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THE MEANINGS OF INDEPENDENCE IN POST-COLONIAL Papua New  
Guinea

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One Introduction.....	1
1.1.What is independence?.....	1
1.2. Decolonization.....	4
Chapter Two Path to independence .....	10
2.1. The Construction of PNG?.....	10
2.2. Invention of PNG.....	11
2.4 PNG's Independence: an external initiative.....	20
2.5. PNG's independence. a gift from Australia?.....	30
3.1. Statist View of independence.....	35
3.2. Defining Independence: National Goals.....	39
Chapter Four Non-statist view: Land as Independence .	45
4.1. Narrative: Do not sell our land; it is our birthright.....	45
4.2. Land: why is it my place.....	47
Chapter Five Change and Conflicts.....	53
5.1. Past Independence: Deviation from the National Goals.....	53
5.2. landowners' voices.....	54
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	61
6.1 Conflicting views of independence.....	61

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1. What is independence?

What does independence mean to the people of Papua New Guinea? In 1975, as Papua New Guinea (PNG) was about to attain its independence, there was excitement, anxiety and even confusion in urban and rural areas alike. As a young and naive primary school student, I witnessed some of those experiences in my village and the surrounding communities. The word independence was new, unfamiliar and problematic for the majority of the people in my community, and I assume the experience was similar in many rural parts of PNG. "Independence" was a foreign and unfamiliar word that got into our vocabulary quite late, and even the pronunciation was a bit awkward for most<sup>1</sup>.

As for its meaning, independence at the village level connoted the departure of Australian administrators (i.e., patrol officers) and the localization of their jobs. And as the independence date drew closer, it was also

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<sup>1</sup> Given its unfamiliarity, people had to begin with something familiar, and the English word that was recognizable to most was the word underpants. Thus, independence was lightheartedly referred to as "underpants" when its pronunciation was tongue-tied. There were even jokes associated with that new word. Two such examples are: "What is the color of this underpants?"; "How many underpants is the government of PNG going to distribute to us?"

associated with PNG having its own government and its own political process.

Many years later, I saw that the idea of independence is broader, not limited exclusively to political, social, cultural processes but also directly associated with economic activities. I realized that while the independent government of PNG was promoting economic development through the extraction of natural resources in the 1980s, the landholders' independence was being compromised. Increasingly militant protests against those national economic development initiatives, and demands that the state (and the foreign investors) pay compensation for the resources they were exploiting, suggested major problems with the government's approach to economic development. While the state was trying to promote economic independence through projects that exploited the nation's abundant natural resources, the "resource owners" or stakeholders at the village level showed little understanding of the government's objectives.

Many observers commented that such protests and resistance by resource owners hindered development and worked against the principle of national self-reliance, one of the main national goals of the new nation. Policymakers argued that PNG has an array of natural resources such as

timber and minerals, assets that could generate substantial revenue for the country. This revenue could in turn reduce dependence on foreign aid and promote national development. However, violent protests and other forms of resistance increasingly hindered the state's ability to raise revenues through the harnessing of natural resources. Why were the so-called stakeholders protesting against economic development? Why did they resist efforts intended to foster greater self-reliance? If they viewed economic activities on their land as a threat to their livelihood, did it mean that they had enjoyed a greater degree of freedom before PNG gained its independence? These are some of the issues that I will explore as I interrogate the notion of "independence."

This thesis argues that PNG independence has multiple meanings. I will focus on the meanings of independence from from the statist and non statist perspectives. I will then analyze rural, village-based citizen interactions with the state. In this paper I write from the perspective of an indigenous person, and in doing so I incorporate personal experiences and express how I feel about these issues. Given that thousands of Papua New Guineans have died resisting government initiatives since independence, the subject has great contemporary relevance in PNG as well as

throughout Melanesia. For example during the Bougainville crisis approximately 20,000 lives were lost and recently July 27,2001 four students at the University of PNG were shot dead by police for protesting against the state. As should be expected, certain parts of this paper are emotionally charged, and show me "talking" to myself about complex and sometimes contradictory issues.

### **1.2. Decolonization**

Papua New Guinea's independence was primarily an initiative of Australia and the United Nations. In 1946 Australia, in keeping with a UN mandate, accepted the obligation to administer the Territories of Papua and New Guinea (TP&NG) and make preparations for self-determination. This was not an arrangement the people of PNG negotiated or had any voice in deciding. For example, there was no national plebiscite. Those years of colonial rule by Australia were basically preparing Papua New Guinea to embrace the "modernization project". That is, the village-based societies and people in TP&NG were perceived as traditional (i.e., backward) and had to be "modernized" or "developed" to be part of the contemporary world. How would PNG do it? Australian colonial policy embraced the view that for PNG to develop it would have to adopt Western

political and economic systems, as well as Western technology and lifestyles. It was assumed that by the time TP&NG were ready to become the independent state of PNG, it would have acquired those Western systems sufficiently to act like a Western nation.

As PNG moved towards independence during the 1960s and 1970s, the emerging indigenous national leaders or elites viewed the transition as a mixed blessing. To be sure there was an attraction to no longer answering to Australian colonial officials. Yet these men also confronted a number of significant challenges and constraints to which they did not look forward. Given that independence was rapidly being thrust upon PNG in a manner that clearly served the interests of Australia and the UN, the people of PNG had little influence in establishing the terms for independence. PNG's future was essentially pre-determined from the outside. That is, as is evident from the structure of government set up prior to 1975, independent PNG, was expected to imitate its former administering colonial power -- to be like a small-scale Australia.

Despite only rudimentary preparation, PNG was expected to follow the path of development conceived by Western planners, a journey that most Asian and African countries had taken during the 1950s and 1960s with largely uneven

results. If there was any sense of nationalism it was elitist: an image and pride held by a formally educated minority who claimed to represent the masses. For those elites, the task of deciding on the destiny of the country on behalf on the majority was immense. There was lack of experience and exposure. Moreover, they did not really know what the majority of the people wanted for their country.

The clearest articulation of what the new state wanted for PNG in terms of its development is found in the National Goals and Directive Principles (Narokobi 1983: 118). These appear as the fundamental guidelines that illuminate the meaning of independence for the new state. They are derived from the Eight Aims, which were enshrined as the basic economic guidelines on how to develop PNG.

Eight Aims.

- (1) A rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guineans and groups and in the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans.
- (2) More equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement towards equalization of services among different areas of the country;
- (3) Decentralization of economic activity, planning and government spending, with an emphasis on

agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade, and more spending channeled through local and area bodies;

- (4) An emphasis on small-scale artisan, service and business activity, relying where possible on typical PNG forms of organization.
- (5) A more self-reliant economy, less dependent for its needs on the imported goods and services and better able to meet the needs of its people through local production.
- (6) An increase capacity for meeting government spending needs from locally raised revenue;
- (7) A rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all types of economic and social activity; and
- (8) Government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to achieve the desired kind of development.

The foregoing suggests that those responsible for defining the new state's independence realized the Australian vision for PNG's future was not entirely appropriate. Rather, PNG's first generation of national leaders sought to develop PNG by emphasizing what they

believed was most suitable for PNG's overwhelmingly rural village-based societies. Yet the need for continued economic support from Australia constrained the degree of freedom these leaders actually had in charting a new course for the nation.

### **1.3 Independence and Land.**

PNG is among the few nations in the world where ordinary people by virtue of birth can claim to secure access land. Land in PNG directly supports about 80 percent of the population, the vast majority of whom live in the rural areas. It is impossible to imagine how PNG could provide for its rural population if villagers had no land. People's attachment to the land is intimately tied to their notions of independence, identity and security. When the state intrudes on their land to exploit natural resources in the name of greater national self-sufficiency, and therefore greater national independence, village level stakeholders may see it as a new form of colonization.

The problems created by such activities can be viewed from two levels. On one level, landholders try to negotiate for sufficient returns when they lease their land (on which the natural resources are found) to the state or to foreign developers, who are frequently seen as part of the same entity. As landholders, they feel secure when they

are still in possession and in control of their land. But when they realize that control has been relinquished, or the returns are not what they expected, or the secondary effects of these development projects disturbs their livelihood (e.g., the pollution of vital streams and rivers caused by mining) they find their basic security threatened. Subsequent resistance to such state sanctioned initiatives is often fierce.

On the second level, one finds individuals who while calling themselves "landowners" seek opportunities to exploit their own relatives and fellow citizens. Such individuals appear as middlemen, promising to bring "development" to their villages but instead attempting to profit personally to the detriment of their own people.

It is a sad paradox that national independence has for some citizens of PNG come to suggest increasing intrusions on traditional village-based notions of independence. To more clearly see how this has happened, it is important to examine how PNG was constructed into a nation-state.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Path to independence**

#### **2.1. The Construction of PNG?**

Papua New Guinea is a country of 5.13 million that is diverse, so diverse in fact that it can be described as a country of many nations. Inhabitants belonging to about 800 ethno-linguistic groups, each with its own culture, history and traditions, evince this heterogeneity. Before Western contact, the indigenous people lived in small, decentralized, economically self-sufficient land-based communities or villages. People from the coastal areas and islands came into contact with Europeans around the 1880s, while those in the Highlands were first contacted in the 1930s. Members were bound by kinship connections, common languages, communal landholdings and trade. Most of these societies are relatively egalitarian. Taken as a whole, the pre-contact map of PNG societies would show small-scale villages with about 50 to 200 people who were dispersed widely over islands totaling 450,000 square kilometers, on the coastal and the inland areas alike. The characteristics of these diverse societies led early anthropologists to describe them as stateless.

The livelihood of the pre-contact inhabitants was based on the land. They acquired their food through hunting, gathering and gardening. Most of the materials they needed for building shelters and making tools came from forest products. This lifestyle based on the land has not changed much. In contemporary PNG the vast majority of the population still live in village-based societies, and depend on the natural environment for their survival. Villagers grow their own food in gardens, hunt for game in the forest and fish for marine products in the rivers or sea. Building materials for shelter, fuel for cooking and warmth, and medicine are also extracted from the forests.

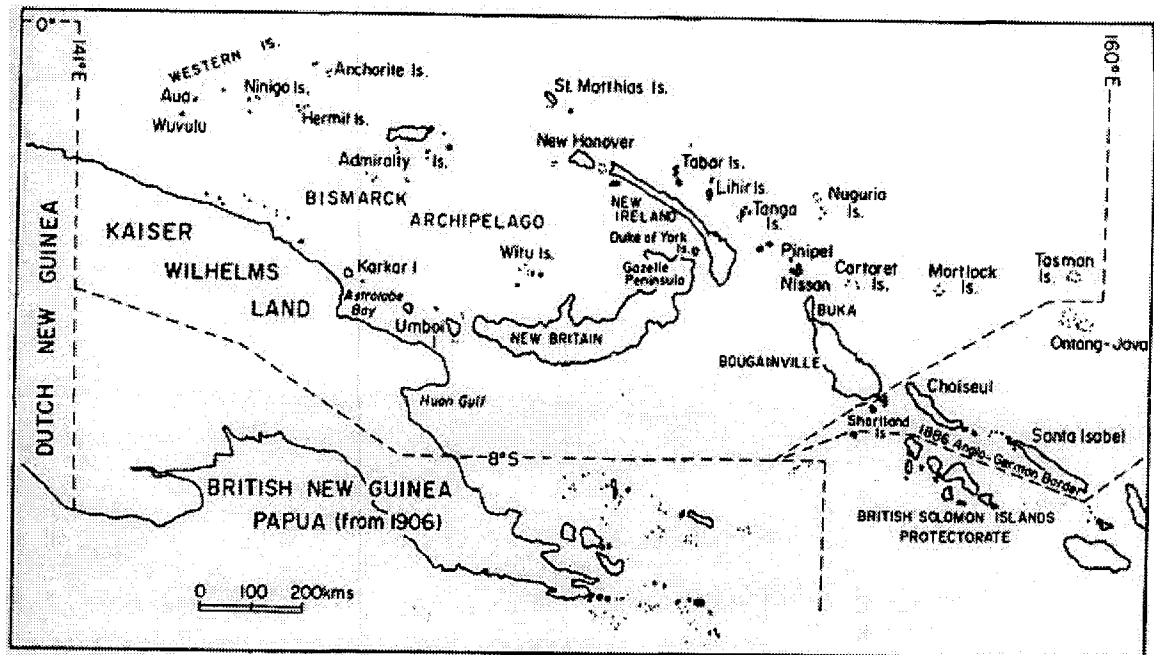
## **2.2. Invention of PNG**

Colonial quests for territories in the Pacific in the 1880s resulted in the island of New Guinea being divided up into three parts. The Dutch laid claim to the entire area west of 141 degrees (Woolford 1976:3). The eastern part of the island of New Guinea was under two colonizing powers. In 1884, Germany laid claim to one half of the island<sup>2</sup> (see map 1).

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<sup>2</sup> New Guinea became a German colony when a German flag was hoisted in Rabaul. The German colony included the Northeastern part of the main land New Guinea and the island.

Map 1. Colonial Boundaries.



Source: Griffin et al, 1970 p37.

Australia colonists feared Germany as an immediate neighbor, and asked Britain to protect them by claiming the Southeastern part of the island. Agreeing to the request, Commodore James E. Erskine proclaimed the Southeastern part of New Guinea a protectorate of British New Guinea (ibid:10) in the same year. In 1906 it passed into Australia's control as the Territory of Papua. German rule in New Guinea ended abruptly in 1914 when Germany invaded Europe. Assisting Britain in the Second World War, Australia troops moved into German New Guinea and occupied it until the end of the war (ibid:46). When Germany relinquished control of New Guinea following its defeat,

the League of Nations gave Australia a mandate to administer the territory. Between the two World Wars, Australia was the administrative authority for both British Papua and German New Guinea, but they were governed separately until World War II, when Australia's military government governed them jointly.

After the Second World War, under the United Nations charter and Trusteeship Agreement, the Australian government accepted the obligation to administer New Guinea as a Trust Territory (Griffin et al 1978: 30-34). In keeping with the Trusteeship Agreement, Australia had the responsibility to prepare New Guinea for self-determination. Later, Australia unilaterally accepted the same obligation for Papua, and the two territories continued to be jointly administered by Australia as the Territories of Papua and New Guinea, with the headquarters in Port Moresby.

### **2.3.Colonial Experience**

Since colonial contacts with the people of Papua New Guinea, an ethnic map has emerged around artificial administrative boundaries and townships. In 1884, when PNG was under two colonial powers, two regional identities were created; British Papua and German New Guinea. Being under different powers, each had different colonial experiences.

The first was the style of administration. In British Papua, the colonial administration was always under the control of an official administrator, while German New Guinea was under company control until 1898, when an official German governor took over. In German New Guinea, the German administration established village government to maintain order. In contrast, British Papua did not have such a system. Instead they relied on occasional visits of patrol officers to administer the territory.

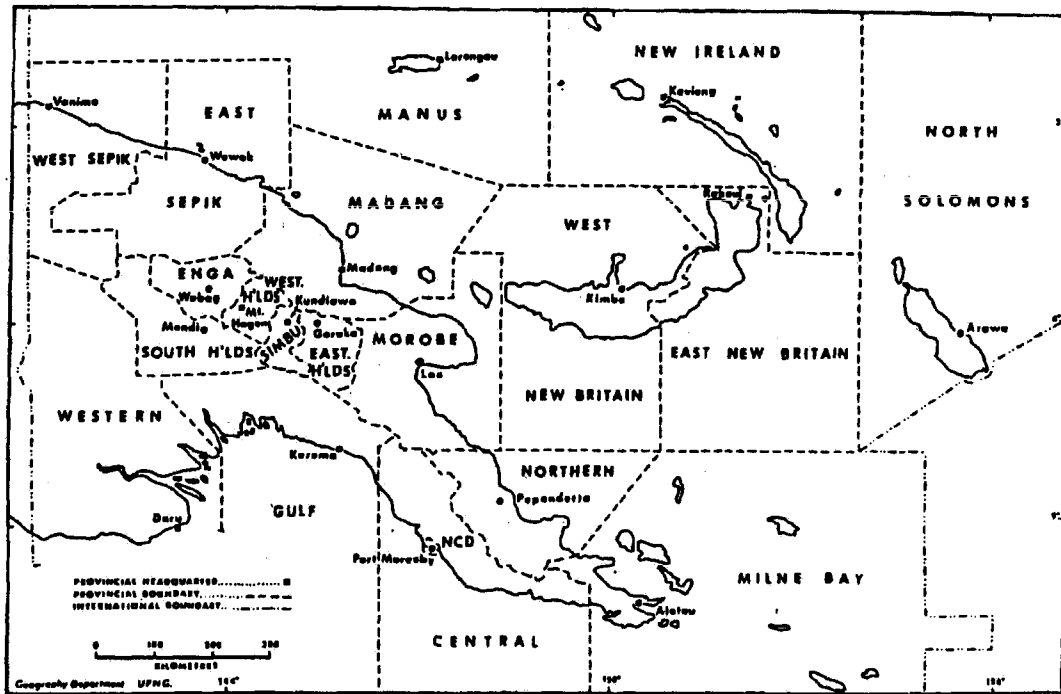
As new colonial administrative posts were created, new boundaries also emerged. For example, in the early 1900s, the Southeastern part of the New Guinea under Australia was only known as British New Guinea and later Papua, but that gradually changed as new boundaries were drawn to create five provinces (see figure 1). By 1975 when the electoral boundaries were finalized, the country was divided into twenty provinces, located in four regions (see map 1 and Figure 1). The often-arbitrary creation of new boundaries revealed that the government was distant from the people.

With the exception of Enga Province, none of these boundaries were drawn up along linguistic or cultural lines. They were drawn up specifically to make the task of administration easier. Subsequently, these new boundaries

suggested new identities to the people that live within them.

Changes that come with "development" over time also enabled individuals to acquire new identities. Vehicles that promoted these emerging identities included education, print media and radio, all 'products' of colonialism. For example, the author of this paper bears a regional identity of being from Momase, a provincial identity of being from Sandaun Province, a district label of being from Aitape and when in Aitape he would identify himself as being from Pou, his natal village. As such, the author can be a *Pouan* at one level, and *Momasean* or a *New Guinean* at another, and these identities affect his relationships in different contexts. These multiple identities have been acquired through the Western changes that he has been exposed to as he traveled and lived away from his village gaining a new awareness of himself in relation to others in the larger society.

Map 2. PNG



Source: A Papua New Guinea Political  
Chronicle 1967- 1991, Clive Moore, M, Kooyman  
(eds)p xviii.

Table 1 : PNG Regions and Provinces

<b>Regions</b>	<b>Provinces</b>
Papua	Milne Bay Oro Gulf Western Central National Capital District
Momase	Morobe East Sepik Sandaun Madang
Highlands	Eastern Highlands Western Highlands Southern Highlands Simbu Enga
New Guinea islands	East New Britain West New Britain New Ireland Manus

Colonial contact not only resulted in the emergence of new ethnic identities but also stimulated new socio-economic formations (Premaas 1989:246). In the colonial order, the Europeans occupied privileged positions either as employees of colonial administrations or as owners of businesses. Papua New Guineans were always subordinate people in the employ of colonial authorities and settlers. Because of the superior position and control held by Europeans, they acquired customary land from Papua New Guineans and established plantations on which they recruited PNG villagers who served as indentured laborers. The labor-intensive nature of the plantation economy meant that labor sources were sought extensively over PNG. The most reliable sources were the latest areas that came into contact with the colonial administration.

The labor indenture system throughout PNG between the 1880s and the 1960s caused dramatic disruption and decay of PNG social systems. For example, the plantation system introduced a monetized economy, which gradually changed and in many instances undermined traditional structures of interpersonal relations. The new monetized order was a

capitalist system that moved all but the most remote Papua New Guineans towards a narrower framework of economic relations (ibid: 246). The emergent capitalist economy with money as a medium of exchange, profit motive, and quest for material goods changed the village-based trading systems into a network of producers and consumers, workers and owners. For instance, the previous Highland barter trade of betel nut exchange for coffee was transformed into cash transaction. The monetized economy created new definitions of self and self-worth around property and employment, and that changed social relations.

To the extent that colonial administrative structures and the monetized economy were significant in developing new networks of trade and social interaction for many Papua New Guineans, these changes had disadvantages. The introduction of Western style capitalism created new social and economic disparities. Such disparities subsequently became a major concern in the late 1960s for the generation of educated Papua New Guineans elites would lead the nation to independence. PNG's first Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare recalled in his autobiography two examples of such inequalities: the first was the dual salary structures whereby expatriates received more than their PNG co-workers performing the same work; the second was the segregated

housing estates in the urban centers where the best residences were reserved for Europeans while Papua New Guineans lived in poorer compounds. Additionally, land alienation for plantations created disparities in wealth and posed problems for the local people in some parts of the country. The problem of land alienation particularly affected the people from East New Britain, Madang and New Ireland, where most of the plantations were established (see map).

#### **2.4 PNG's Independence: an external initiative**

The decision to establish PNG as an independent nation was an external initiative, based on the 1946 Trusteeship Agreement between Australia and the UN. Under that agreement, Australia, as the administering power, would prepare PNG for self-government. Despite that external vision, Australia did not really know when PNG would be ready to be fully decolonized. Thus, before the 1960s, Australia assumed that it would administer the territory for some time to come. The idea of incorporating PNG into Australia as a "7<sup>th</sup> state" was also considered but rejected largely because of the racial climate in Australia at the time.

However, by the 1960s, the worldwide movement for decolonization was growing. United Nations Resolution on 1514 on Decolonization, passed in 1960 became a widely used measuring stick regarding Australia's administration of TP&NG and added pressure on Australia to speed up the decolonization process. Australia understood that the day was approaching when it would have to relinquish control of the territory.

As former British settler-colony, Australia intended to do a better job than Great Britain in administering the territory. In the documentary video, 'Colonists for a Day', Richard Giddings, a former patrol officer in TP&NG, states that Australia was aware of the failings of British colonialism in Africa, and believed that it could do a superior job in the TP&NG. Two of the colonial pitfalls that Australia tried to avoid were slave trading and land alienation. The Australia administration showed a measure of seriousness when it cancelled all Papua New Guinean labor contracts in 1946 (Griffin et al 1978:103). Still it canceled the labor contracts, it did not attempt to give back German-acquired lands to the original landowners. Instead, it confiscated them from the German planters and declared them as state land.

Australia viewed its responsibilities to the territory as a "civilizing" project. The primary task of colonial administration was making contact and pacifying the people, and introducing them to "Western ways". Though contact was made with people along the coastal areas in the late 1800s, most of the areas, especially the hinterland and the highlands, had little contact with the colonial administration until after the Second World War. Therefore, the primary task of the colonial administration until the 1960s was making contact with isolated ethnic and "civilizing" them. According to Ian Downs and Richard Giddens (video 1) who served as patrol officers in the territory, much of their time was taken up exploring and making contact with the "undiscovered" people. They did not think about self-government or independence, nor envision TP&NG moving swiftly towards independence in the 1970s.

The Australian colonial policy in the Territory was based on gradual or uniform development. It was influenced by the fact that contact and 'advancement' of the people was uneven. For example, while people in the New Guinea Islands were already involved in cash cropping, especially copra in the 1950s, and some had basic literacy skills, most people in the Highlands were not. With such unevenness, the Australian government believed that an

appropriate approach for preparing the native people was to advance them at the same rate. The implication of the uniform development policy was that discussions about TP&NG self-determination should be decided based on the circumstances of the majority population. As far as Australia was concerned, that policy would not only work well in practical terms, but would also be fair to the majority of the people. Australia was aware that there were many areas in TP&NG that needed to be developed politically, socially, and economically, and it believed the best way to prepare for eventual independence was uniform development.

Colonial officials knew that most of the people did not understand Western government and all that comes with it. To ensure Papua New Guinean learned about such matters, education was required. The colonial administration during the 1960s feared that at some point in time an emerging elite might push for early independence without the support of the majority of the people (Waiko 1993:88). It firmly believed that the political future of the country had to be decided by the majority of the people. To the extent that Australia wished to contain the fervor for independence among PNG elites, the colonial policy of uniform development acted as a measure to temper such a movement.

In the area of economic advancement, little was done before 1960s to involve the local people (Woolford 1976:211; Waiko 1993:) However, when Australia realized that the tide of decolonization was spreading across the Pacific, it focused on rapidly harnessing the territory's natural resources to provide a rising standard of living and to create a viable economy. It encouraged all sectors of the society, especially the indigenous population, to become involved. According to Namaliu (ibid: 119), that policy underscored two aspects of the Australian government's overall attitude towards PNG's independence. First, it believed that preparedness towards self-determination must take into account the economic viability of the Territory. Second, it believed that rapid economic development could best be achieved through the encouragement of a multi-ethnic society. Given that there was no indigenous capital as well as lack of skilled indigenous labor, Australian policymakers believed it was necessary to rely on overseas capital and personnel. TP&NG's heavy reliance on financial grants from Australia along with multi-ethnicism continued extensive suggested involvement of Australians in PNG society following formal independence.

Despite Australia's efforts during the late 1960s to involve Papua New Guineans in economic development, control and ownership of the economy was clearly in the hands of the expatriates (Namaliu 1973:99). Indigenous economic participation was growing, but meagerly. This was true both in terms of ownership and in terms of contributions toward internal revenue and exports. The formal economy was based mainly on plantation-based agriculture. But for the vast majority of Papuans and New Guineans subsistence, agriculture continued to be the primary means of support.

Australia's reluctance in the 1960s to commit to a timetable for PNG's political independence received criticism from anti-colonial voices internationally. The UN sub-committee on decolonization charged that gradual development policy was discouraging the evolution of local political leadership and entrepreneurial talents, and thus, hampered the process of stimulating active local involvement in a modern society<sup>3</sup>. In terms of education, the policy was also criticized as a failure. Because education was seen as being essential to breeding political awareness, the policy on gradual development by 1960

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<sup>3</sup> Though, one of the principles of decolonization resolution 1514 state that "inadequacy of political, economic, social and educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence", Australia showed no signs to relinquish control. That was ostensibly the economic indicator that the territory was still economically backward.

produced only a small percentage who could claim to have tertiary education (Namaliu 1973: 70). All segments of the local populations were expected to advance at the same rate, and almost all efforts were devoted to primary schooling. The outcome was not something the UN anticipated. The dearth of trained local applicants for key positions indicated a lack of serious efforts to localize public administration and private businesses. Consequently, the indigenous people who entered the monetized economy before the 1960s remained mainly as plantation laborers, domestic servants, and low level government employees (Waiko 1993:66; Namaliu 1973:162). Most anti-colonial critics were not concerned merely with the acceleration of economic advancement but, more importantly, with the extent to which the indigenous people were participating in the political process.

In the face of much criticism the Australian government realized that the policy of gradual development was outmoded and a new approach toward the administration of P&NG was necessary. In 1960 the Australian minister of External Affairs, Mr Paul Hasluck, announced that the Australian government would make major changes in the

territory. In 1964 a 100-member House of Assembly (HOA) was established<sup>4</sup>.

From 1964 to 1968, local participation in the HOA increased. Most Members of the House of Assembly looked to the government for local as opposed to national development objectives (ibid: 133). Their desire for "development" was in fact a desire by their electors, who wanted a representative who could persuade the government to provide more roads, schools, airstrips and opportunities to enter cash economy.

The late 1960s marked a period when large number of Papua New Guineans began to articulate demands for sovereignty. In 1967 political parties were formed, and among them was Pangu Pati (Papua New Guinea Union Party), which as part of its platforms included political independence for PNG. The party's desire for independence was motivated by individual members' experiences under colonialism. Michael Somare, who was the leader of Pangu at that time, spoke against colonialism and highlighted its many injustices. Albert Maori Kiki, also a founding member of Pangu Pati, shared the similar sentiments. In Rabaul,

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<sup>4</sup> Prior the establishment of the HOA, there was Legislative Council, which included three nominated PNG members whose involvement could be regarded as passive. Lack of formal education and skills in language of government restricted them from being active participants (Griffin et al, 1978:14)

there was a growing movement against colonialism. The group that was also in the forefront of the movement was the Mataungan Association. Their main agendas were (1) reclamation of alienated lands and (2) exclusion of expatriates in local government councils.

A UN mission's report at the time had a number of recommendations. One of the recommendations was a proposal for an economic survey of the Territory's resources with a view to developing a balanced development plan. The Australian government agreed to that recommendation and in 1962 invited the World Bank to carry out the survey. The World Bank survey recommended a number of changes with emphasis in the area of education and economic development. The administration acted swiftly to institute the changes.

In terms of education, an administrative college and the university of PNG were started in 1966. To assist Papua New Guineans in the area of business, a development bank was inaugurated in 1967. While the colonial government in the late 1960s encouraged local participation in the economy, it moved to secure equity in certain economic projects. The first was 20 percent equity in Conznic Rio Tinto (CRA), a mining company about to embark on the multi-million dollar copper project in Bougainville. It also

purchased 50 percent equity in a new oil palm industry to be established in West New Britain Province.

In 1967, the House of Assembly approved a new five-year Plan, for the period from 1967 to 1973. The first five-year plan was estimated to cost about \$502,150,000, of which 75 percent would come from the Australian government and public borrowing (Namaliu 1973:130).

Despite Australia's initiative to decolonize PNG and the small but fervent nationalist movement for self-determination, there was also some internal opposition against early independence. In the late 1960s, the United Party, representing mainly the Highland population, was against early independence. It feared that people from their region might not be represented in key positions, which would be occupied by the more "advanced" ethnic groups of the coastal areas. Their fear was supported by the fact Western contact was made with most of Highland areas only after the Second World War, and as such, advancement in the form of education had not reached most of their people. With such uneven 'development', most formally educated people in the Highlands opposed early independence. This is exemplified by a statement from a Western Highland political candidate at that time, " My son

will think about independence but I will not" (quoted in Griffin et el 1978:135).

By 1970 decisions made in Australia meant that independence was only a few years away. Despite opposition, the national coalition lobbied for support from the highlands members of the legislature and eventually got it. By that time the UN had already endorsed independence for PNG, and after the Labor Party victory in Australia the momentum for independence was unstoppable. In 1973 PNG attained limited self-government as a two-year transition stage. It was a period to take stock of how the country was going to move forward when it gained independence.

Michael Somare, the chief minister in 1973 made it clear that he would not press for independence until a constitution was drafted and adopted. A Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) was subsequently established and worked on writing the constitution. By 1975, the constitution was framed and the date for independence was fixed. On September 16, 1975 PNG celebrated its political independence amidst mixed emotions regarding the journey that was to begin.

## **2.5. PNG's independence. a gift from Australia?**

PNG's independence, as indicated earlier, was primarily an external initiative. For Papua New Guinea, like most Pacific island countries, independence connotes an achievement - formal sovereignty from its former colonizing power (Naidu 1993: 126). In most literature on independence movements and decolonization, the achievement of sovereignty by the once colonized people is often linked to nationalist movements. This implies that there must be a "national desire" to achieve sovereignty from the colonizing power. In many parts of Asia and Africa cases the "national desire" for sovereignty came with struggle. However, most countries in the Pacific had a different experience; their decolonization process has been generally peaceful and lacking pronounced nationalist sentiments.

PNG attained its independence peacefully from Australia. Some call it a gift from Australia. How was it a gift? The Oxford Dictionary (1995:498) defines gift as "something that is given away without payment." In this context, PNG's independence was something Australia, as the administering power, gave away willingly. Papua New Guineans did not initiate the negotiation for their sovereignty nor did they struggle against Australia for it. Instead, it was predetermined in the Trusteeship agreement between the UN and Australia. Though colonial policies were

ambiguous at times, Australia showed a commitment to relinquish control when the tide of decolonization reached its shores in the 1960s. Australia's decision to relinquish control of PNG was based on several considerations.

International pressures to decolonize clearly played a major role. In the 1960s there appeared to be a widespread movement for decolonization orchestrated by the newly independent countries from Africa and Asia who had joined the UN. That movement influenced the sub-committee of decolonization which criticized Australia on how it was administering PNG. A second mounting pressure on Australia centered on reducing the financial burden associated with the colonial endeavor. Although the process of preparing PNG for independence required a lot of resources, with most of that derived from Australia, over the long-term independence would reduce Australia's financial responsibilities.

Indeed during the colonial administration period about 75 percent of the colonial administrative for PNG budget came from Australian taxpayers. Similarly, human resource expenditures for the colonial such as the patrol officers, health workers, and agricultural officers were also a significant burden. In an ethnically diverse country such as PNG, substantial resources were required to "civilize"

and integrate the people into a nation-state. Australia's policy of gradual development with limited expenditures, the colonial policy Australia embraced before the 1960s, increasingly came under UN criticism. To quell this criticism would have required significantly larger expenditures. Independence was a far more economical option that simultaneously solved the political problems associated with being a colonizing power.

There are several reasons that suggest Australia's grant of independence was an "unwanted gift". To understand these reasons, one must ask why Australia wanted PNG in the first place (i.e., why did Australia want to administer PNG?). There are two likely reasons. The first is strategic or security and the second is economic. In terms of security, Australia was mindful of its neighbors. In 1884, it was concerned about having Germany as its neighbor that controlled half of the island, German New Guinea. Australia convinced Britain to claim the Southeastern part of the island. After the First World War parts of New Guinea were occupied by Japan, which poised to threaten the continent. During first World War, Australia was also concerned with Indonesia as a possible threat to regional stability. Later during the Second World War, Australia appeared vulnerable to possible attacks from Asia. Thus,

for strategic reasons, PNG's location served as a natural barrier to aggression from Asia. If there were any wars to be fought, it would be advantageous to Australia that they fought in PNG. This evident toward the end of World War two when PNG was one of the fiercest battlegrounds in the Pacific region. Second, Australia wanted PNG to serve economic interests of its planters and prospectors.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Meaning of independence**

#### **3.1. Statist View of independence**

For a country to be independent, certain political and economic instruments have to be in place. Two of those that appeared to be significant to PNG were the constitution and an economic plan. For the emerging PNG national leadership in the early 1970s, the constitution was a basic building block of the country. In 1973 Michael Somare, as the Chief Minister declared that a constitution had to be drafted and adopted before the declaration of independence. Subsequently, a Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) was formed and set out to work. Somare's position regarding having the constitution framed and adopted before the declaration of independence was significant. His government realized that the constitution would define the "modernization" project that they had adopted. Under the Australian colonial administration, they also observed that economic independence was equally important. At independence they would be expected to take over the reins from Australia and guide economic development. In retrospect it is interesting to ask, did Somare and his government know what they really wanted to achieve?

The goal of economic self-reliance can be viewed at two levels. The first is to reduce dependence on other nations and supra-national actors in the international environment. At this level the goal of self-reliance is not autarky. It does not aim to break all the international economic and political links, but rather to avoid dependency and adopt a policy of selective participation in international affairs.

The second level is internal to the nation-state and relates to the role in the development process of groups or classes, which can for example be termed elites and masses. Under post-colonial conditions, unequal relationships can occur at various levels and this is particularly true for nations undergoing rapid change. PNG's founding leaders hoped to ensure all people would benefit from the fruits of development following independence.

During the self-governing period (i.e., 1972-1974), a new economic plan was needed, as the colonial administration's five-year economic plan for the territory was going to end in 1974. The task of formulating the new economic plan was assigned to a team of consultants, headed by Michael Faber, an economist from United Kingdom. This team of economic advisers and policymakers took a little over a year to frame economic policies. Being conscious of

the new nation's uncertain economic future, they opted to pursue economic stability as their principle objective (Turner, 1987: 28). That economic document came out in 1976, and was known as the "National Development Strategy" (NDS). The guiding lights in the NDS are the Eight Aims or Eight Point Plan:

- (1) A rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guineans and groups and in the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans.
- (2) More equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement towards equalization of services among different areas of the country;
- (3) Decentralization of economic activity, planning and government spending, with an emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade, and more spending channeled through local and area bodies;
- (4) An emphasis on small-scale artisan, service and business activity, relying where possible on typical PNG forms of organization.
- (5) A more self-reliant economy, less dependent for its needs on the imported goods and services and

better able to meet the needs of its people through local production.

- (6) An increase capacity for meeting government spending needs from locally raised revenue;
- (7) A rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all types of economic and social activity; and
- (8) Government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to achieve the desired kind of development.

These aims constituted the new government's development philosophy and indicated the projected direction of change. As a direct result of the philosophy inherent in the eight aims, a set of goals was enshrined in the constitution. These goals are known as the National Goals and Directive Principles. Though the five national goals are similar to the eight aims, they are much broader in scope. The eight aims are largely economic in focus, whereas the goals are comprehensive enough to embrace economic, social, political and cultural aspects of life. With the goals enshrined in the constitution, they formed fundamental guidelines for PNG's future. The national goals are spelt out under the following headings:

- Integral human development
- Equality and Participation
- National Sovereignty
- Natural Resources
- Papua New Guinean ways

### **3.2. Defining Independence: National Goals**

The National Goals suggest as the state's meaning of independence. They reflect the liberal thinking of the time, and subsumed the earlier more narrow focus on economic growth. Three basic principles stand out in the national goals: they are equality, self-reliance and rural development.

Under the Australian colonial administration, economic development appeared to be the first priority, but that was not going to be the sole emphasis of the newly independent state. At independence, the PNG government preferred development to be people-oriented. Influenced by liberation theology, it promoted genuine development as integral human development that viewed the individual in totality. While the government of PNG understood the importance of economic growth, it did not want the quest for material progress to

estrangle people from each other or from the land. Since sharing and community were traditionally a way of life, it wanted to retain these important human qualities in the new development plans.

At the time of independence promoting equality became a challenging issue that was fundamental to nation building. Under colonial rule Papua New Guineans were subordinate to their colonizers. The government was aware that PNG had relied on foreign capital and skilled personnel, and would to some extent still have to rely on them after independence. Yet it also wanted to ensure that its people were not going to be unfairly exploited. To rectify that situation it would have to assist Papua New Guineans to be equal participants in commercial activities by providing training in those areas that were necessary for national development.

Inequality did not only exist between foreigners and Papua New Guineans, but among Papua New Guineans themselves. These included uneven development between regions, between rural and urban areas, and between emerging socio-economic classes. To be sure all Papua New Guineans were not equal because of "where they were born" or "who they were born to. Yet incoming Western changes had the potential to widen the gaps, create new disparities and

cause social problems. Some examples of these surfaced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as seen in the rise of urban migration and criminal activities.

The attempt to create a nation by unifying diverse ethnicities had the potential to create disparities. In 1970 certain politicians from the Highlands region acknowledged that a large percentage of people in their region were "less advanced", in terms of Western education, and used that as a justification to resist early independence, asserting that they would miss out on job opportunities to the "advanced" ethnic groups from the coast. Another example of uneven development was a claim by the people of Bougainville Island that the copper mine that was located on their land did not provide much assistance to them. Instead the revenue generated from the mine was siphoned off to develop other areas of PNG. The effects of uneven development after independence also engendered unanticipated social issues such as urban migrations and squatter settlements. Since livelihood in villages is considered secure and stable in terms of basic needs such as food and shelter, proponents of integral human development viewed the migration of unskilled individuals to urban areas as a symptom of development causing insecurity. Thus, the emphasis on development taking a

humanistic approach was viewed as a means to preclude the social gaps from widening. It stressed that development should be an on-going process that tries to improve people and community (Narokobi 1983:95).

Integral human development targeted rural development. By the late 1960s, there were both rural and urban settlements in PNG, but about 80 per cent of the population continued living in rural areas. With this demographic scenario, the directive principles of national goals called for development to reach the rural population. Seeing that most of the Papua New Guineans would continue to live in villages, the state promoted the existence of village settlements through national goal number 5, directive principle 4 (see National Goals in appendix):

We accordingly call for traditional villages and communities to remain viable units of PNG society, and for active steps to be taken to improve their cultural, social, economic and ethical quality.

This goal recognized that although life in villages is simple, it is more secure than in the urban areas. Unlike urban areas, where people depend on the monetized economy, the land sustains the rural population's livelihood. That is, people in rural areas can survive with very little money. The simple lifestyle of subsistence farming on their

land is sustainable. Instead of encouraging urban-migration, the state sought to bring infrastructure and vital services such as health and education to the rural areas.

The proponents of integral human development did not view them as being free. Integral human development affirms Neemia's view that though countries may become independent, the process of decolonization may still be incomplete (1992:30). He pointed out that decolonization also has a psychological dimension. For a country to be truly decolonized the people must be liberated from their years of colonial conditioning. Under colonialism the colonized can be conditioned to lack confidence in themselves or their cultural values. At independence they may not incorporate their cultural values to harmonize the changes. For example, in the contemporary Pacific increasing numbers of people prefer Western processed food instead of locally grown food. With this changing lifestyle, they now face "lifestyle diseases" which were non-existent traditionally. Furthermore, without psychological decolonization, there is also a threat that emerging local elites may imitate the lifestyle of the colonial masters and exploit their own people, perhaps even worse than their colonizers.

The new national leaders were aware that as PNG developed, the changes would inevitably be disruptive. Given that Papua New Guineans are not equal because of 'where they are born' or 'who they are born to', these changes had the potential to widen social and economic inequalities. Thus, the emphasis on development taking a humanistic approach was an attempt to preclude a widening of disparities.

## Chapter Four

### Non-statist view: Land as Independence

#### 4.1. Narrative: Do not sell our land; it is our birthright.

Students at the University of PNG are known for staging protests against the state on certain national issues. In June 1995 and more recently, June 19<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001, they boycotted classes and protested against the state over a proposed bill on the registration of customary land<sup>5</sup>.

The students' view was radically different to that of the developmental experts and certain politicians. They claimed that the proposed parliamentary bill was one of the imprudent conditions that World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed as a precondition for their loans to PNG. The students view themselves as the voice of the silent majority in the rural areas, and they resolutely claimed that the bill was not in the interest of landholding<sup>6</sup> families, but in the interest of the

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<sup>5</sup> In PNG ownership of land is based on custom, and with about 95 percent under this tenure system many "developmental experts" viewed that as hindrance to development. Those experts believe that by registering these lands and giving them titles, it will open up opportunities for investment that would be beneficial to the economy of the country. The students challenged this economic advice

<sup>6</sup> Papua New Guineans by tradition and custom are custodians of their land or are landholders. In their worldview land is to be utilized by

international financial institutions, which are acting to advance the interests of foreign investors. They feared that once customary land is registered, the village-based landholding families may not have actual control over their land and this could lead to eventual land alienation. The message from the student protestors has always been "Do not sell our land, it is our birthright."

In the recent protest, what began as a peaceful assembly ended in tragedy on June 26<sup>th</sup> when the police shot dead four students and injured several others. A day after the students were shot, June 27<sup>th</sup>, Professor Les Eastcott, Vice Chancellor of University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), met with the university community and expressed his condolences to the relatives and friends of the murdered students. He said, " It is always sad to see the loss of one of the country's potential future leaders, and particularly in circumstances where they were representing a cause they felt to be fair and just" (Post Courier 2001: 30).

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those who are living to sustain their livelihood, and hold in trust for future generation. They are not landowners, as the concept of ownership connotes to an asset that is commodifiable.

#### **4.2. Land: why is it my place**

The four students died representing what they viewed as a fair and just cause. They were among 2000 protesting students who claimed the motive of the government in trying to register/title customary land was to appease the international lending institutions. In the students' view, the WB/IMF sponsored program was not in the best interest of the vast majority of PNG citizens who depend on customary traditions of land use. Instead of assisting the people in the rural areas, it would lead to a situation where the majority of land would be in the hands of the few, or in some orthodox economists view - those who can utilize it more efficiently. Land registration could lead to economic growth, but it will not necessarily be equitable guarantee for a socially ideal outcome. The majority of Papua New Guineans could end up either being landless or being squeezed onto small plots of land incapable of supporting their families.

The death of the four students obviously underscores that Papua New Guineans will die for matters related to land security. Why is land so important to Papua New Guineans and what is the special relationship between communities and land? The students who protested belong to landholding families, and their actions illustrate a

critically important perspective that is well summarized in the words of Eric Kwa's (2001:2). To a Papua New Guinean landowner:

Land is the only thing worth living for.  
Land is the only thing worth working for.  
Land is the only thing worth fighting for.  
Land is the only thing worth dying for.  
For land is the only thing that lasts forever and ever.

Like other Melanesians, Papua New Guineans believe that their identity and history come from their land. Land provides a point of reference for their social relations. Their customs are embedded in land and have over time developed social conventions that address many land matters and all the paraphernalia associated with it. Land is emotionally rooted in their being. Their place is where their land is, no matter where they are in the world. At death they want to be buried on their land to signify spiritual attachment and a sense of belonging to the place.

Papua New Guineans have great reverence for land and considered sacred their forest, rivers, mountains, reefs, lagoons, swamps and plants. They feel that their relationship to all that is found on earth is linked to their land. To illustrate the significance of this, I will

describe the processes and the conditions under which a Papua New Guinean rural villager grows up.

In the early village upbringing the child grows up to accept that land and the forest are part of him or her. Both are separate but one; they both hold resources for that person. In time, the youth develops a strong emotional and spiritual attachment from the resources and the land. One comes to see it is land to which one owes their existence. A person who grows up in this setting is socialized into an almost sacred relationship with the total physical environment. He or she comes to understand, over time, that it is necessary to become part of the ecosystem as his or her livelihood and spiritual development depends so much on this ecological awareness.

With such awareness comes an all embracing spirituality. The sensitivity of this attachment is expressed in an almost mystical relationship so that the forest is accepted as a primordial link between the resources, the community and the spiritual world. The forest is considered as a place of origin of the person's totem, medium of ancestral knowledge, and a place of spiritual retreat and the source of material sustenance.

In PNG, no land is Terra Nullius. By custom, as indicated earlier, it is communally "held"<sup>7</sup>, but individual family members have usufruct rights over it. Ironically, the concept of "ownership" does not fit the traditional land tenure system. In a traditional sense, people are not owners of land, instead they are custodians of the land or landholders: they only utilize it for whatever necessary purposes and hold it in trust for the next generation.

The people who traditionally inhabit and exercise custodianship over the land belong just as much to the land as the land belongs to them (Narokobi 1981:4; Zorn 1992:5). In most Melanesian languages, peoples' relationship to land is not normally expressed in terms of an alienable (commodifiable) possession, but rather in terms of an inalienable holding (World Bank Watcher 2000: 6). That is, the relationship is familial or akin to corporal association. Thus, Papua New Guineans traditionally have a very special relationship with their land, as powerfully expressed by a publication of the World Bank Watcher:

Instead of referring to themselves as landowners, Papua New Guineans traditionally refer to themselves as the children, siblings, or parents of the land. In the customary conceptual

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<sup>7</sup>In customary land tenure land is used to sustain livelihood and held in trust for future generation. If it is "owned" it would have to be sold or forfeited to the state when the owner passed away.

framework, it is impossible to envision the buying or selling of one's mother or child, or a piece of one's own flesh.

This relationship explains why landholding families have been resisting extraction of natural resources on their lands, and why they are willing to put their lives on the line when their land is threatened. Without any social security system, land acts as security for their lives, expressed below by three young Bougainvillean students in 1974.

Land is our life. Land is our physical life-food sustenance. Land is our social life; to be marriage; it is status; it is security; it is politics, in fact it is our only world. We have no experience of social survival without detached from their land (Dove, et el 1974: 183)

It is upon the land that one's livelihood is found. The land gives people physical nourishment and sustains life. Land helps propagates life and sustains the continuation of life. It is therefore the basis of life for most Papua New Guineans today. Despite minimal government services to most rural areas land allows people to be largely self-reliant. Instead of depending on the monetized economy to make ends meet, they rely on the land for their

daily sustenance. Even during troubled economic times the land allow people to survive.

Unlike in the urban areas where people are isolated from their land, and have to depend on the cash economy to meet their needs, the rural population only needs land to sustain their livelihoods. While the rural areas lack the amenities that are part of urban landscapes, their environment is a lot less expensive to live in.

Traditionally, a person without land has no identity and status, and is regarded as an alien. In most areas of PNG, people with land are considered wealthy and have the liberty to arrange marriage for their children, host big feasts, and/or request assistance whenever needed. Ancestors of today's Papua New Guineans experienced years of independence before the advent of European colonialism.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Change and Conflicts**

#### **5.1. Past Independence: Deviation from the National Goals**

The initial development plan adopted in preparation for national independence did not last long. In 1976, just a year after independence, the Somare government opted to abandon the welfarist goals. It realized that although welfarist goals were well intended, the political imperative to raise revenues and show results quickly was not consistent with the original plan's longer-term time horizon. Hence, the government instituted major changes in development policy. Under the new scheme, extractive industries through foreign investment were favored (Kavanamur 1993:61). It was expected that the money collected through taxes levied on these foreign investments would be put into rural development. The government invited foreign investors to exploit the nation's bountiful natural resources with few restrictions. Successive governments maintained this emphasis on attracting foreign investment including the development of mining enclaves such as Ok Tedi, Misima, Porgera, Lihir, petroleum developments in Southern Highlands, and the massive logging industry. Despite all these economic activities and the potential tax

revenues associated with such investments, the planned targeting of rural development faded away into the background of official policy statements (ibid: 61).

## **5.2. landowners' voices**

During the 1980s and 1990s most Papua New Guineans in the rural areas felt that the government had neglected them. The government devoted little effort to actually improving life for rural population. The provision of services to rural areas seemed to be directed toward preventing urban migration rather than making important contributions to rural development. Essential services provided by the state showed a distinct urban-bias. The urban areas, which hold only 15 percent of the country's population, had adequate roads whereas the most rural areas were yet to be linked by the most basic dirt roads that are vital for farmers to participate meaningfully in trade activities. Similarly, the urban populations had access to adequate medical services, as compared to those in the rural areas who relied on church-run health centers that serviced large areas and had inadequate resources to promote preventive programs. If it were not for the non-governmental health services, the rural population would have been even worse off. The neglect on the part of the

state left rural people feeling disconnected from the seat of government in Port Moresby. But that would not last long as the state began to intrude into their territories for economic reasons.

In the name of national economic growth, the state moved into the rural territories in search of natural resources it needed to raise PNG's tax revenues. The government gave special emphasis to the mining and forestry industries. Development projects supported by the state were situated on customary lands. The landowners were not entirely powerless in dealing with these intrusions. The fact that the PNG constitution recognized their status as "owners" of the land, allowed them room to negotiate with the state.

In the process of negotiating over the intrusions by the state and foreign investors, rural Papua New Guineans learned a new English word and embraced it -- "landowner". Traditionally, land was viewed as part of them. However, as land came to assume an economic value, the relationship seemed to change. As the notion of being a "landowner" transformed the status of the people in the rural areas where development projects were initiated, it also introduced ambiguity.

In contemporary PNG, being called a "landowner" can be viewed in three ways: (1) a statement of protest, (2) a call for development, (3) a mechanism of deception. First, it is a statement of protest against the state for neglecting the rural population. Since the PNG constitution gives recognition to custom as a way to determine landownership, people in the project areas have become powerful. Given that the state had neglected them earlier because of their geographical location, their new status (as landowners) often required both apologies and recognition from the state as it sought cooperation. As landowners, rural residents believed that they have "sovereignty" over the land, including the natural resources that are found on it. Once it became known that their land had quantifiable economic value because of the natural resources found on it, they believed that they were entitled to a portion of the benefits that may come from their land. This is exemplified by Jugede, a landholder from Oro Province (see map 1):

I did not ask the National Parliament to invite the White man's company to destroy my land. I told them to tell the company only to build road outlet for selling cash crops. The trees near the road can be cut for the company. But now I know it intends to clear-cut my forest. The trees do

not grow in the air, but on land the forest is a sources for my medicine, my wealth and my every thing. Our ancestors owned the place and we have the hunting rights, and not only will the ancestors curse me for accepting few Dollars in exchange for an irreplaceable resource, but only the future generation will condemn me of my decision to invite the company. Our ancestors lived here. I am living on the same land. I want the future generations to have a good gardening land. If the company ignores my word, say it to that Judgege said so, and if it ignores again I will impose this condition: that the company must pay me, my wife and each member of the family a sum of \$1,000 everyday forever. Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and they must all be paid \$1,000; not on Sunday because it is God's rest day. My children and their grandchildren must get this sum in order to live. These sum added together are nowhere near the price of the land and the forest(Waiko 1995:27).

On a second level, the idea of "landowner" is often associated with rural people's genuine desire for village-based development. As "owners" they view themselves as people with resources that can be exploited to enhance their livelihoods. Since colonization Papua New Guineans have developed a desire for material goods. Whenever a person in a project area calls himself/herself a

"landowner", this implies ownership of natural resources found on the land. Yet this is an ongoing source of conflict because the constitution states that minerals and petroleum rights belong to the state. The "landowners," feeling neglected, view the state's intrusion as an opportunity to obtain goods and services they were being deprived of earlier. The material benefits that come from these projects are seen as development.

In yet another context, the title of being a "landowner" may be viewed as a means to deceive villagers into first privatizing, then selling off their rights to land. Customary land tenure in PNG has frequently been viewed as hindrance to investment and development. In an effort to address this perceived problem the state has searched for avenues to lure Papua New Guineans to open up their land. The title of "landowner" is seen by many as a means to get Papua New Guineans to abandon the traditional tenure system and embrace one that would open it for private exploitation by people from the outside<sup>8</sup>. When Papua New Guineans accept the status of landowner, they are then led to believe that they are now powerful and can advantageously negotiate with foreign investors. This leads

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<sup>8</sup> The experience of native Hawaiians with the Great Mahele is most instructive in this regard.

them to open their land for business deals. Once that happens, any discussion that follows about the development of the land is normally based on the language of commerce. This is an area in which most village landholders lack experience. Thus, instead of empowering the landholders, the title of being a landowner deceptively makes them vulnerable to deceitful exploitation.



## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Conflicting views of independence.**

The problems that arise in PNG as a result of statist and non-statist perspectives of independence can be addressed in a number of ways. One of the biggest challenges PNG faces is the stakeholders' loyalty to the state. Education and dialogue, through which landholders and the state become more aware of national and local interests could help to prevent future violence. While majority of landholders are aware of the Bougainville crisis, they do not understand how that has critically affected the country's economy. Similarly, government officials, long removed from village life, may failed to appreciate attachments to the land. The NGOs that have been working closely with the people should be encouraged to serve as a bridge in illuminating these perspectives and facilitating a search for common ground that balances the interests of local communities and the state. For long term planning, the education system should have programs in schools to get students at a young age to be aware of issues that are significant to the process of nation building. If young children in rural villages know their land boundaries and the significance of their land, the

formal education system has a responsibility to expose young students to national issues. School programs must aim at decolonizing the thinking of younger generations. Despite the fact the education system during the 1950s and 1960s did not really prepare national leaders to embrace the modernization project, the current system should ensure that students have an appreciation of the nation's challenges. While an issue like ethnic diversity can be a disuniting factor, the government programs should explore ways raise national consciousness and promote national unity.

The unrestricted extraction of the natural resources for immediate export is not viable over the long run. What is needed is "downstream processing." For example, instead of shipping logs out to foreign markets, the government could encourage foreign investors to set up secondary industries to produce furniture for local and foreign markets. An emphasis on downstream processing would not only create employment opportunities but also introduce skills that landholders lack. These acquired skills will empower and raise the status landholders. That is, these skills will give them opportunity to venture in economic activities that they could not do before. If a landholding family sells its logs to a foreign logging company it will

have money for only a day, but if it acquires skills to make furniture it will have a profession for life.

Another area that needs to be looked at is the status of the landholders in the national project. Since independence, landholders in project areas felt that "their" resources were exploited without adequate benefits. They claimed that benefits such as royalties that they were receiving were insufficient. This could be improved by allocating a percentage of shares in these projects to landholding groups, as advocated by certain landholding groups. If land is the lifeline of the landholders, the government of PNG has a responsibility to assist in this area by providing capital to landholders. While critics may claim that this approach is uneconomical, they have to be reminded that Melanesian countries are probably the only countries in the world that villagers/rural people (80 percent for PNG) can claim to have land for survival. And as such the government has to be innovative and explore "unconventional" alternatives.

In summary, PNG at this point in time is facing a lot challenges in its development. One of the issues that the government has to deal with in the name of economic growth is landholders' issues. While developmental experts regard the traditional land tenure system as hindrance to

development, it conflicts with the views of the landholders. The fact the lives were lost in Bougainville and Port Moresby because of issues on customary land indicates that there is a need for serious discussion on customary and development by Papua New Guineans. Such discussion should not only be academic, but should involve villagers. If customary land in PNG supports 80 percent of the population, there is a need for the government to apply wisdom when dealing with customary.

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## Appendix A

### National Goals and Directive Principles

#### **1. Integral human development-liberation and fulfillment**

All activities of the state should be directed towards the personal liberation and fulfillment of every citizen, so that each man and woman will have the opportunity of improving himself or herself as a whole person in relationship with others.

We accordingly call for-

(1) everyone to be involved in our endeavors to achieve integral human development of the whole person and to seek fulfillment through his or her contribution to the good; and

(2) education to be based on mutual respect and dialogue, and to promote awareness of our human potential and motivation to achieve our National Goals through self-reliance; and

(3) all forms of beneficial creativity, including sciences and cultures, to be actively encouraged; and

(4) improvement in the level of nutrition and the standard of public health to enable our people to attain self fulfillment.

(5) the family unit to be recognized as the fundamental basis of our society, and for every step to be taken to promote the moral, cultural, economic and social standing of the Melanesian family; and

(6) development to take place primarily through the use of Papua New Guinean forms of social and political organization.

#### **2. Equality and participation.**

All citizens should have equal and opportunity to participate in and benefit from, the development of the country.

We accordingly call for

- (1) an equal opportunity for every citizen to take part in the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of the country; and
- (2) the creation of political structures that will enable effective, meaningful participation by our people in the life, and in view of the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of our people for those structures to provide for substantial decentralization; and
- (3) every effort to be made to achieve an equitable distribution of incomes and other benefits of development among individuals and throughout the various parts of the country.
- (4) Equalization of services in all parts of the country, and for every citizen to have equal access to legal process and all services to her real needs and aspirations; and
- (5) Equal participation by women in all political, economic, social and religious activities; and
- (6) The maximization of the number of citizens participating in every aspect of development; and
- (7) Steps to be taken to facilitate the organization and legal recognition of all groups engaging in development activities.
- (8) means to provide to ensure that any citizen can exercise his personal creativity; and
- (9) every citizen to be able to participate, either directly or through a representative, in consideration of any matter affecting his interests or the interests of his community;
- (10) all persons and governmental bodies of Papua New Guinea to ensure that, as far as possible, political and official bodies are so composed as

to broadly representative of citizens from various areas of the country; and

- (11) all persons and governmental bodies to endeavor to achieve universal literacy in *Pisin*, *Hiri Motu*, and in *tok ples* or *ita eda tano gado*; and
- (12) recognition of the principles that a complete relationship in marriage rests on equality of rights and duties of the partners, and that responsible parenthood is based on that equality.

### **3.National sovereignty**

Papua New Guinea should be politically and economically independent and its economy should be basically reliant.

- (1) our leaders to be committed to these national goals and Directive Principles, to ensure that their freedom to make decisions is not restricted but obligations to or relationship with others, and to make all of their decisions in the national interest; and
- (2) all governmental bodies to base their planning for political, economic and social development on these Goals and Principles; and
- (3) internal interdependence and solidarity among citizens, and between provinces, to be actively promoted; and
- (4) Citizens and governmental bodies to have control of the bulk of economic enterprise and production; and
- (5) strictly control foreign investment capital and wise assessment of foreign ideas and values so that these will be subordinate to the goal of national sovereignty and self-reliance, and in particular for entry of foreign capital to be geared to internal social and economic policies and to the integrity of the Nation and the People; and

- (6) the state to take effective measures to control and actively participate in the national economy, and in particular to control major enterprises engaged in the exploitation of natural resources; and
- (7) economic development to take place primarily by the use of skills and resources available in the country either from citizens or from the State and no dependence on imported skills; and
- (8) the constant recognition of our sovereignty, which must be undermined by dependence on foreign assistance of any sort, and in particular for no investment, military or foreign-aid agreement or understanding to be entered into that imperils our self-reliance and self respect, or our commitment to these National goals and Directive Principles, or that may lead to substantial dependence upon or influence any country, investor, lender or donor.

#### **4.Natural Resources and Environment**

The natural resources and the environment of PNG should be conserved for the collective benefit of the people: and should be replenished in the interest of the future generations.

We accordingly call for-

- (1) wise use to made of our natural resources and the environment in and on the land or seabed, in the sea, under the land, in the air, in the interests of our development and in trust for future generations; and
- (2) the conservation and replenishment, for the benefit of ourselves and posterity, of the environment and its sacred, scenic, and historical qualities; and

- (3) all necessary steps to taken to give adequate protection to our valued birds, animals, fish, insects, plants and trees.

#### **5.Papua New Guinea Ways.**

Development would take place primarily through the use of PNG forms of social, political and economic organization.

We accordingly call for-

- (1) a fundamental re-orientation of our attitudes and the institutions of government, commerce, education and religion towards Papua New Guinean forms of participation, consultaion, and consensus, and a continuous renewal of the responsiveness of these institutions to the needs and the attitudes of the People; and
- (2) particular emphasis in our economic development to be placed on small-scale artisan, service and business activity; and
- (3) recognition that the cultural, economic and ethnic diversity of our people is a positive strength, and for fostering of a respect for, and appreciation of, traditional ways of life and culture, including language, in all their richness and variety, as well as for a willingness to apply these ways dynamically and creatively for the task of development; and

(4) traditional villages and communities to remain as viable units of Papua New Guinean society, and for active steps to be taken to improve their cultural, social, economic and ethical quality.

## Appendix B

### **RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

1514(XV). Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples

*The General Assembly*

*Mindful* of the determination proclaimed by the peoples of the world in the Charter of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

*Conscious* of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

*Recognizing* the passionate yearning for freedom in all dependent peoples and the decisive role of such peoples in the attainment of their independence.

*Aware* of the increasing conflicts resulting from the denial of or impediments in the way of the freedom of such peoples, which constitute a serious threat to world peace.

*Considering* the important role of the United Nations in assisting the movement for independence in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

*Recognizing* that the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism in all its manifestations.

*Convinced* that the continued existence of colonialism prevents the development of international economic cooperation, impedes the social, cultural and economic development of dependent peoples and militates against the United Nations ideal of universal peace.

*Affirming* that peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law.

*Believing* that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith.

*Welcoming* the emergence in recent years of a large number of dependent territories into freedom and independence, and recognizing the increasingly powerful trends towards freedom in such territories, which have not yet attained independence.

*Conceived* that all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercises of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory.

*Solemnly proclaims* the necessity of bringing to speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

**And to this end**

Declares that:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, in contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.
2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.
4. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.

5. Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories independence to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race creed or color, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.
6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption if the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country are incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
7. All States shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the present Declaration on the basis of equality non-interference in the internal affairs of all States, and respect for the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

947<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting,

14 December 1960