

YUMI OLGETA PAPUA NIUGINI:
CULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATIONS AND NATIONAL
CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG URBAN-EDUCATED YOUTH
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my late grandfather Karl-Heinz Hermes,
whose favourite exclamation while heading to his bookshelves was
“I have a book on that”.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the self-identification of university-age urban Papua New Guineans and their role in nation-building. I question the role of the state and civil society in nation-building and the ideal of the nation-state model for the diverse Melanesian region. I focus on the implications of social change and social identities in urban Papua New Guinea (PNG) through globalization and migration flows from the rural to the urban. I argue that the influences of modernity and urban social change, particularly being away from customary land ties, lead to a self-identification among the urban youth towards a regional identity and a national imagery, highlighting their significant role in defining what it is to be Papua New Guinean.

Urban society represents a variety of Papua New Guinean cultures, yet this mixture is increasingly defining a national ideology. The urban-educated youth in Papua New Guinea highlight the diversity of their cultural backgrounds as the defining character of their identities. Nationhood in Papua New Guinea rests upon uniting the cultural diversity of its population.

Since Papua New Guinea was a colony handed its independence rather than attaining self-determination through a nationalist movement, the task of nation-building comes after the fact of defining territorial borders and installing state institutions. The significance of land and identity reflects indigenous Melanesian conceptualizations, transcending nation-state borders from Indonesian-governed West Papua to the Fijian Islands. The concept of the pan-ethnic *wantokism* in the urban areas strengthens a seemingly “given” sense of solidarity or unity, not only within PNG and its provinces, but throughout the Melanesian region as well. With this pan-ethnicity and the reference of “the Melanesian Way” and slogans of “Unity in Diversity”, the ideal and applicability of the nation-state model can be called into question here. At the same time, however,

struggles over land and natural resources bring about more fragmentization and calls for autonomy.

In early post-independence Papua New Guinea urbanization was such a recent phenomenon that the majority of the urban population was born in rural villages. In the years since independence in 1975, urban society is made up of newer generations of those born and raised there. Perhaps more so than elsewhere, national imagery of being Papua New Guinean is a constructed or “imagined community”, with independence defining almost 800 ethnolinguistic cultural groups to one PNG society within its geographical territory. It is in the urban areas where education, lingua franca, and consumer capitalism and popular culture contribute to an emerging class consciousness and nationalism.

In Papua New Guinea identity is customarily tied to the land your ancestors are from, so that social relations, norms, customs and traditions are all defined by the land. The distance placed between this land and the urban setting causes the urban population to have only little to no connection to their ancestral lineage and lands. This urban youth in PNG often grow up with an ethnically mixed background, speaking English and the lingua franca Tok Pisin more conveniently than either one of their parents’ *tok ples* of local languages. In an urban setting their cultural identities become more fluid and multifaceted, with the youth promoting a more regional identity towards the provinces or sub-regions of PNG, or altogether taking on a national identity as Papua New Guinean.

Identity is a complex subject, who you are and where you come from will influence where you are going. From a mixed ethnic background as well – Filipino and German – I identify with these situational identity shifts and this hybridity of being more of one or the other or hyphenated Filipino-German. Although I have lived equally in both the Philippines and Germany for the last

fifteen years, I spent the first years of my childhood in expatriate enclaves in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea with dissimilar social involvements.

My familial ties may be much stronger to the Filipino side; however, I am fluent in German and know no Filipino dialect and have a German school background of eighteen years up to a tertiary education, which socialized me more distinctly Western than my Filipino relatives growing up in Manila at the same time as I did. As a post-war born and educated German, the idea of nationalism is a bit foreign to me, and it is always critically eyed as a bad word in German society. Since I never fully grew up there or in a specific region of the country, I have no local affiliation, but can only identify as being German. Choosing a soccer team to root for and answering the question “so where in Germany are you from?” brings up problems, while due to my ethnically ambiguous appearance and an “International School accent”, I also tend to be asked “so where are you *really* from?”.

My personal research interest in this distinct social class and age group of the urban middle-class youth stems from my time living in urban Papua New Guinea. From 1992-1995 I lived in Lae and attended Coronation International School. Despite the “international” in its name contrary to the demographics of Lae International School, which catered to mostly Australians and other expatriates and where my older brother went to, I was in fact the only student with no Papua New Guinean parentage at non-denominational Coronation during that time period. I visited PNG again in July to October of 2010 for an internship at the Friendship Library and the Department of PNG Studies of the Faculty of Arts at the Catholic Divine Word University (DWU) in Madang as part of my undergraduate studies in Ethnology at the University of Heidelberg in Germany.

At DWU, in contrast to the more “practical” subjects offered (like business or tourism management), most of the students in the PNG Studies Department were not from rural villages,

but from urban areas. In many conversations they mentioned feeling disconnected from their own cultures after having spent their entire lives in towns and had chosen to study that focus for exactly that reason. Many of the students were more closely affiliated to one parents' culture than to the other, however, some were shifting their identities contextually, while others seemed barely familiar with either one, or constructed a third or national one, a Papua New Guinean identity.

Cultural identities and the concept of multiculturalism and transculturalism interest me because of exactly these personal circumstances of disconnectedness to both my familial lines and displacement to both my "home" countries. The friends I made in the PNG Studies Department at DWU helped me with their thoughts on my research objectives, and I would like to thank all of them for making this a sort of collaborative work that is not only useful for finding myself as a "third culture kid" living in a global space, but also for my PNG friends who found exactly this mutual background we have to connect with me.

With this research I would like to give back my findings on PNG identities, so for all of us of mixed ethnicity questioning how to fit in on either side or in between or somewhere new, we see who we are, where we come from, and that we are not the only ones with these questions to decide where we are going. The voice of this thesis shifts with the "dialogue" in Chapter 4 from an academic paper to a more informal conversation with my Papua New Guinean peers.

Patrick Kaiku's field work with his various informants and particularly Ganjiki's statement "I didn't grow up in a certain area where I could just claim that this is home. This little part of PNG is home and that is all that matters. I grew up everywhere," (Kaiku 2011: 41) best summarizes the intent of this thesis research on the urban youth and an emerging national consciousness. Kaiku's thesis shines light on the role of the youth and the significance of "understanding young people as

dynamic and complex participants in the process of national development” in Papua New Guinea (ibid.36). Ganjiki sees himself as “occupying a liminal space from where to speak as the quintessential younger generation Papua New Guinean” (ibid.39). Having a mixed parentage and grown up in various regions of the country, Ganjiki also states that his education at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) in Port Moresby is when he recognized the “climax of national awareness mentality” and started “seeing the nation now in a much more intelligent, educated way”, explaining that this experience contributed to an impression of national consciousness (ibid.41).

Western-educated urban élite are often disconnected from the land and their ancestral ties, and the goal of re-attaining an indigenous identity is directed by learning or relearning traditional skills (Hereniko 1994). National consciousness is provided by the state-administered curriculum in schools that contrast the urban against the rural in their access to education. Nation-making involves an identification of the majority of the population with the values of the nation. However, in the kinship- and local-based rural population there is a lack of identification towards an Andersonian imagined community of a nation (Jourdan 1995). National unity often involves the selection of cultural symbols of the more dominant political group, which is usually defined by the Western-educated élite. Nationalism here is an urban class-based ideology rather than an ethnic-based ideology, and Jourdan calls nationalism the *kastom* of the urban population.

In a multiethnic country such as PNG, national unity is projected through imagery of this cultural diversity. With new identities merging both the local and the global and the commodification of cultures, ethnic pride is shown in provincial flags or slogans worn on T-Shirts and *laplaps* (cloth wraps) worn by the diverse university students on urban campuses. This pride generates a sense of belonging, especially in “dilemmas” of affiliation and self-definition, and can

also be clearly seen in the national consciousness and nationalism in the urban areas of PNG, printing the national flag on T-Shirts, *laplaps* and whatever other surface to be emblazoned, as opposed to the rural areas (Lockwood 2004).

Chapter 1 introduces my positioning to this study as a researcher and a brief context to this research. Chapter 2 focusses on a historical background as well as the legacies colonialism has left in the Pacific and the construction of nations and nationalism in post-colonial Melanesia. Narratives of the nation and identities from a Melanesian perspective and self-representation are examined, emphasizing the role of land, tradition and *kastom*, and the unity in diversity of ethnicities in PNG. A comparative analysis of the construct of nationalism is applied between Indonesian-administrated West Papua and independent Papua New Guinea to question the appropriateness of the nation-state on the ethnic diversity of the divided island of New Guinea.

Building a national identity and nation are based on the centralized state unifying the population to the framework of a national ideology. The self-consciousness of an imagined community is based on historical contexts dividing and unifying according to colonial borders. The kinship-based social organization of New Guinea and Melanesia is fashioned into a modern one centered on the premise of politicizing territorial claims resulting from the colonial-imposed borders.

The framework of the nation rests upon a narrative of the collective and the representation to contest this dominant narrative. Here, the narrative evolves into a pan-ethnic sense of community, as the collective consciousness lacks distinct cultural characteristics as a basis. The fundamental commonality is an identity tied to the land, which links the national Papua New Guinean narrative into a Melanesian one. This formation of an identity as “Melanesian” re-appropriates the colonial racial category of the “Black Islanders” to sharing an ethnic consciousness that appears to be based

on primordialism, but was constructed by the colonial narratives.

Essential to these identities is establishing “traditional” custom or *kastom* to a modern national ideology, which is legitimized by the *kastom* representative of the dominant narrative. In the centralized state with its limited reach to the rural periphery the narrative is carried by the urban areas, where the socioeconomic and political control is upheld by the élite. This limited extent of Papua New Guineanness reveals the challenge of uniform state centralization.

The pan-ethnic concept of *wantokism* in the urban and Melanesianism in a greater transnational extent are based on a sense of camaraderie and solidarity. The significance of *wantokism* and Melanesianism is based on the colonial delineations and categories. In the space of the urban towns and across the national borders in the Melanesian region *wantokism* is formed as a shared consciousness, but regarded as a “given”. The concepts of Papua New Guinean Ways and the Melanesian Way, as demonstrated by formal *kastom*, highlight the construction of national ideology similarly limited to urban society and the élite.

Chapter 3 gives a more in depth look into the key terms of *modernity*, *globalization*, and *development* towards bringing about social change in urban PNG since independence in 1975. PNG urban society and the emergence of class consciousness and influences of state institutions and consumption practices are surveyed.

Colonialism and modernization have brought the periphery of the Pacific closer to the hegemonic center, however, the dependency of these regions with each other is undoubtedly a two-way street. Globalization has shaped Papua New Guinea in values and beliefs towards a class society, especially in the urban areas. State institutions diffuse standardized education and trade and economy drives consumption. Urban migration necessitates a lingua franca in Papua New Guinea to facilitate pan-ethnic communication. Tok Pisin is the language of the urban élite who

intermingle in places of education and work, rising above the concept of *wantokism* or defining it more flexibly in scope, while urban settlements and their inhabitants tend to organize according to the kinship-based social structures of their respective villages.

Urban youth are influenced by the consumption of mass media and material goods transforming social activities and behavior and attitudes. They may communicate solely in Tok Pisin and English and lose familiarity with their specific distinct cultural heritages and languages, however, some also maintain social customs and regularly attend to other kinship obligations. Identities vary or are accentuated according to affiliation, but a distinct collective identity of Papua New Guinean urban society is evident.

Chapter 4 details the qualitative research outcomes on identities of urban youth in PNG. The research relied in part on questionnaires, however, it is also based on continual dialogue with participants towards their views on self-identification on being Papua New Guinean. A few of my research participants were eager to contribute to this study for the reason of having studied similar aspects in their own university research projects.

I was given definitions by Francis, one of the students who helped me in this research, on the various identities constructed in PNG. Similar thoughts were voiced by him and others that had made me look into this study on urban youth, concerning distinct identities formed from urban migration, interethnic marriage, and adaptations to urban lifestyle.

The resulting identities were described in various ways, from fluidly navigating several ethnic backgrounds depending on participation in cultural performance and social commitments, to naming “home” to be the place where your parents are from or where you currently live. Cultural affinities were emphasized not in spite of but because of living in the city, while also promoting a national identity of Papua New Guinean. Language and lineage are the common thread running

through the statements made here, and clan identities persist even with a greater distance between kinship relations. Matrilineage plays an especially significant and influential role in young urban Papua New Guinean women's social obligations. While the urban youth do not specify a sense of Melanesianism, a greater spatial reference lays emphasis on a "global" identity from viewing one's own culture(s) from a distance.

A sense of pride is stressed in showing how fascinating the individuals' cultures are and in the idea of Papua New Guineanness in general. When asked what "being Papua New Guinean" meant to them, the key words were always *diversity*, *cultures*, and *languages*.

Chapter 5 concludes with the significance of the role of the urban youth in PNG nation-making and the implications for national identity. The literature and the interviews here suggest that the scope of social relations one is geographically removed from guide cultural attachment to clan, provincial, regional, and national identity formations.

The concept of nations and nationalism is fragile and dependent on the interrelation of economic and political stability. The state in PNG is challenged in its influence by a limited reach outside its urban centers, the national ideology the state attempts to install in its framework is dependent on the urban centers and its citizens in perpetuating a national awareness.

The need for a national identity in supporting the state in its influence thus relies on the collective group of civil society that represents this national ideology of Papua New Guineanness: the urban generations receiving higher education and are inclined to the consumption of global culture and media widening their worldview. This broadened horizon includes a vested awareness and interest in regional and global matters, and while remaining attentive to their social responsibilities on a local level, this group plays the greatest role in safeguarding the viability of the nation-state of PNG.

CHAPTER 2: NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY MELANESIAN SOCIETY

Nationalism discourse starts off with the archetype of the nation-state, where the nation corresponds with the state (LiPuma 1995: 44). Nation-building can be defined as “the creation of political cohesion and national identity in former colonies” (Eriksen 1993: 2). In the post-colonial nation-states this implies that the cultures constituting these are fundamentally bound together to one national identity through a common history in this given territory. However, in most cases of multinational states “one group gains control of the state and imposes its own view of an overarching national identity” (Bertrand & Laliberté 2010: 1).

In the Pacific Islands the construction of a national identity depends on the success of the state in encompassing these cultures to transcend cultural, regional, and class loyalties through a national ideology (LiPuma 1995: 45). The state and its institutions have to implement the national framework for it to legitimately convey a continuity of the nation and a national ideology towards creating the nation-state (Jacobsen 1995: 227). Unlike in the nation-states of Europe, the success of this centralized state in the Pacific is based on colonial administration and law and order (Kelly 1995: 256). The promotion of trade and commerce was the central force of the colonial administrations and the curriculum in schools was merely a mirror of imperial social ideologies.

Nationalist sentiment of independent nation-states emerged from post-World War II colonialism following territorial boundaries that were adopted from their colonial predecessors (Aspinall & Berger 2001: 1010). Due to the lack of hostile uprisings in the Pacific to prompt the move to independence, the Pacific can be seen as a “region where ‘the state’ and ‘the nation’ were least kindred”, as colonies gave way for indigenous self-determination (Kelly 1995: 256). Especially on the geopolitical Asia and Pacific boundary of the island of New Guinea, the concept

of the Westphalian nation-state and its practicality are called into question with the state apparatus' limitations on representing and reaching the citizens of the nation.

While European nation-states incorporated the relative homogeneity of linguistics and sociocultural features standardized to a nation by the centralized state, Pacific colonies are far more ethnolinguistically and culturally diverse to be simply combined and made into a nation-state. Whereas the social construct of race was applied by the colonizers and refers to the categorization of people, ethnicity has to do with group identification. The common anthropological understanding of ethnicity is the "classification of people and group relationships", and the focus of this thesis lies on the *self*-consciousness of a shared ethnicity (Eriksen 1993: 4). This sense of community based on history, culture, and heritage emphasizes the role of the colonial historical context in shaping these, but is largely "mythic" (Smith 1986: 14).

The foreign design of the nation-state in Papua New Guinea is somewhat in contradiction to the diversity of its indigenous cultures, where the political framework hardly incorporates indigenous ideologies in its representative democracy, but rather attempts to fabricate a national one (Jacobsen 1995: 229f.). The sense of pride towards being culturally diverse Papua New Guineans can be observed in the streets of urban PNG and is voiced by the students in this research.

This is in contrast to the emerging nationalism following the colonial history of the other side of New Guinea. The formerly Australian territories of Papua and New Guinea are now combined as independent Papua New Guinea since 1975. The former Dutch territory of West New Guinea remains under foreign rule to this day, handed over by the Dutch to Indonesia via a fraudulent "Act of Free Choice" mandated by the UN in 1962. Nationalism as constructed in West Papua is a politicized ethnies that territorializes its claims and aims for a state of its own. It is based on the principle which holds that "the political and national unit should become congruent" (Gellner

1993: 1).

The concept of the nation is a distinctive form of social organization brought about by modernity, where the privilege of dividing territory and allocating the rights to it is a consequence of industrialism. Nationalism “creates nations where they previously did not exist” by legitimizing political claims to territory (ibid.xxv). However, the longer duration of foreign administration in West Papua that resulted in constructing Papuan nationalism differs to the history of the independent Papua New Guinean nation-state, as Kelly summarizes: “in the Pacific, we begin with states without nations,” (Kelly 1995: 256).

In this chapter I argue that the constructions of nation and nationalism are more multifaceted in Melanesia than in the models of 19th century European nation-states from which modern nationalism theories are derived. Limitations on imagining a collective “we” or community that transcends the archetypal kinship-based social organization are compared between the contexts of the colonial histories and sociocultural features of the populations of New Guinea Island. To better understand the various forms of cultural identities and the self-identification of “Papua New Guinean” that the interviewed students here embrace, including a comparison to what makes a “West Papuan” nationhood was indispensable to me in this research.

Further, I argue that these limitations to imagining a nation and nation-making are countered by a newer construct of a pan-ethnic Melanesianism and the modern narrative given to tradition or *kastom* with regionalism and “the Melanesian Way”. These distinct features of pan-ethnic nationhood in Melanesia challenge the geographic borders of regions in Area Studies and enrich the construct of the “imagined community” in these post-colonial states. Under the School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, where the borders are often defined by geopolitical boundaries rather than by ideologies, indigenous studies of the borderlands

of Taiwan, the Philippines/Guam, Japan/Okinawa, and Indonesia/Papua New Guinea can be counted both towards Pacific Islands or Asian Studies. However, these are often separated under the general conceptualizations of “Asia” or “the Pacific region” with the latter falling short in many foreign policy studies of “the Asia-Pacific”.

i. Decolonization and colonial legacies in New Guinea

As mentioned above, relative to other regions of the world Melanesia’s independent nations were only under colonial rule for a short period of time. They were given their administrative sovereignty under non-belligerent circumstances, unlike more violent revolutions carried out in Asian, Latin American, or African colonies (Sillitoe 2000: 15). What is now independent Papua New Guinea was colonially annexed in 1884 under the British and Germans, while the Western part of the island came under Dutch colonial rule (ibid.24).

A chain reaction of effects had influenced imperial interests in the Pacific. The American Civil War’s demand for cotton introduced investment in the plantation system, which set off the German trade for copra in the islands. The decline in British domination of trade and industry and the “scramble for colonies” enhanced Germany’s drive for an aggressive foreign-policy for political and diplomatic prestige. They sought a colonial “place in the sun” to distract from internal economic and political crises (Hempenstall 1994: 33). The 1898 Spanish-American War and American manifest destiny also brought a change in imperial hegemonies over territory and labor force in the Pacific.

While rival powers in the region affected Pacific Islanders in their perceptions of security, the plantation system also introduced foreign labor in the islands, transferred islanders to other places as laborers themselves, and alienated land from local communities. The willingness and

reluctance of islanders to annexation or protectorate status of their lands greatly depended on indigenous social structures and imperialist interests that differed as well, from trade and commerce, expansionism, and missionizing the indigenous population.

Melanesian social structure is based around small, decentralized, subsistent villages or communities. While the coastal areas came into contact with Europeans throughout the centuries of spice trade in the islands, the New Guinea highlands were first contacted in the 1930s (Baraka 2001: 10). The separate administrations for the British Territory of Papua and the colony of German New Guinea, as well as that of Dutch New Guinea, gave the separate regions of the island of New Guinea distinct trajectories for development (Sillitoe 2000: 27). Upon German surrender to its colony, the Territory of New Guinea and its plantations were more economically prosperous and would lose capital to the Territory of Papua for equal infrastructure and development under the British crown. Lingua franca of Tok Pisin in the North and Motu in the South distinguished the local populations from each other, and the immigrant populations and forms of law and order differed with colonial administrations.

The map of New Guinea in Figure 1 shows the clear borders cut into the island between the Dutch, German, and British colonial administrations before World War I. The upper-right corner of the map also illustrates the demarcation of Bougainville and Buka as the Solomon Islands, but under German protectorate status. These colonial boundaries had built up regional identities for the populations of British Papua and German New Guinea (Baraka 2001: 13). The arbitrary boundaries within the regions revealed the administration's lack of awareness of – or rather disinterest towards – its people as well. Aside from Enga Province, no boundaries were drawn along ethnolinguistic or cultural lines, but simply to facilitate administration (ibid.14).

Dutch understanding of the diverse Papuan traditions and way of life had divided the colonial territory of Dutch New Guinea into a number of regencies, largely corresponding with the cultural and ethnolinguistic areas (Singh 2008: 50). They maintained the ethnic differences between the Malay Indonesians and Melanesian inhabitants, racial categories previously defined by European colonizers in this region. This was, however, regarded as irrelevant to Indonesia later as it claimed to recognize the heterogeneity of the archipelago's ethnicities and did not regard racial-based affinities as the determining criteria of nationhood (ibid.62).

The Pacific Theater hurled the Melanesian populations especially in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands into the middle of World War II combat. Sillitoe argues that this experience marked an emotional awareness towards a global state of affairs, their colonial situation, and the early stages of national consciousness (Sillitoe 2000: 28). The Dutch saw their Pacific territory as part of their attempt to hold on to "spoils of colonialism". The tropical colony was to be used to settle Eurasians from independent Indonesia as well as Dutch citizens, and to situate military bases for economic interests in the region, which was hampered by the brief Japanese takeover during the war (Singh 2008: 60f.).

The socioeconomic conditions of Papuans were improved with renewed Dutch colonization after World War II, and they attempted to demonstrate their development intentions to prove to the Papuans and the world the ability to prepare for Papuan independence. Based on their capabilities administrative positions were filled with indigenous Papuans, which also resulted in ethnic conflict and an educated élite that was divided between pro-Papuan and pro-Indonesian factions (ibid.72f.). The "father of the Papuans" Dutch Resident Jan P. K. van Eechoud and other civil servants believed that the territory and its people deserved a different and separate political future and encouraged "the policy of fanning Papuan nationalism by promoting self-determination,

creating a Papuan political and military élite as well as distinguishing Melanesian Papuans from other Asians, mainly Indonesia,” (ibid.63f.; 72f.). Van Eechoud encouraged Papuan nationalism by establishing civil service and police schools and the formation of an educated élite. Indonesian independence influenced both the growth of Papuan nationalism and pro-Indonesian movements and the founding of the Indonesian Irian Independence Party in the territory.

At the Malino Conference in 1946, Papuan leader Frans Kasiepo introduced the name “Irian” and demanded its integration into Eastern Indonesia, whereas the Dutch-installed New Guinea Council wished for it to be referred to as West Papua and the Dutch banned the name Irian. While the Dutch declared it a non-self-governing territory in 1952, President Sukarno took the issue to the United Nations and described the Dutch governance as “a colonial sword (...) [that] threatens world peace” (ibid.80). The Indonesian military operation *Tri Komando Rakyat* (People’s Tri-Command) or TRIKORA on December 19, 1961 accordingly commanded: “Defeat the formation of the ‘Papua State,’ a product of Dutch colonialism; Fly the Red and White Flag in West Irian, part of Indonesia’s fatherland; Prepare for general mobilization to defend the freedom and unity of the fatherland and nation,” (ibid.81).

From a Melanesian viewpoint, the decolonization called for by the Indonesians towards Dutch administration was in effect merely replaced by an Asian colonization. The top-down paternalism of the Indonesian administration was far more detrimental to the population as the policies disadvantaged and marginalized Papuans. Papuans “came to see Indonesian rule as a new and much nastier form of colonialism” (Bell, Feith, & Hatley 1986: 545). They destroyed local traditions and customs, indigenous land was taken away, natural resources exploited, and human rights were largely disregarded or violated. In comparison, under the Dutch rule Papuans had not directly felt the colonial policies, as the Dutch had initially neglected the region and ruled the

territory through local indigenous leadership (Singh 2008: 95).

The UN's Act of Free Choice annexation legitimized Indonesian policies and exploitation, with President Suharto's New Order government greatly destroying indigenous ways of life in West Papua by endorsing a centralized Indonesiazation. Ethnically and administratively the Australian territories of Papua and New Guinea were seen as similar to West Papua, and a Dutch-Australian condominium or even transfer of territory from the Netherlands to Australia was proposed. Indonesian administration would have a negative influence on East New Guinea, and Dutch control over West New Guinea was seen as a buffer to prevent any potential aggression eastwards. However, Western support to destabilize Indonesia strengthened the Communist party within the Indonesian Republic and was seen as a greater threat to security in the region.

In 1973, Suharto renamed the province Irian Jaya (Victorious Irian) to symbolize the victory in retaking the territory and liberating its peoples from the Dutch (Webster 2001: 522). The main instrument for nation-building by the Indonesian government was the *transmigrasi* or transmigration program shifting thousands of local farmers from the densely populated islands of Java, Bali, and Madura to the outer islands and New Guinea leading to land alienation (Singh 2008: 31). Covering over 22 percent of Indonesia's territorial landmass with only 1 percent of its population, Papua was a prime destination in the national transmigration (McGibbon 2004: 21). Positions were now filled with non-Papuans, and the Papuan élite were intimidated if pro-Dutch or pro-Papuan and replaced by pro-Indonesian bureaucrats (Singh 2008: 96f.).

The situation between transmigrants and indigenous Papuans is a tense one. While in Dutch New Guinea the rivalry or conflicts between Indonesians and Papuans was minimal due to only an insignificant number of Indonesians brought into the territory, since 1963 and *transmigrasi* non-Papuans or "Asians" made up 2.5 percent of the population. Forty years later this has grown to 35

percent, however, the degree of Indo-Papuan intermarriage in these figures has to be taking into consideration. In the urban areas this percentage can be up to 68 percent, making the Papuans a minority in their homeland (Chauvel 2005: 50f.).

The experience of the Papuans in this plural society can be likened to that of the Native Americans in North America, Australian Aborigines, or similar indigenous communities in settler colonies. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that in the case of *transmigrasi* this settlement and its ensuing marginalization of the indigenous population was not of the colonists' own capital and volition, but in fact endorsed as a development program by the World Bank. Development planners saw Papuan indigenous culture as a burden, conversely the common perception of Papuans is a strategic development of underdevelopment to perpetuate control and exploitation (Singh 2008: 96). The new identity devised by the Indonesian government for the population was "Indonesians of Irian Jaya origin" rather than Papuan (Webster 2001: 523).

The main incentive to holding on to the territory amid anti-Indonesian secessionist sentiment came with the discovery of large gold and copper deposits in Papua's highlands. In 1973, the Grasberg mine run by American corporation Freeport McMoRan near Timika began operating and "was to become Indonesia's largest single taxpayer" (McGibbon 2004: 16). As the largest combined gold and copper mine in the world, it sent millions of dollars to the central government in Jakarta in royalties and taxation revenue. With the Freeport mine locals lost their rights to land and many communities were forcibly moved from their land (Singh 2008: 98).

Freeport McMoRan and other multinational operations significantly contributed to the disparity between the massive economic revenues being generated and the grinding poverty experienced by the Papuans (O'Brien & Vaughn 2011: 219f.). The corporation has paid the Indonesian military (TNI) to provide security for the mine, and the military's large presence around

Grasberg has intensified violent conflicts with the local population (ibid.226). Only 20 to 26 percent of mine employees are Papuan, and the traditional landowners of the Amungme and Kamoro groups are hardly represented among these.

Transmigration especially from Java has been driven by the mining industry, and has also had a fundamental impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS. Timika, the nearby town housing and serving approximately 12,000 mine employees of the mine, has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS in West Papua, the province with the highest rate in the nation of Indonesia (ibid.). These instances concerning marginalization from the land and the safety and well-being of the population lay emphasis on the discontent of the people and their assertion of nationalism.

Ethnic groups within Papua New Guinea have likewise stressed calls for autonomy or secession regarding natural resource extraction and the flow of revenues. Bougainville and Buka became a German protectorate in 1885, and since then remained separate from the islands that fell under the jurisdiction of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate in 1893. Eventually these became a province of the independent nation of PNG rather than part of the Solomon Islands.

The people of Bougainville voiced feeling disenfranchised from their lands' resources, as the returns of the 1966 founded Panguna copper mine were being distributed to develop other regions of PNG and stuffing the wallets of bureaucrats elsewhere. With the mine labor came a foreign workforce, i.e., Papua New Guineans from other regions more light-skinned or "red-skinned" than the very dark-skinned ethnically-distinct populations of Bougainville and Buka. This resentment led to the 1988 revolt of Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the 1998 war or "crisis" that brought in peacekeepers from 1999 until 2003, when Bougainville was granted autonomous status. The logging of timber and mining of minerals in the islands of New Guinea also result in land alienation from the indigenous communities, as well as immense environmental

destruction and waste refuge into rivers.

The decolonization of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea towards the Australian administration was a far smoother and more successful endeavor than in Indonesian-held Irian Jaya. As it came to observing the lead up to national independence in Papua New Guinea in 1975, Robert Baraka reflects on his personal experience of observing this as a time of “excitement and anxiety and even confusion” in both the urban centers and rural areas (Baraka 2001: 1):

“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.” (ibid.)

Baraka describes the amusing misinterpretation of attempting to grasp the foreign and abstract concept of “independence” by equating it with the seemingly phonetically-similar English word “underpants”:

“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 light-heartedly 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 colour of this underpants?’; ‘How many underpants is the government of PNG going to distribute to us?’” (ibid.)

When the United Kingdom lost its “jewel in the crown” colony of India in 1947, its foreign policies leaned towards decolonization of remaining territories in the British Empire. They had handed over the Territory of Papua to Australian administration, which under the League of Nations mandate and subsequent UN mandate had accepted the obligation to prepare the Territories of Papua and New Guinea for self-determination (Baraka 2001: 4). The UN mandate was determined without the indigenous population and they became merely a “modernization project” of development by the Australian government. Evidently education played a great role in

this development progress, facilitating an indigenous intelligentsia by the 1960s and 1970s (ibid.5). This literate indigenous élite mainly clustered around the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, often voicing national awareness for decolonization through creative-writing, which will be elaborated on further below.

The impending move for independence was a “mixed blessing”, as it came with various challenges and constraints to the local actors and was “rapidly being thrust upon PNG in a manner that clearly served the interests of Australia and the UN” (Baraka 2001: 5). Papua New Guineans barely had any influence in establishing their own terms for independence and “PNG’s future was essentially pre-determined from the outside,” (ibid.). In administrative structures independent PNG was to mimic Australia’s on a smaller scale.

In 1967 the Pangu Pati (Papua New Guinea Union Party) was formed, one of its demands was political independence for PNG. Michael Somare, who was the leader of Pangu Pati at that time, and Albert Maori Kiki, another founding member, spoke out against the discrimination and inequalities of colonialism towards the indigenous population (ibid.27). There was also indigenous opposition against early independence. Comprised of mainly Highlanders, the United Party in the late 1960s reflected on their more recent incorporation into the colonial territory, pointing to the uneven development through marginal access to education in the Highlands region, which had left them at a disadvantage in civil society comparative to the coastal populations (ibid.29f.).

In 1972, rather than by a common national ideology, the motivation of the coalition government under Chief Minister Michael Somare based itself in opposition to the Australian colonial administration, leaving a “vacuum of political discourse” (Jacobsen 1995: 232f.). A foreign-led advisory team guided the new Somare government in its modernization and development strategies, and the joint venture resulted in the Report on Development Strategies for

Papua New Guinea or Faber Report, which led to the Eight Point Improvement Plan. Only in 1975 nationalistic sentiments arose with the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) under the deputy chair Father John Momis and lawyer Bernard Narokobi. The preamble of the Constitution and a list entitled National Goals and Directive Principles, which were incorporated into the Constitution of Papua New Guinea, were drafted. The government nonetheless retained its foreign advisory team to further the Eight Point Improvement Plan supplemented by these nationalistic ideologies in the Constitution.

As its preferred political system the CPC proposed a unitary state with a decentralized government over a federal government for Papua New Guinea. September 16, 1975 marked the independence of the nation-state of Papua New Guinea, as mentioned, with mixed emotions towards this rapid move to administrative self-determination. With independence PNG was expected to undertake the economic development the Australian administration had ushered in on its own.

In regard to an emerging class society stemming from this uneven development between the interior and coastal regions, and the rural-urban difference of monetized economy and subsistence livelihoods, “all Papua New Guineans were not equal because of ‘where they were born’ or ‘who they were born to’,” (Baraka 2001: 40). Urban areas had become less secure and rife with social friction and criminal activities among the migrants, so that the rural areas and life in the villages were upheld in their existence as viable communities along Directive 4 of the Constitutional Goal No. 5, which called for rural infrastructure and health and education services to be promoted rather than urban migration (ibid.43).

ii. *Narratives of a nation*

The distinguishing characteristic emphasized the most in the Melanesian region is the vast cultural diversity of its ethnolinguistic groups, especially on the island of New Guinea. This cultural diversity is the running theme through the statements made by the informants of this research, as it is named as the identifying characteristic that makes up nationhood in Papua New Guinea.

The nation is constructed around a narrative, it is the collective “we” constructed around its own story with a known past and present, and therefore future as well. The narrative is what the state’s institutional framework rests upon to “obey, foster, protect, and serve” the collective of the nation (Kelly 1995: 257). Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an “imagined political community” that was “always conceived as a deep, historical comradeship” (Anderson 1991: 5; 7).

Here lie the limitations of imagining a Melanesian collective in unity: when small disparate communities are the rule, a narrative of a nation has to be created. If the nation ideologically establishes the identity of the collective through narrative, the notion of imagined, invented, or constructed communities is grounded in the narrative. What is essential to grasping the construct here is the manner in which a consensus over the narrative and its authorship is established. The imagined community constructed through a narrative can be habitually contested in its promotion and reception, and thus re-imagined to the advantage or disadvantage of its constituents (Kelly 1995: 259).

Indonesia was made up of minor and major kingdoms across the archipelago until it fell under Dutch territorial control at the height of the colonial spice trade (Singh 2008: 10). Indonesian narrative bases its claim on the territory of West Papua on the Indonesian Republic being the

successor state over the whole of the Dutch East Indies, as well as the strong historical ties between the territory and the rest of Indonesia dating to the Srivijaya and Majapahit empires (Singh 2008: 59f.). Indonesian nationalism's binding agent was the common experience of being under nearly 350 years of Dutch colonialism (ibid.11). The national slogan calls for "unity in diversity", a mantra echoed towards dissenting ethnic secessionists (ibid.14). Culturally and ethnically "Papua is part of the eastern archipelago where the Malay world of Southeast Asia and the Melanesian world of the Pacific meet and overlap" (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004: 2).

On one hand, as the basis for the Indonesian Republic the concept of an Andersonian imagined community is established around the former territorial borders of the Dutch East Indies. Indonesia's analogous TNI military takeover in 1975 of now independent Timor-Leste, for centuries a Portuguese colonial enclave surrounded by the Dutch colony, stands in opposition to the politics of Special Autonomy given to West Papua. On the other hand, the imagined community of Papuan nationalism counter to an Indonesian one, is what pushes this ethnically diverse population in West New Guinea together and in solidarity with East New Guinea or Papua New Guinea and their "Melanesian brothers" in the South Pacific. Thus, this shared sentiment of being "Other" to the Malay Indonesian population is what binds the Melanesian population to a "Papuan" identity, more than before since the Act of Free Choice that incorporated the territory to the Republic of Indonesia in 1962.

Calls for decolonization during this era supported these claims, and in the National Day Address of President Sukarno in 1950 he argued that the "Irian question is a question of colonialism or non-colonialism, a question of colonialism or independence. Part of our country is still colonized by the Dutch. This is a reality and we do not accept this...", (Singh 2008: 60). Symbolically West Papua has a special place in Indonesia's political and psychological

consciousness because of the nationalist slogan “From Sabang [a city in Aceh] to Merauke [a city in Papua]” (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004: 25). This is played up to argue the secessionist sentiments in Aceh and in West Papua, while Timor-Leste only entered into Indonesia’s imagination in the 1970s (Singh 2008: 62).

The Papuan ethnic identity that has emerged as nationalism is full of paradox and irony, as Papuans assert a Papuan ethnicity in opposition to Indonesians, although the Papuans themselves are comprised of some 310 ethnolinguistic groups (Chauvel 2005: 54). Even with a “hybrid minority literary language” of Bahasa Indonesia, instead of Javanese, to avoid the impression of the linguistic majority imposing its culture, a Javanization of the other inhabitants in the archipelago is apparent (Bertrand & Laliberté 2010: 23). This diversity presents a challenge to the forging of a common Papuan identity and Bahasa Indonesia has become the language of both Indonesian and Papuan nationalism (Bell, Feith, & Hatley 1986: 545). Benedict Anderson has noted this irony, though this paradox is not as great as it seems, as “the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarities*,” (Anderson 1991: 133).

In the colony of Dutch New Guinea, Papuans educated through van Eechoud’s schools and employed as colonial officials throughout the territory’s various regions were the “first Papuans” (Chauvel 2005: 37). Their self-identification in different localities was towards a pan-Papuan distinction, regardless of their ethnic affiliations (ibid.56). The collective identity of Papuans and the consciousness of being Papuan is the “function of the self-realization” of their distinctness as a community within Indonesia (Singh 2008: 121f.). This distinctness stems from the history of their separate administrative institutions and from ethnicity based on myths, values, memories, and symbols. Consequently, the future may be envisioned distinct from Indonesia, based on history,

cultures, and the manner of their treatment by the state.

Papuan nationalism was cultivated by Dutch missionary and administration tactics of endorsing Papuan education and development to promote an anti-Indonesian sentiment on the way to Papuan independence, especially in the urban areas. Anti-*amberi* or an anti-foreigner sentiment is essentially antipathy towards Indonesia and Indonesians. Indonesians transmigrants are the “new colonizers” and the liberation struggle is against the “common enemy” Indonesia (ibid.127). Nonetheless, a class divide among Papuans may also be effecting anti-*amberi* sentiment to reflect on the Papuan officials in the Indonesian administration (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004: 44).

As in independent Papua New Guinea, the Papuan élite was mainly from the coastal areas and urban colonial centers, resulting in comparative socioeconomic and educational disadvantages towards those from the interior (McGibbon 2005: 26). Most of the governors have been Papuans, and having a Papuan in this position may legitimize the status of West Papua as Indonesian, both domestically and internationally (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004: 44). The Special Autonomy Law has provisions for affirmative action and Papuanization of the bureaucracy, which is well under way since *reformasi* (McGibbon 2005: 49). However, Papuan leaders have “dual loyalties” that swing politically depending on personal interests and benefits in the Indonesian state, and may result in élite enrichment rather than in indigenous empowerment (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004: 45).

The end of Suharto’s extended regime brought on the Papuan Spring that awakened a renewed wave of Papuan nationalism. Nowadays, most Papuans are familiar with the national symbols of the Morning Star flag and songs (Mote & Rutherford 2001: 138). The Papuan People’s Congress formed the Papuan Presidium of nationalists in May/June of 2000, which asserted the independence and sovereignty of Papua from the Dutch since December 1, 1961. West Papuan Tom Beanal, the leader of the Team of 100 negotiating independence with President Habibie was

the first to make this somewhat retroactive assertion that called for liberation of the territory to its rightful owners, the Papuans (Chauvel 2005: 14f.).

This claim clearly undermines the legitimacy of Indonesia's 1963 annexation, as it illustrates the plight of a sovereign nation subjugated by another. The principle of self-determination signed by the New York Agreement and the failure to uphold this in the Act of Free Choice have become the focus of Papuan nationalism (ibid.83). Especially towards the international community this rhetoric is utilized in support for a review of the Act of Free Choice and the status of West Papua by the nationalist movement (Aspinall & Berger 2001: 1015). These nationalists were re-enacting their claim of the foundational event in history "through the symbols" of the flag and anthem and the "collective memory as the awakening of their nation" (Webster 2001: 507f.). In fact, this re-enactment and declarations of "already free" can be seen not as the administrative decolonization in 1961, which never occurred, but as a decolonization of the mind.

The declaration of Papuan independence on December 1, 1961, has since socialized Papuans into believing that this right was taken away by Indonesia and others that had a geopolitical and economic interest in the territory (Singh 2008: 125f.). Calls for independence are based on rectifying this historical event, and the self-identification of "Papuan" and "Melanesian" further divides the Papuans and from the Indonesians. However, nowadays Papuans rarely identify themselves with their neighbors in the independent state of PNG, even though an earlier generation of nationalists did so. The relative absence of identification with fellow Melanesians in PNG stems from the enduring influence of colonial boundaries and the trajectories of the different educational and administration systems that developed within them (Chauvel 2004: 60). Similarly, had the history been different and West Papua had become part of Indonesia in 1949 or not at all, a different identity would likely have been formed, concluding that West Papua provides a good case for the

argument that nations are imagined and constructed in modern times (Webster 2004: 528).

In Indonesia the relations between the eastern Sumatrans towards the Malays across the Strait of Malacca were strong until the Dutch and British separated these with colonial borders. Now these Indonesians see themselves as distinct from the Malaysians across the narrow strait. In contrast, the Sumatrans form an imagined community as fellow Indonesians with the Ambonese at the other end of the Indonesian Republic, with whom they have no ethnic, linguistic, or religious ties (Anderson 1991: 120f.).

West Papuan nationhood was constructed internationally, marking out Indonesia as an outsider or “Other” in the same way as Indonesian nationalism did towards the Dutch before, and asserting itself as a defensive reaction against perceived intrusions by that outsider (Webster 2001: 508f.). The key date of December 1, 1961 can be seen as the birth of the nation, however, not yet the nation-state that the nationalists envision.

Land and lineage

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. (Kwa 2002: 102)

Something that characterizes nearly all Melanesians is a particular relationship with their land and the tenure rights to land. Since independence it has become one of the features by which they distinguish themselves from other nations and peoples, and perhaps thus the linking factor in the Melanesian Way from West Papua to Fiji, as “they might be characterized as nations of landowners” (Sillitoe 2000: 76).

Land is a fundamental aspect of Melanesian social and political organization that underlies the existence of local communities. Cosmology, history, customs, and social relations of Melanesians are embedded in the land, and thus they are rooted in the land and the land in them (Nekitel 2002: 57). Place is tied to them through the land and upon death returning to the ground by burial represents this to “signify spiritual attachment and a sense of belonging to the place” (Togolo 2002: 214). Great reverence is given to nature and landscapes, with everything holding sacred meaning in its relations to the land one is from, and the resources it provides link one as a spiritual ecosystem of sorts (ibid.215). This sacredness is the core aspect of issues of land alienation through the colonial system, the centralized state, and corporations, as mentioned above with the mining and logging industries.

People are seen as custodians of the land rather than “owners”; the land is held in trust for following generations (Baraka: 2001: 49). Rather than communally held, the custodianship is held by families of clans, establishing a hereditary lineage to caring for it and living off of it in land titles (Rynkiewicz 2002: 41) However, in the urban areas people are physically and spiritually isolated from their land and are dependent on the cash economy to sustain themselves (Baraka: 2001: 52).

The students interviewed in this research emphasized the significance to land in their matrilineal or patrilineal clan identities. Those that had a matrilineal mother and a patrilineal father had the most beneficial positioning, while those that had a matrilineal father and a patrilineal mother would stand outside their clan affiliations or had this depend on involvement in initiation rites and kinship obligations. For the urban-born and –raised this was largely facilitated by regular travel to their villages and continuous communication with family there. The geographic distance to village and clan disadvantaged especially those who had no direct inheritance to their land

through the interethnic marriage of parents on the crosswise sides of clan inheritance. This detachment to clan lands disinclined to affiliating with certain identities and raised the question of “belonging” to a certain place.

Self and belonging

In an analysis of self and belonging in social theory, belonging is “a crucial aspect of being a person: it is ‘fundamental to who and what we are’,” (Miller, 2003: 217 in May 2011: 368). Involving a process of “creating a sense of identification with one’s social, relational and material surroundings” (Miller 2003 in May 2011: 368), while “[i]dentity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others,” (Weeks 1990: 88 in May 2011: 368). Whereas (in Western societies) “belonging plays a role in connecting *individuals* to the social. This is important because our sense of self is constructed in a relational process in our interactions with other people as well as in relation to more abstract notions of collectively held social norms, values and customs,” (May 2011: 368, emphasis added). In contrast, in Melanesian societies personhood is constituted as a *dividual* being, and only comes to be through its reciprocal relations with others.

Melanesians think of themselves less as individuals bounded and separated from others, but rather as a collective of social relationships. Personhood is understood as the result of numerous significant relationships and not as the origin of a certain relationship. Marilyn Strathern calls these entities *dividual* in contrast with the term *individual* (Holy 1996). This term can be attributed to the fact that persons are divisible by detaching certain aspects of one relationship, to in turn form diverse other relationships. The identity of the person is composed by the result of being an element of relationships, and is thus a “multiple” being, resulting from a composition of many relational

bonds. The *dividual* is “plurally” constituted by the earlier relations and interactions of other persons; personhood is only conceptualized as the result of relationships and a form of history or record of past relations (Mosko 1992).

Anthony Giddens’ inevitable and uncontrollable “juggernaut of modernity” has disembedded social relations from their local contexts. Modernity is a separation of time and space, where the urban can be seen as the space in which social relations are disembedded, and modernity is the time in which this distance appears. The modern individual is no longer an entity marked by social position and relations, but has the power to define him/herself. Nonetheless, urban Papua New Guineans uphold their social relations to ensure the recognition to their land rights, hoping that when they return home to reclaim their portion they may reside there (Sillitoe 2000: 169).

What is significant for this research on cultural identities in Papua New Guinea is the engagement in various social relations and contexts and different places, so that the sense of belonging merely to one group, culture, or place give way to the experience of multiple senses of belonging and fluidity within these (Ifekwunigwe: 1999 in May 2011: 370). Ifekwunigwe notes that “people of mixed heritage or migrants may experience manifold, and at times contradictory, senses of belonging,” (ibid.).

Belonging is, as abovementioned, not a given or something that is accomplished once and for all, but dynamic in its fluidity: “As the world and the people in it, including ourselves, are constantly undergoing change, belonging is something we have to keep achieving through an active process,” (May 2011: 372). Belonging reveals the “interconnectedness of social change and the self – as the world around us changes, so does our relationship to it. If belonging is understood as a sense of ease with one’s surroundings, then arguably not belonging can be characterized as a sense of unease,” (ibid.). In the worst case, foregoing their social duties or otherwise to maintain

these ties to land and place would lead to becoming disinherited and landless (Sillitoe 2000: 169). In Papua New Guinea you belong to the land, and if there is no land, then where do you belong?

The students interviewed refer to the implications belonging has to land or place. Their “home” and their identities are distinct to their sense of self and belonging. For some backgrounds and personal circumstances the opportunities of belonging to one place or several are simpler than for others, but for many of them this is a substantial question to be answered.

Representation and self-consciousness

Identity can be seen as a process or a production which is never complete and always constituted within representation. Identity is positioned and contextualized in space and time, and discourse on identity is culturally-specific and rooted in history: “identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past,” (Hall 2003: 225). Thus, identities are subject to continuous transformation through history, culture, and power.

Stuart Hall states that cultural identities reflect “common historical experiences and shared cultural codes” which provide frames of reference as a collective in opposition to an “Other” (ibid.223). The colonial experience plays the greatest role in the production of identity and re-telling of the past, and it is this idea of otherness that conceptualizes and unifies a cultural identity in binary opposition to it. The naming of distinct peoples only came with the Europeans and their need to draw distinctions and to find titles enforcing group identity and ethnic consciousness by these categories (Rew 1974: 220).

Urban identities in PNG can even be seen as “diaspora identities”, which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves in newer forms through syncretism and hybridity. The rural

to urban migration in Papua New Guinea demonstrates a binary of cultural identities and affiliations from the localized village setting to the urban area. In the multiethnic diversity of PNG national awareness is formed in these urban areas, where the different cultures come together and are reconstituted. Like Patrick Kaiku's young informant Ganjiki, Robert Baraka identifies regionally of being from Momase (Morobe-Madang-Sepik), provincially of being from Sandaun Province, a district label of being from Aitape, and in Aitape he would identify himself as being from his village Pou. Baraka's various identities are the consequence of modernity in his experience with education and mass media, and these all affect his relationships in different contexts, he says (Baraka 2001: 15).

Hirsch defines a national culture specific to this region as: "a system of ideas and practices which transcend individual linguistic/cultural units and have a roughly uniform significance within flexible, but generally well-defined political boundaries," (Hirsch 1990: 19). Under the facilitation of education by the colonial administration and missionaries the indigenous became empowered in their self-consciousness, even if the Australian administration may have assumed to know "what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves," (Saïd 1978: 35).

One of the early indigenous Papua New Guinean writers to come out of this time in UPNG is Regis Tove Stella. He challenged along Edward Saïd's Orientalism that representations of Papua New Guineans had been marginalized misrepresentations produced by the dominant narrative that became accepted as true. This narrative had used its power and knowledge to silence the "Other". In a hegemony of Western thought, the colonials had subordinated the colonized by the power of representation. In the act of naming people and places or leaving these unnamed, indigenous identity was erased.

Papua New Guinean subjectivity was ambivalent, unstable, and contested by competing

discourses. By means of literature, the indigenous voices became empowered and reinserted their selfhood, cultural identities, and sense of place in a counterdiscursive response. However, a great challenge was opposing the colonial control of language in a place of 800 languages, which denied Papua New Guinean subjectivity. The high illiteracy rate could only allow for a small readership in any language aside from English, and called for the “forging” of a post-colonial identity by reinsertion into the dominant discourse (Stella 2007: 166). Words could be left untranslated in vernacular, or code-switching employed to signal cultural distinctiveness; the writer established otherness and difference while taking control of the discourse.

This literary political awakening signified a self-consciousness of their colonial exploitation and a move towards attaining independence and overhauling the colonial system. Oral literature plays a central role in PNG tradition and myths, legends, chants, song, and dance can be incorporated into textual discourse of representation and identities. The legend of “The Sun” constructs a sense of place and belonging, with the crocodile being a metaphor of destruction and change, and incorporates the belief of sorcery into Western discourse depicting social change.

Aside from creative-writing, autobiographical literature represents the author’s life subjectively, usually in a journey of identity and symbolic transition from village life into the “white man’s worlds”. Stella explains that initiation rites provide the subject with newfound power, knowledge, and authority. However, failure to fulfill these rites means a loss of identity and exclusion.

As with anti-colonial literature in other parts of the world, the “trope of the angry indigene” illustrated political assertiveness and resistance and counteracted the discourse by representing Europeans as insensitive, ignorant, and arrogant, while the indigene was represented as knowledgeable, politically aware, and heroic. Indigenous writers told their side of the story as a

more accurate portrayal of the indigene, and revised history and its misrepresentations. They “‘wrote themselves’ in order to rewrite history” and with publication they validated their cultural experience (Stella 2007: 187). With this recovered sense of agency and cultural identities, they reappropriated the dominant discourse, and proved they were “equal in intelligence, knowledge, and political consciousness” (ibid.188).

The pre-independence literature from 1968-1974 was categorically protest literature and antagonistic towards colonization, whereas post-independence literature addresses the implications and consequences of the new configurations of power. This writing illustrates a pessimism of disillusionment and disenchantment, national confusion, identity, political irresponsibility, alienation, and displacement. Outside representations of PNG in media and literature tend to focus on failure in development and disorder in the sociopolitical and economic landscape, a perspective that is gaining support from indigenous writers, as they are based on academically-substantiated views. Much of this literature mourns a loss of innocence and the romanticism of village life, playing to the idealistic perception of thinking of local cultures as “uncontaminated” or “self-contained” (Bhabha 1993: 53).

A few of the university students interviewed lament the loss of cultures/identities, the exclusions from their kinship relations through this, and the struggling development infrastructure of their nation. However, it is exactly this group of critically-aware students that involves itself with reclaiming their indigenous knowledge through higher education and the means to engaging in the discourse. Newer forms of media and literature shared via the internet (with access to computers and a broad cellphone coverage network), and discussion blogs and social media now allow for greater and more widespread discourse on sociocultural and sociopolitical matters, as well as reconnecting with their kin.

Nationhood legitimized through kastom

A national ideology rooted in tradition, which incorporates cultural identities and indigenous epistemologies, is perhaps the main objective in making the Papua New Guinean nation distinct from mirroring a conventional Western nation-state (LiPuma 1995: 56f.). The capitalist system and state institutions including education, science, and technology may be defined as antithetical to tradition. Nevertheless, in this case the inclusion of what is considered tradition is in fact a construction of custom or *kastom* that melds the modern Western influences and the local indigenous ways of life.

The “invention” of tradition as such is not only on account of the dynamism of cultures and social change questioning an essential and “authentic” traditionalism, but also on account of the earlier mentioned dominance in representation of national ideology (Hobsbawm 1992). While tradition may be the past and history idealized and ideologized, the national identity constructed around this is clearly in the hands of those in control of promoting their particular interests, subordinating any counterhegemonic discourses or alternatives to leave the distinct “tradition” incontestable (LiPuma 1995: 55).

Kastom is a term used today “to capture something of that past, externalizing and objectifying culture as never before,” (Sillitoe 2000: 240). It is a blending of the old and the new in response to social change, where access to the market economy and material prosperity are gained while retaining culture and customary rights. Combining these two seeming contradictions of old and new, Sahlins’ term *developman* captures the indigenous way of coping with capitalism and “*kastom* is part of the search for identity in the contemporary world,” (ibid.241).

What is *kastom* is constantly open to negotiation and the various actors play these designations to their own interests (ibid.244). A tradition is created in the name of preserving heritage or *kastom*,

but is nonetheless a construct under the influence of modernity and Western ideologies, even if in opposition to these (LiPuma 1995: 58). Herein lies the problem of nation-making in Papua New Guinea, the national culture constructed attempts to unify a diversity so large that ultimately tradition and *kastom* are under a cultural hegemony of those who lead the discourse.

The incorporation of indigenous ideologies in nation-making are merely to legitimate the present with the “remnants of the past”, branded Papua New Guinean Ways or the Melanesian Way, both concepts a pan-ethnicity of ideologies (Jacobsen 1995: 236). Following the Western democratic ideology of individuality and citizenship, to create national ideology and nationhood for the nation-state to function, is in contrast with the communalism and kinship-based relations of the heterogeneous rural hinterlands. Ergo, those who control and implement the dominant national ideology in the urban are those who legitimize controlling the rural societies in their lack of representation. Pejoratively the stereotypes held towards and names for those not involved in the capitalist civil society are that of “kanakas” or “bush people” (Kelly 1995: 260). The narrative of the nation is thus upheld by the élite and their legitimization of national ideology with the élite control of state institutions.

As a commodification of culture, identities are sometimes enacted to depict what is perceived to be a reflection of the “traditional” and ancestral ways for show; it is sold as such, because perhaps it is expected as such by the audience (Sillitoe 2000: 252). National culture in the form of *kastom* is institutionalized and commodified not only in form of museums, literature, and art, or even the design of the PNG National Parliament building, but also with shows geared to tourism. The cultural show in Mt. Hagen or the Morobe show in Lae present *kastom* selectively, and in this manner create and define what is traditional practice and culture (LiPuma 1995: 60). On the other hand, a ritual that is invented for collective identity and in fact memorializes nationhood is that of

Independence Day.

Insinuation that inventions of traditional practice are “inauthentic” is oftentimes stated by external descriptions of commodified culture, such as the inclusion of Christian ideologies in folklore and ritualism. The criticisms discount the fluidity of cultural dynamism and the agency of its actors, implying a dichotomy between (pre-colonial) past and present and further writing off indigenous self-consciousness as “inauthentic” (Jolly 1992).

Forms of new media that depict modern Papua New Guineans, show the diversity of what, and more essentially who, is accepted as “authentically” Papua New Guinean, and is touched on in Chapters 3 and 4. Most significantly young urban women and their changing gender roles and representation are brought to the foreground. The involvement of the students in the university-led provincial clubs, also described further below in Chapter 4, provides kinship structure and a form of cultural immersion for both the rural- and urban-based students. The agency of the students and their shows of “tradition” are a prominent example of countering the perceived “inauthenticity” and commodification of culture for tourism. The synergy of Christian values and *kastom* can be best observed at an institution of higher learning that is run by clerics, as Divine Word University is, where most of the students interviewed have graduated from or still attend.

Nation-making in Papua New Guinea and defining nationhood or oneness among Papua New Guineans is hampered by a lack of any distinct characteristics commonly accepted to define being Papua New Guinean (Jacobsen 1995: 227f.). Nationalism and national culture can only largely be found in the urban areas, the political and economic centers of Port Moresby, Lae, Madang, Mt. Hagen, Goroka, and Wewak. The table in Figure 2 depicts the areas considered urban centers in PNG and the population growth in these from 1966-90, showing urban population increasing fourfold.

Table 1. Urban centres, 1966–90

	1966	1971	1980	1990
Port Moresby (NCD)	41 848	76 507	117 991	194 295
Lae	16 546	38 707	60 708	80 655
Madang	8 837	15 296	19 718	27 057
Wewak	8 945	14 982	19 408	23 224
Mt Hagen	3 315	10 621	13 192	18 977
Goroka	4 826	8 186	11 067	18 368
Rabaul	10 561	12 770	14 581	18 186
Daru	3 663	5 744	7 149	8 490
Kimbe	—	1 172	4 659	8 363
Vanimo	512	1 064	1 752	7 908
Popondetta	2 139	4 494	6 343	7 627
Bulolo	2 724	4 001	4 500	7 421
Kavieng	2 142	3 299	4 769	6 486
Alotau	525	2 499	4 311	6 435
Mendi	1 687	2 435	4 130	6 192
Lorengau	2 446	2 890	3 588	5 804
All urban	110 716	204 667	297 866	445 488

Sources: Connell (1985, p. 92) and Connell (1997, p. 189).

Figure 2: Urban centers in PNG

Source: Koczberski, Gina, George N. Curry & John Connell. 2001. Full Circle or Spiralling Out of Control? State Violence and the Control of Urbanisation in PNG. *Urban Studies*, 38(11): 2017–2036.

The social domains of Papua New Guinea are the rural and the urban, with the former being the domain of about 85 percent of the population and the latter of only 10 percent of the Papua New Guinean population. The remaining 5 percent define the overlapping areas or the population in flux, as these two domains are not isolated or definite dualistic spaces. Outside these urban areas the provincial government offices or provincial broadcasting stations may endorse national culture, but loyalties remain those that revolve around kinship.

To create and strengthen a national culture of Papua New Guinean, the social domain of the rural hinterlands needs to be incorporated into the nationhood of the urban areas. However, various attempts at the diffusion of a national ideology fail to stray very far from the urban, thus requiring an examination of the viability of nation-making in the kinship-based societies that constitute the

bulk of the population in Papua New Guinea.

The national *élite* and intelligentsia play the most significant role in nation-making by constructing and representing the national ideologies (LiPuma 1995: 42). Their involvement in the market economy and accumulation of wealth and nonessential consumer goods positions them in the leadership roles vacated by the colonial administration, leaving the task of nation-making and national ideology to be reliant on class relations. Capitalist modes of production are confined to the urban areas, whereas the subsistence economies outside this social domain can remain fairly autonomous to the market system and thus do not require national control for their survival (Jacobsen 1995: 236).

With this difference in mind, where the national ideology and consciousness neither penetrates nor in fact needs to penetrate the social domain of the rural, the *élite* representation of Papua New Guineanness over the entire nation-state strives for legitimacy. The state's representative civil society is limited to a specific sort of community, namely that of the urban *élite* involved in capitalist subjectivity (Kelly 1995: 260). Class relations may be dependent on cultural identities and religion, when the *élite* is made up of a higher percentage from one region. This also skews the ideology of a certain origin to be deceptively read as a national one (LiPuma 1995: 42).

The *élite* may work in the urban setting that brings together the different cultures of PNG, but live in parts of the towns that are defined less by ethnicities and kinship relations, rather than by their social class. The high rate of intermarriage between Papua New Guineans from opposite sides of the nation or with Europeans or other expatriates characterizes the multicultural background of the *élite*. Nationhood and national identity are reliant on this mixture, which is only conceivable in the social domain of the urban. This is the space where social identities are dependent on class distinctions that are based on wealth, access to state power, education, membership in private

clubs, and other forms of symbolic capital (ibid.58f.). The social change and emerging class society of the urban areas is illustrated in more detail in the following Chapter 3.

iii. Pan-ethnicity: wantokism and Melanesian solidarity

The issue of a common tongue in Oceania to counter the domination of the colonial languages of English and French is facilitated in the Melanesian region by the creolized indigenous pidgin, which allows for the separation of colonial identities from post-colonial ones (LiPuma 1995: 50f.). Contrary to the Indonesian national slogan promoting diversity, in West Papua indigenous cultures are being homogenized and Bahasa Indonesia is taught from first year on in schools, although in other provinces local languages are in use until the fourth year (Singh 2008: 98f.). Local languages were viewed as anti-Indonesian and labelled separatist, so that most Papuans can speak better Bahasa Indonesia than the transmigrants, whose local languages were not suppressed.

In Papua New Guinea and the other Pacific Islands formerly under British and Australian colonial rule, English is the language used to access and communicate with the rest of the world and is used in government, economy, and education. Local newspapers, the archetypal unifying dynamic in the Andersonian imagined community, also utilize the “externally directed language” (LiPuma 1995: 53). In contrast to this, Pidgin English or Tok Pisin is the language of national identity and discourse, and is likewise used in the urban areas in workplaces, newspapers, and schools to communicate in the cultural diversity of Papua New Guinea.

The urban élite use Tok Pisin informally and are expected to do so no matter how fluent they are in English as well. It is the language used to construct a unified national culture. Similarly, in the Solomon Islands the urban areas are also more readily incorporated into a national ideology,

as the state apparatuses of a standardized education system and the lingua franca of Pijin unite and give a common reference frame to the population (Jourdan 1995: 127f.)

The *wantok* system, from “one-talk”, implying a shared linguistic basis, is the term used for sharing similar ethnic identities or even simply as a pan-ethnic camaraderie (Rew 1974: 222). Urban-dwellers meet and interact with more people who are not their kin, but with whom they form a category of relationships that effectively encompass kinship, ethnicity, and more individualistic friendship ties in “a new, pervasive urban social idiom” (Levine & Levine 1979: 70).

Wantok has been defined by Mihalic as “one who speaks the same language, one who is of the same nationality, a compatriot, one who is from the same country, a neighbor,” (Mihalic 1971: 202 in Levine & Levine 1979: 70). In addition to this definition, often mentioned is that *wantok* come from the “same place”, but increasingly *wantok* is used to identify those with common loyalties to different spaces, from village, administrative province, or broader region of origin, and the farther one is from this origin, the wider the spatial referent (Rew 1974: 222; Levine & Levine 1979: 71).

For many of the interviewed students *wantokism* plays a great role in their support system at university. Away from their immediate family in most cases, they rely on a more extended kinship structure for their new social environment. Depending on the demographics of the university, the spatial reference of *wantok* is the home village/town, the home province, or even the region for those that have only a small number to build this community at their university.

Language and communication play their parts in *wantokism*, but the indigenous conceptualization is one of *ples* or place (Rew 1974: 222f.). Ethnic identity or *wantokism* is given great consideration in the choice of social relationships, outclassing education or socioeconomic

standing, when kinship obligations and rights are indispensable. Central to the *wantok* system is the emphasis on mutuality and sharing, wherein *wantok* interactions are governed by “generalized reciprocity” (Sahlins 1965 in Levine & Levine 1979: 71).

Primordial identities come into play here, as the nation is not only created under colonial direction or even at independence, but also as an entity “whose integrity antedates its name, its people’s consciousness of it, or its unification,” (LiPuma 1995: 54). The concept of primordialism as described by Clifford Geertz defines it as a collective consciousness that is “given” and in existence before it is constructed as such:

“One that stems from the ‘givens’ or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed ‘givens’ of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves.” (Geertz 1973: 259)

The nation imagines itself as a community in existence before the fact of the nation. The emergence of national consciousness and independence as the memorialization of the nation-state coming into being are taken for granted, placing upon indigenous ethnic communities a retroactive unified nationhood (LiPuma 1995: 54). This primordialist concept is perhaps essential for nation-making, as it establishes the birth of a national ideology as a given on a nation-state, whose independence was handed over to them, rather than violently fought for in a struggle.

In Papua New Guinea a primordial sense of brotherhood and nationhood raises the question of borders more apparently than in other regions in the Pacific or in the world. Its multitude of ethnic communities is not only unified in the nation-state, but arguably also divided from the borders towards West Papua and the Solomon Islands, both illustrated by conflicts of ethnic dissent. The West Papua conflict voices a nation in opposition to the Indonesian government’s

national ideology, whereas the Bougainville crisis shows the autonomy of a population caught under a colonial trade. This had placed them under German New Guinea, and its natural resources to be subsequently tapped by independent Papua New Guinea, rather than under the British jurisdiction of the Protectorate of the Solomon Islands to their south.

Transcending the national borders is a primordial claim to a shared common identity of Melanesian. This is a claim efficiently used by West Papuans in solidarity towards the nations to its east, as a call to assistance in the contestation of their geographical territory and self-determination. The shared territory of New Guinea Island is grasped as the foundation of a unified primordial identity divided by colonial powers. The formation of a national culture based on pan-ethnic similarity over difference is a continuation of colonial objectification, seeking to categorize Melanesians as such due to a presumed racial difference (ibid.57).

Interestingly, first Vice President of Indonesia, Mohammed Hatta, was one of the most prominent advocates for Papua's exclusion from Indonesia, arguing for ethnic difference: "Papuans were Melanesians (...) and had the right to become an independent people," (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004: 5f.). He found only little support in suggesting that the Indonesian Republic be the Dutch East Indies minus Papua, also suggesting Malaya should be included and Papua excluded. Hatta argued that Indonesia should not be perceived as an expansionist or imperialist state and requested a referendum on the matter of Papuan independence. He criticized the inclusion of Papua, arguing, "it is possible that some shall not be satisfied with Papua only and that we may want to include the Solomons and so on as far as the middle of the Pacific Ocean," (Singh 2008: 25).

Unifying the diverse cultures to one nation of Papua New Guineanness is due to the seeming endurance of the colonial borders and administration, which succeeded in unifying the

population directly in opposition to the colonial power. However, once independence is achieved, the nation must hold its unity through discordant ethnicities and their demands (LiPuma 1995: 49). The state is required to hold the unity, and it is the state that defines the nation of Papua New Guinea with the national constructs of Papua New Guinean Ways, and not the other way around (Jacobsen 1995: 235f.). The creation of the Melanesian Way that unites cultural diversity is a critique against Western points of view and ways of life in an indigenous modernity, and can perhaps be seen as an alternative to still ethnic dissent in fear of fragmentization (LiPuma 1995: 50).

The nationalist construct of Papua New Guinean Ways specializes in blending outstanding features of the different cultures into a general national one where traditional practices and *kastom* are presented (Jacobsen 1995: 233f.). The pan-ethnic nationalist construct corresponding to this is the Melanesian Way. This pan-Melanesianism combines the created local national cultures to an overarching Melanesian national ideology. These official representations of *kastom* and culture are institutionalized and formalized to be part of the nations and their state apparatuses, even if these are in seeming contradiction with sociopolitical and economic state organization.

This Melanesian Way continues to motivate regional support for West Papuans and the “rediscovery” of Melanesian cultural identities has served to reinforce the political identity of West Papuan as Hatta had envisioned for them (Webster 2001: 525). The colonial boundary on the island of New Guinea imposed a territorial limit to the imagined community of West Papua, while in rhetorical identification West Papuan nationalists continue to identify with Melanesians and not Indonesians (Chauvel 2005: 63). Especially in recognition of the plight of the West Papuans, people are proud of Papua New Guinea as an independent nation. However, the success of nation-making is challenged when local cultures and their kinship-based relations are still the most

important social structures (Jacobsen 1995: 240f.).

Rather than nationalizing ideologies in the rural hinterland, the national construct is weak when the state institutions are insufficient in extending their peripheral influence. Not only are local cultures barely integrated into the state apparatus, but the impact of these conversely seep into the national construct to weaken it, through nepotism and *wantokism* or a dominance of certain regions and cultures over others. In recent years, the number of provinces in Papua New Guinea has increased. Natural resources demand a greater autonomy by those holding the land to these resources, and the previous provincial borders are fragmented along new lines. Yet, considering the multitude of lines that could be drawn between ethnolinguistic cultural groups, would this mean national disintegration towards more and more ethnic movements for autonomy?

The concept of nations and nationalism in Papua New Guinea and Melanesia as a whole is questionable. The formation of the nation-state is conveniently taken on by the national élite to construct specific institutions and ideologies in an attempt to imitate the status quo of the right for a territory and its people to be sovereign (ibid.242). However, how strong is the phenomenon of nations and nationalism, when the capitalist market system can transcend borders and states? With globalization, the opening of trade agreements and the implications of regionalism, the individual nations-states lose their significance.

As mentioned before, in the Melanesian region identity is perpetuated through the land one is from and lives on, thus land struggles have probably influenced more than any other factor to create the resentment routed into nationalist sentiment. The most militant expression of anti-Indonesian sentiment in West Papua is the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) or Free Papua Organization that first appeared in the mid-1960s. The movement began as various local armed groups, and drew most of its leadership from traditional leadership and the Dutch-educated urban

élite (Aspinall & Berger 2001: 1014). By the next decade, the scattered groups had become a spreading popular revolt, which credits the loss of land to their taking up of arms against the new colonizers (McGibbon 2004: 17; Webster 2001: 520).

Freeport McMoRan has levelled entire mountains that are sacred to the Amungme people who were resettled from their homeland (Webster 2001: 522). Papuans' call for *merdeka*, independence in Bahasa Indonesia, as their hopeful way out of the grievances and sufferings since falling under Indonesian control (Singh 2008: 113). In West Papua it is notable that the demand for "free Papua land" *Tanah Papua Merdeka* is an expression that has become more common than "independent Papua State" *Negara Papua Merdeka* (Webster 2001: 520). West Papuans claim a special attachment to the land as its original custodians (*orang asli*), and insist that their rights as the traditional landowners be recognized and draw on international efforts to protect indigenous people (McGibbon 2004: 18).

With this Melanesian sense of identity there is a strong solidarity within the other Melanesian states of the South Pacific based on the "Melanesian socialism" doctrine of Vanuaku leader Father Walter Lini of Vanuatu that became a turning point in the region (Webster 2001: 524f.). The three independent Melanesian states of the early period of the Indonesian takeover, linked by the common lingua franca of Pidgin English, formed the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) along with New Caledonia's Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) stressing issues of land and Melanesian identity. Vanuatu in its geographic location is less vulnerable to Indonesian pressures than neighboring Papua New Guinea, and thus provides the greatest active diplomatic support for the OPM.

Vanuatu's most recent Prime Minister Moana Carcasses was a strong proponent for decolonization and has polarized the MSG in his government's position towards allowing

Indonesia as an observer. The post-colonial plan of a Melanesian Federation with PNG, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and Vanuatu was eventually nixed by Australia, which had previously advanced the idea (Webster 2001: 514; Premdas 1985: 1063). Papua New Guinea is caught in the predicament of following Australian and Indonesian foreign policies and aid donations. A leaked official Australian defense document proves that Australia had strongly influenced PNG's policies towards the OPM, wherein "PNG's Melanesian ethnic brothers were to be sacrificed to this end" (Premdas 1985: 1057).

In PNG there has long been widespread sympathy for fellow Melanesians from the West, "dark, frizzy-haired people like ourselves," who say they are fleeing Indonesian oppression. However, the governments have always taken the view that they cannot afford to antagonize Indonesia by welcoming refugees (Bell, Feith, & Hatley 1986: 541). Even the then Prime Minister Somare admitted after denouncing the OPM activities in PNG: "I have a feeling for Irian Jayans of Indonesia. We were divided by history. We know that we have brothers on the other side, we sympathize with them," (Premdas 1985: 1071).

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL CHANGE AND MODERNITY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

“Melanesia has been invaded by a huge tidal wave from the West in the form of colonization and Christianization. Like any tidal wave, the West came mercilessly, with all the force and power, toppling over our earth, destroying our treasures, depositing some rich soil, but also leaving much rubbish.” (Narokobi 1980: 8)

This declaration stems from Papua New Guinean politician Bernard Narokobi’s post-independence manifesto on *The Melanesian Way*. Dramatic albeit poetic as it sounds, this Western colonial invasion disrupting the way of life and state of mind of the indigenous is probably not the principal force bringing social change to Papua New Guinea, or Melanesia in general.

Since cultures and societies are not static, but inherently dynamic in the fluidity of the human beings and their life cycles within them, change can be internally generated as well. Societies are constantly in the process of improving their situation, which affect its social organization and institutions. Nevertheless, the internal changes occurring may be less disruptive of the social structures than an external catalyst will be (Sillitoe 2000: 3f.).

The transformations that bring about other social change are those of a technological nature: innovations in tools and other implements to improve the productivity of day-to-day life and consequently the routine of the social order. The three aspects of external change that can be distinguished are technological innovation, social consequences, and the indigenous rationalizations of these modernisms (ibid.5). Technological change will usually be desirable by the population and show a perceptible progress or “development” in societies. However, social change in itself, i.e., a “change in the social organization, economic arrangements, or political ordering of another culture or shifts in the aspirations or ideology of its members” can hardly be judged as improvement, “for who is to say that one social system or political ideology is better than another except in terms of culturally specific values?”, asks Sillitoe justly (ibid.7).

Narokobi powerfully argues against the aggression of these Western innovations, praising the worth of Melanesian customs: “Because we have some beautiful values, outsiders should stop ramming their values and systems down our throats under the guise of ‘technology’, ‘modernism’, ‘development’, or ‘progress’,” (Narokobi 1980: 15).

In this chapter I describe the globalization framework informing social change in urban PNG. I argue that the context of urbanization and urban migration has changed over the decades since independence, with labor migration being less of a factor for the second or even third generation of PNG urban society now born and raised in towns. I further argue that a social class consciousness has emerged over these generations through the urban dynamics of ethnic intermarriage, access to higher education, and modern consumption practices. Previous literature is discussed to illustrate current research on the urban middle-class in PNG.

Development and its advantages and disadvantages are interpreted critically by some of the students interviewed. As urban university-educated students, they evidently benefit from the technologies more than perhaps their peers in the rural villages. Nonetheless, they acknowledge the drawbacks of these and also note the romanticism of leaving these and urban life behind again, as some populations are excluded from national development and the lacking infrastructure feeds off of those already deprived of it.

i. Development discourse: developman vs. development

A great deal of the development rhetoric is grounded in what Edward Saïd termed as Orientalism: “ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”),” (Saïd 1978: 43). However, to understand social change and “development” in Melanesia, Narokobi

himself utilizes this discourse in his reverse Orientalism to praise the Melanesian Way towards modernization. This rhetoric is unavoidable, as the different cultural heritages and histories have to be taken into account in the increasing currents of globalization (Sillitoe 2000: 34). On definitions of globalization, Joseph Stiglitz characterizes it as bringing together people and countries through transnational movements:

“the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by the enormous reduction costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of ratification barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and to a lesser extent people across borders.” (Stiglitz 2003: 9)

The four dimensions of globalization are world capitalist economy, world military order, international division of labor, and the nation-state system. Class and globalization theories tend to identify class society with the nation-state, as the nation-state is seen as the ideal form of society (Beck 2011: 2; 26). Economies cross these borders transnationally and globalization emphasizes the importance of regional blocs as market and political actors (Beck 2011: 28f.).

Anthony Giddens’ definition of globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” highlights the sociopolitical impacts past the general economic implications (Giddens 1990: 64). The truly negative aspects of social transformation can be seen similarly in the industrial nations as well as in developing countries. The impacts on industrial labor, welfare, and fragmentation of communities lead to the reconstitution of social identities in the industrial nations. Correspondingly, agricultural labor, destruction of rural livelihoods, erosion of social orders, and the creation of shanty-towns within the cities of the developing countries are impacted (Castles 2010: 1576).

For the case of PNG, when economists and planners consider developing a region, this entails considerably modifying the traditional social order to conform with the centralized capitalist-like

system (Sillitoe 2000: 149). In Marxist terms of modes of production, these are related to particular stages of the development of society, which are expected to succeed each other in a predetermined linear sequence (Ogan & Wesley-Smith 1992: 36). In most parts of the periphery of the world, i.e., the post-colonial “third world”, the force behind the transition to capitalism is externally imposed as capitalism expands “from its homelands into the non-capitalist periphery” (ibid.).

Modernization theory emerged from the reasoning that it is a duly humanitarian act of the colonial powers to bring about social change to stimulate the economic growth and social development of its colonies. This theory alleges that many “traditional” societies were “held hostage by beliefs, values, and associated institutions which were responsible for a resistance to change,” (MacPherson 1992: 439). Following a transformation of these factors would thus in turn spur economic growth or development. Sillitoe argues for the use of the more accurate term technological development over that of economic development, which he deems less precarious in its evolutionist implications. The material advancement of societies infers the more quantifiable involvement of new technologies in the fields of, e.g., scientific medicine, agriculture, industries, and businesses (Sillitoe 2000: 6).

A fair criticism towards modernization theory is its focus on external forces promoting change, while ignoring internal dynamics and the impacts of the cultural specificity and historical circumstances of traditional cultures on modernization. “Traditional” and modern systems cannot be seen as mutually exclusive, as some traditional values may be compatible with or even promote development (ibid.73f.).

Dependency theory assumes that developing countries are divided between the monopoly on resources and power of the wealthy minority and the peasants and urban poor, who make up the impoverished majority. These nations are linked by dependency relations to industrial powers

as satellites of the metropolises, which benefit from expropriating the production surpluses of these satellites. The satellites are limited in their influence over capital investment, world markets, or international politics, and also unable to achieve development autonomously, with economic growth dependent upon the more powerful metropolis nations.

From the metropolis down to the satellite, and on down to the rural village, underdevelopment is perpetuated in “a chain of domination and dependency relations” (Sillitoe 2000: 115f.). In fact, in disproof of the concept of “underdevelopment”, Latin American social scientists show that the exchange relations were regulated so that economic growth in the satellite states of the periphery could not occur, as surpluses were systematically leeched by the metropolitan states that they were associated with. Thus, the states were not in a status quo of underdevelopment, but had in fact been systematically underdeveloped by metropolitan states in the dependency relation to these (MacPherson 1992: 439).

Economic growth has led to the impoverishment majority in developing countries and for the prosperity of a small élite. Additionally, this “indigenous bourgeoisie”, as expected, has a vested interest in maintaining the unequal power structures based on the dependency relations. Dependency theory sees underdevelopment “almost exclusively in terms of vertical relations of domination” (Sillitoe 2000: 116). However, any relationship must assume that the two parties are interdependent to some degree and that cooperation exists both between and within opposed interest groups. Metropolitan centers do not exclusively control resources and modes of production in the satellites, which are overseen by a national élite, as the local communities can also play a role in the allocation of regional and even national resources.

As mentioned above, a problem with both modernization and dependency theory is the false assumption that with the intrusion of centralized capitalism into other peripheral societies,

“traditional” socioeconomic arrangements are eliminated, when it may in fact interact side-by-side with new capitalist monetary arrangements (Sillitoe 2000: 116). Specific to the implications of Western modernity on Melanesian cultures, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins debates the alternative “developman” as opposed to *development* in Melanesia:

“a happy misunderstanding that seems to express truly the initial relation of Pacific island people to the encroaching Western economy. The term captures the indigenous way of coping with capitalism, a passing moment that in some places has already lasted more than one hundred years.” (Sahlins 2005: 23)

The concept of developman can be seen as an early indigenous rationalization of the Western influences, specifically Western capitalism and commodities, and the selective appropriation and transformation of these. Sahlins states that with the inclusion into the capitalist world system, the appropriation of modern commodities is the culturally-specific means of “realizing” modernity. Nevertheless, it brings upon an ever-increasing dependency on capitalism for these societies. He observes a “shift from a selective to an eclectic relation” to commodities as a shift from developman to development within the later twentieth century (ibid.35f.).

Analyses of Sahlins’ approach discuss his account to the shift from developman and development as variable from capitalist production, and as such distinct from the notion of economic/technological development, being instead culturally embedded in their perpetuation of local systems and beliefs (Errington & Gewertz 2005: 164).

Biersack interprets Sahlins’ arguments (referring to his previous publication “Goodbye to Tristes Tropes”) towards cultural heterogeneity and numerous modernities, which are the result of reciprocal local-global interactions. She criticizes the dichotomies of traditional/modern, the West/the Rest, and specifically to Sahlins’ development argument cultural reproduction/cultural transformation, which disregard the notion of a “thirdness” or “third culture” and transculturalism (Biersack 2005: 136). However, she acknowledges that Sahlins’ model of change dispenses with

the binaries of “either-orness”, as it examines the various potentials of interactions between the indigenous (the local) and the world system (the global). Furthermore, she commends this approach for focusing not on the world-systems-theory understanding of development and flows of capital and technology, but on (indigenous) meaning, subjectivity, and the human imagination (ibid.152).

Both dependency and modernization theory overlook the sociohistorical contexts of different cultures and the interaction of unique internal variables towards promoting social change. In the PNG Highlands, Sillitoe says, individuals who build on the opportunities of change may gain the economic advantage to promote successful cash-earning enterprises to their previous subsistence lifestyles, e.g., local betelnut consumption offering an innovative market commodity on a national scale (Sillitoe 2000: 116; Hirsch 1990).

Foster calls this the “crisis of modernity” that brings with it not only a political, economic and/or cultural crisis, but an ontological one undeniably necessitating indigenous rationalization, as it “engenders scepticism about a whole mode of existence; it is a crisis of well-being or of how to be well in the world,” (Foster 2005: 207). He also echoes Biersack’s observation on Sahlins’ all-or-nothing Orientalist binary of “their” versus “our” ontology implying a radical rapture from tradition to modernity. Sahlins’ Melanesian developman to development shift can be seen as a rejection of the “limited choice between *either* being more like Themselves *or* being more like Ourselves,” (ibid.208).

Foster describes the two alternatives of choosing both kinds of elements simultaneously or one at a time, or of being “something or someone else; neither develop-man nor development, but a transcendent negation of their opposition achieved through creative synthesis,” (ibid.209). He shows the synthesis in the examples of Errington & Gewertz’s study comparing university-

educated Chambri man John Illumbui, who spatially separates his performance as develop^{man} in Wewak and development in Port Moresby, wherein his ontologies could be described as *kastom* and *bisnis* in other Melanesian terminology. The Boiken Kamburi synthesizes his actual house to these ontological distinctions. It appears from the outside as a native house, however, inside houses various essential modern necessities (ibid.). Thus, the implications of social change in Melanesia can be approached as seeing and embracing the potential for “realizing” modernity in the ways most appropriate for the societies at hand.

Bernard Narokobi focusses on Directive 3 of the Constitutional Goal No. 5, which emphasizes Papua New Guinean ways, elucidating that the “cultural (...) diversity of our peoples is recognized as a positive strength. There should be fostered a respect and appreciation for traditional ways of life and culture (...) and a willingness to apply these ways dynamically and creatively for the tasks of development,” (Narokobi 1980: 106). Furthermore, for the vision of a great nation, he proclaims:

“This Western tidal wave has also set in motion chain reactions within ourselves and a thirst for a much better future. Western influence has a negative and, destructive aspect. Melanesian Voice also sees it as a wave that has helped to set free our creative forces. It is a wave whose moving ripples should be used as a living light for new future.” (ibid.8)

A number of the students’ statements to this research touch on the back-and-forth of their fluid identities, between the social domains of urban and rural, and of behavior around family and in university life. The spatial separation of selves and the synthesis of the Chambri and the Boiken man here are characteristic portrayals of how the students describe their adaptability between appropriate conduct among people and places.

ii. *Urbanization in early post-independence PNG*

As elaborated in the previous chapter, present-day Papua New Guinea was colonized in 1884 by the British and Germans as the Territory of Papua and German New Guinea respectively (Sillitoe 2000: 24f.). Both New Guinea and Papua were thus administratively independent, and even after German handover amalgamation was considered but rejected. Only the post-war union of the territories resulted in administrative centralization, but the country was still largely fragmented as several large islands and there was a lack of a land transport network with high costs of internal transport.

These are conditions that encouraged the development of a several semi-independent urban centers, which held stronger and often more direct economic links with overseas cities rather than a “unified urban hierarchy” with one another within PNG itself (Ward 1977: 46). Colonial intentions of the two territories directed the future prosperity of these. German New Guinea in its short life span was linked to its industrial metropolitan center with the resolve to build a flourishing overseas empire, while the British were not too involved in the colony aside by name, merely tying it to their colony of Australia, in the imperial periphery on its own (Ogan & Wesley-Smith 1992: 44).

Against the promotion of the rural, which is named in the Constitution’s Directive Principles, Ward states that internal migration and urbanization are essential for economic and social progress, and further argues that increasing this urbanization and the extension of urban ways of life into the rural areas promote national unity (Ward 1977: 27). One of the earliest studies on urbanization in Papua New Guinea was published just shortly after national independence by Levine & Levine in 1979. In the subsequent decades newer studies by anthropologists have been conducted with the urban-dwelling population, amongst others, Michael Goddard, Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, and

Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, who focus their research on the emergence of the middle-class leading to a national consciousness (Gewertz & Errington 1999).

Towns in Papua New Guinea were originally established as the centers of colonial administration and not the expansion of local settlements (Levine & Levine 1979: 1). In early post-independence Papua New Guinea urbanization was such a recent phenomenon that the majority of the urban population were born in villages and have only migrated for labor to the towns of late. However, more recent literature reflects on the current population of urban-born generations, which is the starting-point of the social change towards urban identities examined here in this thesis (ibid.3).

In these mere 30 years the initial observations made by Levine & Levine have highlighted the social change that has materialized through modernization in its effects on the newer generations. This social change between pre-independence urbanization and the lifestyles of the contemporary society of urban residents is what distances and gives new challenges to the urban youth of PNG now compared to their parents' and grandparents' generations. The social change causing new challenges to identities, belonging, and "home", are voiced by the students in the interviews and observations of national development in urban PNG.

The byline of the publication by Levine & Levine is aptly titled *A Study of Ambivalent Townspeople*, a recurring sentiment even more blatantly expressed in the newer studies. Among problems stated are, e.g., crime, juvenile delinquency, and alcohol abuse, steadily growing with the rate of urban population increase. All alarming concerns for the local population, although also causing significant problems in the rural areas. These are aggravated by a lack of urban integration and by related feelings of social anomie (ibid.148). Social change in urban PNG embodies the shift and fluidity between Tönnies' concepts from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, or community vs.

society. The rural and localized community centers around close kinship relations, while the formation of a Papua New Guinean society in the urban areas is fundamental to the imagery of the nation, but comes with a transformation of the structures essential for social integration.

Analogously, Bernard Narokobi describes a Melanesian village as being “a vital and dynamic human institution. It is not the shapeless, impersonal, juristic layout of buildings a modern suburban city is,” (Narokobi 1980: 18). This caution towards life in towns vacillated between, on one hand, the high costs of living, violence, and difficulties of living amongst so many dissimilar others, and on the other hand, there was the excitement of the “largely European colonial environment”, the modern and sophisticated amenities, and the escape from monotonous village life and responsibilities (Levine & Levine 1979: 1).

Nowadays, many non-Melanesian residents of the PNG capital Port Moresby casually call it Moresby, while Papua New Guineans tend to commonly refer to it by either the airport code POM or simply as Mosbi. This should not be taken as a transliteration into the lingua franca Tok Pisin, but explicitly represents a Melanesian pronunciation of the city’s name as it went from colonial town to becoming a Melanesian city. Generally Port Moresby and other urban areas are likely to be referred to as town or *taun* instead of city, the nomenclature taken from being comparable to a small Australian town (Goddard 2010: 1f.). Goddard notes the lamentation over what Port Moresby had become, as both Papua New Guineans and Europeans agreed it was “not the real PNG. The real PNG was considerably beyond the city’s boundaries, both in geography and in imagination,” (ibid.4).

Push-and-pull factors for rural to urban migration among Papua New Guineans are cited as land pressure, rural income opportunities, the need for cash, the desire to escape traditional obligations and authority, personal factors, the wish to acquire marketable skills or an education

for one's children, boredom with village life, the attractions of the towns, availability of access to towns, the desire to join resident kin, and the perception of migration as a rite of passage into manhood (Levine & Levine 1979: 28f.). Urban development itself was also a pull factor, as the opening of the Panguna mine in Bougainville subsequently attracted laborers from all over the country, while Lae and Goroka grew rapidly with the completion of the Highlands Highway.

In the late 1970s, the percentage of the migrant populations born outside of the main towns' demographics was well over 50 percent. The two largest towns, Port Moresby and Lae, having 61 percent and 62 percent respectively of their populations born outside their sub-districts (ibid.26). Urban migration at this time had not led to great rural-urban disjunctions with the first-generation migrants of working age and a high rural-urban circulation (ibid.33f.).

In Marilyn Strathern's 1977 study on Mt. Hagen migrants in Port Moresby, she notes the intention to go home "even among those who from their behavior seem most settled and entrenched in urban society," (Strathern 1977: 264). She gives the reasoning towards regarding the labor migration merely as a "sojourn" in town as "no more than a stage in life, the 'real' adult world being elsewhere," (ibid.). Sillitoe echoes this sentiment of prolonged labor migration as the general attitude of urban residents, even among those born and raised there as second-generation and further (Sillitoe 2000: 169).

As early as 1974 it was observed that the social organization in Port Moresby was not merely a collective replica of the migrants' societies of origin but perhaps "possesse[d] sufficient interdependence between its parts to allow us to treat it as a separate social structure," (Rew 1974: 213). The local Europeans of this pre-independence time period thought of the incoming migrants as "parasites, sponging on their urban kinsmen" and the cause of the town's disorder and crime rising in the city (ibid.vi). To them the masses seemed like common rabble or an unstable *lumpen*:

“living on the breadline in shanties erected in increasing numbers on the bare brown hills of that disagreeable town, is a polyglot force of men without jobs, women or land – the dispossessed of the new dispensation,” (Hastings 1969: 103 in Rew 1974: vi).

Laying less emphasis on opportunism and dependency, this kinship behavior simply reproduces the social organization of the migrants’ village origins in a new space. It emphasizes the divisions between geographically- and ethnically-distinct settlements, leading to little interethnic social cohesion. According to Levine & Levine the urban settlements around the towns had a reputation “for squalor and social disorganization” amongst those not living in them (Levine & Levine 1979: 41). Urban settlements have nevertheless taken on some of its migrants’ villages functions adapted to the constraints and necessities of the urban setting.

In contrast, the first housing suburb for non-Europeans, Gabutu, was constructed in 1952 in Port Moresby. More exclusively Papua New Guinean suburbs were built later on, whose residents tended to be more highly paid than the average urban wage. In the Port Moresby suburb Hohola the average wage was double that of the average urban wage (Levine & Levine 1979: 20). Towns in the Territory of Papua were typically constructed in the style of North Queensland towns, as “suburban dwellings standing in plots of nonproductive gardens” (King 2004: 185).

With higher salaries than migrant settlers, better jobs, more education, and a higher standard of living, these estate-housing residents lived closer to shops and other amenities and in more multi-ethnic environments than those who built their own houses. The towns’ demographics in the 1970s could be divided into three groups:

“On a superficial level, these areas look like the home of a developing middle-class, while an underclass of seemingly tribalized natives lives in the shanty towns and a mostly white upper class inhabits a tropical version of affluent western suburbia.” (Levine & Levine 1979: 20)

iii. *Urban society*

There is a convention towards terms of a rural-urban dichotomy in Papua New Guinea. However, this representation is restrictive, as most people do not live in towns and the country's demography is more complex than a binary. As with all migrations, Papua New Guineans are constantly moving in a circular fashion between their hamlets, regional towns, and the major urban areas of Port Moresby and Lae.

Urbanization over several decades of post-independence has stagnated what seemed to be growing towns in the late colonial period. At the same time places previously regarded as remote in the mountainous west, like Tabubil, a township alongside the significant Ok Tedi mine, have appeared. In contrast to the assumed dichotomy of a modern urban and a traditional rural society, this continuous migration shows the hybridity of societies in PNG as a rural-urban continuum (Goddard 2010: 11). In regard to Tönnies *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, this continuum illustrates that contrary to Western industrialization modernity in PNG is fluid and not fixed, as are social positions and identities. Rather than a loss of traditional culture and social organization, these are having strong influence on the towns and its people in negotiating their rural and urban social behaviors (Levine & Levine 1979: 2).

Differences in their historical and colonial contexts and the geographic locations of the urban areas in PNG create variations in the social characteristics of the migrant populations in the towns. Papua New Guinea was commonly divided into four regions, which often reflect the ethnic conflict in town: Papua, the Highlands, the New Guinea Islands, and New Guinea Coast. In most towns the stereotype holds that Islanders and Papuans are the most educated and qualified for skilled positions, while Highlanders are seen to be the least qualified. The reason being given is that the Islanders and Papuans are best prepared for the urban economy, as they are from areas which have

long been in contact with Europeans and have benefited from missionary or colonial education systems (ibid.38). Nowadays, these ethnic characterizations are still upheld, however, the (coastal) Papuans and coastal New Guineans can be named together, showing a bridging of the disjunction in the colonial administrations, or this Morobe-Madang-Sepik region of New Guinea is commonly contracted to Momase.

Since Port Moresby at the time of independence was Papua's only significant town with a large Papuan population in itself, that large-scale migrations of New Guineans have made the pan-ethnic "Papuan" identity (not to be confused with the "Papuan" identity construct in West Papua) an important one for Port Moresby (ibid.109). The first significant arrival of migrants there began after World War II and many of them remained. The former Papuan population of the Motu-Koita in the direct vicinity of Port Moresby was joined by these migrants from other regions. Whereas Europeans, who had once felt a "proprietary attachment" to their colonial town, are now "among the outsiders in this cauldron of Melanesian ethnicity" (Goddard 2010: 7).

Maev O'Collins notes that in many communities the youth continue to eagerly learn the ancestral ways and traditional knowledge and skills (O'Collins 1984: 3). The issue of cultural alienation is inevitable for the urban-born and –educated. Poems written during the pre-independence period at UPNG describe the problems in relating to their elders or their village-based peers. One student expresses the separation and discomfort experienced by those who returned to their home villages over the semester break:

My age and 'learning' notwithstanding
I am excluded
Uninitiated
- Herman Talingapua 1972 (ibid.4)

O'Collins observes that since independence, communities had revived customs and traditions, often adapted to the newer circumstances. As examples for including the urban relations

she mentions that occasions like initiation, family and clan ceremonies are scheduled for school vacations, while pigs and beer for these are subsidized by the higher-earning kin (ibid.5).

Nevertheless, even participating in initiation rites may still cause a form of exclusion to kinship relations to persist. One of the male students interviewed in this research refers to being initiated in the clan of his paternal kin, however, since this is a matrilineage, the clan would withhold an inheritance of land to him. Conversely, a female student names her maternal matrilineage to possibly reserve kinship obligations from her, as geographic distance may have promoted other rural kin in line over her.

Social relationships and village identity in town

Social relationships in urban Papua New Guinea can be summarized as connected in personal networks according to kinship, friendship, and ethnicity. Differing patterns of association between urban residents can be observed than those among rural ones, to discern how urban environments influence the composition of distinctive forms of social relationships (Levine & Levine 1979: 60). As a form of shifting identities and allegiances, individuals may use their various personal kinship connections instrumentally by drawing on ties in urban areas that would not ordinarily be the basis of social interaction, e.g., by drawing on matrilineal kin for assistance although hailing from a patrilineal society. When conflicts arise, identities and self-identifications form and reform to define group boundaries (Ruw 1974: 228).

An overarching basis of these social interactions is the abovementioned *wantokism*, and a village social organization based on kinship relationships is reproduced in the city. The individual migrant will seek to associate himself with a set of compatriots and friends, who in turn have further connections that extend the network's scope. It is highly noteworthy that Levine & Levine

recognize the now pervasive Papua New Guinean *wantok* system as originating from urbanization and its social interactions. Sillitoe regards this as promoting “blatant nepotism” in the workplace and adds that *wantokism* makes it difficult to accumulate significant personal wealth thanks to social obligations of redistribution and support towards kin in need (Sillitoe 2000: 171).

Urban ethnic groups and their respective villages of origin form an integrated social system, as their social ties appear to be stronger than or as strong as those between urban groups (May & Skeldon 1977: 22). Village identities and social organization are characteristic especially of the urban settlements and may contribute to their viability (Barber 2010: 106). Barber notes how the Buang settlement at Port Moresby’s Eight Mile bears the village name Bugiau, and how a particular manner of their ethnically-specific urban adaptation can be seen in comparing this settlement in 2010 with another Buang settlement in Lae in 1973.

Curiously, in the settlements, village identity in the urban space is carried into generations where the point of reference is still the village of origin, although the previous generation has had no direct exposure to it itself. The continuation of village identity among the Toaripi, for instance, still accounts for endogamous marriages to carry on a patrilineal heritage, even when the father had never been there (Barber 2010: 106). Strathern similarly notes that even among the transitory migrants of her Hagen case study, “a little ‘home’ is constructed in the town, so that he can through his personal associates continue being a Hagener though he is no longer in Hagen,” (Strathern 1977: 264). However, she claims that “ethnicity as such is of little relevance for urban strategies against other ethnic groups” and is mostly self-definition of the individual (ibid.266). Nonetheless, the Hageners here maintain connections outside their main circle of fellow Mt. Hagen *wantoks*, but “Hagen migrants in Moresby regard themselves as an ‘ethnic’ body,” in their own (ibid.264f.).

Among the residents of urban settlements, household survival strongly relies on these

kinship relations for a successful adaptation to the urban setting, and these village-based social organizations and *wantokism* are sure to remain significant to the urban scene (Barber 2010: 108). Rural and urban relationships are not separate from each other, but rather the latter has sprung from the former and that they remain linked to the benefit of the individual and his identity: “No one who wishes to keep up meaningful relations with his home can become an independent townsman looking out for his interests alone. He is inevitably a tribesman-townsman,” (Sillitoe 2000: 173f.).

Urban class consciousness

The layout of the urban planning in PNG is similar to other cities in the post-colonial third world, as squatter settlements run alongside élite houses with further subdivisions in high-, medium-, and low-cost strata (King 2000: 184). Housing here reflects the occupational status and emerging socioeconomic difference in PNG, stratifying the urban society unlike before. However, although clearly Papua New Guinean urban society is no longer homogenous nor equal, compared to the cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Papua New Guinean towns display no strong extremes of rich and poor yet based on census data (ibid.188).

Marxist analysis of changed modes of production have formed social classes in Melanesia since colonialism, although the assumption of egalitarianism may not be as true to the books concerning the pre-capitalist societies (Ogan & Wesley-Smith 1992: 42; 63). The distinctions between these classes is still blurred, nonetheless, “there can be little doubt that a working class, a white collar class and a bourgeoisie do exist although the name chosen to label a class and the precise delineations and role of that class will vary according to theoretical and ideological preference,” (Turner 1987: 29 in Ogan & Wesley-Smith 1992: 63).

The rhetoric towards these emergent social classes frequently includes Marxist terminologies of *peasants*, *élites*, *intelligentsia*, and *bourgeoisie*, convenient for studying class formation and class consciousness essential for the study of social change in PNG (ibid.). What is worth noting is that the terms of middle-class (or *bourgeoisie*) and *élite* are conflated in regard to PNG as one urban upper-class in relation or opposition to the “peasantry” living off the land in the countryside. Another by-product of the class conflict in urbanization in PNG is the “under-class” or *lumpenproletariat* of the homeless “rubbishmen”, those that have migrated to the towns and are unable to stay afloat in the capitalist urban society.

For the sake of this study, the definition of a global middle-class measured by a “car index”, where car ownership and the ability to purchase nonessentials are the factors of importance. Middle-class and *élite* are used for the population of a “consumer class” whose income is above a certain threshold, rather than measuring a per capita median income (Dadush & Shimelse 2012).

The issue of new social categories has emerged through increasing participation of Papua New Guineans in the urban economy. No longer is kinship, friendship, or ethnicity the basis of internal solidarity, but common economic position of competing interest groups. The distinctions between urban residents are more pronounced according to their economic positions and an objective sense of class exists (Levine & Levine 1979: 82f.). The period of rapid localization following national independence led to many educated Papua New Guineans stepping into well-paid positions vacated by the former administration (Macintyre 1998: 215).

While perhaps the Australian administration had worked to remove its colonial relics from transferring onto the indigenous population, Bernard Narokobi pinpoints that the class system created by colonists continues: “The present day bureaucrats and politicians have swiftly moved into the shoes, the robes and the wigs of their white masters and continue to perpetrate the class

system and the institutions of exploitation of the masses,” (Narokobi 1980: 91). The existence of these highly-paid educated élite that are “fiercely protecting its jobs and urban living standards, perpetuates the divisions between haves, have-nots, and hopefuls,” (Macintyre 1998: 215).

Here, Max Weber’s theory of social class stratification may be significant to add in understanding post-colonial PNG society, as the role of status and power in classes, especially through basic and higher education, can be of higher significance than Marxist modes of production and commodities. According to Ralf Dahrendorf the unequal distribution of authority that Narokobi names is the source of social inequality and classes and not modes of production. In the Marxist sense of class a consciousness is emerging by the individuals themselves:

“As such, class is also a subjective phenomenon which enters into the consciousness of people. When individuals come to realize their objective class position and act collectively upon it to better their life chances, mere position in the economy is transformed into a principle of social identity and solidarity”, ‘class for itself’. It is only when this occurs that true classes form. Prior to such realization, members in the same objective economic position (class *in* itself) may be on hostile terms with each other as competitors for the same jobs.” (Levine & Levine 1979: 84)

To understand the roles and position of the middle-class or élite in PNG urban society, the distinction has to be made between the objective “class for itself” and the subjective class consciousness of a “class in itself”. The awareness of shared class views and interests are what constitute the organization of social class in itself. Levine & Levine question whether this class consciousness has already occurred in Papua New Guinea (of the 1970s), or is still occurring, or whether fragmentation of the objective class situation is reinforced by the *wantok* system and can thus not be seen in entirely Marxist terms of industrial period Europe (ibid.).

Nevertheless, they noticed that their informants would already frequently disparage road-side bottle collectors as “rubbishmen” or worthless individuals. Analogously, they observed that university students saw themselves as the nation’s élite, and educated people generally expect to

be perceived as more prestigious in the urban society and among their own kin (ibid.89). Non-ethnic social relationships are most distinctly urban, as they are habituated by urban events, may operate without the common kinship and ethnicity of the rural setting, and are thus likely to be influenced by status in the socioeconomic urban system (ibid.96).

Levine & Levine note the possibility of class stratification and interests becoming more engaging in future, and while they did not study this specific group of urban-dwellers, they acknowledged that local élites were more class-oriented and more involved in multiethnic social interactions than other urban residents. The growing number of urban élite would in time give rise to a greater level of class consciousness in Papua New Guinea was their prediction. Furthermore, the role of this class consciousness may overrule the significance of ethnicity in much of urban social activity.

However, they acknowledge that ethnic loyalties in the urban areas may seem to encourage provincialism or a pan-ethnic allegiance, especially in its fundamental role in the development of *wantokism*, as mentioned above in the case of Highlanders versus Islanders (ibid.146f.). They also observe that the social interaction in the towns that is most interesting “is contained in the synthesis of new social systems arising from interaction between a colonially based social order and a *mélange* of tribal people, which formerly defined mutually exclusive social worlds,” (ibid.130).

As noted by Narokobi, the urban residents took on the colonially-imposed social order, which is becoming the predominant force behind Papua New Guinean social stratification and class consciousness, while the development of ethnic loyalties become the focus of urban schisms reconstituting rural social values and systems (ibid.110). More recent studies of urban class consciousness and an emerging middle-class in PNG present the notion that the élite in the urban areas are essentially the faction of society creating the nation, with their national imaginings

through their participation in state institutions and higher education, as discussed in the previous Chapter 2. This population who can afford nonessential products and services is the population most likely to place greater demands on governments and that has the potential to transform the balance of economic and political power (Dadush & Shimelse 2012: 2f.).

Portes concludes that “truly revolutionary social change requires the transformation of the value system or the remaking of the society’s class structure”, implying that the social change in Melanesia and Papua New Guinea is steered by the urban emergence of social classes and class consciousness, and is thus significant to the countless indigenous appropriations and rationalizations of the influences of globalization and modernity (Portes 2010: 1548).

Media and consumerism

Unlike newspapers, radio and television broadcasting have a greater impact in reaching the population that has not received more than a primary school education. As mentioned above, the state apparatuses of a lingua franca and a formal education facilitate the promotion of nationhood, but also of consumption patterns in PNG. Narokobi had already criticized the power of the radio as an instrument for “good or evil” in shaping the minds and attitudes of the population (Narokobi 1980: 151). Not only national policies and news could be easily spread and accessed through this medium, but the advertisements could influence consumerism of products or services (ibid.).

Nancy Sullivan’s work with indigenous film-makers reflects on the local reconstruction of modernity (Sullivan 1994: 549f.). The three film-makers, whom she mentions all belong to the national élite, are utilizing their film-making to construct social identity and the social self on a “continuum of the very local to the national” (ibid.). Pengau Nengo says the he thinks of himself “as Papua New Guinean only, from no particular place,” born in one place and raised in another

by parents of mixed PNG ethnicity, now also in an interethnic marriage and living in another PNG town, while Martin Maden is urban-born and –raised (ibid.). Nonetheless, they have a relative attachment to “place” and to a regional culture and community, which they construct in their film-making, utilizing a modern tool such as entertainment media to construct both their localness and national identity (ibid.551).

Gewertz & Errington study the Chambri community of East Sepik Province in their defining and negotiating of the dichotomy of “tradition/modernity”, While living in the urban settlement of Chambri Camp in Wewak, they recognized that extensive and continued social change was regarded as virtually inevitable. Discourses of consumer capitalism and Christian evangelism are especially salient to the Chambri urban youth, although their ancestral language and social forms are becoming less relevant in their understanding of self and identity in a rapidly changing and increasingly urbanizing Papua New Guinea (Gewertz & Errington 1996: 476).

They identify the influences of consumerism and evangelism on social change between their first research with the same group in 1987 and their second visit in 1994. Through the music television show Pepsi Fizz and the Antioch ministry group they observed a growing construction and enactment of self (ibid.490). Chambri elders voice great concern towards the overt conflict between the generations and their constitution of Chambri sociality. In acknowledgment of the ongoing social change, their more recent study alerts to the extent of the shift towards youth empowerment and a change in the rhetoric of it.

Juxtaposing the “traditional” and the modern, the Pepsi commercial during the show depicts Papua New Guineans of all sorts drinking the beverage. The consumption of it is conveyed as part of an affluent lifestyle, with young Papua New Guineans dancing together on a yacht or at a disco, while also depicting Asaro mud-men consuming the drink (ibid.478). Its message is that

consumption leads to an unambiguously satisfying life, by emphasizing the pleasures and opportunities of the urbane and the novel, but the depiction also gives respect to the culturally-distinct and indigenous lifestyles of Papua New Guineans. Furthermore, Chambri elders praised Pepsi Fizz, because it helped young people learn their culture and value that culture.

Gewertz & Errington assert that with modernities and historical processes, Papua New Guinean modernity's influence on the urban Chambri is characterized by "contingency and variability" (Miller 1994: 80 in Gewertz & Errington 1996: 489). In summary, this convergence of the faceted lifestyles in PNG reflected the hybrid and syncretic way of life of the archetypal Papua New Guinean:

"By equalizing Asaro mud-men and urban sophisticates as all participants in the new generation – as participants who had eagerly adopted (as self-evidently desirable) a Pepsi lifestyle – the commercial asserted a ready bridging of divisions between cultures and between the traditional and the new." (ibid.479)

Similarly, Robert J. Foster's analysis of advertisements in constructing a "imagined communities of consumption" shows the influence of mass media on creating shared collectivities of capital consumerism or a consumer class, as well as a national imagery through localized advertisements and domestic products (Foster 1995: 153). Arjun Appadurai's ethnoscaples and mediascaples form an imagined collective that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood (Appadurai 1996). This collective or community binds those who have access to capitalist consumer goods in PNG urban centers and excludes those without access outside of it. Shared and unshared consumption practices show inclusion and exclusion towards a community of "fellow consumer citizens" (Foster 1995: 153).

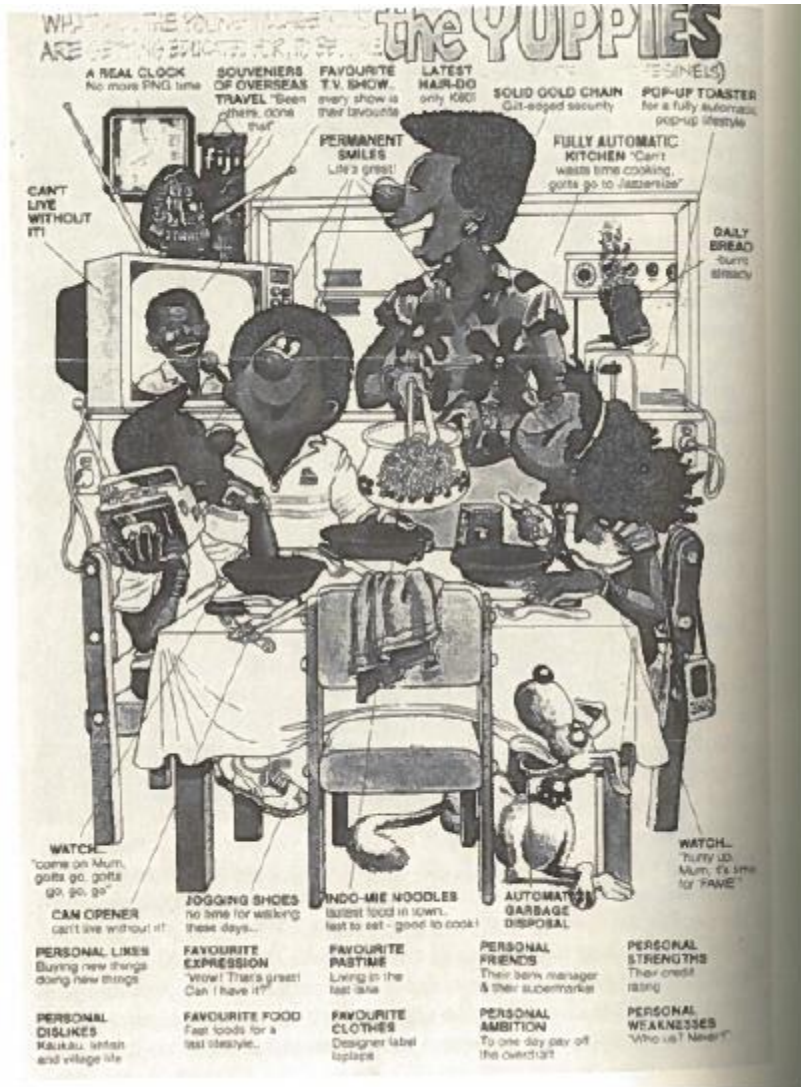


Figure 3: Bob Browne: “The Yuppies”

Source: Foster, Robert J. 1995. Print Advertisements and Nation-Making in Metropolitan Papua New Guinea. In *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia*, edited by Robert J. Foster, 151–181. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Foster’s example of the domestic product Ramu Sugar as a national commodity describes the communal sense of Papua New Guinean “tradition” with a recipe for sago cake. However, the essential ingredients of milk and margarine probably exclude rural consumers without access to supermarkets and thus illustrate only urban middle-class consumption practices (ibid.155; 171). Middle-class consumption practices such as an oven-baked cake may in effect be parodied in their “glocalization”. Comic strip author Bob Browne depicts a poster titled “What all the Young

Village Kids are getting Educated to Become: the Yuppies”, wherein the young consumers synthesize elements of consumption, such as Walkmen, running shoes, American television programs, and instant noodles, with those with a more local reference, such as tinned meat and designer-label *laplaps* or cloth wraps (Foster 1995: 173f.).

In constituting newer and synthesized forms of self, Gewertz & Errington were surprised that even with persistent inquiries no Chambri “could imagine ceasing to be a Chambri”. Their young informant Eric, who had lived in town all his life, spoke no Chambri, and never thought of following marriage prescriptions, declared ““What, after all, (...) would I be if I weren’t Chambri?”” (Gewertz & Errington 1996: 480). However, what actually constituted being a Chambri is becoming less distinct and increasingly variable, they establish. It is characterized by emphasizing the significance of Chambri language and by reciprocal gift-giving:

“Speaking Chambri with other Chambri was yielding to speaking Pidgin English to Chambri and non-Chambri alike. Paying a brideprice to affines was yielding to giving a cassette to a friend (possibly someone not even a Chambri) who shared one’s musical tastes.” (ibid.)

These modern changes in speaking the *tok ples* of the Chambri towards Tok Pisin, and the form of commodities exchanged signal a significant and ongoing shift in Chambri ontology. Mass media, education, and increasing economic disparities are creating a new urban culture that have the power to “simultaneously break[...] down ethnic barriers and creat[e] new alignments that are centered on class interests, religious affiliation, gender solidarity, and larger regional and national interests,” (Rosi & Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993: 176).

Contemporary gender constructs

Youth are the most influenced by Western culture and consumer products, but also the values prescribed by these. Research on the attitudes towards marriage in the urban society shows

a conflict between the genders' expectations. With the educated middle-class, women want "more supportive, egalitarian, and Westernized relationships", while men still expect more submissiveness, i.e., compliance and obedience towards their traditional role in marriage and society from their wives (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1998: 207f.).

Increasingly, educated Papua New Guinean women are choosing to marry non-Papua New Guinean husbands to resist these constraints. Among the educated middle-class interethnic marriage is more common, facilitated through the coming together of diverse social and ethnic backgrounds at institutions of higher education (Rosi & Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993: 181f.). The relationships of the educated élite of Port Moresby are now incorporating ideas of romantic love and marriage, instead of solely following traditional village customs and prescriptions (ibid.175). Accordingly, PNG women's move towards seeking a marriage based on mutual attraction and love coincides with increased higher education and employment (ibid.194f.).

This élite endogamy emphasizes the move for financial success and upward social mobility through education, as partners are sought with a similar educational background and interests. Urban universities likewise provide a space for liberal thinking and national consciousness that encourages more heterogeneous social relations. University students' continued interaction in the academic environment showed a more open-minded point of view throughout their education between first years and those of a higher standing (ibid.181f.).

Students coming from rural backgrounds may tend to remain in closer contact with their *wantoks*, whereas those born and raised in the urban areas are likely to choose friends on the basis of mutual interests and concerns. The genders and ethnicities of one's peers were less likely to be based on the individual's own gender and ethnic background, but on similar interests. Older students were more likely to have social groups of mixed ethnicities and genders, and were also

more tolerant of interethnic marriage and having the right to pick their own partner.

On the question of marital relations, first year male students wanted their wives to be hard-working, attractive, modest, and above all mindful of their husbands' needs and future careers. None indicated he would support his wife's career over his own, nonetheless several expressed it was "important for wives to be educated, so that they could be interesting and socially acceptable companions for their elite husbands," (ibid.182). Female students accepted this sexism in the class discussions, however, expressed different opinions in student papers and in private discussion, feeling that an own career was as important as the men's to provide for economic security.



Figure 4: Stella Magazine 2nd Anniversary Fashion Show flyer

Source: Stella Magazine. <http://www.stellamag.com/index.php/blog/archive/runway-2014>

Last accessed: 08/01/2014

Another more modern outlet showing PNG women is *Stella* Magazine (Figures 4 and 5) founded in 2012, which also has platform as a Facebook page by the same name with over 30.000 users "liking" the page. Describing itself as "a thinking woman's magazine from Papua New Guinea," it focusses mainly on fashion and the arts from a woman's perspective, by representing PNG women to a wide-reaching Pan-Pacific audience. The official website itself praises *Stella* as a modern magazine styled after other contemporary women's publications:

“The magazine celebrates the indigenous voice of Pacific Islanders covering fashion, health, travel, arts, and life across our region. Following publishing trends from across the globe, Stella shares uplifting stories from our Pacific sisters and brothers across the region in all walks of life. We aim to challenge the stereotypes and share good ideas. This modern magazine is an exciting platform for the creative talents of the Pacific region, by the people, for the people. Stella is the Star of the Pacific.” (<http://www.stellamag.com/about> 2014).

Ceridwen Spark’s analysis of the magazine’s intentions and appeal establishes a shift in gender constructs among educated, employed women in PNG and the Pacific that stresses the representation of this marginalized social group often discredited as “inauthentic” (Spark 2014: 54). Highlighting Bernard Narokobi’s commonality of Melanesianness and Epeli Hau’ofa’s notion of a “sea of islands” (Hau’ofa 1994), the magazine’s founder Amanda Donigi explains her choice of steering the magazine’s content to a wider Pan-Pacific audience:

“I was going to start with just Papua New Guinea and then I decided that there’s so much that we share across the Pacific that we should all be proud about, uniting for, shouldn’t be dividing ourselves up across the Pacific because even though we do have our individual cultures, there’s so many similarities and we should be uniting for those and being proud of our Pacific heritage as well as our own individual country’s heritage.” (ABC Radio Australia 2012 in Spark 2014: 54)

Donigi hopes this transnational identification and vision of a Pacific womanhood solidarizes and emancipates the marginalized minority of educated Pacific women “by that which is ‘shared’ with those outside PNG’s borders,” (ibid.55).

The views of the urban middle-class intellectual woman are oftentimes dismissed for their inauthenticity comparative to rural women, and they become accused of distance from the “grass roots” and of not being “real native women” (Jolly 2005: 151). Especially those located within patrilineal kinship organization feel oppressed by the traditional expectations placed upon them, and those who rise in positions of leadership through social class and academic accomplishments are reproached of subverting these “traditional” power structures (Spark 2011: 165).



Figure 5: Stella Magazine Issue 6

Source: Stella Magazine.

<http://www.stellamag.com/issue/archive>

Last accessed: 08/01/2014

The case-studies above illustrate how identity and self are constantly being renegotiated by the urban middle-class, especially the younger generations. Ethnic kinship and land-based identity is giving way to newer forms of self-identification through the external social change brought upon the societies by consumerism, education, and the migration from the “place” one would be ancestrally

tied to. Particularly the newer identifications of PNG women may result in conflict with social roles and obligations of more traditional values and beliefs.

The photography page “Humans of Papua New Guinea” (HOPNG) and the student interviews in the following chapter bring to the forefront the many voices of urban youth in PNG. A photo and caption chosen from the page by David, one the students interviewed, depicts a UPNG student and his view on the development infrastructure in urban PNG as lacking in the basic necessities one would come to expect in a modern society (Figure 6). This picture struck David as one of the most intriguing, as it voiced his own concerns about the path Papua New Guinea and its people were on, and the setbacks they were encountering, much like the perceptions Narokobi foresaw a few decades before. Chapter 4 switches its tone from an academic paper to using the statements and opinions voiced by the students themselves and ties in the students’ lives at home, at university, and in social media.



Figure 6: Humans of Papua New Guinea October 7, 2014: UPNG student

Source: Humans of Papua New Guinea.

https://www.facebook.com/humansofpapuanewguinea/photos_stream

Last accessed: 11/13/2014

“We are looking to the future but there’s something holding us back. The ship has set sail but the anchor is still down.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Well let me put it this way. For such a premier learning institution of the country as the University of Papua New Guinea, its toilets are quite atrocious!” (HOPNG 2014)

CHAPTER 4: PNG URBAN YOUTH IN DIALOGUE

As noted, the outset of this research was discussed with my Papua New Guinean peers, especially those who are the focus of this study, the urban university-educated youth. Due to my personal network the most eager responses came from students at Divine Word University and they were coincidentally all from Port Moresby; one informant is the exception and is a grade school classmate from Lae who then studied at Unitech in Lae as well.

i. Defining PNG identities

When describing the intent one informant broke down the title of this research into his personal definitions of the terms. He eloquently describes the issue of cultural identity as an intricate net, reminiscent of the analysis of network theory, wherein nodes are interconnected through social relationships as ties with the individual that signify these connections towards the position of the individual:

“The cultural identity in urban youth in PNG is intricate and complex, similar to a spidery web. The individual (spider) is in the centre and all the strings (representing his identity) of the web holding him to the supports (factors that create this web or identity) that keep the spider suspended where he is.” (Koimanrea, pers. comm. 2014)

This description as a spider’s web defining the creation of the individual’s identity shows parallels with the Melanesian conception of consocial personhood, but also highlights the subjective centrality of the distinct individual. Francis theorizes the role of the state in nation-making and the emergence of a PNG national identity. He differentiates between regional identity, the four regions of Southern (Papuan), Highlands, Momase, and Islands, and a provincial identity. His addition of local identity is in reference to certain suburbs in town signifying a more home-grown identity for the urban youth.

National Identity	This identity is the outcome of the mechanism that is the government . Based on the function of PNG as a country, globalization has demanded the need for PNG to participate in the global community . The government (Western form) is the vehicle through which the interests of the country and the protection of its sovereignty are represented, thus creating the national identity, the national identity being Papua New Guinean.
Regional Identity	Regional identity is an outcome of the facilitation of division of territory within PNG. In PNG there are 22 provinces and they are divided into four regions; Southern, Highlands, Momase, and the Islands. This division is as mentioned only for the facilitation of territory and not owing to cultural or linguistic factors .
Provincial identity	Provincial identity is used more significantly when dealing with identity in PNG as it is more definite . It is also a mechanism by which the government facilitates for the delivery of services to the population, which allows for a far greater attachment to this identity by the population. Personally, I think the provincial identity is less broad and has more substance as opposed to the regional identity.
Local Identity	This identity for me would mean the locale, in which one has grown up in, i.e., the town. This is a subconscious identity and is borne from the familiarity of environment.

Koimanrea 2014 (emphasis added)

Francis's breakdown of national, regional, provincial, and local identity is supplemented by clan identity, which he mentions is PNG-specific and significant for understanding the identity connected to the land in PNG: "Finally I am just going to throw one in for good fun:"

Clan Identity	I think that the cultural (clan) identity is an important form of self-identification as it has traditions, language, values, and familial ties attached . This identification is more specific and is limited to a very small land territory (villages). It is this factor that makes it very specific, as land in PNG is owned by the clan groups, thus giving them a specific physical place of belonging , as opposed to the provincial and national identity.
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Koimanrea 2014 (emphasis added)

The definitions in the tables above reflect the abstract and experienced identities Francis sees formed for him as a Papua New Guinean and echo the theoretical and empirical explorations

on PNG identities in the previous chapters. The state apparatus is responsible for the provincial, regional, and national identities. He sees these as a result of administrative divisions within the country and globalization necessitating a national consciousness in order to participate in the global economy and to represent PNG and its peoples as sovereign.

He sees local identities as more personal to the individual in urban centers, as local identity can identify and position one socioeconomically and sociopolitically in awareness of the turf. Clan identities, which he merely adds in the end (which I found noteworthy in only being mentioned after local identity), is nonetheless the identity he considers as most distinctive in defining self and belonging to place. The self-identification to clan lineage root the individual in the land. The significance of this physical space in perpetuation of kinship, values, beliefs, and language is what perpetuates cultural identity and “tradition”.

ii. Cultural involvement in education

The participation in social and cultural clubs structured by the schools and universities was of great interest to me in these interviews. Questions on self-identification inquired on the involvement and membership in the schools’ provincial clubs and were also informed by my personal experience with these. In the case of my own education at Coronation International School in the years 1992-1994 and the 2010 school year at Divine Word University, I was able to observe and participate in various annual Cultural Day events and other cultural performances. Particular classes in the PNG Studies Department at DWU, which I further reference below, aimed to familiarize the students with their cultural heritages more than they perhaps had in their urban environment before.



Figure 7: Cultural Day 2010 Madang *meri*

Figures 7 and 8 nicely depict the choice two students made in showing their own culture of Madang Province in the pink and purple provincial colors, and in representing the “modern PNG woman” in wearing a dress and *bilum* both woven in national colors and depicting the PNG flag. Similarly, and on a more personal note, I had in my three years at Coronation also enacted three different cultures and worn the following for the school’s Cultural Day: a

hand-me-down “German” (or rather a regional Thuringian) folk dress from a friend from there, a custom-made *Filipiniana* dress by a local Filipina seamstress, and a synthetic grass skirt for the tourist consumer (bought on a trip to Vanuatu) to dance with the Coastal group of PNG students.

Every year on the anniversary of the founding of Divine Word University in 1996 the university carries out Cultural Day, a smaller-scale cultural show institutionalized by the school. This may probably the most important and exciting day of the year at DWU, aside from the students’ own graduation day, and preparations are undertaken weeks beforehand. There are provincial clubs at DWU for all Papua New Guinean provinces as well as the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, and many students are members of at least one of these clubs which function as their family in Madang.



Figure 8: Cultural Day 2010 PNG *meri* blouse

Often there is already actual extended family present and a part of the club too, so that for instance a birthday is widely celebrated in the company of the club, and a member of the DWU teaching staff acts as a patron and offers his or her lodging as the club headquarters.

The club members also meet to practice dances and songs for performances in Madang, but especially for the one on

Cultural Day (Figures 9 and 10). The students and staff members wear their traditional costumes and pre-present their skits, dances, or songs in the school auditorium the evening before Cultural Day, and then on the school grounds adjacent to the campus on the actual Cultural Day.

Tourists and expatriates from all over Madang come to DWU for this and many students have their family drop by for the event day. Family and friends come to watch and to participate in the performances, and to safely transport the traditional ornaments and costumes, whose value can amount to thousands of kina regarding elaborate bird of paradise feather headdresses, to Madang and back. Since DWU is a Christian university, performances were more sanctioned by the faculty, and customary female topless costumes were somewhat discouraged, although the Sandaun Province did showcase *koteka* penis gourds at the Cultural Day 2010.



Figure 9: Cultural Day 2010 Oro Province club



Figure 10: Cultural Day 2010 Milne Bay Province club (Fergusson Islands)

What I found most noteworthy about Cultural Day was that it was not specifically a commodified tourist event, but an occasion the students could get together with their friends and family to engage in their own cultural traditions and proudly show these off to the others. I knew of many students who joined their friends' clubs for the event, to become familiar with these dances and songs and experience the cultures of their friends for a while, which some of the informants stories' below verify may be a greater factor in selecting club involvement.



Figure 11: Central Night 2010 flyer

Following the annual Cultural Day there were many clubs that wanted to make use of the fact that they still had their newly memorized dances and songs and their costumes at hand, and put on cultural nights within the next few weeks. This was used as fundraising, as well as to get together the *wantoks* in town for a last gathering of the school year (Figures 11 and 12).

It was a fun event more than it was artistic, as I had observed many of the male students just jumped into some performances on the already overflowing stage, with evidently little prior practice in the dance steps and improvising, which their female counterparts then criticized accordingly.



Figure 12: Central Night 2010

Independence Day on September 16 is another annual occasion for club performances in the auditorium and the school courtyard in honor of celebrating

these national festivities. While many days of the year shirts bearing the PNG flag are omnipresent, the national holiday brings out assorted depictions of the national flag. Any explicit political statements in student-led cultural presentations were only notable during a Sandaun Province performance, where a West Papuan flag was included in the Papuan *Sajojo* dance (Figures 13 and 14).



Figure 13: PNG Festival Night 2010 Sandaun Province club with West Papua flag and PNG flag



Figure 14: PNG Festival Night 2010 Sandaun Province club with West Papua flag

During my stay at DWU my co-intern and I had been asked by the Central Province and National Capital District Club if we would like to join in on their performance a few days ahead of time. So honored by this request, we spent three days learning a contemporary dance with them and performed this, in grass skirts and jewelry we had been lent by the club patron and other members, in front of about 400 students in the auditorium. These performances were really a coming-together of the club members to perform with their friends and for their friends. Costumes were more do-it-yourself with the *laplaps* at hand and markers for tattoos (Figure 15), and soon the stage was spilling over with many more dancers than were at any practices or were intended to dance.



Figure 15: PNG Festival Night 2010 Central Province club applying Motu face tattoos

iii. Personal accounts

The following statements are from the questionnaires and communication with the students who volunteered for this research. Most willing to participate were of course the students and graduates who, as mentioned above, had been involved in assignments and projects looking into the same issues that this thesis focusses on.

Natasha

Natasha grew up in Port Moresby but graduated from university in Madang. Natasha's heritage is Madang and Morobe from her mother's side, and East Sepik and West New Britain on her father's. However, she does not name all her provincial backgrounds when asked, and identifies more with her father's side in general. She feels closer to her father's family and more connected to his lineage. The province she most identifies with is East Sepik, to which she feels the strongest attachment and calls "home", although her answer may differ on who is asking. One of her reasons for this is the assumption that her features and appearance would lead others to question her self-identification towards anything other:

"Because of my appearance and features. In PNG people more or less identify someone from features and appearance. Many a time people can tell from your features where you come from."

She describes her cultural identity as more significant because she lives in Port Moresby and not despite of it. She sees her cultural identity in the town as a way to represent her cultural heritage, i.e., in a sense as a sort of cultural ambassador for her people. This urban identity allows her to associate with and appreciate her parents' cultures and perpetuate the distinct features of these:

“I think living in the city or town gives me more pride for my cultural identity because I tend to appreciate more of my background because I have a sense of representation. By that I mean I represent my people in the city and that makes me proud.”

Natasha agrees that her self-identification influences social roles and responsibilities towards others. Here she almost echoes the statement that I had made in Chapter 1 on “who you are and where you come from will influence where you are going”:

“(…) truly knowing and understanding who you are is very important because then you will know where you are and where you want to go. It gives a sense of direction and influence how I conduct myself in the society that I live in.”

This relationship of self and belonging to a place not only gives sense to an awareness in the present, but also directs social and cultural conduct for her. This implies that culturally-specific socialization brings on identities that are accordingly specific to enacting the appropriate values and beliefs as demanded.

Natasha describes the influence of school and her peers with mixed feelings. On the one hand being around *wantoks* gives her a “sense of security” away from home, but on the other hand, any negative incident caused by someone from the same area she is from leaves others a “generalized bad impression” of her heritage. Interestingly, Natasha was a member of three provincial clubs at university, West New Britain, Madang, and Bougainville, but not the province she most identifies with. She says she chose these according to the social aspects of the club and its other members: “I tend to involve myself with people or provincial clubs who were sociable like me.” Although two of her clubs were based on her parents’ provinces, it is evident she only felt comfortable being a member of the ones she had friends in, rather than based on her self-identification of East Sepik.

Natasha speaks none of her parents’ *tok ples*, possibly since both parents are already of mixed-ethnicity themselves and the family speaks Tok Pisin at home. She says she wishes she

spoke a *tok ples*, particularly her mother's *tok ples* from Madang, which she says she in fact fully understands but finds hard to speak. However, Natasha does not believe her language skills influence her self-identification. Although she does believe that her fluency in Tok Pisin and English influence her cultural identity of being Papua New Guinean, and overall she identifies more with this national identity than from a specific province.

Caroline

Caroline is still a student at DWU and also grew up in Port Moresby, but is from East Sepik. She names East Sepik Province when someone asks her where she is from, but in fact most identifies with being from the nation's capital, although this is also dependent on who is asking. She speaks her mother's *tok ples*, but speaks Tok Pisin and English at home with family. Caroline believes that her and her peers' exposure to these languages influences a self-identification towards a national identity. Tok Pisin as a lingua franca in ethnolinguistically-diverse PNG is what constructs and holds together the national identity of Papua New Guinean:

“(...) we have been exposed to Tok Pisin and English and most of the population now seems unable to speak their mother tongue fluently, so now speaking Tok Pisin identifies us as PNGeans.”

Caroline identifies more as Papua New Guinean than as being from her province, which is noteworthy, since her parents' cultural heritage is more homogenous than that of the other students studied here. Interesting as well, is that she was an active member of one provincial club at DWU, but this was not that of East Sepik Province, but Oro Province with whom she performed at the most recent Cultural Day.

Comparing the influence of cultural identities living in the city with that of her peers living in her parents' village, Caroline explains an adaptability to a mixture of social and cultural cues:

“In the city, we are living with different people and cultures, so we try to adjust in a way that we fit into the society (...).” Regardless of this difference in social domains, when she is with her family in the village she sees no issue with taking on the social roles and responsibilities according to her cultural heritage: “I have no trouble adapting (...).” This awareness of flexibility shows the fluidity in the identities she holds in between the social domains of urban and rural.

Caroline notes the strong influence of her education and peers in socializing with people from other cultural backgrounds, both in the diversity of Papua New Guinea and the social environment of school and university. She explains her provincial club choice as having followed her friend and feeling more comfortable in joining the Oro Province club. She notes that as a Papua New Guinean she is part of a cultural diversity, but that she knows her own cultural identity. The place she calls “home” is East Sepik Province despite having grown up in Port Moresby, as this is the place both her parents are from.

Michelle

Michelle has a mixed ethnicity of New Ireland Province from her mother, and Central Province from her father. She names both provinces when asked where she is from, although she grew up in Port Moresby, and was also in both provincial clubs for the duration of her studies at DWU in Madang.

Michelle says she identifies with both cultural backgrounds, but perhaps more as being from Central Province. She explains that this is due to her regular visits to the village, since it is easily accessible by car from Port Moresby. Moreover, she also mentions that she is inclined to identifying with this, since she says her features are recognizably Central. Nevertheless, she again stresses her attachment to both sides equally: “However, I am also very much proud to identify

equally from my mom's origin, New Ireland, as well. When I am asked I make sure I identify with both." She speaks her father's *tok ples* of Motu and around relatives she speaks this or Tok Pisin, but notes that at home with family she normally speaks English for scholastic reasons: "My dad imposed this on us so that we could excel in English at school."

Michelle elaborates on her specific lineages that cause her to specifically identify with both instead of one over the other:

"(...) my parents come from two totally different provinces with separate language and traits. My dad is from Central and follows the patrilineal society model, where the male is the dominant figure and they benefit from everything, resources, status, etc., and the family is to follow the rules and culture customs of the father. He is the decision-maker and 'big man' in the house. Whereas my mum comes from New Ireland which is a matrilineal society, where women are the ones with power, are seen to be land owners and decision makers, they speak and the men follow. They will benefit from everything that their foremothers worked hard for, they bring status to the community and most importantly entitle land benefits (...)."

This heritage of Michelle's is noteworthy, since she has a patrilineal father and a matrilineal mother, she could theoretically inherit property on both sides of her lineage. However, as a woman she has a stronger priority to her matrilineage, even if she has no brothers in her nuclear family. Since she lives in Port Moresby which is geographically closer to her father's village, she calls herself a Papuan when she is there, but notes that on account of her gender: "(...) I will not (culturally) benefit in his culture, my role would be to submit to the man (...)." She sees her priority in her leadership responsibilities of her matrilineage and emphasizes this cultural identity also "to ensure I (and others around me) recognize that identity (...)," in acknowledgment and respect of her social position in this culture.

Christina

Christina grew up in Port Moresby as well and is a recent graduate of DWU. Her provincial background is East New Britain and New Ireland on her mother's side and Central Province on her father's side. She names these provinces when asked where she is from, but notes her ethnic features as influential to the answer:

“When I was little I say I'm from Central but now that I'm big, I say I'm from East New Britain and New Ireland, since I look more like my mum's people than my dad's people. And so when I say I'm from Central, people don't seem to believe me.”

She often tends to downplay her New Ireland heritage, as her mother and her family grew up emphasizing the East New Britain culture and language over the New Ireland one. She usually only mentions New Ireland to those who are from New Ireland as well and to acknowledge this connection. However, she feels connected to all her parents' heritages:

“I feel attached the same for both Central and East New Britain, because even though I look more East New Britain/New Ireland, I do not speak the language, but I understand and speak the Central language, even though I do not look Central.”

She says she joined provincial clubs in school and university and had many friends from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, she says these influences barely made an impact on her cultural identity: “I guess because I was not a cultural type of person, but I was proud of where I come from.” Her friends did influence her choice of club attendance and she tagged along to their clubs and events, mostly those of the other New Guinea Islands provinces of West New Britain, Manus, and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. She was only a full member of the Central Province club at university, but never participated in any cultural performances by the club.

Her choice to not perform lies with her reluctance to public performances, but also with her religious upbringing of Seventh Day Adventist (SDA). Although other members of the Central Province club were SDA, Christina chose to adhere to the rules against rituals and performances

more strictly. She does mention that her cousin at DWU was also SDA and did perform at events all the time. She also credits the religious influence for not having her learn any of the cultural practices previously before attending university.

Christina laments the fact that compared to her peers and relatives in the village, the access to technology in town like phones, social networking platforms like Facebook, and applications like Whatsapp for video communication were used more excessively. This led urban youth to be “less interested in knowing our cultures and traditions” to keep up with cultural practices and rather disregard them and their significance and allowing these to die out. She does use this technology to keep in touch with her family in the village as well, whom she would perhaps not have been able to meet otherwise. On the one hand, she notes the overuse and reliance on social media and technology among urban youth, but on the other hand, this has enabled renewing and keeping ties to her kin elsewhere.

She was rarely able to visit “home”, especially in the islands due to the cost of air travel, and also did not visit the village in Central Province often. Since her mother is from a matrilineal society, she holds responsibility to her mother’s clan, but notes the problematic of not having been to the village in such a long time. She “wouldn’t have the power to do anything” or have any say because the clan barely knew her or had never met her at all.

Christina says that living in Port Moresby influenced her more Western than her cultural identities of her parents’ heritages did. She never learned her mother’s Kuanua *tok ples*, although she speaks her father’s *tok ples* of Hula, which she speaks in his village and with relatives there, but at home they speak Tok Pisin. She notes how living in town and away from the village had her communicating mostly in Tok Pisin and English and left her unfamiliar with specific cultural customs since these were not practiced in town. She wishes she could speak all her *tok ples*:

“(…) because that is my cultural identity, which I believe is very important to pass from generations to generations. I’m working on learning all my 3 languages and be fluent, so I could make it my responsibility to make sure my kids know their language as well.”

She believes that not speaking her *tok ples* influences her self-identification and is her main reason for not joining the East New Britain Province club: “Because how will I understand and communicate as a community/*wantoks*?” She argues that the club members would usually speak in their mother tongue and she would not be able to communicate with them or embarrass herself if she did attempt it. Christina describes her lack of language skills here as being challenging and feeling a loss of identity without this language. This unfamiliarity with her language causes a sort of exclusion to the group, and also to the culture and its values and beliefs. She says that speaking Tok Pisin influences being Papua New Guinean and gives the tendency to identify more nationally in general, but the English language does not.

Nevertheless, she argues that physical appearance is the most distinguishing characteristic for a provincial identification by others, and that influences self-identification towards the assumptions held on appearance. She would identify herself by provincial identity and says that Papua New Guineans are disposed to identifying in this manner and only reference national identity when overseas. To Christina “home” is East New Britain, where her mother is from, Central, where her father is from, and Madang, where she currently attends university.

Christina, Natasha, and Michelle all describe their cultural identities dependent on their physical appearance, and say this influences how others perceive them and question them, choosing to identify with what they ethnically look like more than their actual self-identification might be in general. Christina even describes a rather unfortunate situation after a club performance, which she once again had declined to participate in, but then decided to at least assist

with the event by cleaning-up the auditorium afterwards. While cleaning she was asked by another student if she were “a fan of Central?” to which she awkwardly replied she was in fact mixed from Central Province and mentioned her well-known cousin’s name. The questioner reacted surprised on account of not assuming this in any way from Christina’s ethnic appearance.

Christina and Michelle also emphasize the difference in having a cultural background from Central Province than from elsewhere. Central Province is arguably more culturally homogenous than some other provinces on the main island of New Guinea, but is also in the direct vicinity of the capital Port Moresby. Since they can more easily visit their village and family in the province, they are more familiar with the culture and *tok ples* and will identify more readily with this heritage.

The domains of rural and urban are barely dualistic in their social influence here, as frequent visits and communication allow for a more definite identification through engagement in social obligations and a familiarity in cultural customs. This region is also home to the third most common language in PNG, Motu, so that the ability to speak Motu is more common and practicable in town to help retain this skill.

Christina’s religious background of SDA shows the influence of the missionaries in transforming cultures in PNG, or in this case, inhibiting cultural practices and rituals. Due to the SDA prohibition of cultural dances, Christina was also not made familiar with these when growing up, and perhaps had the most direct contact with these at the provincial club. Here, others were not SDA or not as strict in enforcing these rules, but she still chose not to participate since she was not as trained in the dances as the others who had grown up with them.

Although Divine Word University is Catholic and run by clerics, who also teach various classes, the students are socialized with Christian values in their home environment early on, due

to the widespread missionization in the region. The Christian beliefs are oftentimes synergized with *kastom*, which was most observable in the “Society, Culture, and Health in Melanesia” rural health lecture I had given tutorials for. Here, the topic of *sanguma* (practicing sorcery and witchcraft) was interspersed in the curriculum and assignments on evaluating the influence of *sanguma* in health and illness.

In the assignments I corrected, only one student was adamant that *sanguma* was ungodly to Christian values and that the power of prayer would be sufficient for convalescence. Whereas the common belief held by the lecturer (who was SDA) and other students was an ideal combination of Western medicine and *kastom*, and the existence of *sanguma* and spirits was taken as matter of fact, indicating the persistence of local beliefs even with missionization. The lecture was often enlightened by myths from the lecturer’s own Motu background.

The role of matrilineage in PNG women’s self-identification is extremely significant, as both Michelle and Christina emphasize their maternal lineage and responsibilities to these societies. While Christina has less of a connection to hers and thus admits she may have a lot in the way of claiming these social roles, Michelle is fully implicated by hers and upholds them as the most valuable claim to her mother’s cultural heritage over her father’s patrilineal one. Michelle is given the means to efficiently combine her social standing through her matrilineage with the education she has received, and can to take on a role of leadership and influence in her community. Michelle also mentions the hampered role she would play in her father’s society in regard to marrying someone she would be ranked lower than.

“Gender Issues in PNG” was a DWU class that focused on these gender relations in their specific PNG cultural contexts. As with the case studies in Chapter 3, where female and male students diverged in their opinions, the changes in gender roles and expectancies in PNG society

were discussed. The students I worked with in 2010 were extremely fond of debating, and the complexity of more controversial topics like gender-based violence were difficult to convey to some of the male students.

Regarding Christina's criticism of the young generation being "less interested in knowing our cultures and traditions", the general urban-based student of PNG Studies at DWU was more eager to (re)acquire exactly this knowledge and skill base. Oral traditions and histories were discussed and collected in the "PNG Oral History" class. For some of the students it was a more challenging task if they had no real proficiency in a *tok ples*, or no *wantoks* around to supplement their understanding of myths and songs or other *kastom*. The class aimed to collect and preserve local indigenous knowledge and recordings in *tok ples*, while the students were made more familiar with their own backgrounds.

The majority of the references in the answers were connected to a provincial identity. Even Christina who at some point specifies her mother is from Rabaul continues referring to her mother's heritage less specifically as "East New Britain". Although Natasha names East Sepik as her "home", she states more of a national identity from her multitude of ethnic mixture and living in town. However, she proudly highlights the cultural identities as more distinct when describing herself, as it gives her a sense of representation in the urban setting.

Natasha and Caroline both say they identify more as Papua New Guinean than from their respective provinces. Caroline is an interesting example of how her urban upbringing, although having parents from the same cultural background, has influenced her to identifying more nationally. She identifies more as Papua New Guinean and from Port Moresby, although she can claim "home" in East Sepik Province and is even fluent in her *tok ples*. Since she is so assured in her cultural identities, she chose to join a provincial club outside of her own cultural heritage, to

become more familiar with that of her friends.

These statements made by Natasha and Caroline in their contrasting individual cultural backgrounds indicate the validity of the thesis of an emerging national consciousness that in some cases overrides a more localized identity. Even with the great emphasis on provincial identities, the national identity is one verbalized with more ease when all factors of physical appearance, lack of *tok ples* skills, or geographic distance from the rural domain raises the question of “authenticity” in proving other localized self-identification.

iv. Seeing PNG through another lens

Travel and social media facilitate the broadening of social horizons, connecting PNG youth physically and virtually with other viewpoints. These other perspectives also help alter their perceptions of themselves as individuals and as Papua New Guineans when seeing their cultures and their country through another lens.

David chats with Lizzie

D: Jokes aside, this trip really has been about finding myself through experiencing another culture (western).

L: n hv yu found urself?

D: I guess the answer to me finding myself will be determined by actions after the here and now. (...)

Well you see, I have become disorientated with myself, and by exposing myself to another world, I can understand my own abilities and limitations and hopefully to see the value of them in a universal sense to allow for me to see beyond this reflection protracted by our own culture!

This hazy reflection that is!

L: i like that...a fresh perspective of who yu can be as a global child

D: but you see, becoming a global child is not achievable unless one is able to first pass through the initiation of self identity and that is only through the window of the cultural identity... simply put, i only want to know that I can fit through that window, (which represents my cultural identity a), and if i do, then I will be able to make it on the outside of the house (which is the globe) and then and maybe then wil I become a global child!
make any sense yet?
it is like being in a house with no doors, but with only a window to climb through to get to the other side and the only way through is....

L: lewa weda yu realise it o not, yu already r....maybe yu just need to accept that first..

These excerpts from a personal chat dialogue between David and his friend Lizzie were relayed to me by him with the title “Dilemma”. It illustrates the change in perceptions of the individual when leaving Papua New Guinea for a brief period of time. David had left to stay with Papua New Guinean family in Australia for a few weeks and is describing the impact of going somewhere else on his self-identification.

What is especially noteworthy is how this conversation and his own description shows the need for an “initiation” for going from “disorientated” in his own culture to becoming a “global child” (although this term is thrown in by Lizzie). This reference to being a globalized world citizen is one carried by most others who are called “third culture kids”, those growing up inter- or transnationally and often with a mixed heritage. In the cultural diversity of PNG this “third cultureness” can be perceived on the level of the social domain of the urban *within* the nation’s borders.

David’s background of Manus and East New Britain have him in the opposite situation that gives Michelle an advantage having a matrilineal mother and patrilineal father. David’s mother’s clan identity is patrilineal, while his father’s is matrilineal. Inheritance to land and social roles and responsibilities go opposite ways through his mother’s brothers and his father’s sisters.

With this distinct cultural background in mind, David, having grown up in Port Moresby, albeit with connections to his father's village by undergoing formal initiation rituals as a child, has a more flexible identity formation of his choosing, one that the two describe as "global" in their informal chat discussion.

Poignantly, Lizzie concludes that this process of identification has already transpired:

L: "lewa weda yu realise it o not, yu already r....maybe yu just need to accept that first.."

"Lewa (dear), whether you realize it or not, you already are. Maybe you just need to accept that first."

Social media

The Facebook page "Humans of Papua New Guinea" launched in January 2014 and modelled around the popular page "Humans of New York" highlights the people of PNG in stunning photography of people and scenery. The pictures taken by Victoria and Nickson Piakal are captioned with actual conversations held in English or Tok Pisin with the protagonists about themselves, their day, or whatever strikes their mood. The page's "About" section simply describes it as: "A Story. Their Stories. A Conversation. Their Words. Their Fashion. Their Colors. Their Worlds. The Quirk. The Fun. The Style. All Lives Here," (Humans of Papua New Guinea 2014). The page is "liked" by more than 12,000 users (as of October 2014), meaning that this number of Facebook users view the posts by HOPNG to showcase the people of PNG in a global and accessible outlet.

I began asking my own Papua New Guinean Facebook connections what they thought of this page and its purpose and methods to showcasing PNG. Paul, a Papua New Guinean-Australian living in Australia after having lived all his life until graduation from university in Lae, was not

aware of it previously. He was immediately taken in by it and appreciative of my inquiry having brought HOPNG to his attention. He described the page as a “wonderful idea” to “explain in images the diverse nature of the land of the unexpected. PNG,” (Faunt, pers. comm. 2014). He elaborated on its accomplishment of illustrating PNG’s diversity:

“I tell people of the diversity in PNG but nothing can explain that better than seeing the different people that are called Papua New Guineans. Papuan, Bougainvillean, New Irish, Highlanders, Sepiks, (...).” (ibid.)

In reply to my question on the choice of pictures selected for posts and if there were any more memorable ones, he replied:

“The pictures are perfect. Not staged. Real people, living real lives. Captured in a timeless frame. Not one picture comes to mind. The collective viewing of them makes them memorable.” (ibid.)

HOPNG manages to holistically highlight the diversity of the people of Papua New Guinea through a favorable lens and modern medium via a social network platform, and in this manner not only shows its images to Papua New Guineans abroad, but also to others using Facebook and unfamiliar with PNG.

Whereas Paul and my interpretation of the page is very positive, David mentions how some pictures and their captions cause more of a melancholic image of contemporary PNG and its national development. He does see HOPNG as a good page that expresses an optimism and hope for PNG voiced by the people themselves in the photo captions, but refers his sadness to two pictures in early October, one of a woman who lives on the outskirts of Port Moresby and one of a drink-seller disenchanted by urban life (Figures 16 and 17).



Figure 16: Humans of Papua New Guinea October 7, 2014: woman with earrings

Source: Humans of Papua New Guinea.

https://www.facebook.com/humansofpapuanewguinea/photos_stream

Last accessed: 11/13/2014

The woman lives in the slums, but to counter the stereotypes held against her, David interprets her story of her favorite earrings and wanting to look presentable to be motivated by her not wanting “to be stereotyped as a bad person because that’s the general perception by the population, and so dressing up decently is her way of rising above that perception”. The man, who had come to town from plantation work, was making his earnings by selling drinks, but had realized that living in town was costing him more than what he made. He was not expecting this when he had moved there five years previously, which made him decide to move back, and he was struggling to not spend the little money he made, so he could return home.



Figure 17: Humans of Papua New Guinea October 2, 2014: drink-seller
Source: Humans of Papua New Guinea.

https://www.facebook.com/humansofpapuanewguinea/photos_stream

Last accessed: 11/13/2014

However, in criticizing the “little development infrastructure that is capturing the needs of the population,” even when he returns, David presumes that the man “will find that the life he envisioned for himself returning is not really possible anymore”.



**Figure 18: Humans of Papua New Guinea
May 25, 2014: young PNG woman in
Australia**

Source: Humans of Papua New Guinea.

https://www.facebook.com/humansofpapuanewguinea/photos_stream

Last accessed: 11/13/2014

In regard to the perception of urban young women and their “inauthenticity” a captivating picture in May 2014 showed a Papua New Guinean woman with the caption “I am confident in who I am” and was in a setting that was distinctly recognizable as an Australian city center and not in PNG. For this reason it was struck down as not representative by the internet commenters until the photographers replied:

“We want to put it out there that we are interested in sharing the stories of Papua New Guineans wherever we meet them. They can be here in PNG or anywhere else in the world. Continue the love.” (HOPNG May 26 2014)

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION: ON BEING PAPUA NEW GUINEAN

Building a national identity and nation in Papua New Guinea is based on the centralized state apparatus successfully unifying the population past ethnolinguistic lines or cultural miscellany according to the framework of a national ideology. The self-consciousness of an imagined community is based on historical contexts, where ethnic groups that may have once been cohesive were arbitrarily divided by colonial borders, while other more heterogeneous ones were combined and sent on a mutual path to conceptualizing a sense of unity.

In the case of New Guinea, the nationalism of West Papua is constructed as an imagined community in opposition to a colonial “Other”, whereas the nation of Papua New Guinea is based on the state building a national framework after the fact of independence. The kinship-based social organization is fashioned into a modern one centered on the premise of politicizing territorial claims resulting from the colonial-imposed borders.

The framework of the nation rests upon a narrative that rationalizes the historical “myth” of the collective and depends on representation to contest this dominant narrative. In the diversity of cultures on both sides of the border of New Guinea, the narrative evolves into a pan-ethnic sense of community, as the collective consciousness lacks a shared ethnolinguistic basis or mutual history, aside from the one in contrast to the colonial “Other” as the outsider. The fundamental commonality is, however, primordial ties to the land, which links the narrative into a Melanesian one. With this post-colonial narrative the lack of representation is reinserted into the colonial discourse, so that identities are formed around a political self-consciousness to reclaim representation.

The essential construct to these identities is one establishing “traditional” custom or *kastom*,

wherein the past and history are romanticized to an ideology that transcends cultural dynamism and social change as a negotiation or coping mechanism to modernity. The national ideology is legitimized by *kastom*, the *kastom* representative of the dominant narrative. In the centralized state with its limited reach to the rural periphery, the narrative is carried by the urban areas where the state apparatus is the strongest. In the urban areas, where the socioeconomic and political control is a result of modernity, the narrative and designation of *kastom* is upheld by the élite and the cultural hegemony of this leadership.

The lack of distinct characteristics to synthesize *kastom* that corresponds in equal measure to representations of the cultural components of the nation is what strengthens the influence of the urban and the élite in carrying the national ideology. However, while the rural arguably does not require the national ideology in its kinship-based subsistence economy, the limited geographical extent of Papua New Guineanness signifies the limited realization of state incorporation of peripheral ideologies and populations.

The pan-ethnic concept of *wantokism* in the urban and Melanesianism in a greater transnational extent are based on a sense of camaraderie. The role of the colonial designations combines *wantoks* by provinces or regions, borders often drawn arbitrarily for administration. The colonial label of “Melanesian” as the dark-skinned inhabitants of the islands is re-appropriated and used as a broader *wantokism* that transcends the national borders to unify the people from West Papua to Fiji.

In this sense the sociocultural commonality is taken as a given, which problematizes the border-making of geographical territory, and this regionalism also challenges the idea of the nation confined to these borders. The concepts of Papua New Guinean Ways and the Melanesian Way, as demonstrated by formal *kastom*, highlight the construction of national ideology based on pan-

ethnic commonality in their geographical extent by the state apparatus of Papua New Guinea and that of the neighboring Melanesian nations. However, these are indeed limited to urban society and the élite.

Included in the 1980 publication of Narokobi's Melanesian manifesto is a critical response by another PNG élite, Bernard Minol. He notes that the concept of a national or "Melanesian" identity is merely the attempt of the educated urban élite to *re-locate* itself in the culture it had previously been firmly rooted in (Narokobi 1980: 177). With a sense of "dislocation" or a disturbance in spirits, they find solace in the formation of more logical constructs of identity. Minol highlights that the uniqueness of Melanesia is the concept of the rural village, which is the "nerve centre of diversity", i.e., the common element is the locality or a sense of *ples* (ibid.178).

Colonialism and modernization have brought the periphery of the Pacific closer to the hegemonic center to be integrated economically and influenced socially and culturally in technological development. Undoubtedly, the dependency of these regions with each other is two-way, with colonial strategy and plantations perpetuated in their importance by current military strategies and the cultivation of crops for global consumption in day-to-day life in form of palm oil, coffee, or chocolate.

Globalization has impacted Papua New Guineans in values and beliefs towards a class society, especially in the urban where state institutions prevail in diffusing standardized education and trade and economy drives material and ideological consumption. Urban migration necessitates a lingua franca in Papua New Guinea, historically based on the colonial trade vernaculars of Police Motu or Hiri Motu and plantation Pidgin English that demanded a pan-ethnic communication.

Tok Pisin is the language of the urban society and the élite, who transcend ethnic ties in their social interaction towards a common socioeconomic background and mutual interests. While

urban settlements and their inhabitants organize according to the kinship-based social structures of their respective villages, the élite intermingle in places of education and work, rising above the concept of *wantokism* or defining it more flexibly in scope.

Urban youth are influenced by the consumption of mass media and material goods “glocalizing” social activities and behavior and attitudes. They may communicate solely in Tok Pisin and English, especially the mixed-ethnicity youth from intermarriage spanning the diverse Papua New Guinean heritages and those attending higher education, where some may transform more traditional values concerning gender roles and marriage prescriptions. While many lose familiarity with their specific distinct cultural heritages and languages, some also follow social customs such as initiation rites and bride price and regularly attend to other kinship obligations. Identities vary or are accentuated according to affiliation, but a distinct collective identity of Papua New Guinean urban society is established.

As can be seen in the tabled version of Francis’s definitions on PNG identity, a few of my research participants were enthusiastic towards this study, as they had looked into similar aspects in their research projects. Some perhaps due to conflicting social roles expected of them through living in urban society, others perhaps due to an expression of sadness towards the modern influences causing the diversity of cultures and languages in PNG to fall into disregard by their generation. I appreciated it greatly when friends in their reaction to my research were voicing the same thoughts that had made me look into this study:

“all this is dying away, we are in the 21st century where technology is advancing and developments are taking place, people are migrating from rural to urban centres” (Karo pers. comm. 2014)

“as generations pass while living in the urban, our cultures and traditions are dying and we are adapting to the western cultures and traditions/ lifestyle” (ibid.)

“(...) worse for youth whose parents are from two different cultures/provinces than for youth who have parents from the same province/cultures” (ibid.)

David also describes another aspect of “returning home” that has shifted in his generation compared to that of his parents and was expressed by his mother:

“[she] always talks about going back home to the place she grew up at (village/her home), when she decides to retire from the urban area. We, her children, are more detached to that place or home of our parent, as we were brought up in the urban area, and so her going home becomes exclusive as we do not share similar sentiments in regard to that ‘place called home’. So in a sense there is a sense of abandonment that leaves us disoriented in terms of having a place to call home...”

The aspect of an emerging national identity that comes explicitly from the urban youth is in fact more particular in the distinctions of Natasha and Caroline’s personal backgrounds. Both of them are from Port Moresby and both name “home” to be in East Sepik Province. However, while Natasha has a multitude of cultural heritages from both parents to self-identify with, she chooses to overarch them by promoting a national identity of Papua New Guinean. Nonetheless, she also emphasizes her cultural identities when representing a certain aspect of these towards others in the nation’s towns.

In contrast, Caroline has parents from the same cultural background and speaks the language, and yet defines herself as decidedly Papua New Guinean from living in the nation’s capital. She answered that her provincial reference was the National Capital District, and not East Sepik Province where both her parents were originally from. None of the informants unambiguously mentioned a sense of Melanesianism or Pacific Islander, however, David and Lizzie’s chat conversation express a sense of “global” identity that springs from having left the country and seen it and one’s own culture(s) from a distance.

The modern representations of Papua New Guineans through the women’s magazine *Stella* and the Facebook page “Humans of Papua New Guinea” also highlight the sense of pride in

showing both how diverse and fascinating PNG and Papua New Guineans are. Additionally, they are a means to promoting a view of the modern Papua New Guinean as a Pan-Pacific Islander in sharing regional issues and stories of other Islanders in the magazine. The representations also depicts the modern PNG citizen as a global citizen, as these involve Papua New Guineans in Australia or elsewhere, no matter the fallout of critical voices saying these depictions were inauthentic. When asked what “being Papua New Guinean” meant to the students, the key words were always *diversity*, *cultures*, and *languages*, showing an immense pride in these descriptions.

As with the extent of *wantokism* depending on the scope of social relations one is geographically removed from, it seems that the importance of a national identity as well as an identity as Melanesian or Pacific Islander grows with the geographical distance and need for solidarization in matters of political affairs and regional trade agreements. While the plans for a Melanesian Federation may have elapsed, the shared issues of land struggles and indigenous self-determination reveal the necessity for a pan-ethnic solidarity in undertaking these tasks.

The European Union (EU) as a model for a transnational partnership is arguably dependent on the viewpoint. Although it may have been heralded as a sort of post-national symbol in its early days, the European financial crisis and growing nationalism of many of the states affected by the fiscal matters of the Eurozone have left citizens of member states questioning the role of it. In the most recent European Parliament elections there was a pronounced success of nationalist parties and a gain of seats for their representatives.

The nation most economically prosperous in the EU is Germany, also the one that has grave historical concerns about nationalism, for which reason it holds on firmly to the ideal of transnational cooperation. The financial mess that has been leading to a rising nationalism demonstrates the difficulty of adding that prefix “post-” in the concept of nations and nationalism.

It is in fact fragile and its practicality is dependent on economic stability, as most recently demonstrated in the “no” vote for Scottish self-determination. This economic stability is also the reason behind an endless fragmentization along ethnic lines not being feasible, neither in Europe, nor in Papua New Guinea.

The strength of the economy is connected with the strength of the state. Seeing as how the PNG state is challenged in its influence by a limited reach outside its urban centers, the national ideology the state attempts to install in its framework is dependent on the urban centers and its citizens in perpetuating a national awareness. The need for a national identity in supporting the state in its influence thus relies on the collective group of civil society that represents this national ideology of Papua New Guineanness and consequently the nation of Papua New Guinea: the growing population of urban generations born and raised of ethnic intermarriage, receiving state or international education, and inclined to the consumption of mass media and popular culture widening their worldview. This broadened horizon includes a vested awareness and interest in regional and global matters. Combined with a pride in their nation of Papua New Guinea, in all its diversity of cultures and languages declared as the distinct characteristic of the nation, this collective, while attentive to the unity in this diversity and social responsibilities on a local level, plays the greatest role in safeguarding the viability of the nation-state of PNG.

What makes Papua New Guinea unique is its cultural diversity, said the students interviewed here. I chose the title of this thesis, which I have not explained until now, as “Yumi olgeta: Papua Niugini”. It can be translated from Tok Pisin, the language of the nation, as “all of us together are Papua New Guinea” or simply “we are Papua New Guinea”. The distinct cultural characteristics of PNG are its people, those that call themselves Papua New Guinean, those that imagine themselves to being the collective of one nation of many cultures and languages.

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