control.

Although Schwarzweller, et al., concentrate on the network of relationships maintained among migrants in their urban habitat, they also stress the intensity of interaction that is maintained between migrants in the city and their families still residing at the rural homestead, despite the great distances that separate them. And on top of their interactional ties back home, most Beech Creekers seem to have retained a strong psychological integration with the mountain community.⁸¹

Having examined independently in this chapter the differentiation of sustenance activities and the institutionalization of migration systems as viable organizational responses to

ecological strains, the following and concluding section turns to the question of how these two responses relate to one another. As the title of this next section implies, the principal question in this regard asks whether differentiation and migration represent alternative adaptive processes, or whether the two processes actually complement or reinforce one another.

DIFFERENTIATION AND MIGRATION: ALTERNATIVE OR COMPLEMENTARY RESPONSES?

The importance of "distributional mechanisms" in the process of ecological adaptation has been repeatedly emphasized in evolutionary theories of social change.⁸² But despite their recognition of its preponderance, ecologists have remained entirely unclear as to how the migration factor actually relates to other aspects of the change process. In part, this failure stems from the analytical obstacles involved in merging spatial and social structural processes into a unified conceptual framework, but also it may be a reflection of the relatively undeveloped state of sociological theory in the area of human migration. Then, too, it is evident that to a large extent these problems are lodged in the basic misconceptions about communities and the migration system outlined above. If migration is to be viewed simply as a means for reducing population size, then one is led to the immediate conclusion that migration represents an alternative adaptive response to structural differentiation. And indeed this has been the

general orientation of the ecological school of thought. Wilkinson, for example, remarks about having paid relatively little attention to the possibility that migration may also help relieve strains caused by resource scarcity. His interest in exploring the role of development (occupational differentiation and technological advance) as an adaptive mechanism, has meant that responses such as migration "which tend to stave off the need for development" have been of only minor import in the process evolutionary change.⁸³

It is perhaps worthy of note that ecological systems may vary according to their degrees of "openness." An open system is one in which its boundaries are not "hard and fast," that is, in which territorial expansion is allowed to proceed unchecked in virtually every direction. To the extent that migration to more distant areas is restricted by either natural or social barriers, the system is partially or completely closed. In the absence of a firm perimeter, the rural community system is defined as relatively open, the guarded and highly confining frontiers of some societies, by contrast, can be classified as relatively closed.

The degree of "openness" in the system is the major factor that determines whether migration occurs in consort with structural differentiation, or in lieu of it. Insofar as the system is prohibited from exploiting its surrounding areas, it is closed and must avail itself to alternative means of solving its ecological problem. This means more efficient exploitation of existing resources, or a natural decrease in

population size. The former entails real evolutionary change, the latter does not. In a situation where the system is "unconditionally" free to exploit a larger environment, the possibility of expanding into new territories arises as an alternative to the reorganization of work roles or demographic decline. In other words if resources beyond the system boundary are plentiful, then the boundary will be extended to bring these available resources into the system. The ecology of the traditional peasant community, however, falls somewhere between these extremes in what might be described as a "conditionally open" relationship with the external environment. Since the immediate land base of the peasant community is securely positioned amidst that of its neighbors, the possibility of acquiring greater land area is remote, particularly since these neighboring communities are also likely to be caught in the same ecological bind. This principle of invasion is evident in the plant world as well, i.e., plant communities are often prohibited from invading adjoining "closed" communities because of the intense competition they must meet.⁸⁴

Although it is not feasible for a peasant community to invade its neighboring farm communities, the possibility of territorial expansion into the urban sector does not meet with the same constraints. Unlike the rural economy where nearly all families derive their sustenance from similar means (agriculture), the sustenance activities in the city are more differentiated and can absorb the excess population from the

surrounding hinterland. Thus, in effect, by moving into the urban habitat the peasant community is able to obtain a new equilibrium which relies on a more extensive resource base and more elaborate organization of work roles. In other words, structural differentiation and migration are not necessarily alternative adaptive mechanisms; they can, and often do, occur simultaneously, as constituent ingredients of one and the same process. Indeed, in the context of the rural community, one does not and cannot occur independently of the other for they represent impartible dimensions, the spatial and the social, of a single transformation. By focussing on the peasant community in the interactional sense rather than in the territorial sense, migrants to the city continue to play a very significant part in the rural sociocultural system from which they migrate. Their social and economic lives in the city become a reality to those back home, influencing their needs, wants, and normative expectations accordingly. In a very real sense, then, the rural exodus can be viewed as an extension of the community boundary system, and the new occupational roles migrants perform in the city as a contribution to the differentiation and development of the rural community.

It is conceivable, nevertheless, that the peasant village economy could differentiate "internally" by its own means and by exploiting only its own local resources, thereby creating new roles and institutions necessary to carry out increasingly specialized functions in the community system. That a rural

community can readily "pull itself up by its own bootstraps," so to speak, is a rather naive hypothesis, however, for it assumes that the community is capable of differentiating more efficiently or more economically than the city to which it is attached, the economy to which it must conform. The point here is that rather than differentiating internally, the peasant community does so "artificially" simply by extending its boundary system into the urban sector and participating in the already differentiated industrial economy.

Of course central place theory suggests that a village or small town could grow if it were well enough isolated from an urban center that it might establish linkages with other equally remote communities in its vicinity, competing successfully with other urban centers for these linkages simply on the basis of its proximity. Yet obviously only a small proportion of the rural communities in France or any other nation could ever hope to see such development, for to do so would require a much greater proportion of relatively undifferentiated communities in the surrounding region.

A critical feature of man's sociocultural evolution is that each successive level of development is characterized by a greater degree of heterogeneity than that of his predecessors. Each new increment in man's relationship to his environment, in the tools, techniques and patterns of work necessary to exploit its resources, makes it possible for him to occupy a wider range of habitats.⁸⁵ Clearly the institutionalization of migration systems that extend into the

urban habitat, and concomitant differentiation of the community occupational structure reflect this progressive ecological expansion. And as Duncan has stressed, ecological expansion, which involves population growth, culture growth and intensification of environmental exploitation, also produces a greater interdependence between industrial centers and the hinterland.⁸⁶ Yet, as suggested earlier, in order for a community to extend its outer boundary to encompass a larger habitat, the "friction of space" requires an adjustment in the nature of community and family solidarity. Then, too, differentiation processes also pose new problems of integration for the system. The specialized functions of two or more structural units must be coordinated where only one unit existed before, and the territorial separation of technology and sustenance activities from the residence complex necessitates the locational coordination of kinship and occupational groups.⁸⁷

Solidarity is a characteristic of the relationships among interacting individuals in a social system, the nature of which is determined by its content, strength, and intensity, the three principal components to solidarity as defined by Levy. Content refers to the type of relationship and members involved; the strength of a relationship is indicated by "the relative precedence, or lack of precedence, taken by this relationship over other relationships of its general sort, and over other obligations and commitments in the larger social sphere;" intensity refers to the level and type of affect involved in the relationship.⁸⁸

The integrative problems that emerge in the process of ecological expansion as described here, has received considerable attention by Schwarzweller, et al., who assert that community solidarity can be maintained in the face of adverse environmental conditions through the stem-family structure.⁸⁹ The function played by the stem-family in the Beech Creek study is, in fact, an integrative function. It is the solidarity of the Beech Creek kinship system, together with the stem-family structure, that permits the continuity of the sociocultural system among migrants. Schwarzweller, et al., state that, "to the extent that the system itself is isolated from the eroding influence of direct contact with the host culture, the system tends to be maintained."⁹⁰ In other words, as argued here, the system is maintained to the extent that it remains internally integrated through its network of relationships in and between the home and host localities—or simpler still, to the extent that the relative precedence taken by these relationships, over other such relationships and over the obligations and commitments in the host culture, the system is perpetuated. On the other hand, if the solidarity between the "parent" family and its migrant "branches" is not maintained, then ecological expansion does not occur.

In conclusion, this chapter has focussed, in conceptual terms, on the organizational mechanisms by which peasant communities can adapt the structural strains of ecological disequilibrium. The notion that migration should be viewed simply as a demographic event, or a method for reducing population

size, is refuted. It is argued here that migration is an organizational response to ecological strains and that, in the context of the peasant community, the establishment of migration systems occurs in consort with the differentiation of sustenance activities. In the following chapter these theoretical considerations are applied to an empirical case study, the community of Montaut.

CHAPTER VII

MONTAUT: THE ECOLOGICAL EXPANSION OF A PEASANT COMMUNITY

The process of ecological expansion as described in the preceding chapter begins on the farm. It involves the selective pressures placed on the agricultural community, and the patterns of migration and occupational differentiation that unfold in response to these pressures. While increasing numbers of young people are forced to look to the city for employment in the highly specialized industrial labor market, so, too, are those who choose to remain in agriculture compelled to specialize. Land consolidation, technological innovation, and the disappearance of farm labor are all indicative of this adaptive change. In the following pages the evolutionary process of ecological expansion is discussed in both structural and territorial terms as it applies to the community of Montaut. Beginning with the transformation of the farming system in Montaut, the process is then traced through the differentiation of the nonfarm work force and concomitant territorial expansion of the community system from the Second World War onward.

FARM MOBILITY AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF HOLDINGS

Unlike families in many other regions of rural France, the Gersoix peasant family has had a curious history of farm mobility. The origin of this mobility extends back to the

seventeenth century and the system of land tenure that characterized agriculture at the time. In brief, the feudal lords and bourgeoisie disregarded the legal restrictions governing the sale and leasing of the land. As a consequence, properties changed hands frequently and for the peasants who worked the land, their boundaries never stayed the same. Later on, in the nineteenth century, the landholders sold off their land and the peasants who worked it became the new proprietors. But the bourgeois attitude toward the land has not disappeared, and for this reason it is hypothesized that the mobility of the Gersois farmer is perpetuated to this day.⁹¹

Thus, the peasant's sentimental attachment to the farm which has emerged in so many other parts of France in the context of residential stability, has not been a characteristic feature of farmers in Montaut. Peasants in Gers have a more instrumental appreciation of the land they till. It is clearly the source of their livelihood. From it they derive the grains, meats, vegetables, wood, and practically all other products necessary for their immediate consumption and for exchange in the local and commercial markets. The basic division of labor in this respect is uncomplicated: the man earns the money in the production end of the operation through the sale of grains, cereals, livestock, etc., while the woman feeds the family from the kitchen garden and poultry-yard.

Because the farmers of Montaut have maintained a strong utilitarian attitude toward the land, this movement into

specialized production agriculture has probably met with less resistance than it might have otherwise. Concurrent with agricultural specialization, the pressures of the commercial market have stimulated a dramatic shift in the principal factors of agricultural production: land, labor and farm technology. There is an implicit interconnectedness among these factors which retards the development of any one without an appropriate adjustment in the others. As land holdings are consolidated, technological advances become both economically feasible and necessary. Capital intensive technology, in turn, displaces farm labor, and so the process goes in a system where the value of agricultural goods is competitively determined at the market place. The peasants of Montaut have been as much a part of this momentous transformation in the structure of French agriculture as have their fellow farmers all across the country.

Massive consolidation of land holdings did not occur in Montaut until after the Second World War when modern agricultural technology appeared on the scene. Before that time, the population employed in agriculture and the total number of farms declined at a gradual rate of about 0.3 percent a year. In 1851, the commune's arable land was divided into 143 separate farm units, and the active farm population numbered 413 persons, or about 77% of the total work force in Montaut. By 1946, nearly a century later, farmers and farm workers were still the predominant occupational group (85%), yet in number they totalled only 199, just under a half of the

farm-employed in 1851. Farms, too, declined by about a third over the same time period, as only 89 of them were still in operation in 1946.

These figures indicate that mid-nineteenth century farms were a great deal more labor intensive than those of one hundred years later. Based on the village cadastral surveys, roughly 2,198 of Montaut's 2,577 hectares of total land area are used for cultivation, pasture, or vineyard (see Table 7). Thus, according to these figures, the average farm size in the year 1851 was calculated at 15.4 hectares, and the amount of land that was operated by an individual farmer or farm worker was about 7.2 hectares.⁹² Over the course of the next ninety-five years, farms grew to an average size of 24.7 hectares and the decline in the agricultural workforce left each farmer or farm worker with about 11.1 hectares of land (see Table 8).

Since 1946, land consolidation in Montaut has proceeded at a virtually unprecedented pace. Of the 89 farms in the commune in 1946, fewer than half are in operation today and just 30% of the number in 1851. Naturally, the size of the average farm has expanded accordingly, and is now better than fifty hectares per farm unit. The great bulk of this movement, however, had occurred by 1968 and since then appears to have tapered off. Such is also the case with the rapid post-war exodus which reduced the total number of persons employed in agriculture to less than a third the 199 enumerated in 1946. Since 1975 this departure of farmers and farm

Table 7. Land Use in Montaut in 1954 and 1975

	1954		1975		Absolute Change (Hectares)
	Hectares	(%)	Hectares	(%)	
Cultivated Land	1627.0	(63.1)	1552.0	(60.2)	+75.0
Pasture	486.0	(18.9)	509.0	(19.8)	-23.0
Vineyard	85.0	(3.3)	130.0	(5.1)	-45.0
Woods	263.0	(10.2)	264.0	(10.2)	- 1.0
Non-arable Land	61.0	(2.4)	60.0	(2.3)	+ 1.0
Quarry	0.1	(0.0)	0.3	(0.0)	- 0.2
Water	0.2	(0.0)	0.2	(0.0)	0.0
Garden	9.0	(0.3)	10.0	(0.4)	- 1.0
Recreational Land	3.0	(0.1)	3.0	(0.1)	0.0
Other Land	42.9	(1.7)	48.7	(1.9)	- 5.8
TOTAL	2577.2	(100.0)	2577.2	(100.0)	0.0

Source: Cadastral Survey of Montaut: 1954 and 1975

workers has slowed to a rate of about one per year.

It is evident that for quite a long while now, and particularly during the first two decades after the Second World War, farms have been growing in size and falling off in number. To the extent that these changes have come about in connection with the mechanization of agriculture in Montaut, it is understandable that the farms most deeply affected have been those at the lower end of the scale, the small, subsistence oriented operations. De Gaulejac and Duplex report that in 1866, half the farms in the department of Gers

Table 8. Changing Structure of Agriculture in Montaut by Year

	Number of Farm Families	Average Farm Size (Hectares)	Number of Farm Worker	Average Number of Hectares Per Farm Worker
1978	42	52.3	61	36.0
1975	41	53.6	64	34.3
1968	45	48.8	88	25.0
1962	72	30.5	112	19.6
1954	86	25.6	144	15.3
1946	89	24.7	199	11.1
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
1851	143	15.4	305	7.2

were under four hectares in size, another 30% were concentrated in the 4-15 hectare category, 17% were from 15-60 hectares, and only 3% of the farms at that time exceeded 60

hectares (see Table 9). Figures published in 1976 by the Ministry of Agriculture illustrate how the distribution of farms has been reshaped over the years. Production agriculture, it seems, has taken its toll first and foremost on the small farmer, he who is least able to adapt to the new

Table 9. Farm Size in the Department of Gers, 1866 and 1976

1866		1976	
Farm Size (In Hectares)	Percent	Farm Size (In Hectares)	Percent
Less than 4	50.0	Less than 5	17.6
4-15	30.0	5-20	26.5
15-60	17.0	20-50	40.6
60 or more	3.0	50-100	12.4
		100 or more	2.9
TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

Source: 1866 figures from De Gaulejac and Duplex (1965), p. 76; 1976 figures from the Ministère de l'agriculture, reported in Chambre Regional de Commerce et d'Industrie Midi Pyrenées, Présent et Avenir, 1977, p. 33.

market structure. The proportion of farms in the smallest category of five hectares or less has dwindled to 17.6% of all farms in the department. Farms on the upper end of the scale, however, are proportionately far more prevalent now than in 1866. Indeed, an entirely new category for farms of "100 or more" hectares has been created to distinguish among a growing number of large farms.

Village records dating back to the nineteenth century on the distribution of farms according to size are both sketchy and unreliable, largely because they fail to communicate the complex interweaving of land rental, sharecropping, and family inheritance that lies beneath the surface of the equally intricate pattern of land ownership. More recent trends in land consolidation are, on the other hand, another matter. Coupled with informant and direct interview documentation of land use and farm size, the cadastral surveys of 1954 and 1975 can be used to make a general assessment of post-World War II changes in farm size. In keeping with the pattern of land consolidation that has occurred at the departmental level, a parallel yet perhaps even more dramatic transformation appears to have taken place in Montaut.

In comparing farm size in 1954 and 1975, there are two very pronounced observations which seem to capture the substance of this movement. The first is that where small farms, those under 20 hectares, were still very numerous in 1954, comprising over a third of all farms in the commune, there were none of this size in operation by 1975 (see Table 10). The second major shift involves the large farms and has, naturally, offset the disappearance of farms on the lower end. In 1954 there were only two farms of 60 hectares or more and neither exceeded 80 hectares. Over the subsequent twenty-one years the redistribution of farmland pushed nearly a third of the surviving operations over the 60 hectare level, and of these the majority were 80 hectares or more in size.

Table 10. Farm Size in Montaut , 1954-1975

Farm Size (Hectares)	1954		1975	
	Farms	(%)	Farms	(%)
0-10	9	(11.7)	0	(0.0)
10-20	19	(24.7)	0	(0.0)
20-40	36	(46.7)	17	(44.7)
40-60	11	(14.3)	9	(23.7)
60-80	2	(2.6)	5	(13.2)
80-100	0	(0.0)	4	(10.5)
100+	0	(0.0)	3	(7.9)
Total*	77	(100.0)	38	(100.0)

*Because some farms support more than one family, these totals are slightly lower than the total number of farm families in 1954 and 1975, as reported in Table 8.

Having considered in this section the changing patterns of land use, land consolidation and the number of families in Montaut deriving their sustenance from farming, the following pages deal with modes of land tenure. In particular, the discussion centers around the questions of who owns the land, how much they own and what trends in land ownership in Montaut have become observable over time.

THE LAND TENURE SYSTEM

The agricultural labor force in Montaut is characterized by several different types of farmers and farm workers.

Owner-operators (propriétaires-exploitants) constitute the dominant farming system in the commune. There is also a group of farmers who do not own the land they till. They are tenant farmers who must work out a rental arrangement with a landlord; some pay a fixed amount for their land (fermage), others establish a sharecropping agreement of one kind or another (métayage). It is not uncommon, too, for an owner-operator to expand his farm a bit by renting a few additional hectares of land or, likewise, for a tenant farmer to purchase a portion of the land he works or to buy a small neighboring farm when the owner reaches retirement age.

Table 11. Land Tenure in Montaut, 1954 and 1975

	1954		1975	
	Farms	(Percent)	Farms	(Percent)
Owner-Operators	57	(74.0)	25	(65.8)
Tenant Farmers	14	(18.2)	1	(2.6)
Part Owner/Part Tenant Farmers	6	(7.8)	12	(31.6)
TOTAL	77	(100.0)	38	(100.0)

Although there have been some significant changes in the land tenure system in Montaut during the period from 1954 to 1975, owner operated farms are still by and large the pre-dominant mode and, as a proportion of all farms in the commune, have been relatively stable over time (see Table 11). Families

engaged exclusively in tenant farming have all but vanished in Montaut as there remains but one fermier still in operation. But not all tenant farmers have left agriculture. Some, the larger and more advanced, have become property owners and therefore can no longer be considered renters in the unique sense of the term. Due to the fact that many small farms have

Table 12. Land Tenure in the Department of Gers, 1955 and 1976

	1955		1976	
	Farms	(Percent)	Farms	(Percent)
Owner Operators	20,705	(78.4)	9,192	(57.1)
Tenant Farmers	3,710	(14.1)	934	(5.8)
Part-Owner/Part-Tenant Farmers	1,990	(7.5)	5,972	(37.1)
TOTAL	26,405	(100.0)	16,098	(100.0)

Source: Service de Statistique: Ministère de l'Agriculture.

either gone up for sale or lease under the pressures of modern production agriculture, part-owner/part-tenant farms have become a significant dimension to the local farming system. And a corresponding rearrangement in the pattern of land tenure has occurred throughout the entire department of Gers (see Table 12). Although the overall disappearance of farms has been slightly less dramatic in Gers than in Montaut alone, the simultaneous movement away from the propriétaire-exploitant system and toward the owner-tenant mode of operation has been a bit less vivid in Montaut than at the departmental level.

There does not appear to be a social class division between farm families who own their land and those who rent it, and this finding is consistent with the instrumental and altogether unsentimental attitude Gersois farmers hold with respect to their land. To be sure, land ownership is thought to be a valuable asset, particularly in terms of security after retirement. Yet there is an important drawback to the propriétaire-exploitant system that the tenant farmer does not encounter. This is the problem of inheritance. By custom, and to some extent by French law, farmers are obliged to subdivide their landholdings equally among their children, a tradition that places an enormous burden on the agricultural system. As a result, owner operated farms are cut down in size and are badly fragmented, a predicament that does not arise for the farmer who rents the land he operates. The mode of land tenure, therefore, is of relatively little import as an indicator of social status in Montaut.

In terms of farm size, the egalitarian inheritance system does appear to have impeded land consolidation among the propriétaires-exploitants in Montaut. By comparison to tenant farmers, and those who both own and rent farmland, owner-operators are more likely to be making a living on a small farm enterprise. In 1954, for example, 24 of the 57 owner operated farms (42%) were twenty hectares or less in size. At the same time, only 4 (20%) of the 20 farmers who rented all or a portion of their land operated farms of this small size (see Table 13). Despite the overall increase in farm size by 1975,

smaller farms were still largely in the hands of owner-operators and farms in the upper size categories tended to be operated, at least in part, under some form of rental agreement. In fact, while only twenty percent of the owner operated farms exceed 60 hectares in size, nearly two thirds

Table 13. Distribution of Farms in Montaut by Size and Land Tenure, 1954 and 1975

	1954			1975		
	Owner- Operator	Tenant Farm	Owner/ Tenant	Owner- Operator	Tenant Farm	Owner/ Tenant
0-10	8	1	0	0	0	0
10-20	16	3	0	0	0	0
20-40	25	7	4	14	0	3
40-60	7	3	1	7	1	1
60-80	1	1	0	1	0	4
80-100	0	0	0	2	0	2
100+	0	0	0	1	0	2
TOTAL	57	15	5	25	1	12

of the tenant and owner-tenant farms fall into this size category. Considered next is the decline in the demand for farm labor that has accompanied the process of land consolidation in Montaut during the nineteen and twentieth centuries to the present day.

THE DECLINE OF FARM LABOR

In the traditional system of peasant agriculture there was a definite need for hired farm workers. It is true that farms were small by today's standards, but relative to the primitive level of agricultural technology during the nineteenth century and before, even farms of only eight or ten hectares were often too much for a farmer and his family to handle on their own. Later on, as a shift into mechanized, production oriented agriculture proved to be in the best interest of those who sought a future in agriculture for themselves or for their children, the demand for extra-familial farm labor began to recede. There are two general types of farm workers in Montaut who have been affected by the growth of capital-intensive agriculture. The first type is the hired hand (domestique), usually a single man (or woman) in his teens or twenties who is hired for a full year and lives on the farm with his employer. Although his wages are poor, the job is secure and usually includes room and board. Domestiques are among the most transient members of the commune since more often than not they are at a turning point in the life cycle and are simply biding their time until enough capital is accumulated and the opportunity arises where they can rent a farm of their own. Those who are unable to raise the means to get into farming independently will, at the time of marriage, set up a household in the village or in an unoccupied dwelling in the countryside and continue supplying their labor on a daily basis as an ouvrier agricole, the second type of farm

worker found in Montaut. Since the employment of day laborers is largely on a seasonal basis, they more than any other occupational group are hard pressed to make ends meet. Regarding the social hierarchy of agricultural classes, farm hands are a notch above the day laborers but both are landless and are therefore viewed as a class below their employers.

From the middle of the nineteenth century until the Great Depression the number of men employed as agricultural laborers declined in France at a rate proportionate to the overall reduction in farms during the period. This parallel movement is illustrated by the fact that the number of laborers per farm hovered around .4 from 1862 to 1929 (see Table 14). Figures show that between 1929 and 1979 the number of

Table 14. Average Number of Permanent Male Agricultural Laborers in France per Farm > 1 Hectare

	Number of Permanent Farm Laborers	Number of Farms (> 1 Hectare)	Average Number of Laborers Per Farm
1970	301,000	1,421,000	0.21
1955	528,000	2,110,000	0.25
1929	1,141,000	2,924,000	0.39
1892	1,386,000	3,468,000	0.40
1862	1,468,000	3,226,000	0.46

Source: Michel Blanc, Les Paysanneries Françaises. Paris: Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1977, p. 97.

farm laborers in France dropped by three quarters, clearly outpacing the 51 percent loss of farms over the same time span. Consequently the laborer/farm ratio fell to the level of one

worker per five farms. This figure is misleading, however, in that many farms have more than one hired hand and therefore the proportion of farms without any permanent workers is considerably above the crude rate of four out of five. In point of fact, 88.5 percent of the farms in France employed no extra-familial labor (male or female) in 1970. Among the 11.5% that did hire help on the farm, a sizable proportion (almost 3 in 10 employed a minimum of two workers and some of these hired as many as ten or more to assist on the farm.⁹³

Table 15. Farm Laborers in Montaut by Year

	Day Laborers	Permanent Farm Hands	Total Farm Laborers
1978	7	1	8
1975	8	1	9
1968	10	4	14
1962*	11	5	16
1954	13	7	20
1946	19	26	45
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
1851	87	109	196

*Figures for 1962 are estimates, due to a lack of reliable information for that year.

The agricultural workforce in Montaut midway through the nineteenth century struck a balance between farmers and landless farm laborers. The census of 1851 enumerated a total of

196 agricultural workers, 109 of whom were resident farm hands and the remaining 87 were employed as day laborers (see Table 15). No attempt has been made here to trace the migration patterns of these agricultural groups in any depth. It seems probable, however, that in the light of what is already known about the modernization of French agriculture, the rural exodus in Montaut has in large measure been nourished by the decreasing demand for hired farm labor. Whereas all but the smallest, typically owner operated, farms relied on at least some form of hired labor in 1851, the agricultural workforce took on an entirely new profile in 1946, one notably less dependent on extra-familial workers. Immediately following World War II, those employed as permanent farm hands or as day laborers were still more or less even in number, yet they had diminished at an astonishing rate to where only 45 were still living and working in the commune. Since 1946, despite the fact that farms have increased in size by three-fold, technological advancement has supplanted all but eight farm laborers, only one of which is working on a permanent basis. Several of the seven remaining day laborers are older men who have been kept on part-time by their employers mostly as an act of kindness and will not be replaced after their retirement.

Today, modern agriculture requires no more than family labor. Once they have completed their schooling, the children are expected to assist in the fields, especially if they are still living on the farm. Even if they have moved away,

they are sure to return home, at least during the evenings, to share in the work at harvest time. It is also frequently the case that an older brother-in-law, uncle, or father-in-law resides in the household. If so, and if in reasonable health, these family members are also obliged to pitch-in when needed. Although most wives prefer their work in the home and farmyard, they too, make an important contribution in the fields or vineyard on frequent occasion . Twenty years ago the purchase of a tractor allowed the farmer to cut down on hired labor, today his investments in higher forms of technology remove his family, and even himself from the farm.

THE RISE OF MECHANIZED AGRICULTURE

The modernization of agriculture in Europe was conceived in the spirit of the Industrial Revolution. The relationship between peasants and their land, the ecology of European peasant society, began in the latter half of the nineteenth century its great evolution from what Wolf has described as the paleotechnic to the neotechnic ecotype. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the essence of this transition entails a decreasing reliance on human and animal labor and a growing dependence on energy supplied by combustible fuels and the skills supplied by science. Early in the nineteenth century, the technology of Gasconne agriculture was simple and required an abundance of labor. Most tools were made of wood, some were of metal. There were no machines to speak of, with the possible exception of the plow, so nearly all work was

done by hand.⁹⁴ Through the 1800's and the first half of the twentieth century, great strides were made in the mechanization of agriculture and the application of scientific principles to all phases of the farming system. By 1929, the year of the last census of French agriculture before the Second World War, it was clear that among the farms still in operation in Montaut, mechanization had been the key to their success. An assemblage of the commune's farm machinery in 1929 included, among a wide array of smaller equipment:

- 4 multiple-bottom plows
- 40 disk plows
- 11 mechanical seeders
- 3 manure spreaders
- 5 haymakers
- 115 mechanical reapers
- 52 reapers and binders⁹⁵

Apart from the three tractors found in the commune at that time, the energy required to draw this proliferation of farm machinery was still supplied by draft animals. Because the soil in the area is baked hard and dry by the sun, teams of four or six oxen were used in the fields; draft horses lacked the necessary strength and were therefore seldom seen.⁹⁶ Although mechanization before World War II gradually reduced the farmers need for hired labor and thereby contributed to rural outmigration, it was not until after the war that the structure of agriculture in France truly discarded its peasant heritage and began to take on a new order, one more compatible with the

industrial society of which it was a part. In terms of technological development, this period of history was the major turning point for contemporary French agriculture. A significant break from the past was accomplished then when the use of combustible fuels was introduced and adopted by the farming community. In other words, there was a motorization of agriculture in rural France that did not seriously begin to take hold until the late 1940's and early 1950's. Of all the motorized farm machinery in Montaut, tractors and combine harvesters have had the most pronounced influence on the farming system, both in cutting the cost of hired and family labor, and in expanding the economy of scale for a competitive operation. Outside the realm of farm equipment per se, motorization has also stimulated the transition into production agriculture through a more extensive transportation network. This includes the personal ownership of small trucks which has brought farmers closer to the rail system that has linked the farmers in Montaut with consumers in Paris, Lyon, Marseille and many other locations in France.

The "tractorization" of agriculture in Montaut, as well as the evolution of combine harvesters are two facets of the agricultural development process that are nowhere more clearly documented than in the minds of those who were among the original such owners in the commune.⁹⁷ Interviews with several of the 'oldtimers' yield a relatively close consensus as to the proportion of farmers owning a tractor, and a near exact count of the number of combine harvesters owned by village farmers

at various points in time. In addition, a detailed analysis of tractor and combine harvester ownership in Montaut by farm size was conducted in 1964 by De Gaulejac and Duplex, some of their findings are also reported here.

Table 16: Ownership of Tractors and Combine Harvesters in Montaut from 1946 to 1975

	Tractors	Combine Harvesters
1975	All farms had at least two (total about 80)	18
1968	Most farms had two (total about 60)	15
1962	Most farms had at least one (total about 40)	6
1954	20	0
1946	6	0

It is evident that in 1946 the diffusion of the tractor was still in its initial stage of presentation as there were only six to be found in the entire commune (see Table 16). The tractor continued to gain acceptance through the 1950's and by the early 1960's it was no longer thought to be a risky investment, at least by those farmers with landholdings sufficiently large to assure a reasonable return on their investment. Convinced of the advantages brought on by the purchase of a tractor, farmers in Montaut during the late 1950's began to look ahead to other means of gaining a competitive advantage in the market. The combine harvester was the focus

of attention for some, and by 1962 there were six of them in operation.

There was a rapid expansion of both tractor and combine harvester ownership in Montaut through the 1960's, the same period in which the rate of land consolidation in the commune reached its peak, increasing the size of the average farm from 30.5 hectares in 1962 to 44.8 hectares in 1968, a fifty percent jump in just six years. During the 1970's growing farm size and increasingly heavy farm machinery compelled most farmers to invest in a second or even a third tractor -- often an American made machine with greater horsepower: a John Deere, McCormick or International Harvester.

The number of combine harvesters on the other hand has seen a more modest increment in recent times, in part because farms have use for no more than one combine, but also because a new group of entrepreneurs has appeared on the scene. These entrepreneurs, investing in large scale farm machinery to be hired out at a profit, have been particularly suited to the interests of the relatively small farmers in Montaut. Small farmers are the least able to afford to invest in new machinery of their own, and their aspirations for establishing a cooperative arrangement for the ownership of farm machinery (Cooperative d'utilisation de matériel agricole, C.U.M.A.) has met with little success in Montaut.⁹⁸ Several such rental operations have cropped up in Montaut and its neighboring communities, and although their fees are not modest, farmers are happy to rid themselves of the expense and inconvenience of

hiring additional labor and harvesting their crops by older, less efficient methods.

The ownership of tractors and combine harvesters in Montaut has evolved as a function of farm size. In the mid-1960's, a time when farms were actively seeking to expand in size to avoid floundering or possibly going under entirely, it was also imperative that the farmer upgrade his equipment in a manner sufficient to reap the benefits of his newly acquired land, and to minimize his dependence on hired labor. This point is illustrated by the finding that of the seven largest farms in Montaut in 1964 (all those above 70 hectares), four of them were equipped with three tractors and the other three with two tractors (see Table 17). Farmers with the smallest landholdings in the commune, by way of contrast, those owning less than ten hectares, had mechanized the least. Only one of the six in this category had by 1964 sold his oxen and invested in a tractor. The ownership of combine harvesters followed the same pattern as tractor ownership. Each of the seven largest farms was in 1964 equipped with a combine, while none of the smallest six farms had one. Among those at the middle range, too, it is evident that the larger ones tend to be two-tractor farms, and the smaller ones, one-tractor farms.

But for many of these mid-sized farms, their future was, and still is, marked by a high degree of uncertainty. They are on the borderline between relative prosperity and a life of constant struggle. Many are faced with the reality that

Table 17. Ownership of Tractors and Combine Harvesters
in Montaut by Size of Farm, 1964

Farm Size (Hectares)	Tractors					Combine Harvesters
	None	One	Two	Three	Total	
Less than 10	5	1			6	
10-20	1	1			2	1
20-30	1	7			8	1
30-40		5	1		6	2
40-50		4	5		9	
50-60		2	1	1	4	2
60-70		2	1		3	1
70-80			1		1	1
80-90				1	1	1
90-100				1	1	1
100+			2	2	4	4
TOTAL	7	22	11	5	45	14

the son or son-in-law may see no future in the operation and take up a career in another field, leaving the farm to a slow and painful demise. Some accept their fate and allow the farm to go under, others invest in new equipment and hope for the best. Mendras describes the precarious nature of this situation in the following way.

If the mother loses hope that her children will have a decent life in the country, she turns their ambitions toward other occupations and other horizons. Then the farm, instead of being modernized, gradually loses its character of an economic enterprise until it is no more than a means of survival and subsistence. The result, obviously, is that all economic concerns of management are subordinated to family needs. The departure of the children transforms the farm into a retirement farm, until it disappears with the death of the parents.⁹⁹

Yet for those parents who do feel the farm has a future there is often a great deal of pressure applied by the son to buy a tractor or combine.¹⁰⁰ He does not want to inherit an enterprise that is out of step with modern French agriculture, one that will deny him the kind of life style enjoyed by his cohorts. Clearly, not all decisions to upgrade the family farm have been based on economic rationality. The social status derived from a new tractor or combine harvester invariably enters into the decision-making process. Over-mechanization, and therefore a heavy load of indebtedness has been the unanticipated consequence for many farmers who wished to entice their sons to stay on the farm, or to enhance their own standing in the community.¹⁰¹

But for those who do leave agriculture, the many sons and daughters of farmers and farm workers who are discouraged from

seeking a life in agriculture, the urban economy offers a broad spectrum of employment possibilities. In order to pursue a career outside of farming, however, it is often necessary to relocate residences so as to reduce the distance between the home and work site, and the time required to get from one to the other. If the work site is situated relatively close by, either in the village itself or in a neighboring village or town, then a daily commute to work may replace the need for residential relocation, depending on the available means of transportation of course. Yet in either case the differentiation of family and work roles necessitates the territorial isolation of the two. And to the extent that this isolation sends men and women outside the traditional confines of the village, the community boundary system is extended accordingly. This latter point forms the subject of the following sections of this chapter.

THE DIFFERENTIATION AND DISPERSION OF WORK ROLES

Occupational differentiation began in Montaut during the late 1940's and early 1950's as farms grew fewer and less labor intensive. Before that time, from the middle of the nineteenth century until the close of the Second World War, the proportion of the working population of Montaut employed in agriculture remained relatively constant, despite a significant decline in the overall size of the population. In fact, Table 18 indicates that the proportion of farm-employed actually grew slightly, from about 81% in 1851 to 85% in 1946.

It is unclear, however, as to whether this change stems from differences in the fertility rates and size of farm and non-farm families, or from a real shift in economic conditions. At any rate the change is small and inconsequential, and if anything, it shows a remarkable stability in the level of occupational differentiation during this 96 year period.

Table 18. Farm and Nonfarm Employed in Montaut by Year

Year	<u>Farm (Percent)</u>		<u>Nonfarm (Percent)</u>		<u>Total (Percent)</u>	
1978	61	(34.9)	114	(65.1)	175	(100.0)
1975	64	(39.0)	100	(61.0)	164	(100.0)
1968	88	(56.4)	68	(43.6)	156	(100.0)
1962	112	(62.6)	67	(37.4)	179	(100.0)
1954	144	(75.4)	47	(24.6)	191	(100.0)
1946	199	(85.0)	35	(15.0)	234	(100.0)
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
1851	413	(80.8)	98	(19.2)	511	(100.0)

Sustenance activities in Montaut have since 1946 taken a dramatic turn away from agriculture and toward the higher-order secondary and tertiary sectors. The transformation has been steady and seemingly uncomplicated as the total number of farmers and farm workers has fallen to 61, less than a third the agricultural work force of 1946. Conversely, those engaged in nonfarm work roles have come to dominate the occupational sphere, growing threefold during the post war period

to where they now account for nearly two thirds of the active population in Montaut. In the department of Gers, too, the proportion of the work force employed in agriculture has diminished at a virtually unprecedented rate. Census figures show that despite the fact that the Gersoix economy continues to be the most agricultural in all of France, farmers and farm laborers declined from 69.7% to 36.3% of the total working population between 1954 and 1975. On a national scale during the same period of time the percentage employed in farming fell from 26.7 down to 9.3.¹⁰²

The increasing diversification of work roles occupied by the residents of Montaut has been accompanied by a significant dispersion, or territorial expansion in the location of these activities. In the traditional order, where communities were virtually self-contained, work site and residence were locationally undifferentiated, the farm or shop served doubly as a place of work and a place of habitation. Even as late as 1946, those engaged in nonagricultural pursuits seldom sought regular employment beyond the village limits. Of the 35 nonfarm employed at that time, only one, a truck driver, spent a significant portion of his workday away from Montaut (see Table 19). Since 1946 the number of locally employed villagers has declined a slight amount but appears to have levelled out at around 25 persons, a nucleus of village merchants and artisans who are still able to attract enough local patronage to stay in business, and a small handful of civil servants (fonctionnaires) and day laborers.

At an earlier time, in the last century, the nonfarm work force in Montaut was nearly three times as large as in 1946, but as mentioned above, this change was paralleled by a decline in the farm population, so the balance of farm and nonfarm employment changed little over this period of time. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the employment picture in Montaut during the nineteenth century was not simply more voluminous than that of the 1940's; it was also more diverse, providing locally many goods and services that were

Table 19. Work Site of Nonfarm Employed Persons by Year

	<u>Montaut (Percent)</u>		<u>Elsewhere (Percent)</u>		<u>Total (Percent)</u>	
1975	25	(25.0)	75	(75.0)	100	(100.0)
1968	26	(38.2)	42	(61.8)	68	(100.0)
1962	29	(43.3)	38	(56.7)	67	(100.0)
1954	37	(78.7)	10	(21.3)	47	(100.0)
1946	34	(97.1)	1	(2.9)	35	(100.0)

later on replaced by more efficient enterprises in the city. It has been reported, for example, that a small weaving manufacturer once employed ten workers but later disappeared without being replaced, presumably because of growing market competition.¹⁰³ In addition there were about twenty merchants, most of whom retailed farm products (bakers, grocers, and a butcher), but also several who worked in the clothing industry.

The largest group of nonfarm-employed was comprised of a diversity of independent artisans. Some worked in the textile industry (weavers and wool combers), others worked with wood, stone and iron (carpenters, blacksmiths, masons and sabot makers), and still others in the manufacture of clothing (tailors and seamstresses). There were also three millers in Montaut, a barber, a mailman, a midwife, a lawyer, a notaire, two ministers, two school teachers, a veterinarian, and a tax collector.

By the middle of the twentieth century many of these occupational roles once performed locally had been transferred to Auch, Gimont, Fleurance and other nearby urban centers. The village sabot makers, for example, had been replaced by cobblers and shoe manufacturers in the city, the same was true in the clothing industry where garments produced by machine in the market economy put many local tailors and seamstresses out of work. Internally, then, within the locale of the village itself, there has been a loss of occupational diversity. Today there are only about twenty-five persons employed in nonfarm activities in the village. These include a butcher, a cafe owner, a baker and his two assistants, a small grocer, a small number of artisans (a carpenter, a mason and his apprentice, an auto mechanic and two agricultural mechanics), two primary school teachers, a minister, several civil servants, and a number of day laborers.

In accounting for the post World War II growth in nonfarm employment among the residents of Montaut, it is

necessary to look to the outside, urban economy. Virtually all of the occupational differentiation in Montaut's labor force has involved a territorial redistribution of work roles. Rather than seeking employment in the village, those who leave agriculture have turned to the city. Thus, where in 1946 there was only one person employed outside the traditional boundaries of the village, by 1975 there were 75 such individuals, or three fourths of the nonfarm working population (see Table 19). In other words, the growing scarcity of agricultural lands has encouraged local residents to extend the community boundary into the urban habitat, where their participation in the highly differentiated, highly specialized market economy represents a major evolutionary transformation in the community system.

The kinds of work activities which these commuters engage in extend into nearly every facet of the industrial economy. Since the services sector in the department of Gers is more extensive and faster growing than manufacturing, however, there is a tendency for those who obtain employment outside of agriculture to end up in the various service industries in the area. As of 1975, for example, there were over a dozen office workers (secretaries and clerks), an equivalent number of persons in sales (of books, sewing machines, electrical appliances, women's wear, etc.), four hospital aides, two nurses, two accountants, two bank tellers, the director of the regional grain cooperative, a building inspector, a cook, six truck drivers, fifteen craftsmen (mechanics, two plumbers, a

heavy equipment operator), three factory workers and a large group of general laborers. In traveling each day to their jobs in the city, these rural residents help reduce the strain on the local economy while at the same time **contribute** to the maintenance and integrity of the community system.

It must be kept in mind, however, that the differentiation of the labor force described up to now pertains only to those members of the "community" of Montaut who actually reside in the village--in Montaut the geopolitical, administrative unit to which the national census records apply. But as described earlier, special attention must also be paid to those community members who both work and reside outside the administrative boundaries of the commune, mostly in nearby urban centers but sometimes in more distant and/or rural locations as well. Most frequently these are the sons and daughters of local residents who have been obliged to seek careers outside the agricultural sector, yet who maintain strong attachments to their families and friends still living in the village.

MIGRATION AND THE ECOLOGICAL EXPANSION OF MONTAUT

In order to gain a firmer understanding of how the flow of migration in Montaut has contributed to the community's adaptation to the constraints of the market economy, it is first necessary to develop a demographic typology that identifies the major migrant and nonmigrant groups in the commune. Although no more than about 550 persons ever resided in Montaut at any one

time between 1946 and 1978, the five national censuses conducted during this period, and sixth census carried out as a part of this study in 1978, have enumerated at one or more times a total of 1,205 persons in the commune. What this means, of course, is that there has been an enormous turnover in the population since World War Two, both in terms of natural movement (births and deaths) and the flow of migration in and out of the commune. The contribution of each of these factors to the total "ever enumerated" between 1946 and 1978 is decomposed in Table 20. The image of the peasant community as sedentary and unchanging is put to rest by the finding that only one in five of those enumerated can be classified as current permanent residents, that is, as having lived in Montaut since 1946, or since birth for those born after 1946. This figure translates into about a half of the current population of Montaut, the other half being composed of immigrants since 1946.

Patterns of Through-Migration

The 199 persons who migrated to Montaut after 1946 and who have since left the community are here labelled "through-migrants." When considering the importance of the concept of community in the migration system, as this chapter does, through-migrants must be handled as a distinctly separate group. As posited earlier, it is in the extent and nature of the interaction network maintained between migrants and their home community that the migration system contributes to

Table 20. Demographic Typology of Residents of Montaut,
1946-1978

	Percent of Total Residents	(N=)
1. In Montaut in 1946 or born in Montaut since 1946, and still living in Montaut. (Permanent Residents)	20.3	(245)
2. In Montaut in 1946 or born in Montaut since 1946, and since died in Montaut.	12.5	(150)
3. In Montaut in 1946 or born in Montaut since 1946, and since migrated from Montaut. (Outmigrants)	30.0	(361)
4. Migrated to Montaut since 1946, and still living in Montaut (Immigrants)	18.0	(217)
5. Migrated to Montaut since 1946, and since died in Montaut.	2.7	(33)
6. Migrated to Montaut since 1946, and since migrated from Montaut. (Through Migrants)	16.5	(199)
TOTAL	100.0%	(1205)

community adaptation. Thus, only those migrants to whom Montaut as "home community" applies can be looked upon here as playing a significant part in the adaptive process. This implies that through-migrants, who as a group have let down relatively few roots in the community, do not represent a territorial extension of the community boundary system in the sense suggested here.

In the absence of precise information on length of stay, the clearest indication of the through-migrants' instability lies in the fact that less than 15 percent of them lived in Montaut long enough to be enumerated there by the national census on more than one occasion. Since a census was taken an average of about once every seven years during this period of time, this suggests that the vast majority stay only a few short years and move on.

Occupationally, through-migrants tend to pick up lower level employment as farm hands, day laborers, servants and the like. A good many, on the other hand, are sharecroppers and tenant farmers; a few have even purchased land of their own. In more recent times, through-migrants, like the rest of the local population, have engaged in many nonfarm activities as well. But again, these are mostly manual in nature (truck drivers, quarrymen, laborers) and only occasionally in the upper ranks of the occupational hierarchy. Although through-migrants are quite frequently living and working on their own (more so than the general population), the majority come and go as a family unit either with or without children.

Males (52.3%) only slightly outnumber females (47.7%) in this migrant group.

Given the fact that through-migrants seldom live in Montaut long enough to establish strong community attachments, information regarding where they come from and where they go after leaving Montaut is often very difficult to ascertain from local residents. Few have kin still living in the village and friendship networks are usually quick to decay after their departure. Despite the many obstacles to obtaining reliable information on through-migrants, place of origin has been established for 119 (60%) of the 199 such migrants enumerated in Montaut in the post war period, and place of destination has been obtained for 123 (62%) of them. Naturally, the more recent the migration the easier it is to determine where migrants come from and where they go to; people's memories are sharper in the less distant past and their channels of correspondence with those who have left recently are more likely to still be active. Where virtually all the previous residences of those who arrived in Montaut between 1962 and 1978 have been obtained, less than half this information could be ascertained on the 1947 to 1962 through-migrants. Missing information on place of destination, on the other hand, is only slightly more problematic for the earlier of the two time periods.

Bearing in mind the incompleteness of these data some general observations can nevertheless be made pertaining to the pattern of through-migration in Montaut. First of all it

is evident that the flow of through-migration in the second fifteen year period has fallen to just a third that of the previous fifteen years (see Table 21). Since the major source of employment for these migrants has been in agriculture, particularly farm labor, one may surmise that the tapering-off of through-migration in Montaut is largely a function of the changing ecological picture and mounting

Table 21. Through Migrants: Arrival in And Departure From Montaut, 1947-1962 and 1963-1978.

	Arrival In Montaut (%)	Departure From Montaut (%)
1947-1962	148 (74.4)	64 (32.2)
1963-1978	51 (25.6)	135 (67.8)
TOTAL	199 (100.0)	199 (100.0)

selective pressures on the traditional farming system. As farmland grows scarce and the demand for farm labor diminishes, potential through-migrants are more inclined to bypass Montaut and other such rural communities, picking up instead on the relatively open work opportunities in the city. For these same reasons, the departure of through-migrants has picked up over the years. Increasing numbers of inmigrants to Montaut are feeling the squeeze on the farm sector and are moving on to areas where their prospects for steady employment are more favorable. It should be noted, however, that the apparent

predominance of departures over arrivals of through-migrants is perhaps exaggerated to some degree simply because a number of those who came to Montaut between 1947 and 1962 did not leave until sometime in the following time period. Moreover, departures during the first period are undercounted by the number of migrants who arrived in Montaut before 1946, and have therefore been classified as "outmigrants." Arrivals during the period 1963-1978 similarly have been undercounted by the number of migrants to Montaut who will leave the commune sometime in the future, yet who have been classified for present purposes as "inmigrants."

An idea as to where through-migrants come from before they get to Montaut can be gleaned from Table 22. The largest single group of through-migrants are those who have come from other rural communities in the department of Gers. During both time periods the proportion of through-migrants from other nearby rural communities has been about a half. This finding is consistent with the earlier observation that most through-migrants seek work on farms in one capacity or another. That is, since they are coming from predominately agricultural areas it is not surprising that farming continues to be their primary source of employment. The proportion coming from other countries, Spain and Italy in particular, has fallen off almost entirely since 1962. Again, a reflection of the waning demand for farm labor in Montaut. On a national scale, too, the number of permanent immigrant workers, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Moroccan, has

Table 22. Through Migrants: Place of Origin, 1947-1962 and 1963-1978

	<u>1947-62 (%)</u>		<u>1963-78 (%)</u>		<u>Total (%)</u>	
Auch	4	(5.9)	4	(7.8)	8	(6.7)
Other Urban Gers	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Rural Gers	38	(55.9)	25	(49.0)	63	(52.9)
Other Southwest	2	(2.9)	10	(19.6)	12	(10.1)
Other France	14	(20.6)	11	(21.6)	25	(21.0)
Other Country	10	(14.7)	1	(2.0)	11	(9.3)
TOTAL	68	(100.0)	51	(100.0)	119*	(100.0)

*Missing information on 80 cases (40.2%).

declined rapidly in France since about 1964.¹⁰⁴ Roughly one in five through-migrants originates from other parts of France, i.e., outside the Southwest region, and this number has changed little over time. It is evident that few through-migrants come from Auch or any other nearby towns. Indeed, it appears that for many, Montaut represents a stage, or stop-over, in the process of rural outmigration. The flow is a strictly one way affair in which a high concentration of the population in the urban center seems to be a major feature.

Through-migrants when they leave Montaut go one of two ways. About half continue doing farm work, most often in the general vicinity of Montaut but also in other parts of the Southwest (see Table 23). The other major group migrates to

Table 23. Through Migrants: Place of Destination, 1947-1962 and 1963-1978

	<u>1947-62 (%)</u>	<u>1963-78 (%)</u>	<u>Total (%)</u>
Auch	11 (29.0)	30 (35.3)	41 (33.3)
Other Urban Gers	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Rural Gers	17 (44.7)	35 (41.2)	52 (42.3)
Other Southwest	10 (26.3)	9 (10.6)	19 (15.5)
Other France	0 (0.0)	10 (11.7)	10 (8.1)
Other Country	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	1 (0.8)
TOTAL	38 (100.0)	85 (100.0)	123* (100.0)

*Missing information on 76 cases (38.2%)

the city of Auch where they pick up jobs, mostly unskilled labor, in the urban work force. A few are also attracted to Toulouse, the major industrial center in the region. By and large this pattern of through-migration has persisted over time, yet there appears to be a gradual trend developing of movement toward the urban sector. Through-migrants have also begun to migrate longer distances than before as nearly 12 percent of those leaving Montaut between 1963 and 1978 moved entirely out of the region to other parts of France. None of the through-migrants who left during the earlier period of time migrated out of the southwest. Only one has relocated outside the country, a widowed woman in her mid-eighties who

returned to her husband's family in Germany.

Through-Migrants and Outmigrants: The Kinship Factor

The major factor that distinguishes through-migrants from the 361 individuals here classified as outmigrants, is the degree to which the two migrant groups maintain community and kinship ties after their departure from Montaut. Naturally, the length of time an individual spends in a community, and the pervasiveness of his or her family roots there, go a long way in determining that person's level of attachment to the community. Thus the basic line of reasoning used in classifying through-migrants separately from outmigrants is simply that the two groups differ markedly with respect to their duration of residence and kinship networks in Montaut. Having touched down in Montaut for a more or less abbreviated period of time, the through-migrant gains little opportunity to develop binding community ties. In the absence of kinship involvement, too, these migrants do not share in the kinds of interactional networks, feelings of community allegiance, and psychological attachment to the family homestead, that characterize the outmigrant group whose families and residences have become well established in Montaut over the course of time. Thus, in no meaningful sense can through-migrants be seen as "unit carriers" of the community system, and for this reason it would be unprofitable at this point to consider this group as contributors to Montaut's institutional adaptation, i.e., as an element of the local migration system.

Of course the importance of through-migration to the overall transformation of rural France is undeniable. Presumably those migrants who pass through Montaut maintain ties with families and friends in the communities from whence they came, and thereby represent the outer extensions of these communities, contributing to migration systems quite independent of, yet equal in importance to, the migration system that has evolved in the community of Montaut. Similarly, outmigrants from Montaut often "stop over" in other farm communities, both near and far, without truly settling, putting down roots, or establishing ties of any enduring quality; naturally vis-a-vis these other farm communities such transients, too, can be viewed as through-migrants.

It is regrettable , however, due to the somewhat arbitrary, temporal distinction between outmigrants and through-migrants, that not all of the former differ from the latter in terms of their family and community attachments in Montaut. Undoubtedly there is a sizable proportion of the outmigrant group who with regard to their interactional ties to Montaut tend to resemble those in the through-migrant category more closely than the outmigrants they have been grouped with. These are the non-native residents of Montaut who arrived in the commune sometime before 1946, yet often not long before, and with no previous kinship network there. Thus, although classified here as outmigrants, they typically lack the kinds of social and psychological attachments to Montaut characteristic of those who had resided in the commune for a relatively longer period of time, true natives, or those who still have

family living there. And it is not surprising to find that current information on the whereabouts and employment situation of these less "attached" outmigrants is, as with the through-migrant group, comparatively hard to come by.

Outmigration: An Extension to the Urban Habitat

Based on information derived from local residents and village census records, 257 (71.2 percent) of the 361 outmigrants were either born in Montaut, still have kinship in Montaut, or can otherwise be classified as having at one time been "genuine" residents of Montaut, i.e., simply because of their duration of residence (for two or more censuses), or on the basis of informants' judgements as to their participation in community life. In the interest of pursuing recent developments in the migration system of Montaut, that is, in the community's institutionalization of a migration system that territorially extends the community boundary into new habitats, these 257 "genuine" outmigrants provide the major focus of attention in the following analysis.

Evidence shows that the fundamental difference between outmigrants and through-migrants in their current locational situation is in the tendency for the former to take up residence in Auch and other nearby urban centers, while the latter, earlier observations verify, have a greater propensity to move to other rural communities in the surrounding vicinity of Montaut. Where only a third of the through-migrants have left the countryside for a life in urban Gers, nearly a half of the outmigrant group is now residing in Auch or other urban cities

(see Table 24). Conversely, in comparison to the 42.3 percent of the through-migrants still living in rural Gers, just one in four of the outmigrants are presently so situated. As for those departing for other parts of the Southwest, France, or other countries, outmigrants differ very little from through-migrants, comprising roughly a quarter of the entire group. In general, then, it can be posited that the institutionalization of migration in Montaut has extended the community boundaries primarily into the nearby urban sector but also in a more diffuse way into many neighboring farm communities and into other regions of France altogether. Migration systems often do "stretch" into relatively distant urban areas, even to cities outside the larger sociocultural region, such as

Table 24. Outmigrants: Place of Destination, 1947-1962 and 1963-1978

	<u>1947-62 (%)</u>		<u>1963-78 (%)</u>		<u>Total (%)</u>	
Auch	35	(27.3)	41	(36.6)	76	(31.7)
Other Urban Gers	22	(17.2)	16	(14.3)	38	(15.8)
Rural Gers	38	(29.7)	24	(21.4)	62	(25.8)
Other Southwest	21	(16.4)	15	(13.4)	36	(15.0)
Other France	12	(9.4)	16	(14.3)	28	(11.7)
Other Country	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
TOTAL	128	(100.0)	112	(100.0)	240*	(100.0)

*Missing information on 17 cases (6.6%).

found in the movement of southern blacks to cities in the northern industrial states, and Appalachian migrants to urban locations in Ohio and other parts of the midwest. But post-war migration patterns indicate that outmigrants from Montaut have formed a more concentrated system of migration capable of exploiting new habitats within relatively close proximity. In part this is due to recent growth in the regional urban economy, yet it may also be a reflection of Montaut's close-knit kinship networks and the region's lagging development of modern transportation and communication systems.

With growing occupational diversity in the city of Auch, increasing numbers of migrants have been attracted there by employment opportunities in the sundry manufacturing, artisanal, and service industries. Table 24 reports that the proportion of outmigrants now living and working in Auch has expanded from 27.3 percent in the period 1947-1963 to 36.6 percent in more recent times. Occurring along with this concentration of migrants in Auch has been a significant decline in the more diffuse movement to other farm communities in the surrounding areas, i.e., from 29.7 percent to 21.4 percent between the two time periods. This shift toward the city closely parallels that of the through-migrant group and undoubtedly stems from the same root cause, the selective pressures of the market economy on the traditional farming system.

In earlier times the economic impetus to leave the home community usually involved the acquisition of more and/or better farmland. For the farm worker it was simply steadier,

better paying employment. In some instances farmers, wives and children moved as families. Other times, however, residential relocation coincided with a marriage, the resultant migration to either the husband's or the wife's home community presumably occurring in the couple's best interest, exploiting the resources available to them as effectively as possible. Growing land scarcity, consolidation and mechanized agriculture since World War Two have flooded the streams of outmigration from Montaut and redirected the flow toward the city of Auch. Where the migration system originally extended the community boundaries into the surrounding countryside, and served to integrate Montaut with other farm communities seeking to exploit the same territories, outmigrants have progressively expanded the community of Montaut into the habitat of Auch, developing a stronger interdependence with the urban community, its economy, culture, and general way of life.

Maintaining Ties Back Home

Information obtained via direct informal interviews with the outmigrants living in Auch, and with their families still residing in Montaut is suggestive of how bonds are maintained between migrants and their-home community, and of how such migrants actually constitute the outer boundaries of this community. Under the constraints of time, and in the interest of exploring the more immediate developments in the migration system, special attention was paid to the 41 migrants who moved to Auch between 1963 and 1978. Only one of these 41

migrants is no longer living, an older man who because of illness was obliged to take up permanent residence in the city facility for the aged. Despite this person's departure from the village, there is little evidence that he ever actually left the community in a psychological or even in an interactional sense. Visits from his family and friends in Montaut were frequent and the nature of his immediate hospital environment probably restricted his exposure to other aspects of urban life, (if indeed a migrant's integration into the new urban community can exert an erosive influence on previously established social bonds). Years ago the sick and elderly might well have never sought assistance outside the home community, their care being a necessary obligation of the family. As this function is relinquished to specialized institutions in the city, so, too, there must be a movement of people in space, a physical departure from the village. The result: an extension of the community system into the differentiated urban habitat, and the convergence and growing interdependence of rural and urban communities.

From among the 40 living outmigrants now residing in Auch, women slightly outnumber (54.5 percent) men, and seven were children at the time of departure, being viewed therefore as appendages to their parents' migration. Interviews with the remaining 33 adult migrants revealed that all but three migrated alone, with no spouse, children or other family. All three adults who left Montaut as a family unit were married to previous non-residents of Montaut who moved to the commune

at the time of marriage but were not there at the time of a census enumeration. Formally speaking, then, these three spouses fall outside the study population, yet they must be made mention of here in order to better understand the situation at hand.

It was posited earlier that the institutionalization of migration systems contributes to the rural community's adaptive capacity largely to the degree that migrants maintain ties with their families and friends still living in the home community. Evidence gleaned from interviews with migrants to Auch and with their families in Montaut indicates that the migrants' territorial relocation has not precipitated a disintegration of their interactional bonds to the home community. Indeed, of the thirty-three adult migrants to Auch since 1963, nine say they get back to Montaut to visit with families and friends at least once a week. For most this means weekends, notably Sunday afternoons for a special meal and a few rounds of boules or cards. But there are others for whom the drive to Montaut is made two or three or even as many as four evenings a week, on a regular basis. Invariably those who get back to visit the most often are the women, particularly those with young children; perhaps this is because the grandparents are usually happy to share in the necessary care and discipline of the children.

Three of the four migrants who do not regularly return to visit in Montaut are prevented from doing so by illness; two are hospitalized and the third is largely immobile and

confined to her apartment in town. Nevertheless, friends and relatives in Montaut are not neglectful of the sick and the elderly, as they make a special effort to see them on a frequent and routine basis. In fact, one young woman from Montaut who journeys to work in Auch each day makes a point of spending her two-hour midday break with her disabled grandmother. By no means, however, do villagers confine their visits in Auch to the sick and elderly. Parents, too, enjoy the opportunity to leave the farm and pass an afternoon or evening with their children in the city. As a rule the residents of Montaut call on their kin and friends in Auch when the trip can be combined with other business in town. Thus, Saturdays and Tuesdays, market days in Auch, are the times when migrants are the most likely to receive company from the village.

Naturally, the flood of migrants back to Montaut takes place over the holidays, at Christmas and New Year's in particular. These are the times when even the most distant migrants, to Paris and beyond, are drawn to the family gathering at the homestead and share in the local festivities. Other occasions that attract large numbers of outmigrants are the Hunter's Club Ball, the fête of the village patron saint, and the annual Mechui (a North African-style lamb roast). In terms of weekend visiting patterns, migrants seem to get back to Montaut the most frequently during the summer and autumn months when the hunting season is on and time away from work is somehow easier to manage. For those who live in Auch, as

well as for migrants in the surrounding rural areas, and even for many of the more distant migrants, Montaut has continued to be regarded as "home" in the subjective sense of the term. And this feeling is reinforced over and over again through overt patterns of behavior. The availability of personal transportation and the continuously expanding telephone network have enabled migrants to maintain ties with the home community at relatively little cost, in terms of time and money.

Not only are interpersonal ties maintained between migrants and those still living in Montaut, the home community, but also among the migrants themselves entirely within the urban milieu. Roughly one in three of the migrants to Auch has kin living nearby, and of these, about half are close neighbors. Interaction among kin occurs almost on a daily basis. Husbands will meet for an apéritif at a local cafe after work, wives will assist one another by watching over the children at certain times of the day, or certain days of the week. And on frequent occasion, evenings will be spent together, in conversation, in front of the television set, or perhaps in Montaut with their parents at the homestead.

Although an astonishing proportion of outmigrants moved alone, to Auch as well as to other destinations, the great majority of these moves have coincided with changes in the migrants' family life cycle and/or career status. Most commonly, 57.5 percent of the time, migrations to Auch take place at the time of marriage, as many young couples feel the need to set up households of their own in closer proximity to their places

of work (see Table 25). Conversely, for those who do find employment in the village, either on or off the farm, the need to establish an independent household is not always so great. Other changes in family and career status that have necessitated residential relocation are the death of a spouse or parent, the start of a new job or job training, and retirement. Only one in five of the recent outmigrants to Auch

Table 25. Coincidence of Migration and Changes in Family Life Cycle or Career Status Among Migrants to Auch from 1963 to 1978

Type of Change	Percent Coincident with Migration
Marriage	57.5
Death of Spouse or Parent	6.1
Start Job Training	3.0
Start New Job	6.1
Retirement	6.1
No Change	21.2
TOTAL	100.0
(N=)	(33)

moved without a concurrent shift in career or life cycle stage.

Naturally, since career and family life cycle changes are frequent during early adulthood, a time when most young people break from their families of origin, find employment, marry, and set up homes of their own, it stands to reason that movements in space should also be characteristic of those in the younger age groups. And, indeed, it is a well established fact

that residential mobility is more common among younger adults than those in the later stages of family life cycle.¹⁰⁵ For several of these young outmigrants to Auch, migration has been coordinated with multiple changes in their family and occupational situations. For some, employment was obtained prior to marriage, making it necessary for the husband and/or wife to commute to work in the city each day until after their marriage, at which time they were permitted to move to Auch and establish a home of their own. But there have been other instances where the husband, while still single, worked at home on the farm until his marriage. The wedding day in this situation means more than a new family life, for it can also entail a new residence in the city and the start of a new job.

And as time passes, the frequency with which marriages have coincided with migration has increased significantly in Montaut. Of course it goes without saying that at the very least in order for the couple to live under the same roof, either the husband or the wife must pack his or her belongings and move in with the other's family. But this does not require that there be a movement across community lines. In the event that both spouses are residents of Montaut prior to their marriage, the change is strictly internal and involves no shift in the community boundary structure. The same is true even for those who establish independent households within the confines of the community. The migration system is activated only when an independent residence is established

in a new location outside the traditional community lines.

An investigation of the pattern of marriages in Montaut, via direct interviews with the couples and indirectly from kin and local informants, reveals that the young men and women of Montaut do not by any means limit their network of relationships to other members of the community. And this observation has become particularly evident over time. Since 1946, 133 marriages have been recorded in the register of vital events in Montaut. A decomposition of these marriages by residence before marriage reveals that in only 25 percent of the cases did both husband and wife reside in the commune before they married (see Table 26). Far more frequently, about

Table 26. Residence in Montaut Before Marriage
by Sex (1946-1962 and 1963-1978)

	<u>1946-1962</u>	<u>1963-1978</u>	<u>Total (1946-78)</u>
Husband only (N=)	7.7% (5)	13.2% (9)	10.5% (14)
Wife only (N=)	55.4% (36)	64.7% (44)	60.2% (80)
Husband and wife (N=)	35.4% (23)	14.7% (10)	24.8% (33)
Both nonresident (N=)	1.5% (1)	7.4% (5)	4.5% (6)
TOTAL (N=)	100.0% (65)	100.0% (68)	100.0% (133)

60 percent of the time, only one spouse or the other was from Montaut, the other coming from Auch, a nearby rural community,

or even from Paris or the more distant provinces of the northeast. Since the wife's parents ordinarily take charge of the wedding arrangements it is sufficiently clear why husbands are six times out of seven the "outsiders" in the wedding ceremonies that take place in Montaut. An analysis of those who marry elsewhere would surely point disproportionately to the men. The few remaining marriages are those in which neither spouse can be considered a permanent resident of Montaut at any time prior to the wedding. In about half of these cases, at least one of the spouses has had some previous ties to the village, such as a summer residence, or an aunt, uncle, or grandparent living there. In a number of instances, however, couples have been married at Montaut's church of Saint Michel having had little or no previous attachment to the community. Typically these couples are city dwellers interested simply in exchanging their matrimonial vows in the tranquil surroundings of the rural countryside.

A comparison of the 65 marriages that took place in Montaut between 1946 and 1962 with the 68 more recent marriages suggests that a trend has begun to take form. Notably, marriages in which only one or neither of the spouses are residents of the commune have increased in proportion over the years. Wives of course are still more apt to be residents of Montaut than are their husbands but the gap appears to be narrowing some. The implication of the marriage pattern that has emerged in Montaut is that the network of interpersonal relationships has expanded outward from the village into the

surrounding localities, urban as well as rural, to a greater extent today than was the case in the not too distant past. Many friendships are established at a relatively young age as students at the high school in Auch. In the classroom context young people from the city are brought together with those from the numerous agricultural communities in the surrounding countryside. The potential for making friends and getting to know others living outside the immediate habitat of the commune is enormously enhanced through the school experience. And coupled with improved means of transportation and telephone communication, the possibilities for forming close relationships with young people living elsewhere is virtually unlimited. More and more frequently, evidence shows, these friendships evolve into ties of marriage and the geographical relocation of one or both of those involved.

Not only are the young people of Montaut today more likely than were those just two decades ago to find spouses from outside the traditional boundaries of the commune, but they are also far more apt to set up households of their own at the time of marriage, independent of their parents' households. Between 1946 and 1962, on the order of one half of the couples married in Montaut continued to reside with either the bride's or the groom's parents for at least six months after their marriage (see Table 27). Since 1962 this proportion has declined to one in four, and of the twenty couples most recently married during this period virtually all have set up households independent of their parents'.

Moreover, among those who do establish independent households there appears to be a growing likelihood that their residential relocation will take them away from either the husband's or the wife's home community. Findings reported in Table 28 on couples' independent residence location after marriage show that the proportion staying on in the home community has fallen from about one in three in the period 1963-1978. In terms of actual residence relocation

Table 27. Couples' Residence Status After Marriage
(1946-1962 and 1963-1978)

	<u>1946-1962</u>	<u>1963-1978</u>	<u>Total (1946-78)</u>
With Parents (N=)	46.7% (28)	24.2% (16)	34.9% (44)
Independent (N=)	53.3% (32)	75.8% (50)	65.1% (82)
TOTAL (N=)	100.0% (60)	100.0% (66)	100.0% (126)*

*7 couples' residence status after marriage unknown.

outside their home communities, the most notable change over time has, again, been in the direction of the city, Auch in particular.

In the light of these findings, then, it is evident that the institutionalization of migration systems in Montaut occurs simultaneously and in association with various other changes in the migrants' social and economic lives. Migration is not an independent or random occurrence. As an adaptive response to structural conditions that threaten the future of the

agricultural community, the migration process emerges gradually, one step at a time, and intertwined with other aspects of the larger transition. Although the pressures of the external economy are constant and unyielding, the community's response is not immediate or in any way hasty.

Table 28. Couples' Independent Residence Location
After Marriage (1946-1962 and 1963-1978)

	<u>1946-1962</u>	<u>1963-1978</u>	<u>Total (1946-78)</u>
Husband's or wife's home community (N=)	34.4% (11)	20.0% (10)	25.6% (21)
Auch (N=)	21.9% (7)	38.0% (19)	31.7% (26)
Other Gers (N=)	15.6% (5)	12.0% (6)	13.4% (11)
Other France (N=)	28.1% (9)	30.0% (15)	29.3% (24)
TOTAL (N=)	100.0% (32)	100.0% (50)	100.0% (82)

Rather, migration to the city comes about in time, as young men and women reach the ages where other normative expectations begin to be felt. -Marriage, the formation of a family, and the pursuit of a vocation or career suitable to support the family are all institutionalized behavior patterns to which young people are obliged to conform.

As these family and career commitments are made, there is an attempt to coordinate them with a relocation in space, a spatial change that will presumably contribute to their future

success. In meeting life's obligations, the couple begins to be "locked in" to the structural circumstances that surround them. Their investment in a certain way of life in a particular place is compounded as time passes. Roots take hold and the prospects of any alternative course of action become increasingly uncertain. Likewise, the strength of these roots, the couple's integration into their community, is resistant to the mounting forces of change, and it is therefore entirely understandable that social and geographical mobility is less common among those who are further along with their families and careers. Additional evidence in support of this point is brought out by the finding that there is another wave of migration that occurs later on in life, when commitments made earlier on reach maturity, that is, at the point of retirement, the departure of children, or with the disintegration of the couple through the death of one of its members.

Patterns of Immigration: Newcomers and Returnees

To this point the migration system in Montaut has been investigated largely in terms of the changing pattern of out-migration. And indeed, as an institutional process the establishment of migration systems that extend into new habitats has been a major thrust of this study. Yet the community system is also very much affected by those who move into the commune from elsewhere. Naturally this is true of those who locate in Montaut on a temporary basis, these are the through-migrants as previously discussed, but especially of those who

take up residence in a more permanent way, "settle down," and become bonafide members of the local community. This latter group has been referred to as inmigrants in the demographic typology established earlier in Table 20. From an ecological standpoint, most inmigration does not represent an adaptive manoeuvre on the part of the community; rather, inmigrants compose the outer boundaries of their own respective home communities and are potentially significant to the adaptation of these communities only. To be sure, the very fact that the resource base during time of scarcity can absorb any additional households at all is of great importance to the ecology of the community.

To a large extent inmigrants to Montaut have come from the numerous surrounding agricultural communities of rural Gers, counterbalancing the flow of migrants reported earlier extending from Montaut into these communities. But in the course of time, the squeeze put on small farms and subsequent drop in the availability of land has curtailed the inflow from nearby rural communities, a migrant group once composed largely of farmers and farm workers. From 1947 to 1962 the proportion of inmigrants from other parts of rural Gers amounted to 58.5 percent of all inmigrants to Montaut (see Table 29). During the fifteen year period following (1963-1978), the proportion dwindled to just 26.2 percent of the inmigrant group. Despite this substantial relative decline, these inmigrants have become even more prevalent in absolute terms. Indeed, inmigration from virtually all locations reported has swelled in number. The marginal totals in Table 29 show a three fold

increase in overall immigration from the earlier to the more recent time period. At first glance these findings appear to fly in the face of the most rudimentary notions of ecological theory. But just as Montaut's permanent residents have found it possible to continue to reside in the countryside, commuting to work in Auch each day, so, too, have many others, from urban as well as rural areas, picked up on this "life style" alternative. In other words, although the volume

Table 29. Immigrants: Place of Origin, 1947-1962 and 1963-1978

	<u>1947-62</u> (%)		<u>1963-78</u> (%)		<u>Total</u> (%)	
Auch	7	(13.2)	86	(52.4)	93	(42.9)
Other Urban Gers	1	(1.9)	3	(1.8)	74	(34.1)
Rural Gers	31	(58.5)	43	(26.2)	4	(1.8)
Other Southwest	3	(5.6)	5	(3.1)	8	(3.7)
Other France	10	(18.9)	20	(12.2)	30	(13.8)
Other Country	1	(1.9)	7	(4.3)	8	(3.7)
TOTAL	53	(100.0)	164	(100.0)	217	(100.0)

of immigration to Montaut is growing, increasingly fewer of these newcomers are drawn to the community on the basis of the local employment outlook. Instead, they secure employment in Auch or another nearby town then relocate in Montaut or other such rural communities within reasonable proximity to their places of work. City dwellers are quickly discovering that in Montaut, more land can be bought for less, the style of

life is more tranquil, the air cleaner and roadways less heavily traveled than in the city.

At face value, these findings suggest that recent waves of immigration may be transforming Montaut into a suburban community of one genre or another, devoid of the closeknit network of interrelationships characteristic of the small agricultural community. But a closer examination of who the migrants are and why they are choosing to settle in Montaut and other rural communities like Montaut, reveals that such presumed "suburbanization" is an entirely untenable hypothesis. Rather, the trend of immigration to Montaut in recent years runs parallel to observations reported by rural demographers in Europe and in the U.S. that the balance of net migration has begun to shift toward the nonmetropolitan sector and many small towns and rural communities in nations of the developed world are now growing in population.¹⁰⁶ Some of this new growth may be a reflection of a higher rate of rural retention; some is undoubtedly a genuine relocation of families from cities and suburbs into the countryside. Although research on the nature of this rural revival is just now beginning to open up, early reports single out two groups of particular interest. One is the younger, well educated, white collar urbanite seeking a change from city life.¹⁰⁷ The other is the return migrant, the former rural outmigrant drawn back home by the ties that bind--kinship, community and the rural homestead.¹⁰⁸

Personal interviews with migrants arriving in Montaut within the past three years, i.e., since the census of 1975,

reveal that the two groups of urban-to-rural migrants described above have become major elements of the recent influx of immigration to the commune. And the two groups are by no means exclusive of one another, as many of the returnees have come to occupy respectable positions in the urban services industries where they continue to work.

As indicated in Table 30, the flow of migration to Montaut between 1975 and 1978 has been profuse, concentrated and

Table 30. Immigrants: Kinship Ties in Montaut Previous to Immigration, 1975-1978 (Since 1975 Census)

	<u>Kinship In Montaut</u>	<u>No Kinship In Montaut</u>	<u>Total</u>
Auch (N=)	88.9% (40)	57.1% (20)	75.0% (60)
Other France (N=)	11.1% (5)	42.9% (15)	25.0% (20)
TOTAL (N=)	100.0% (45)	100.0% (35)	100.0% (80)

kinship oriented. From among the 80 recent immigrants, over half of them were returnees and their children moving back to the village after five, ten or even twenty or more years of city life. All but one of the migrant families returning to Montaut still had kin living in the commune prior to their move; although the one family no longer had kin in the village, they did own property and a home there that had been in the family since the middle of the nineteenth century. The homestead had been occupied by the husband's father until his

death several years before their return.

Just as outmigration from the village has over the years converged in the city of Auch where ties have been maintained with a minimum of strain, so, too, have these migrants become the predominant source of return migration to the commune. Since 1975, three fourths of all migrants to Montaut have moved from a previous residence in Auch. Of those with kin still living in Montaut (i.e., the return migrants), nine of ten have come from Auch. These are two factors that account for the overwhelming importance of Auch in the recent pattern of immigration and return migration to Montaut; both involve the geographical proximity of the two locations. One is that because of the relative ease and low cost of local transportation and communication, family community ties have a better chance of remaining strong and vibrant and are therefore more influential in the migrants' lives. The other is that migration to Montaut does not necessitate a disintegration of many social and economic relationships developed in the city of Auch the way it can and often does in other more distant locations. In moving into or back to Montaut migrants from Auch are able to retain their jobs and social networks in the city; their children are not obliged to change schools, enabling them to retain a degree of continuity in their social lives as well.

From among the nine immigrant families with children at the primary level, only one couple has transferred their children to the village school; the others have found it in their

own and their children's best interest to continue sending them each day to Auch. Couples affirm that their reluctance to change schools is not a reflection of a difference in the quality of the schools, for in general they speak quite highly of the Montaut school. Rather, there seems to be a desire on the part of these migrants to preserve their urban linkages, and the primary school constitutes an important means for doing so. Additionally, the urban schools provide after school daycare for those children whose parents work. And this service is of particular utility to the young migrant families who are far more likely to have both spouses employed outside the home than are the permanent residents of Montaut. Thus at the day's end parents are able to simply fetch their children at the school before returning to the countryside. To date no such service has been instituted at the primary school in Montaut.

All indications suggest that the pattern of return migration to Montaut during the past three years is not transitional, nor is the picture presented here complete. As pointed out earlier, a large proportion of the outmigrants who have not yet moved back to Montaut plan to do so as soon as the time is right and it becomes economically feasible. Intentions to return to the village seem to be particularly evident among young men and women whose outmigrant siblings also plan to move, or already have moved back. There are two families that come to mind as being prototypical in this regard. Both are large families, one of five and the other of eight children,

and both are close-knit and well respected in the community. The families differ in that one resides in the country on the farm it owns and operates for a living; the other owns a large house in the bourg and the father of the household is employed most of the year as a farm worker. During the winter months he works as a sort of "itinerant" butcher, traveling from one farm to the next in the area and slaughtering "on site," two, three and sometimes four pigs in a day. There is little doubt that his role is an important one in the community and he is paid handsomely for his work.

Of the eight farm-family children only the younger two have never left the community; one is in her final year of secondary school and the other, the youngest son, has opted to make his future on the farm with his father. The older six children have, at one time or another, moved away from Montaut in order to make a living. Three of them took up residence in Auch, another in the nearby city of Gimont and two more are utilizing the cooking skills they acquired locally in a prominent restaurant in Paris. To date only the eldest son and his family has returned to Montaut, from Auch, having built a new home on a corner of the farm across the road from his family's farm house. Inquiry into the migration plans of those presently residing elsewhere reveals that two of the three still living in the general region have specific intentions to build on the farm within another year while the third views his return to Montaut occurring a few years down the road. Finally, the two sons in Paris although entertaining no sure thoughts about moving back to Montaut, do affirm

their plans to seek employment somewhere in the southwestern region of Gasconne, a region known for its fine restaurants and gastronomic specialities.

In the second family, four of the five children have in the past five years married and moved to Auch. The birth of children of their own have subsequently created the need for additional living space among two of these outmigrant families. Combined with the additional encouragement of the grandparents to see more of their children and young grandchildren these couples have purchased small plots of land at the outskirts of the bourg with the intention of building homes there soon. Despite the fact that the two remaining outmigrants and their spouses have no children at this time, both couples are also firmly committed to following in the path of their older siblings. Only the youngest, currently working as a butcher's apprentice in Auch, is still living at home with his parents. He has expressed little interest in leaving the commune as did those before him.

The point to be gained from this brief description of the recent migration histories of these two established Montaut families is two fold. First, although significantly larger than average, these families illustrate in no unusual way the growing sentiments of many departed young people to become more active participants in their home community. For some this predilection has been manifested in the intensity of the ties they maintain with friends and family in Montaut, both through their expressed aspirations to be more a part of

community life and through their observable visiting patterns and other forms of communication. For others the answer has been nothing short of a calculated return migration to the rural commune. Second, the above comparison of families has been used to show that the return of young migrants to the home community is a pervasive phenomenon that, according to all indications, appears to be occurring among farm and non-farm families alike, and irrespective of land ownership. Enhanced by the greater availability of employment in the region and improved means of transportation, not to mention the higher incomes that have brought many young couples the wherewithal to build homes of their own, the power of this movement has affected the hearts and minds of virtually the entire younger generation of outmigrants from Montaut. Although it is only speculation at this time, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the momentum of this migration turnaround is likely to loom large in the reshaping of the community's social and demographic structure for some years to come.

The object of this chapter has been to explore the specific forms in which ecological expansion--the territorial redistribution of people and simultaneous diversification of their work roles--has helped the community of Montaut meet the exigencies of the changing and evermore demanding regional and national market economies. Employment opportunities in the city, ecological strains in the rural economy and improved personal mobility have brought about a new direction in Montaut's evolutionary course. In no uncertain terms this ecological

expansion has involved many deep and lasting transformations in community structure. Yet due to the tenacity of the family and community ties maintained by the outmigrant group, which in effect has been the driving force of ecological expansion, the integrity of the traditional village community has resisted being absorbed by and becoming one with the increasingly pervasive outward movement of the city. In the concluding chapter of this study some of the consequences, both positive and negative, of this resilient adaptive capacity are examined as they relate to the future of traditional communities like Montaut both in Europe and in parts of the developing world.

CONCLUSION

Comparative sociology takes on many different forms. In its most general form, comparative sociology begins with theories, concepts, methodologies and insights formulated through research carried out in a particular sociocultural context, and then attempts to apply this system of thought to similar issues located within different sociocultural contexts. The work of frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville on patterns of American culture is exemplary in this regard.¹⁰⁹ In the present study of Montaut, a comparative sociology of this type has had a strong influence on the focus of inquiry, the conceptual approach taken and the conclusions drawn. My familiarity with migration and rural community change, as well as my theoretical perspective and research experience in these areas, has been based largely on my work in the U.S. In applying this background to a foreign culture, to a rural society with a deep and lasting peasant tradition, a comparative sociology of this general form has been achieved, and has helped open several doors for further research.

However, the need remains for a more systematic comparative approach which builds beyond the single case study. The questions of why some rural communities adapt more easily to structural/ecological strains than do others, and why certain adaptive mechanisms may be institutionalized more effectively than others, are crucial to the understanding of community change in rural society. It is my contention in this thesis that a community's pattern and extent of adaptive change through

structural differentiation and the institutionalization of a migration system is strongly influenced by the integrative capacity of the broader sociocultural system to which that community is linked. It is in exploring this linkage, between the community's adaptive responses to structural/ecological strains and the higher level sociocultural context, that a systematic comparative design can make its strongest contribution.

An observed relationship among two or more variables at one level of analysis is better understood if it can be shown to "hold" or to differ when the higher level "context" or system in which it is observed is varied. In this instance, it is the objective of the comparativist to explain why the observed relationship does or does not vary across different systematic conditions; in a word, the intent is to spell out the linkages between levels of analysis with as much precision as possible.¹¹⁰ As Przeworski and Teune put it, "we are only concerned with studies in which both the patterns of relationships within each system and the role of systematic factors are examined."¹¹¹

Using the "most similar systems" design as discussed by Przeworski and Teune¹¹², and by Narrol as the method of "concomitant variation,"¹¹³ the influence of the integrative capacity of the broader sociocultural system on patterns of adaptation through migration and differentiation could be determined. Briefly, a study of this nature would involve selecting for observation two communities (or possibly more)

that are matched on those systemic characteristics that are to be held constant--population size, structure of agriculture, patterns of migration, etc. The communities would vary, on the other hand, in terms of the integrative capacities of the sociocultural systems in which they are situated; levels of religiosity and familism are two important indicators of integrative capacity. Those characteristics on which the communities differ are viewed as potential explanatory variables. In other words, in selecting communities for study it would be desirable to maximize the number of common characteristics, and minimize the number of differences--hence, the "most similar systems" design.

The contribution of the present research to the study of migration and societal development is twofold. On one hand I hope to have helped break ground in the formulation of a useful, integrated sociological approach to both the social and the spatial properties of community growth and change. On the other hand, I have reorganized and attempted to face up to difficulties often involved in spelling out the linkages between some of the more abstract theoretical notions of this approach and the very basic changes experienced by individuals and groups at the community level; an in-depth concern with the farms and families that make up the community of Montaut has served to ground my discourse.

In a more indirect way, this volume represents a modest step forward through the plethora of questions it raises for future research on the issue. Is, for example, a cultural

ecological perspective also useful for understanding the processes of structural differentiation and the redistribution of people at the regional and/or the societal levels? This study focusses largely on the differentiation of the family and its sustenance activities while touching only briefly on differentiation in other institutional settings, such as in schooling the young, or in the delivery of health services. How is differentiation in these areas linked with population redistribution? Are there regional or rural-urban differences? If so, do they too affect the geographical relocation of families? How important is the homestead in attracting migrants in other sociocultural systems? To what extent does the rural community and homestead continue to provide migrants with a form of security and a sense of belonging after their departure? And how does the process of return migration interface with the population movement we have now come to refer to as the migration turnaround? These are some of the many issues, theoretical and applied, that have surfaced and come to my attention in the course of this research project.

We see Montaut today as a traditional agricultural community in the French region of Gascogne. In recent decades the people of Montaut have experienced vast changes in how they live, how they make a living, in how they think, and even in what they believe; they are following along a path of change begun years earlier by many other communities in the more industrialized northern regions. Decades of outmigration and fertility decline have cut the population of the commune to a

fraction of its earlier size. Only very recently do our observations give us genuine reason to suspect that this deep-rooted trend has finally ceased and that a new, reverse movement may be appearing on the horizon.

Virtually every aspect of daily life, on the farm and in the bourg, has been conditioned by Montaut's growing interdependence with the city. Once largely selfsufficient in the production of food, farm families have begun to emulate their counterparts in the city, deviating significantly from the traditional diet and consuming progressively more goods purchased at the market. The family vineyard, once very common in Montaut has now all but vanished. Standards of comfort, too, have risen. Electricity, hot water, indoor plumbing and sundry kitchen conveniences have become the norm. The means for communication and personal mobility are now hardly less prevalent in Montaut than in nearby Auch or Toulouse. The telephone system will soon include the vast majority of the commune and few households are still without at least one automobile. Redfield's concept of the peasantry as "part-society" no longer applies to Montaut, as the city is no longer "held at an arm's reach."

The disappearance of the traditional system of farming in Montaut has undoubtedly been one of the most fundamental structural changes to have been brought on by the urban market economy. Subsistence, once a simple relationship between the farm family and the land it tilled, has been complicated by the vagaries of the external market. Once a matter of the

family's ability to farm and to deal effectively with environmental conditions, subsistence has further become a matter of economics--of producing by the most efficient means possible what the market demands. Today the economic organization of agriculture in Montaut is of the neotechnic ecotype, which is to say that there is an increasing dependence on external sources of energy and higher levels of technology. Previously, the system of agriculture in Montaut relied on relatively low levels of farm technology and only animal and human energy sources were used, as is characteristic of the less developed, paleotechnic ecotype.

The path Montaut has followed in moving from one eco-type to another is evolutionary and, from a cultural ecological standpoint, has taken place for specifically adaptive reasons. In fact, it is argued here that the pattern of Montaut's development has occurred as a series of adaptive responses to the changing ecological balance between the people of the commune and the land they occupy. These adaptations, however, have not required a change in either the land or in the biological makeup of those who occupy it. Rather, the change has occurred in the "cushion of culture" that separates these two factors--in the particular system of ideas, institutions and technological artifacts that has evolved over many generations and continues to be utilized by the villagers of Montaut to cope with their particular social and environmental circumstances. In other words, Montaut's adaptation to variations in its natural habitat on the one hand, and to

the mounting pressures of the external market on the other, has involved a relatively gradual restructuring of this sociocultural system in a way that has continually helped restore a degree of balance to the population's ecology, while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of the community.

Environmental pressures on the community and pressures from the market economy are alike in one fundamental respect; both can affect the relationship between the supply of resources and the population's demand for these resources and, consequently, both are capable of inducing a situation of scarcity, a situation to which the community is impelled to adapt. Strains caused by variations in the environment have been described here as "natural scarcity," and do not extend beyond the simple biological relationship between the size of a population and the availability of resources from its habitat. Droughts and floods, for example, can cause "natural scarcities." Although there is always a great deal of concern among the farmers in Montaut as to the possibilities of natural catastrophe, it is the deeper yet more subtle, less comprehensible "social scarcity" evoked by the urban market that has been the real cause for adaptive change in Montaut. The expansion of the market economy has come to affect virtually every family in Montaut, both in the goods and services it now provides and in the demands it makes for farm products. As these market ties are intensified, the contrast is made increasingly visible between the traditional standards of living found in Montaut and those found in Auch and Toulouse and other regional cities. Hence, families of the commune are

lured to participate in the urban market. The farmers' level of market participation, however, is governed by their ability to produce a surplus of goods; consequently, their demand for land grows. As the supply of land is fixed, farmers who wish to expand are faced with a form of scarcity, a scarcity that has been induced by the exchange economy.

In order to minimize the effects of this strain, the families of Montaut have sought to respond with a number of adaptive changes. The principal forms of institutional adaptation have been the reorganization of work roles and the development of a migration system integral to family and community structure. These institutional changes have not, however, developed independently of one another; for as this study has evidenced, they are integrated elements of the same adaptive process. By and large, the reorganization of work roles in Montaut has meant a growing differentiation and specialization of sustenance activities. But in order for this process to take effect, families have been pried apart and the community boundary system has been extended into the diversified urban habitat. In other words, the institutionalization of migration systems and the concomitant differentiation of Montaut's occupational structure are not alternative adaptive mechanisms; they comprise the spatial and social dimensions of a single transformation--a progressive ecological expansion into the urban habitat. The new spatial configuration of the community has required the dislocation of younger generations from their parental families, a process that has fostered a reorganization of the family in the direction of the more

space-independent, "stem-family" system. Of course the crucial element in Montaut's ecological expansion has been the strong ties that the commune's outmigrants have maintained with their families and community back home; for it is precisely by these ties that the newly evolved community and family structures have been defined.

The scarcity of land in Montaut has created the greatest hardship on those with the least. Landless laborers were among the first to seek off-farm employment, followed by the sons and daughters from families with the smallest holdings. The norms that define what is an acceptable level of living in Montaut have been profoundly influenced by the commune's growing contact with the city. The power of these norms has forced many farm families to reconsider the viability of their farms; where four or five hectares was once thought to be quite sufficient to meet a family's needs, holdings of forty or fifty hectares are viewed by most young farmers today as the minimum required for a successful operation. The growing secondary and tertiary sectors of the urban economy have provided new employment alternatives for those who lack sufficient land and capital to make an acceptable living in agriculture.

The data presented in Chapter VII have demonstrated that the diversification of work roles carried out by those in the commune has meant a significant territorial dispersion of these activities--an ecological expansion of the community that extends into the urban sector. As sustenance activities are dispersed, so too are those who perform them; post-World War

II patterns of migration clearly point this out. Before automobile ownership became prevalent (before the mid-1960's), virtually all those who sought employment in the city were obliged also to reside there. Today, automobiles have reduced the "friction of space" considerably, permitting increasing numbers of families in the community to work in the city and continue to reside in the commune.

Farm families that have not left the land because they have holdings or rental properties sufficient to make a living, like those now working in the city, have been obliged to turn toward a more specialized mode of production. Polyproductive farming, once the norm in Montaut, has been replaced by a monoproduktive farming system. The vast majority of Montaut's farmers are now engaged in large-scale cereal production; a few have concentrated in dairy farming. As farms in Montaut have grown and specialized over time, there has been a necessary parallel shift in the level of technology employed. Although some mechanization of the farming system in Montaut had taken place as early as the 1920's, it was not until after the Second World War that motorized agriculture came on the scene. Data on this subject described in earlier chapters show that tractors, for example, did not come into common use until the 1950's, and combine harvesters not until the 1960's. In terms of the input of labor, quite naturally, in Montaut's shift from a traditional system of peasant agriculture to a system of highly mechanized production oriented system, the demand for extra-familial farm labor has receded

vastly and is now next to nothing. Consequently, a major component of the flow of migration from Montaut has been comprised of unemployed farm workers.

The pattern of outmigration from Montaut does not differ profoundly from that characteristic of other farming communities in this or other regions of France. To some extent migrants have spread into surrounding rural areas, but to a far larger degree they have concentrated in the regional urban centers, particularly the city of Auch. A closer look at those who have migrated to Auch in the past fifteen years has shown that the great majority of these moves have been coordinated with a change in family life cycle or career status. More and more frequently young couples are moving to the city at the time of their marriage. Traditionally, newly married couples continued to live under the same roof with the parents of either one spouse or the other, depending largely on their prospects for eventually taking over the family farm or business. Today, relatively few young people see a future in farming. Thus, the once prevalent extended-family system has made room for a branch-family system in which the children migrate and set up households of their own at the time of marriage. Other life cycle and career changes that have often been associated with a relocation in space are the birth of a child, the death of a spouse or parent, the start of a new job or related training, and retirement.

In spite of the territorial separation of migrants and their families in Montaut, migration has not brought about a

disintegration of the interactional bonds maintained between the two groups. A concentrated investigation of migrants to Auch has found that visiting patterns and other indicators of their ties to the family and home community are intense, and that these migrants have continued to play a very significant part in the community of Montaut. In a subjective sense, too, these migrants have continued to regard Montaut as "home." Moreover, their social and economic lives in the city have also become very real to families and friends still living in Montaut, thereby influencing their needs, wants and normative expectations accordingly.

Further evidence of the strength of the bonds maintained between migrants and the home community has been brought out in an earlier discussion of the recent patterns of immigration to Montaut. Over the last three or four years, the long-term flow of young people to the city has been counterbalanced by a reverse flow of families from the city. The significant observation in regard to the migrants' continued attachment to Montaut, the home community, has been that better than half the recent immigrants are former village residents and their families who are now moving back to Montaut after as many as twenty years of life in the city. This finding is clearly supportive of the notion that migrants truly do comprise the outer fringes of the community boundary system.

Thus, as this thesis suggests, we must abandon the usual political definition of a community, i.e., its property boundaries, in favor of a more functional definition based

on systems of interaction. As the dominant patterns of interaction are extended into the city, most notably the nearby city of Auch, Montaut has become a "bi-centric" community. While a large proportion of the labor force is now employed in Auch, and many administrative, economic, educational, and recreational functions are now carried out in Auch, the village continues to operate as a cohesive unit. Institutions such as the church, the town hall, the primary school, the smithy, the farmers cooperative, the salle des fêtes (grange hall), and the cafe are still functional as socially integrative elements of the community. So, as evidence suggests, Montaut has not become a "bedroom community" to Auch and other urbanized areas, nor, to be sure, has it maintained the self-sufficiency it once had. Montaut is in the process of rapid transition, the end of which is difficult to foresee. So long as there is an imbalance between the demands of the industrial society and the social organization of Montaut as a community, adaptive changes will occur. These changes will most likely appear in the form of increased linkages with the urban social system.

The significance of the migration turnaround in Montaut must not be underestimated. Although it is only now getting underway, all signs suggest that the trend is not a transitional one and that it may have serious implications for the community's future. With respect to that segment of the turnaround comprised of returning migrants, this research has found that among the outmigrants still living in Auch and elsewhere,

a large proportion have made definite plans to move back to Montaut along with their families in the near future. Many others have expressed more distant intentions of returning when the time is right--at marriage, at the birth of a child, at retirement, or as soon as it becomes economically feasible to do so.

The turnaround of course, is also composed of newcomers, those families of urban origin who are moving out from the city into the surrounding countryside in search of more space and a less harried way of life. This dispersion of the urban population into the rural hinterland is not unique to Gers or to southwest France. It is a socio-demographic movement that has been observed in recent years by sociologists and rural demographers both in the United States and in Europe. Although the effects of this turnaround on the rural communities at the receiving end are still unclear, Price and Clay have identified a number of areas of potential strain.¹¹⁴ For one, they suggest, a community's institutional infrastructure can be strained as a consequence of rapid population growth. Problems of this nature have been termed "institutional overload" and many arise as the influx of new residents intensifies the competition for scarce jobs or places demands beyond the capacity of many community services and institutions. A second area of concern involves the socio-cultural differences between local residents and newcomers. If the values and normative expectations of the two groups are seriously dissimilar, these differences could lead to conflict, or a "culture clash" situation.

The problem of institutional overload in Montaut does not appear, as of yet, to be cause for special concern. As the majority of the newcomers to Montaut are from Auch, where they continue to be employed, and to which they continue to commute, they pose little threat to local residents seeking employment in the commune. Nor does the arrival of newcomers seem to be a burden on local institutions. Rather than transferring to the primary school in Montaut, all but a few of the young children from these migrant families have continued at their schools in Auch. Other institutions such as the church, various social organizations and small businesses in the commune all welcome their prospects for growth. Although it is too early to say at this point, the demand for more and improved municipal services is likely to be seen as something of a problem in the future. Water and sewage systems in Montaut are currently incomplete and the need for an improved road and public transportation system is soon to become a matter of some concern to newcomers and oldtimers alike.

In terms of the dissimilar sociocultural orientations of the immigrants and the local residents of Montaut, here, too, no major problems have surfaced. For the most part, newcomers and oldtimers appear to be living side by side in harmony. But there is a very basic reason for this absence of conflict; it is because these urban families that have moved to Montaut have maintained their community affiliations in Auch and have not become integrated into the local rural community. In other words, just as the outmigrants from Montaut

have extended their community boundary system into the city, so too have these migrants from Auch extended the boundaries of their urban communities into the rural milieu. As pointed out above, newcomers to Montaut have continued to hold jobs in Auch and to send their children to school there. Naturally, in traveling to work and school each day in Auch, relationships with families and friends still located there are relatively easy to maintain. Shopping and other needs also continue to be met by the merchants and businesses in the city, and there seems to be little possibility for these ways to change. Since social interaction between the immigrants and local people is kept at a minimum, any opportunity for building social and economic allegiances is stifled. Even the Father at the church of Saint Michel has been unsuccessful at attracting newcomers to his Sunday services. By the same token, however, Montaut's political body, the conseil municipal, has been dominated by a small and relatively prosperous group of farmers for many years, and unless the newcomers begin to be integrated into the local community, it seems quite unlikely that this pattern will be broken for some time to come.

The question of whether or not the ecological approach developed in this paper can be used to help understand the migration turnaround as it has occurred in Montaut, and elsewhere, is a complex one and touches on several issues that have not surfaced in the context of this study thus far. We must first try to consider the levels at which the migration turnaround is based on the community's relationship to its

environment. In previous chapters I have looked at migration as a necessary component to the differentiation of work roles, as the spatial dimension of change in the community's exploitation of its habitat. But, does the urban-to-rural migration now appearing in Montaut and elsewhere also involve a change in the organization of work roles or in the level of technology that is brought to bear in deriving sustenance from the environment?

To some extent the decentralization of manufacturing industries and the rapid expansion of the services sector in rural areas has accompanied the turnaround. Our knowledge of the migration turnaround in its early stages, however, suggests that it is not necessarily paralleled by an adaptive change in sustenance activities. Rather, it is a movement that appears to be based in part on non-economic factors--on the values, attitudes and residential preferences of those who leave the city for a different kind of life in the country. Because the migration turnaround does not occur for specifically adaptive reasons, that is, because it is not properly viewed as an adaptive response to an imbalance between a population's size and its resource base, the ecological approach to the turnaround has only limited applicability.

Indirectly, however, the migration turnaround does relate to the ecological context in which it occurs. Of course a fundamental aspect to the relationship between a population and its environment is physical mobility, i.e., man's ability to move about freely and rapidly in his habitat. In large

measure this mobility depends on the development of transportation technology—the bicycle, the automobile and mass transit, for example. In Montaut, the development of improved means of personal mobility has permitted residents of the community to carry out work roles outside the traditional boundaries of the commune. By the same token, this mobility has given urbanites the option of living out their residential preferences by relocating in the countryside and commuting to work each day in the city. Not all turnaround areas are within commuting distance of urban centers, however, and in such cases (many counties in northern Michigan, for example) the immigration of families to the city has indeed been accompanied by a change in the occupational structure, primarily an expansion of the services sector.

At a second level, too, the migration turnaround can be viewed from an ecological perspective. Although this research has defined man's cultural ecology largely in terms of the organization of work roles and the forms of technology he develops to draw sustenance from his environment, man's values, beliefs, perspectives and sentiments vis-a-vis his environment are also a part of his cultural ecology. Insofar as the migration turnaround is a reflection of a change in man's view of and feelings about his environment, then it may well be that this new urban-to-rural trend in migration can be worked into the ecological framework in a profitable way. Clearly, this is a research problem that warrants further investigation. Suggestive questions in this direction ask what it is about

certain rural environments that is attracting so many people, and similarly, what it is about certain urban environments that repels them. Whether the concept of adaptation can actually be used to come to grips with this reverse migratory trend back to the countryside remains to be seen. In any case, viewed in this study as a specific mode of institutional change that a community must undergo in order to achieve and maintain a viable relationship with its habitat, the adaptation concept has proven to be a useful one in coming to understand the forces and mechanisms of change in Montaut.

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12. Calvin Goldscheider, op. cit., p. 299.

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14. Figures obtained from the commune's cadastre, 1954 and 1975.
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16. Census figures on the year of construction for all dwellings in the department of Gers, which includes the newer, urbanized areas, indicate that something less than half the dwellings in 1975 were built in this century:

Proportion of Dwellings in Gers
by Year of Construction in 1975

<u>Year of Construction</u>	<u>%</u>
Before 1871	46.6
1871-1914	18.8
1915-1948	5.0
1949-1961	6.8
1962-1967	8.3
After 1968	14.5

17. As in footnote 16, figures are not available for rural Gers alone, and because of the large proportion of new dwellings in urban Gers, there is probably a strong upward bias on the percentages reported in Table 5.
18. M. C. de Gaulejac and J. Duplex, op. cit., p. 129.
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Telephones in Service in the Department of
Gers from 1970 to 1976

<u>Year</u>	<u>Telephones</u>	<u>% increase since 1970</u>
1970	9,751	
1974	14,211	46
1975	15,936	63
1976	19,303	98

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92. It should be noted that the pattern of land ownership among residents of Montaut overlaps the geographical/political boundaries of the commune used in the cadastral surveys. Therefore there is a certain "haziness" about actual farm size since the landholdings of Montaut farmers occasionally cross over into neighboring communes, and vice versa. Yet as all indications suggest that "cross-commune" land ownership strikes a more or less even balance, it is felt that the cadastral figures on total farm land and its use can be employed with a high degree of confidence.

93. The distribution of farms according to number of permanent farm hands in 1955 and 1970 is as follows:

Number of Farm Hands	1955		1970	
	Farms	(%)	Farms	(%)
1	214,000	(65.7)	137,000	(72.1)
2	64,000	(19.6)	29,000	(15.3)
3-4	32,000	(9.8)	15,600	(7.9)
5-10	12,000	(3.7)	6,500	(3.4)
10+	4,000	(1.2)	2,500	(1.3)
TOTAL	326,000	(100.0)	190,600	(100.0)
% of all farms=	17.6		11.5	

Source: Michel Blanc, Les Paysanneries Françaises.
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Although smaller in number, women employed as permanent farm workers before World II disappeared far more rapidly than did the men. For example, in 1929 women supplied 27% of all permanent hired farm labor in France. By 1955 the proportion of women had fallen to just 15%. See Françoise Langlois Les Salaries Agricoles en France. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin.

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96. Marcel Jollivet and Henri Mendras, op. cit., p. 49 observe that agriculture in southwest France mechanized very early on; one reason for this is that farmers have welcomed any innovation that has helped them alleviate their difficulties in cultivating the region's hard earth.

97. "Tractorization" is a concept originally developed by Harry K. Schwarzweller in his study of social change in a German agricultural community. For further discussion see Schwarzweller, "Tractorization of agriculture: The social history of a German Village," Sociologia Ruralis, 1971, vol. XI (2): 127-139.
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102. Figures obtained from the Institut National de Statistique et d'Etudes Economique (INSEE), reported in Présent et Avenir de Midi-Pyrénées, Chambre Régionale de Commerce et d'Industrie Midi-Pyrénées, 1977, p. 32.
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