

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHANGING LEADERSHIP  
PATTERNS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Religion and politics in many parts of the Pacific islands cannot be separated from each other as both were integral part of the daily activities of the islanders. This is particularly so among the different tribal groups in Papua New Guinea. Because there had been different tribal groups, means at getting at power and status differed from society to society. As a result of this, my proposition in this thesis will not be applicable to all the different tribal groups and cultures of the country. Therefore, to support my proposition I selected three societies and also give two casestudies in this paper. A general proposition is that some tribal groups in Papua New Guinea, bigmen became leaders in their tribal groups after having gone through a series of religious rituals. This is so because, a lot of the people saw the religious rituals as very important for power and status. Often those that go through such rituals were given ranking in their own society.

After having gone through these rituals they are considered to have gained the sacred knowledge and the ability to control spirits and the supernatural world. Many claimed to have gone through this as a rite of passage that allowed them to lead the people. This justified their role as bigmen in their respective villages. I discuss in this paper how this mentality or attitude of the villagers has applied throughout the years, despite the many changes in the country.

Religion has often been used for political ends by

leaders throughout the world. The political movement for independence in India led by Ghandi, for instance, had its roots in the teaching of the Hindu religion; Buddhism was used in Burma, while the Indonesians used the Moslem faith to help drive the Dutch out. The Black Civil Right leaders also used certain Christian religious values to fight racial issues in the United States. Dr. Martin Luther King was a Methodist minister. This has also been the case in early Europe, the Middle East, South East Asia, Africa and Latin American countries. Thus, religion is a driving force for people who feel that they have been oppressed or depressed by a dominant power. In other words, religion had often been used for political purposes, to introduce a new order. Interestingly, Lanternari in Religions of the Oppressed (Lanternari, 1970) gives several examples of these politico-religious movements in many parts of the world, including Melanesia.

In many parts of what are now the independent Melanesian states, what the anthropologist called cargo cults arose. These cargo cults and other social movements were in the first instance, started because the Melanesians could not explain the arrival of the European and the vast quantities of cargo brought in by the European. After some time these cults turned anti-European because the people were not able to get the wealth so easily, which can be seen as early forms of revolt against the oppressors, the colonial masters. I discuss the relevance of these movements and the rise of political nationalism later in the paper. Significantly, I believe that these cargo cults have left a mental legacy among the villagers to expect the "new bigmen to

deliver the desired cargo."

In this paper I discuss the roles of religion and politics and the effects they have had on changing leadership patterns in Papua New Guinea. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze the relationship between the roles of the "leaders" of the past and today's elected leaders. The role of the Melanesian Bigmen and Cargo Cults has been discussed by Cochrane (1970), while Finney has discussed the role of bigmen and business (Finney, 1973, 1987). These two works have focused on different societies; Cochrane's work is a comparative study of bigmen and cargo cults in Elema, Vailala and the Solomon Islands Marching Rule. Ben Finney on the other hand, discusses attitudes of people towards the development of modern businessmen in Goroka valley of the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. My aim in this paper is to discuss how people have adopted the traditional forms into the present day political system in three particular societies, Wantoat of Morobe Province, the Yali followers of the Southern Madang Province and followers of Paliau Moloat on Manus. Although, bigmen and businessmen will be discussed, the main focus of the paper will be on the attitudes the people have towards modern day political parties and their platforms. The attitudes of the people to changing leadership patterns have not been accounted for in these works.

#### Statement of the problem.

Despite major changes in economic, political, social and religious systems in Papua New Guinea during the 20th century, there is a continuity of attitudes among the people. In this

paper I will show how the different roles of leaders changed to fit into the introduced systems, and also how the traditional role of the bigmen persist today. The main argument here is that although Papua New Guinea's political system changed outwardly, the underlying attitudes have continued. The system had not completely changed, but had remained continuous with precontact values and beliefs. With this argument in mind, I will focus my discussion on four propositions and try to analyze them:

1. According to the attitudes the people have towards present day leaders, the role and functions of traditional bigmen has not changed much.
2. The oppression faced during colonial rule and the false promises made during the cargo cult era still linger on today. The people expect present day leaders to deliver them from the misery and to get desired goods and services often promised during the political campaign, as the former cult leaders have failed to deliver the goods.
3. The religious concept of mana, (having been given a right to rule by a god) is still persistent. This is because a leader had gone through a rite, and therefore has the right to rule the people. One is accepted by the people as a leader, and can be seen as a worshipped or a revered person.
4. The political campaign tactics and platforms in themselves promote a cargo cultic mentality among the people.

The paper will be divided into five chapters, in chapter one I define and discuss the role of Melanesian bigmen.

The significance of religious rituals in ascertaining the importance of a bigmen will also be discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter discusses the introduced leadership patterns introduced during colonial rule. Although initial colonial establishment in Papua New Guinea was in 1800's (1884 in German New Guinea and the same year in British New Guinea), not all parts of the country were influenced by colonial rule. Therefore, the introduced leadership patterns really spread throughout the entire country between 1900 and 1945. In this chapter I discuss the tultuls and luluais in German New Guinea and the Village Constables in British New Guinea. These were the imposed "agents" selected by the colonial administrators to ensure law and order in the villages. It should also be noted here that about the same time missionaries were also active in many parts of the country spreading their new religion. As a result of missionary involvement, they also appointed their "messengers". These were the pastors, the catechist, and other mission helpers. I will discuss the impact these two forms of leaders had on the beliefs and the role of the traditional bigmen. Between 1945 and the decade that led to the push for political independence, there grew another set of leaders in Papua New Guinea. These were what has generally been labeled as cargo cultist. These cargo cults had a significant impact on the attitudes of the people even to this day. I will discuss the role of these cargo cult leaders and the relationship between these leaders and the traditional bigmen. There was indeed a continuity of the traditional system, as I intend to show in my discussion.

The third chapter discusses the modern leadership in Papua New Guinea. There are several types of modern leaders in Papua New Guinea today, these are church workers, bisinisman, and councilors/politicians. Having outlined their roles, I will relate them to the continuity of former leadership roles and attitudes of the people towards these new leaders.

The final chapter will present two case studies to show the linkages or the changing roles of the leaders in the country. I hope these case studies will show the link between the former and the new leaders, the attitudes of the people, and whether they have changed their attitudes over time. I take a case study of Yali Singina of the Yali movement in Madang Province and the Paliau Movement from the Manus Province. I also will be adding to these case studies, the impact of such leadership changes within my own region, the Wantoat of Morobe Province.

## I: MELANESIAN BIGMEN

Traditional Melanesian societies (except for a few for example Mekeo or the Trobriands) had bigmen, as their leaders. The bigmen rose in these societies as a result of isolation, and the separate communities developed their own political groupings based on clan ties or warfare alliances. The Europeans, having experienced the Polynesian chiefly system, thought it would be the same in Melanesia. This was not the case. The people were scattered and difficult to reach because of the difficult terrains. There was no single king or ruler that ruled as in Polynesian societies. As a result of this, early scholars developed the idea of the bigmen, as leaders among the different tribal groups in Melanesia.

Apart from the term "cargo cults", Melanesia is famous for the anthropological term; bigmen. Amongst the major work on the Melanesian bigmen had been Codrington (1891) who realized that there was no king or chiefly ruler in the Fijian islands. Among the latest scholarly articles is one by Marshall Sahlins, who discussed differences between the political types in Polynesia and Melanesian in; Poor men, rich men, bigmen, chief: political types in Melanesia and Polynesia (Sahlins, 1963). Lamont Lindstrom gives a very interesting account of how the term bigmen developed in Bigmen: a short terminological history (Lindstrom, 1981: 900-905) He argues in this paper that bigmen was an anthropological term used by anthropologist

for over forty years. However, before that, early scholars had used the term chief. Through time individual scholars have used a variety of terms, amongst these terms were headmen, strongmen, centermen, manager and bigmen. It was not until between the 1960s and 1970s that the term bigman was accepted in the discipline of anthropology. Perhaps an article of interest for the purpose of my paper is again by Lindstrom titled; Doctor, lawyer, wisemen, priest: bigmen and knowledge in Melanesia.

**(Lindstrom, 1984:291-309)** This article is of interest to me because, as the title indicates, a bigmen in many parts of Papua New Guinea performed the roles of a healer, mediator, and religious priest or even a prophet. By performing these roles, we see here the religious connotations and the rituals and the possible reverence to Melanesian bigmen. The religious significance of these roles I discuss later in Chapter Three when I discuss cargo cults. Furthermore, knowledge was very crucial in order to play a role of a bigmen. A lot of the men had kept their role secretive, in order that their status was kept or roles remained. Surely if the secret knowledge was revealed to the young ones then there was no need for a religious prophet or a priest as every body would know how to perform the roles. The young ones had to go through a series of rituals before being able to know the secret knowledge, as, for instance in the case of the Wantoat of Morobe Province. **(Kaima, 1987)**

An article by Bill Standish also outlines the need for a review of the bigmen model in; The bigman model reconsidered: power

and stratification in Chimbu. (Standish, 1978) He argues that the model should be reconsidered, as in the case of Chimbu there are indications of a hereditary control of power and wealth. This is really the case in many parts of Papua New Guinea today, as the monetary system had been introduced and new leaders, especially the children of the former leaders, are accumulating wealth, and at the same time dispersing the wealth in feasts and other gatherings. This, I will show later in Chapter Four when I discuss the present political campaigning, in a lot of cases is based on power and wealth. To build up a power base and wealth today for political purposes by hereditary means may not be a traditional role of a Melanesian bigmen. However, to win votes he has to sponsor feasts and even distribute cash in many cases. In some cases this can be seen as bribery, but it is part of Papua New Guinea politics.

#### I: 1. Role of a bigmen

There are several important characteristics of the ideal Melanesian bigmen. Unlike the Polynesian or Micronesian chiefs, the position of Melanesian bigmen was often ascribed and not hereditary. Young men (not women in most cases) who desired to be bigmen had to demonstrate their qualifications. In the case of a tribal bigmen, one had to be able to lead in warfare, be a mediator and organizer, and have the necessary abilities to lead the people. In terms of religion, a bigmen had to have gone through a series of religious rituals and have secret knowledge, as Lindstrom put it; be a doctor, a lawyer, wiseman, or a priest and have gained knowledge in a given society. (Lindstrom, op.cit.)

In order to be a bigman one has to compete with the other aspiring young men, and prove oneself, and be recognized in a society. Generally for the purpose of this paper a Melanesian bigman will be seen as a village leader who gives feasts, settles disputes, works as an intermediary between human beings and spiritual ancestors (priest), and a man with skillful secret knowledge. He is generally seen to have a lot of wealth, which he redistributes thus creating obligations amongst the people. He is also thought to have religious secret knowledge. If he does not have this knowledge, he can consult the other specialists in his society.

Having outlined the role of a bigman, I wish to discuss the relationship between the bigmen role and traditional religious values. This is necessary because the religious role of a bigman is very important, in particular when it comes to religious ceremonies. I have shown this in the case of my own society when I discussed the rise of money cults in Wantoat **(Kaima, 1987b)**. In order to acquire secret knowledge one has to go through a series of secret religious rituals. How then, is the bigman role related to religion in many parts of Melanesia?

#### I: 2. Relationship of "bigmen" leadership to religion.

Religion and leadership entail power and status in many societies. In the case of many Melanesian societies one becomes a bigman through a variety of ways, but mostly, it is ability of a man that is taken into account first. For many of

the Melanesian societies, yearly religious ceremonies and rituals were an integral part of life. It was through these ceremonies that the young were initiated, rituals associated with sorcery were done, rituals for warfare, hunting and gathering performed.

I will give an example from my own society to show how the religious rituals have been able to produce a set or group of leaders that link religion and leadership. Anything to do with sacred rituals and religion in a society are often handled by one person, the only one selected in that given society. For the Wantoat, a yearly ritual needs a lot of preparation and planning, and a lot of religious rituals are offered to "please the ancestors for a successful venture". The only person who perform these rituals is one who has gone through a series of rituals and has become an expert. He alone will decide who will replace him at a later stage. The selection of such a person is based entirely on the training one receives and the ability of the person to acquire the skills.

These religious rituals are referred to as takwan. Takwan is a complex term that can be roughly translated as sacred. It can be a substance, an object, a dance or a ritual. The person involved in it also becomes a takwan, he is not supposed to be observed by others while performing the ritual. Accordingly, women in the past have been killed if they observed the ritual accidentally. As a result, they were often warned in advance before the ceremony.

The leadership implications of the takwan rituals are clear, for, according to the people, the person who comes out of the ritual is given a special rank or status in society. He has passed through the ritual and so is given another ranking or role. However, one is not enough. He has to go through a series of rituals before he becomes a pandet,; the chief trainer. A pandet literally controls all the religious activity in the village. The consequence of this is that all the people of the village must obey and listen to what he says. If one does not listen to what has been said, there are social and spiritual sanctions imposed. Very common is the belief that the members of a family that has broken the rules are bound to encounter problems in the future.

In Wantoat during the later years the implications of this was very strong. This was especially so when the money cults arose. I discuss the role of the pandet and takwan in the next chapter. These religious beliefs and rituals had an immense impact on the rise of cargo cults and the later political development in Wantoat, as we will see.

## II. INTRODUCED LEADERSHIP 1900-1945

Like many former colonies throughout the world colonial powers brought with them their own preconceived ideas, religions, political system and values, and imposed them on the people of Papua New Guinea. This was done to help make administration simple and to help the work of colonial rulers. In many of the Pacific islands, in particular New Guinea, the people were divided into separate tribal groups. It was difficult to administer the isolated tribal groups. The option left for the colonial rulers was to arbitrarily select local "leaders" to help them rule the colony. I will explain the process of selection later in this chapter.

I focus in this chapter on the effects of these introduced leadership patterns on Papua New Guinea. Much of Papua New Guinea history has been recorded in a variety of books. However, a brief summary is necessary here. The island of New Guinea was divided by colonial powers into three different administrative units. The Dutch got what is now Irian Jaya in 1826, the British got the southern part in October 1884, while the Germans got the islands and the northern part of the main island a month later in November 1884. What was German New Guinea became a League of Nations Mandated Territory after World War I, while British New Guinea became a territory of Australia. Soon after World War II, the two territories were administered by the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU). This administration went on for years and the Australian government

continued to administer the two Territories of Papua and New Guinea together. The effects of these different administrative decisions on the leadership patterns are discussed later in this chapter.

After the declaration of the empires, the colonial powers went their own way in trying to explore and administer the territories. The Germans did not do much in terms of exploring the territory, as they were mostly interested in the large copra plantations and the recruiting of laborers to work on these plantations. Much of the economic activity was based in the islands of Bougainville, New Ireland and East New Britain. Rabaul was the main administrative headquarters of the territory. It is therefore true to say that the colonial influence in German New Guinea was concentrated in a few parts of the New Guinea islands.

In British New Guinea, like in their other territories and protectorates in the Pacific, the British wanted the local natives to run their areas, with British supervision. Much of Papua was therefore left for the village officers to help run. The village constables as a result were selected by the British to help in the local level politics of the villages. In most cases the men selected as village constables were already influential in the villages before the arrival of the British.

### **II:1. Tultul, Luluai and Village Constables.**

As indicated above, the Germans in New Guinea had their

own administrative policies and made their own rules for the indigenous people to help in the process of administration. The village leaders were selected according to the influence an individual had over the village population. The tultul was a messenger, a person able to communicate with the German officials and the village people. The Luluai was the village higher chief, one of the most noticeable leaders in a village. As the terms may indicate, these village leaders were selected by the Germans in the hope that their policies would be implemented with the assistance of these village leaders. The tultul was able to speak pidgin and had the ability to converse with the visiting officials and the people. In other words, he was a translator for the villagers and the officials. The village headman was the overall head of the village, a notable leader of the village the people looked up to at the time of colonial contact.

The village constable in British New Guinea was appointed by the administrators mainly to maintain law and order in Papuan villages. He acted as a intermediary between village people and colonial rulers, maintained law and order, and solved disputes among the people. He was the figurehead and a person looked up to by the village people.

## II:2. Missionary, teacher, and Catechist.

While the administrations were imposing these separate leaders, there was also a need for missionary work among the villages. As a result of this, the missions also appointed their

leaders in these villages. The mission-appointed leaders had different roles to play in the villages. The missionary (usually a whitemen) was the most revered leader of them all. Similarly, for the Wantoat the pandets (teachers of secret knowledge in initiation huts) were the most revered people in the past. They were the ones that performed the takwan rituals during the initiation ceremonies. While at the same time they also appointed local people to help in the spread of the new religion. Amongst the new appointed mission workers were the catechist, the pastors, and the other mission workers, including translators, and teachers. All mission workers in Wantoat language were referred to as the pandets, meaning they were the ones that helped trained the people to be converted into the new religion. As a result the people interpreted the role of the new pandets, as having performed the role of the traditional pandets, although for a new religion.

The problem with these different leaders was that a lot of them were appointed in villages who had traditional bigmen. The significance of this is that most of the people were now trying to follow several leaders at the same time. The people, therefore, had to adjust to the new situation and be able to cope with the demands of these different leaders. As a result most of the activities of the traditional "bigmen" had to be constrained. The roles of former leaders did not totally disappear, but rather went underground. They were bound to surface again in the future, as I will show later. A good example of people adjusting to the demands of these separate leaders can be

taken from my own village. The tultul was the main spokesman for the village, and villager's daily activities had to be broken up and rearranged so that the people divide their days equally for the different leaders. For instance, Sunday was for the people to rest and worship in the churches. On this day nobody did anything, they were to rest and visit friends and relatives. Mondays were left for the people to do their own garden work, Tuesdays were for the people to work for the administration, Wednesdays were left for mission, and so on. This meant for lot of the villagers a neglect of their traditional yearly activities. The neglect in these rituals meant that the "pandets" (teachers initiation huts) lost their purpose in the village. He had no role to play in the village, as the rituals were often abolished if they were considered to be heathen by the missionaries. But the traditional roles of bigmen, chiefs, and especially priest were practised underground. The priest role was important during the rise of cult activity much later on. In particular for the Wantoat, the leaders (priest) of the money-making rituals were one time mission educated or workers. The same is possible for other traditional village leaders in many parts of Papua New Guinea.

The people had lived through these changes in the leadership patterns during the colonial period. Having lived through it and experiencing the demands and the effects of new leaders the villagers had to make adjustments to their lifestyles. At the same time there was hope for a brighter future and the rewards for having followed the new religion and the

administration. During this period (1945-1960s) most parts of the country had been explored and the people had adopted and/or adjusted to the new forces of change. One of these major changes was in leadership patterns. There were, as outlined above, those that were imposed and selected by the colonial administrators.

After going through these processes, the people had to think of alternatives. Common among these alternatives was the amalgamation of new systems with that of the old. In political terms the people were introduced the new election process, but they elected their leaders based on attributes and values. I discuss in the next chapter how the "new election process" was amalgamated into the traditional forms. For a lot of the people elections were new and there was not enough time for the people to make adjustment to the introduced system. The House of Assembly elections in 1964 was a good example for the people to select their leaders for the first time in an introduced democratic system of voting. Nothing really had changed. The people voted for their own relatives without knowing the significance of the new system of voting. The next one in 1968 showed a similar pattern, as the people voted without any attempt to understand the process involved. While this was a weakness, the political drive towards independence was also quite quick for many of the people. Political self government was granted quickly on the country after only the third general elections in 1972, and the country was granted full political independence in 1975. This was indeed a very fast drive towards

political independence. Much of this rush to political independence was due to pressure from within the educated Pangu Party leaders and also from overseas. Many of the people in the interior of the country opposed political independence. This can be justified since much of their territory was only discovered less than a hundred years ago, and they felt they were not fully prepared for political independence. It is a process that a lot of them will take a while to fully understand. Much of this is analyzed in the following chapter.

Let us look at the impact of the new religion and the aftermath of it on the religious beliefs and values of the people of Papua New Guinea. This is also a significant factor in the political role of the present day leaders of the country. Being so religious before the arrival of the colonial powers the people took up religious options to restore their pride and hope for the future, based on traditional beliefs and values.

### **II:3. Appearance of "cargo cult" leaders.**

Much literature has been written on what scholars now know as "cargo cults." Although, the role of a cult leader and the religious significance of these leaders were discussed, a little had been done in relation to the present day political implications. My purpose in this chapter is to relate how the religious rituals of these new cult movements, and the importance of the new cult leaders, was a significant part of the renewed religious phenomena in Melanesia during colonial rule, the drive

towards independence and soon after independence and, for some, even to the present.

I do not see cargo cults as simply ritual - associated phenomena in which Melanesians laid down and waited for their ancestors to arrive with vast quantities of cargo. Their attitudes and actions changed through time, as the people adjusted and adopted to new social situations. The political significance of these movements has been discussed briefly in the past. Amongst the earliest discussion was by Guiart, who label these movements as Forerunners to Melanesian nationalism (Guiart, 1951). This was followed by Peter Worsley who, in The Trumphet shall sound, analyzed cult movements as proto-nationalist movements fighting against the colonial rule. (Worsley, 1968:254-256) Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford in Protest and dissent discuss separate protest movements in different Pacific island countries, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Guam as well as the Melanesian cargo cults. (Hempenstall, 1984) A later book discusses the Micronationalist movements in Papua New Guinea (May, 1984) Among the micronationalist movements are marginal cargo cults, pressure groups and marginal political parties. In his book May does relay the relation between many of the cargo cult movements and present day political parties in many parts of the country. Indeed many of the former cult movements had changed their ideology to follow the political parties and there was indeed a lot of misinterpretations, as was the case of Pitenamu and the Pangu Pati in Morobe Province. (Adams, in May ed. pp. 63-112)

The authors of these books have not fully considered the attitudes of the people. In particular the impact of these movements on the ability of the people to understand the political implications of the "leaders" of these movements.

My purpose here is to discuss cargo cults and the roles of their leaders. The other purpose of this part of the chapter is to discuss how the leaders of cargo cults filled in the "missing gap". A gap where the people were already frustrated and the desire for a "good life" was on the verge of increase in many parts of the country. In terms of the political leadership patterns, these groups preached a hope for the future because the past had failed to give the people a good life. A good life preached by the colonial administrators and the missionaries.

The religious values of Melanesians had in the past been based on worship of ancestors and the results being produced, according to the people, soon after. After following Christianity for some time, according to the people the promised good life was never to eventuate. The people wondered, What was the cause of the gap? Were the ancestors annoyed? Were the missionaries lying to them? When was the promised good life coming to them? Before answering these questions, one needs to look at the religious roots and the similarities of the two religions. For many Melanesians the life after death promised in Christianity was a familiar idea. As Mircea Eliade writes:

if so many "cargo cults" have assimilated Christian millenarist ideas, it is because the natives have

re-discovered in Christianity their traditional eschatological myth. The resurrection of the dead proclaimed by Christianity was to them a familiar idea. **(Eliade, 1962:143)**

The events as told in the Bible were also similar to the supernatural events told in the Melanesian mythology. As a result, for many of the tribal groups, Christianity was to be a means to an end, a means for the people to get even or equal with the European. Some had taken up the new religion to get at the wealth that was being displayed by the European. According to the local traditional religion the people had believed in the coming renewal of a new order, the imminent arrival of the dead ancestors. As the same author writes:

for what attracted the native to Christianity was the most powerfully was the preaching of the coming of renewal of the world; the imminent arrival of Christ and the resurrection of the dead; it was the prophetic and eschatological aspects of the Christian religion that awakened in them the most profound echo. **(Eliade, 1962:143)**

As a result of disappointed expectation the people had to start questioning the role of the new religion. It had for some time now not produced the expected results. What was the cause of it? In the past having had such an experience the people had to consult their ancestors for help. Traditionally any terrible event needed an explanation. In this case, however, the people could not simply comprehend the arrival of the European; it totally destroyed the total cosmology of the people. For according to Waiko **(1981)** contact accounted for a disaster in many societies. The people had to seek ancestors to help explain the events. This was the case especially when the

people were not able to account for the arrival of the Europeans and the lack of any explanation of the goods the Europeans brought with them to the islands.

After following the new religion for some time, the people were also not able to account for the lack of deliverance of the desired goods or the Second Coming of Christ. The promised good life as preached in the new religion was never to come. In particular for those who joined the new religion with the hope for a better life, it was to be a disaster. This was because the anticipated results were never to come about.

The cargo cult leaders appeared on time when the people were losing hope and experiencing the frustrations developed of the new religion. In many parts of the country there has been a change in the new religion and the political ambitions of the people. The major factor was the amalgamation of religious and political ambitions.

Early scholars have studied these cult movements and interpreted them based on their own personal interpretations. Few have discussed the significant role these movements played in the development of political thought amongst the Melanesians. I have in this chapter discussed the role of the introduced leaders and the ability of the village people to accept the role of the new leaders. Many villagers saw the introduced leaders as having replaced the former leaders during the colonial regimes. The people had not at all forgotten the roles of the traditional leaders. In fact they saw the new leaders as having simply

replaced the former leaders in a new social situation, that was imposed on them by the colonial powers.

The next chapter discusses the role of modern religious and political leaders in the country and the attitudes the people towards them today. The legacies of the former leaders will also be analyzed based on the present day attitudes of the people.

### III: MODERN LEADERSHIP

By the time independence was approaching Papua New Guinea had gone through a series of different leadership types. The attitudes of the people towards these leaders lingers on today. In this chapter, I discuss the role of present day church leaders, businessmen and politicians in the country. After discussing the roles of these men, I discuss their attitudes and continued role in relation to the former leaders of the villages.

The analysis will be made here to outline my theory that many village people still have beliefs that the present day leaders will help perform the roles of the past. I will show that the traditional roles of the former bigmen have been taken over by the present day leaders. This theory has been outlined by Cochrane (1970) in the following:

In 1919 the attributes claimed by the leaders were the same as the attributes that had been necessary for a 'traditional bigman'.... attributes in theory were traditional, though the kinds of knowledge associated with these attributes were modern no new attributes were claimed by the leaders, the way in which possession of attributes was demonstrated as new, but the semantic implications were still traditional. (Cochrane, 1970:141)

He concludes then that:

the leaders in 1919, 1944 and 1963 movements were simply more powerful versions of the traditional 'bigman'. (ibid:143)

With this basic theory in mind, I will discuss the roles played by three new categories of leaders of the country. I first focus

my attention on the politician, then discuss the role of the churchmen and finally the role of the businessmen. Although, these three will be the main focus, I will also fit into the discussion the roles played the cargo cultist. Again, these are a group of leaders that lead a group of followers, just like the others of the past. However, the cargo cultist has also played a very important part in making many of the people expect the deliverance of goods and services from the new leaders.

### III:1 The politician

As discussed earlier, the present political system was introduced by the former colonial powers and imposed on the people. This is one of the legacies of former rulers in the country. The role of the present day politician in many rural parts of the country is perceived rather differently by the people than by the politicians themselves and educated people in the country.

Perceptions of modern politicians by village people are very different from that of many of the politicians, and even the councilors that existed before parliamentary democracy was introduced in to the country. The traditional 'bigman' was the mediator, a commonly accepted leader of the village. He was seen to settle disputes, acquire wealth and distribute it among his followers. By doing so, he was able to gain a following and at the same time gain respect and influence in the group. In this regard a present day politician is seen by the people to play the same role in a different setting; this time encompassing an

entire electorate, a much bigger group than in the past. For instance, the Markham Open Electorates covers, the northern part of Markham valley and the mountainous Wantoat Valley. Traditionally the people were tribal enemies. The new electorate has, however, brought the two groups together under one representative. Having won an election a politician is expected by the people to distribute goods and services to his people. Having won the election a leader has to show his skills. One finds among many leaders a refusal to do away with the Parliamentary Slush Fund, where the leaders literally use the money to go out and give to the people, or at times go to open a new school, or a bridge. By doing so, he not only shows his skills but gives assurance to the people that he can deliver the goods and services.

Political propaganda, political speeches and other forms of publicity can be misinterpreted by the people of the rural areas. This was particularly so in the case of Yali and the Pangu Pati platform in Southern Madang district discussed in the next chapter as well as in the relationship between Pangu Pati and the Pitenamu Society in Morobe Province. The relationship between Pangu and Pitenamu was observed in Wantoat by the author. In this case the people were told to pay membership fees for the Pangu Pati by the "Komiti" members, supposedly members of the Pangu Party. It was later revealed that the "Komiti" were indeed strong followers of the magico-religious Pitenamu movement that had its base in Pindiu area of the Province. **(Adams:1984:63-112)**

Indeed, when cultism and political parties are

involved one is bound to find many strongly committed followers of a doctrine, whether it be political or religious in nature. The unification of the two then causes a lot of people to have very high hopes for a leader upon winning the election. The expectations the people had for Yali is best described by Morauta (1974) and will be discussed in the next chapter.

In many parts of the country a politician is seen to have a lot of wealth and to be able to discuss disputes and solve them. And, like the former traditional bigmen he, is expected to display the wealth and eventually distribute it among the people. For many of the people, a modern politician is simply playing the role of the traditional bigman. He had taken over the role of the bigman, with a new name and is elected every four years. Glynne Cochrane (mentioned above) discussed the roles of the leaders of the Solomon Islands and the people of the Gulf of Papua showing similar attributes in both the traditional and the modern leaders. The roles played by several different leaders in parts of Melanesia can also reflect these attributes.

One finds for instance, the Paliau Movement which has through time changed from a purely cargo cult movement to a political force on Manus, and is presently a main opposition group in the Manus provincial politics. The same is true of the John Frum movement which later became a political party in Vanuatu .(Calvert, 1978]), while Jimmy Stevens uprising in Vanuatu at the time of independence (Beasant 1984; Shears, 1980) had political ambitions too. That is, even if they started off

with magico-religious beliefs and values, these movements changed through time and became a political force in their own areas of influence. Among the Wantoat for instance, was the tultul who was looked up to settle disputes, conduct feasts and welcome visitors, especially the kiap., the Australian patrol officer. Then the Local Government Council system was introduced to the area in 1964, which saw the rise of new leaders. Accordingly, they were then the ones the people looked up to. They helped in settling disputes, negotiating with the administration, and controlling meetings and feasts in villages. The people therefore, saw the Councilors replacing the tultuls, in other words were seen as a more powerful versions of the tultuls.

In Chapter Two above, I discussed the role of the introduced leadership positions in the country. Having outlined the role of these new introduced leaders, this section will try to relay the importance of these leaders and the legacies of these leaders to the present day leaders. Taking into account for historical period of administration, the leaders selected will follow in this order: tultul, luluai and village constable, followed by the councilors, and then "cargo cultists," businessmen and the politicians. Because, I argue, the politician is seen to have replaced the former leaders he can be seen as a "more powerful version of the traditional leaders" as Cochrane argued (**ibid**). He is often seen as an intermediary between the disputing clans, and tries to solve any problems in the village. The role of the religious leader and the businessmen can also be

adopted by the same politician as well. However, the differing views of the people to politicians and churchmen are still evident. A businessmen is a money maker for the community and identifies himself with the wealth he creates. The role of the former bigman as having a lot of wealth can also be accounted for in this modern businessman, because he had the wealth he can distribute like the former bigmen. A churchmen is identified with the new introduced religion. Accordingly, the churchmen in Wantoat is referred to as a pandet; the name given for the traditional religious ritual specialist. **(Kaima, 1986.)**

What then was the relationship between the role of the priest and the traditional bigman? Applying this relationships to traditional leadership patterns, a bigman had often consulted a priest for help in his endeavors. The bigman would consult a magician regarding for the best time for feasts, to go hunting, fishing, and so on. Having collected what he wanted he consulted the priest to give offerings to the gods and then distribute to the people. The roles of the modern churchman and a politician can also fall into this category very easily. When a political leader gives speeches or feasts he often does so with the ritual blessing of the modern church leader. It then shows that the two leaders in a village community can rely on each other for support and influence among followers.

### III:2 Churchmen.

Churchmen in many rural villages are the most revered and respected men. As discussed in chapter two, he, according

to the people, is seen as having replaced the former traditional priest. The traditional priest was the intermediary between the gods and the people. The new religion that was introduced was also seen as having replaced the former religion. As a result the new priest in the villages was the one the people looked up to in time of a religious need.

The introduction of the new Christian religion to many Melanesian societies had a significant impact on the belief systems and religious values of the people. One of the major causes of religious confusion was the rise of the so-called cargo cults. The people in many societies developed the new religious values and tried to amalgamate them with traditional religious values for their own ends. Many people for instance joined the new religion in the hope of getting at the European wealth through following the new religious rituals. There is a large literature on these movements, and scholars have discussed them in books and articles. Amongst the many books are Lawrences' Road Belong Cargo (1964), Steinbauer's Melanesian Cargo Cults (1979), Strelan's In Search of Salvation (1974) Worsley's The Trumpet shall sound (1968) and many others.

For many of the people, the arrival of the Europeans and the wealth they displayed was never accounted for in their traditional religious cosmic values. The arrival was sudden and the people were not able to account for the huge quantities of cargo and the wealth being displayed. They had, however had

their own traditional religion that explained events in their societies. The new religion came with the new wealth. The people thought that the European had the goods because of the new religion and that their god had provided more for the European than the indigenous people of Melanesia. The village people, in many cases, accepted the new religion in order to get at the European wealth and the imminent arrival of Jesus. **(Lawrence, 1964; Steinbauer, 1979, Kaima: 1986)**

There was a hope that was to lead to frustration amongst the many church workers and the followers of the new religion. Seeing that it was a failure, it was many of the mission workers that revolted against the new religion (see, for instance, the leaders of the movements discussed by Steinbauer). For many of the cargo cults were led by many of the former church workers.

Because religion had played a very important role in the lives and the activities of the people, anything religious was taken very seriously. Church men having lead Christian church services were respected men in the villages. Thus, when they revolted and brought cargo ideology they were able to bring a lot of committed followers to their teachings. There are a lot of examples in which church doctrine has been taken up by the modern political-religious groups. A good example of this can be seen in the case of the Paliau Movement with its own religion. The Peli Association that had been using the Apostolic Church to collect money for the OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka); an Irian Jayan Freedom fighting movement against the Indonesian rule in

Irian Jaya. (**Gesch, 1985:103; Camp, 1983:87**). Furthermore, the Pomio Kivung Group of East New Britain has its own religious rituals, and their two respective leaders had been elected to Parliament, Koriam Urekit who died and was replaced by the next leader, Alois Koki. (**Bailoenakia and Koimanrea, 1983**)

### III.3. Businessmen (Bisnismen)

A businessman in many parts of the country is a modern example of success for many people. The people now see a modern businessman as a person to follow. The nature of money and the means of making it had been mistaken in many places with the rise of the cargo cults discussed in Chapter Two of this paper. Many tribal groups had been inclined to follow the cargo cult rituals during the cult era. The significance of this is that for many of them they had not simply given up the idea of making money through secret rituals. (**See for instance the Wantoat discussed by myself 1986, 1987**) For many of the people, there is still a belief that a businessman possesses the rituals of modernization necessary for making money and being a modern businessman. There must be a logic behind the success of a modern businessmen in the country. This then also brings into account the multiple roles a businessman can play in present day politics in many parts of the country. For a politician to be a leader he must show his ability to make money and also distribute the wealth among the members of his group. This follows the role of a traditional bigman, well known to the people.

The religious significance of a modern businessmen can also be seen from the traditional point of view. The traditional men of wealth had played a role which was also considered to involve religious rituals as well. For the bigman with wealth to get more wealth, he had to follow secret rituals in order to please the ancestors for his future success. Because much of Melanesian society is based on religious values, there are still strong beliefs in traditional religious beliefs and practices. In the modern sense, then, for a person to have a lot of wealth he must have the secret knowledge in order to be so successful.

#### III.4. The continuity with earlier forms.

The relationship between modern politics, cargo cults and Christianity are a legacy that needs to be discussed from a villager's perspective, rather than from outside the villager's understandings. Many of the changes that have taken place in the country rely very heavily on the conceptions that have been developed by the people during colonial rule and after political independence. In this regard I see the modern leaders in Papua New Guinea as stronger versions of the leaders in the past, during colonial rule, and of the time of elected councilors. The businessmen and the churchmen are the other versions of leaders that have arisen as a result of modern developments. Accordingly, many villagers still have a lot of hope and expectations for the modern church and political leaders. This is a cargo cult legacy. The cult leaders have failed to

deliver the desired goods and services. While the cult doctrine was dying out, the elections for the National Parliament came onto the scene. In the end the cargo cultist preaching was replaced with the election platforms and the political propaganda of many of the political parties. The people, therefore, had much to expect from their elected leaders.

I examine this theory in the next chapter by providing two case studies of men who had been seen as bigmen, cargo cultists, and or politicians. Much of my discussion will depend on the interpretations of modern day scholars. I see these leaders as having taken over the roles of the former leaders. These case studies show that the people gave up hope for the deliverance of cargo soon after the administration introduced the Local Government Council system. Having failed in the cults, the people expected the councilors to deliver them the desired goods and services. The cargo cult legacy, therefore continued into the council system. However, when the local government system and the councilors lost fame, the House of Assembly (later Parliament) elections were held. One of the major reasons for the failure of the Council system was that the councilors demanded that people pay head tax. According to a lot of Wantoat men, their reaction was: Why pay tax when the Council was not doing anything for them? Accordingly, cargo cults have not told the people to pay tax, but why was this new system asking them to pay tax, rather the new council system should be delivery them the desired goods and services.

#### IV: CASE STUDIES

The Second World War had a great impact on the people of the country. For many people, this period was a time of intense military activity and display of the wealth of the "whitemen". Due to the sudden influx of military weapons and might a lot of villagers (some of whom had never seen Europeans or Japanese) were astounded. The culmination of this astonishment was the rise of so-called cargo cults in many parts of the country. A lot of men were taken as laborers and later returned to be "leaders" in their own villages. The case studies provided here are examples of those who returned home after the war with a lot of hope and expectation to "improve" their villages.

Village populations were shattered and the social structure disrupted during this period. The time was now ripe for a change in the politico-social structure. The impetus for the change in the structure was left to the young and well traveled men of the villages. Because the political establishment of the villages was ruined, or on the verge of decline, the young men and returned soldiers were expected to lead the people. Having been exposed to the outside world and the European wealth, these men were seen by villagers to be the next possible leaders.

I will present two case studies in this part of the paper to show how these new leaders played their part in village

and regional politics. Both the leaders I will discuss had intensive wartime experiences, and returned to their respective villages at a time when the villagers were in a state of mental confusion. Cargo cultism was already on the rise by the time they arrived back to their villages. As a result, based on good plans for improvement, they were soon sucked into cultism and anger towards the Europeans. It is my hope in this part of the paper to show how the people changed to suit the new roles adopted by these leaders. These cases will serve to illustrate what was happening in other similar movements in the country.

Again considerable literature has been published about the relationship between cargo cults and the political aspirations of cult leaders. In the Solomon Islands the Maasina rule movement has been discussed (**Laracy, 1983; Keesing, 1978**). In Vanuatu there are two notable examples: John Frum, now a political party, and Jimmy Stevens' Nagriemal movement based on magico-religious beliefs. In Irian Jaya a recent article discussed the relationship between the (OPM) Organisasi Papua Merdeka Movement and cultism (**Tucker, 1988:163-185**)

Returning to Papua New Guinea, there are also several books and articles discussing the relationship between politics and cargo cults. The two case studies below have been discussed in detail by several different scholars. Theodore Schwartz first discussed the Paliau Movement in detail (**1962**), and several other scholars have discussed the movement in the later years, as we shall see in discussing the case study. On the Yali Movement,

a detailed study was done by Peter Lawrence in Road Belong Cargo (1964). While the political implications of his movement have been analyzed by Lawrence (1971a; 1971b), and Morauta (1974). Eugene Ogan, (1973;1974) has discusses the relationship between cultism, Paul Lapun and Pangu politics in Bougainville. And the same political implication of the magico-religious Pitenamu society and Pangu party politics in Morobe Province have been discussed by Adams (Adams,1984). The political aspirations of Mathias Yaliwan and his Peli Association are also recorded by May (1984) Furthermore, Pomio Kivung Group's two consecutive leaders Koriam Urekit and Alois Koki had been elected to Parliament. The other of these elected leaders was Walla Gukguk who had at one time lead the Tutukuval Isukal Association on New Hanover demanding a Presidential system of government and also had hoped for President Johnson of United States to lead New Guinea.

In the following case studies, I will discuss Yali Singina of the Yali Movement and Paliau Moloat of the Paliau Movement. I will show the relationship between the political aspirations of these leaders and the attitudes people had towards these two men. I plan to give a biographical sketch of each and relay their political ambitions.

#### **IV.1. Yali Singina of the Yali Movement.**

Much of Yali's lifestory has been recorded in Road Belong

Cargo (**Lawrence, 1964:116-139**). Ten years later Louise Morauta discussed the political implications of this movement among local villagers. Her monograph shows the political influence Yali had on the people of his area and his attempts at winning office in local and national level politics (**Morauta, 1974:146-162**). Much of the life story of Yali can be read in these two books.

My purpose in this paper is to sketch a brief life story and discuss the attitudes of the people of Madang towards Yali and his doctrines. I discuss the role of Yali in local and national level politics, while analyzing the misconceptions the people had of him.

Yali Singina was born about 1912, the son of a village bigman who had secret knowledge and was a respected leader of the village. Yali was able to observe the traditional rituals and the values of his people at an early age. Like other ambitious and energetic young men of New Guinea at that time, Yali left the village for adventure. He went to Wau in the Morobe Province to work on the goldfields as a laborer in the 1920's. It was in Wau that Yali heard of "cargo talk". The labor conditions were indeed oppressive and tough. However, much of this cargo talk was brought in 1929 by those that were expelled from Rabaul for having taken part in the Rabaul Strike (**Gammage, 1975:3-29**). Of particular influence to Yali was a fellow Madang named Tagarab. Yali, however, was not impressed with Tagarab's message.

In 1931 Yali went back to his village. He was made the tultul as he was able to speak tok pisin and to communicate with the colonial officials. In this position, Yali was able to travel around the entire district with a Patrol Officer. It was Yali and the Patrol Officer who tried to control the cult activity which was then on the rise in the District.

Towards the end of 1936 Yali's wife died. Disillusioned by her death Yali left his village for the another journey. This time he joined the police force in Lae. Yali was then sent to Rabaul for further police training . After training Yali was posted back to Lae for duty which took him to many parts of the district before 1940.

Between 1940 and 1941 cargo activity was on the rise again in Madang amongst the Bilbil people led by a person named Letub. Yali being curious about the movement went on leave to see for himself the activities of the cult. After the vacation Yali returned and was posted to Madang. It was in the Madang police station that Yali met up again with Tagarab, who had also joined the police force. They were both engaged in arresting the people involved in the cult activity, in particular the people of Karkar Island who were involved in the Kukuaik cult movement.

Yali was soon transferred to Lae to assist in the evacuation of the residents of Rabaul, which was then under attack by the Japanese forces. This was to be the beginning

of Yali's experiences in the war, which were to have a significant impact on his future. He was soon promoted to the rank of sergeant and sent off to Brisbane for further training. While in Brisbane Yali was able to compare his village with what he saw in the city. Embarrassed with what he saw, Yali returned back to New Guinea after six months.

Also to influence Yali later on were the propaganda speeches made during his time in the war. A lot of the allied commanding officers had told Yali and the other recruits to assist them in driving the Japanese out of New Guinea. They promised them better life after the Japanese were defeated. Among the speeches heard by Yali is the following reported by Lawrence.:

In the past you natives have been kept backward. But now if you help us win the war and get rid of the Japanese from New Guinea, we Europeans will help you. We will help you get houses with galvanized iron roofs, plank walls and floors, electric light, and motor vehicles boats, good clothes, good food. Life will be very different for you after the war. **(Lawrence, 1964:124)**

Yali may have exaggerated, according to Lawrence, but he admits that the similar message may have been delivered at such a gathering. Such a message would surely have a significant impact on the local people of the island of New Guinea. Indeed Yali was profoundly impressed and expected the results soon after the war, when the Japanese had been driven out of New Guinea. As a result Yali fought loyally for the allied troops expecting the rewards of his loyalty after

the war.

Yali returned to New Guinea for a short time in 1942 and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major and was soon sent back to Brisbane for more training. This time Yali joined the AIB (Allied Intelligence Bureau) and helped in the training of other New Guineans in the force. Of interest is also a man named Walla Gukguk of New Hanover, who later led the Johnson cult.

While Yali was in Brisbane the Japanese were being pushed back into Irian Jaya (then West New Guinea under the Dutch). Yali was summoned back to help in the drive out of the Japanese. A significant myth developed as Yali returned after the war, the only survivor from a trip to Hollandia. The people saw Yali as having supernatural powers and abilities. One of the stories about Yali is recorded by Nancy McDowell as told by a villager in the Sepik district (**McDowell, 1982:449-452**). Again another myth with similar ideas that developed around Yali is reported by Lawrence as follows:

it was said that he [Yali] had been killed in this action by the Japanese and has come back as a spirit of the dead. In this capacity he had gone to Australia, where he had seen the King. He had then gone to Heaven, where he had seen God (or god Kilibob or Jesus Manup), who promised him cargo for his people after the war (**Lawrence, 1964:136**)

Such a story was inevitable, most Melanesians are religious, and mythic episodes readily develop based on traditional values and beliefs. Indeed the story of Yali spread like wild fire around the entire Madang District and parts of Sepik and Morobe

Districts.

After demobilization in 1946, Yali returned with high hopes for the development of his village. Upon arrival Yali was to be a very influential figure among his fellow villagers. He was used by the administration to stop the spread of cargo doctrine, then on the increase in the area, in fact in the entire district. Yali did travel around the district and told the people to stop the cargo ideas and work together with the administration.

Yali did this in the hope that the administration would help his people and that he would be able to get the "promised goods". In the meantime rumors had been spreading around the villages that Yali had supernatural powers. He was believed to have discovered the secrets to cargo, possess supernatural powers and was seen as a savior. The administration used him to oppose cargo cults, but the villagers came in huge numbers to hear the "King" speak.

Towards the end of 1946 Yali set up the famous Rehabilitation Scheme, later to be known as the Yali Movement. Again the scheme was set up primarily with the belief that the promised goods would be delivered to Yali and his people. This was later to lead to frustration and anger over the missionaries and the administration. The Scheme was superbly done. Yali proposed a school system, a local court system and put emphasis on health and hygiene. At first the idea sounded great and was supported by the

administration and the missions.

Showing great plans for improvement for his people, Yali was summoned by the administration to Port Moresby. The summons, by the administration was mistaken or misinterpreted by the followers and by Yali himself. The followers had thought that Yali was going to Port Moresby to bring back to them the desired cargo. Yali himself thought that he would be given a paid job by the administration, like a patrol officer. Yali left Madang with several of his "Lo Bos" with high expectations. Unfortunately the mission was to be a failure for Yali and his people. He returned home a frustrated man, only to see huge numbers of people waiting for him at the wharf with high expectations.

Frustrated and angry, Yali returned against the mission and Christianity. This was to be the beginning of his anti-foreign activities which lead to opposition by the missionaries. Eventually Yali was arrested and sent to jail in Lae for six years, of which he served five and was released in 1955.

By the time Yali returned to his village, the administration had set up the Local Government Council system in the area. Yalism was a common denominator in the Ambenob Local Government Council (**Morauta: 1974:150-153**). Anti-Yali activities amongst the mission had grown, as Yali was condemned by the missions at meetings and from the pulpit. This did not stop the popularity of Yali. He was elected into the Saidor

Local Government Council and eventually became the President of the Council.

He was still the President of the Council when he stood for the Rai Coast Open electorate to enter the House of Assembly. Although he lost in the elections, the "Yali vote" was popular among the people of the District. Even in electorates where he was not a candidate, many people voted for Yali, resulting in a lot of informal votes. **(Lawrence, 1964:27); Morauta, 1974:103)**

The defeat of Yali in the 1964 elections did not mean he lost fame among his followers. He was encouraged to stand again in the 1968 elections. This time one of his political platforms was for immediate self government and political independence **(Lawrence & Harding, 1971: 162-217)**. Yali lost again in this election but there was still cargo expectation amongst his followers. Accordingly, one of Yali's supporters told Morauta during the election period:

the door [House of Assembly door] has whirling swords on it which will only rest when Yali approaches. When this door is open all wealth will pour out to all New Guinea. **(Morauta, 1974:102)**

Such rumors were sporadic among the many followers of Yali in the District during the election period. Furthermore the people had also misinterpreted the relationship between the policies of Yali and Pangu Party. The people simply thought the message of Pangu was similar to the ideologies of Yali and his inspired

Rehabilitation Scheme. As one follower told Morauta:

the ideological similarities between cargo and Pangu messages were also important for the alliances between them. As one cultist explained...Pangu came. We went and saw that its policy was like the Old man [Yali] talk. **(Morauta, 1974:102)**

This shows the relationship between cargo and politics and the attitudes people had for the political party and their leader, Yali.

Having lost twice in the elections, Yali never gave up. He tried again in 1972, and lost again. The question then is, What would have happened if Yali had won the election? Would the people have expected him to deliver the desired goods soon after he was elected to the House of Assembly? The expectation may have continued as committed followers continued to believe that Pangu had replaced Yali's message and that later on, Yali's son, James, was a replacement for Yali as far as the committed followers were concerned. This was to be his last attempt at the House of Assembly. He died on 25 September 1975 a few days after the country gained political independence from Australia on 16 September 1975.

Even though Yali had died in 1975, the strong followers of the movement had carried on the policies and philosophy of Yali. Garry Trompf discusses the would-be successor to Yali in the town of Madang in 1976 **(Trompf, 1976: 166-174)**. Ten years after Yali died, a son of his, James, led the Dadabu Association **(Morabang, 1985: 1 & 4)**. James stood for the Madang Regional Seat in 1987 General elections and polled well

finishing second. There is a possibility that strong supporters of Yali will vote for his son again in future elections. The only problem here, would be that the people will believe that Yali's son had replaced Yali and his "cargo cultic philosophies.

#### IV.2. Paliau Moloat of the Paliau Movement

Like Yali, much of Paliau's life story has already been recorded. **(Schwartz, 1962:238-279, Moloat, 1970:145-161)**. I will present a brief summary to show his leadership role among the Manus islanders.

Paliau Moloat was born in Lipan village on Baluan island in about 1907. He grew up in the village observing the activities of his village leaders, especially wealth sharing and feasting. At the age of seventeen he left his village, as he was forced to pay head tax and worked for a few Chinese in Lorengau.

Soon after, in 1928, he joined the Police force, a few years before Yali did. After training, Paliau was sent to Lae on New Guinea mainland where he assisted Patrol Officers to explore the unexplored areas of the District. He was in the District for two years before going back to Manus. He again observed the practices of the village leaders, but was not in a position to impose his ideas. He returned to work and this time helped explore the central part of the mainland with Patrol Officer Jim Taylor. After about eight years of service he went back to Manus in 1939.

His stay in Manus was not long, because of his

frustration with what he saw in his village. Annoyed with the traditional practices he found there he decided never to return back to his village. However, while in the Police Force he traveled around the districts and visited many villages. In his attempt to do away with feasts, Paliau was astonished with the similar practices of the people he visited. As a result of this he decided to go back to his village to try to stop the practices of feasting and wealth sharing.

After about three years of service he went back to his village. This time, instead of giving feasts and sharing wealth he deposited the money he saved with the tultul of the village. The money, he said, was to be used to help pay the head tax by those who can not afford to pay the tax. The collection was to be kept by the tultul of the village. This was to be the beginning of the influence of Paliau in his village community.

Paliau returned to Rabaul in 1939 and was promoted to Sergeant Major. In this position he was able to help train other natives in the Police Force. This was to prove useful for him during the war years. When the war came to Rabaul in 1942, Paliau was able to escape the Japanese with a group of his trainees. After fighting for a few years Paliau surrendered to the Japanese. As a result of his police training the Japanese used him for police duties during the war. After the war Paliau was charged for war crimes by the allied troops, which resulted in him spending one year in Rabaul. During this time Paliau

wrote a letter to the tultul of his village, telling him to build a meeting house.

Paliau returned to his village in 1946. By the time he arrived in his village the people were already expecting reformist ideas and were restless. This was the result of the war and the desire to change their social system and cultural values. These reformist movements were to be the forerunners of the Paliau movement later on. The leaders wanted to do away with the taboos of the villages, feasts, wealth sharing, and to be involved in cash cropping. But the plans did not work. The return of Paliau was timely and produced an impetus for active revival of these policies.

Paliau was used by the administration to help spread the colonial policies around the entire district. Like Yali in this way Paliau was able to travel with the administrative officers and to establish his own influence. He preached about working with the administration and forgetting cargo cultism for the benefit of the people of the village. At the same time, he preached about his plans for the advancement of his people and the community.

By this time Paliau was able to combine both religious, economic and social affairs of his village community. Guided by the Catholic teachings he observed while in Rabaul, he was able to set up his own semi-religious policies. He said that evil was

derived from false thinking and that a new kind of thinking was necessary. According to Paliau, new thinking was expressed in regular hours of working, eating, bathing, and devotions in the church. As a result, life in the village became more regulated, like a military establishment. There was a strict code of conduct. A local school and a court system was set up. It was similar in many ways to Yali's Rehabilitation Scheme. In the end, Paliau set up his own Baluan Native Church, the only native church at that time. Although, a well-planned activity, Paliau was "arrested" and taken to Port Moresby for discussions with the officials in 1947.

His arrest led to the development of a further cult movement often referred to as the Guria Nois movement, which in 1953 became the Spirit Cult. When Paliau returned from Port Moresby he developed a "nupela pasin" (new fashion)- the word as proclaimed by Paliau.

In 1949 Paliau was appointed tultul by the administration. Upon his appointment Paliau was instructed to oppose cargo cult doctrines and try to keep the expectations of the village people down. Although Paliau did attempt to put down the false expectations, more cultism erupted and Paliau refused to adhere to it. As a result splinter groups developed amongst the supporters of Paliau, thus weakening his popularity. It was further weakened when Paliau was arrested again, this time for misusing the luluai title, and sentenced to six months jail.

The popularity of Paliau among the people did not decline as a result of his imprisonment. After his jail term Paliau was elected President of the newly formed Manus Local Government Council in 1951, one of the first Local Government Councils in the country. Paliau is often seen as the main instigator of the Council. He was still President of the Council when he was elected to the House of Assembly in 1964. Paliau was re elected in 1968. In the House of Assembly he fought for the development of his electorate. He was also one of the founding members of the large political party, known as the Pangu Party even to this day. The relationship between the Paliau Movement and the Pangu party is recorded in the Makasol Creed as This creed is like the Apostles Creed often said in advance by the followers of the Makasol Party. Part of it reads as follows:

He [Paliau] was the father of Manus Local Government Council, the Father of Pangu Party, the Father of Papua New Guinea, now independent nation. **(Moloat, 1985:31)**

It is true, Paliau is a "respected national leader", of course responsible for the Manus Council, a founding member of Pangu Party and one of the early leaders of the country. One wonders, however, the attitudes of the followers of the former Paliau movement. Have they changed their attitudes and do not wait for a ship to return later? My theory is that committed followers of this man are still waiting for the time when the goods and services will be delivered.

Paliau's life in national politics ended when he was

defeated by Michael Pondros in the 1972 General elections. But his political activity did not simply die away. It is alive and well in provincial level politics. The name of his movement has changed to Makasol Party, with two University graduates as advisors; one of them is his son. The party is now a major opposition grouping in the Provincial government. Although political participation of Paliau is well received by the leaders of the country, there are strong supporters of his cultism and doctrines. The political involvement and ambitions of the Makasol Party remain to be seen in the future. The Paliau Church religious doctrines are still being adhered to these days by the very committed followers of the movement. He is still alive and lives in his village of Lipan.

#### **IV.3. Analysis**

These case studies indicate that a leader can change, evolve and alter his philosophies to suit the changing situation in any society. For the villagers, however, the legacies of all these changes in the leadership patterns still continue to the present day. It is especially so to the committed followers of the movements, who see the continuous ideologies of the former leaders.

Significant changes in attitudes will eventually lead people to develop ideas about the past and develop new ideas for future leadership. In both of the cases discussed the men were policemen and had traveled around the country. They both fought in the war, which had a drastic impact on the beliefs and values

of people throughout Melanesia. As a result, both of them returned home to see that people were restless and expecting a complete change in the status quo.

According to the people, the two were the ones to change the status quo. Because of their experiences the administration appointed them to be leaders, and the people saw them as the ones to lead them to their destiny. At the time cargo expectation among the people was high, and finally the two got sucked into the cargo ideology, although they both had rejected these doctrines in the early period of their return. Obviously, if they had rejected then the majority of the village population would never have supported them.

Their political ambitions and the nature in which they got involved puts the followers in a dilemma. A dilemma that for the people was to continue to have a cargo cult legacy. The nature of the Paliau movement in particular had shown that the followers of the movement are now a political force in the Manus area. In the case of Yali the arrival of his son was, according to the people, a hope for the future, as his father had died.

In the end, these case studies show that the people of the rural areas of the country are left in a great dilemma. The cargo cultists have made "false promises", and the political parties and their speeches are very similar. Thus, as I have shown in these case studies, the people saw the political parties as merely replacing the cargo doctrines. One could argue

therefore that the political parties are considered "more powerful versions of cargo cults" by the rural villagers. The only danger for this is that a lot of people will continue to expect their leaders to provide the goods and services, without getting to know that there is a need for more money and better planning.

Political campaign speeches dangerously lead people to believe that the goods and services will be delivered as soon as one is elected to Parliament. The main problem here, is that a lot of the village people are not so well educated and the political process in the country has been very quick. The people therefore, have not changed a lot in the political attitudes but still consider the roles of former leaders in conjunction with those of the new leaders. In reality the people of the country went through the process in a very limited time period, that there was not much of political awareness or education in the country. There is a need for better political education among the rural villages, and in many cases good and honest political campaigning.

## Conclusion

I have in this paper discussed the changing roles of leadership patterns in Papua New Guinea and tried to relay the impact of these changes among the majority of people; the rural village people. Many of the changes in these leadership patterns reflected changes in the social system and brought about by introduced rule, as the people of the country tried to adapt to new changing situations.

From a historical perspective, the changes in leaders can be traced and fitted into the changes and the forms each leader took. This is to say that new leaders came onto the scene when the former was losing fame. From simple observation, there is a common trend among these changes in leadership patterns. One can argue that these leadership changes were done in such a way that the village people saw the changes as having replacing the former leader for the "next better one". Like Cochrane (1970) argued, the next lot of leaders were a more powerful version of the former. I also see this pattern among present day leaders of the Independent country, Papua New Guinea.

Despite major changes in the political and socio-economic their leaders has not changed much. People in many parts of the country saw the new leaders as performing the roles of the traditional leaders. Accordingly the leadership patterns in the country has involved new leaders coming onto the scene when

the former leaders are loosing fame and status. This can be seen, as in German New Guinea, when the tultuls and luluais were either replaced or continued when the new Australian administration

In the 1950's the Local Government system was introduced into the country. With the rise of the Local Government Council system the people from all over the country demanded a similar system to be set up. It was a prestige symbol for the villagers to be Councilors, especially with the Council Badge on their shirts. They were respected men, even if the people were not aware of the process of electing these new leaders. For many of the people voted for their own tribal leaders, and those that they knew could perform well. As a result, many of the councilors were the former leaders, returned contract workers; who were tultuls or luluais just before the Council system was introduced. This is particularly so of Yali and Paliau, and the same is true of Wantoat Local Government Councilors.

The next major political step was the election of the national representatives to the Legislative Council. By the 1960's the territory was being prepared for political independence. With the introduction of the Legislative Council a way was made for the introduction of the House of Assembly elections. The first national House of Assembly elections were in 1964 which saw the people of the entire country vote for their representatives. Since this election was the first, the people voted for their representatives on a tribal or kinship basis, or for one who had shown leadership qualities. This,

accordingly, relied upon traditional 'bigman' qualities.

These changes in the selection of the leaders can be seen as replacing the traditional with new forms of leadership. Although, new leaders were selected, using the new introduced system the attributes used for the selection of these new leaders was traditional in nature.

Let me finalize my discussion by looking at the theories I had earlier outlined to discuss in this paper. Many of the leaders of the country had gone through patterns that can be seen to have evolved during the process. That is, the change from the traditional bigman, to administrative officials, mission workers, tutul, luluais, cargo cultist, businessmen, councilors and finally the present day politicians. The people of the rural areas still select their leaders based on the abilities of the traditional bigman; the power to lead the people, organize feasts, settle disputes, and ability to give and foster obligations amongst the followers.

The religious power and knowledge of present day politician is based on the ability of the politician to be able to have links with the church workers. For many of the people claiming to be Christians, wish to see a prospective leader to have links with the church organization. There are often political speeches made after church services, and it is often a prestige and religiously important for a politician to associate with the members of the new religion, especially the pastors, or the missionaries.

One of the legacies among the people is the "false

expectation" raised by cargo cult leaders during the cultic era. There are clear cases of former cult leaders in the country entering Parliament later on, after having gained fame through the magico-religious cults. Amongst these men are Mathias Yaliwan, Walla Gukguk, Koriam Urekit, Alois Koki and Paliau Moloat. Others have tried but failed to enter Parliament, like Yali Singina.

Taking into account these examples, one can also find the relationship between politics and former cult movements in many parts of the country. Many people saw the new political platforms as having replaced the former cult doctrines. The strict followers of the cult movements then saw the new political leaders as those who would deliver the desired goods and services. This in particular had been the case in the two case studies discussed here. The only weakness for this is the high expectation that the people will have of a leader being elected. The expectation will be a high desire for goods and services to be delivered without any thought about the planning process and the monetary factors involved in the delivering them. As Peter Lawrence wrote:

In the political field, people may vote for candidates in Council and House of Assembly elections in the belief that they possess cargo secret. Members of their electorates could make unrealistic demands on them for immediate development without realizing the planning, capital and hard work it involves  
**(Lawrence, 1971: 120)**

Lawrence continues that very often cult movements had opposed

Local government councils and the House of Assembly elections which often resulted:

In doing so they declare that they have no time for slow, orderly development schemes and offer people a more spectacular, if valueless, alternative. (**op.cit.** :119)

This may have been some years ago but the trend can still continue among the strict followers of former cult leaders. They still expect a new leader to lead them to the desired goods.

The political campaigns during the election period in many parts of the country represent for many a time for party, feasts and the exposure of the wealth of a potential leader. Just like when late Sir Iambakey Okuk gave a big feast at Kundiawa Airport during the 1981 election campaign. He was dressed in traditional regalia resembling a Chimbu bigman. This is not the only case. There are a lot of leaders who have given such feasts to "entice voters" to vote for them. This can be seen as a form of political bribery. But in reality this was the method used by the traditional bigman to have influence over the people and also to create obligations. And so, if one is able to convince the others of one's prestige and wealth, they might vote for him.

The knowledge and the ability of the former bigman was related to "secret knowledge" he was able to gather through the initiation rituals. The ability of a bigman to perform such oratory skills was deeply rooted in the religious rituals he went through. As a result, the ability of the bigman to lead the people was often

not put to test or questioned by the ordinary villagers. The potential for such a legacy to carry on to the present day is still open. Although, much of Papua New Guinea was unstratified, a former bigman was often revered and respected. With this reverence and respect came the ability and the values of the bigman to be able to be seen as a person selected by god to lead.

The only danger for such is the repeated election winning for some Parliamentarians to the present day. The people may refuse to accept a new leader when the former loses. This is the case in stratified societies such as Fiji. The people, especially the Taukei, saw Mara as their only hope, and could not accept his defeat. This trend may evolve in Papua New Guinea or other Melanesian societies. In which case, democracy might as well be thrown out of the window.

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