Social Stratification, Cultural Identities, and Politics of Leadership: The Consolidation of a National Culture at a Papua New Guinean University

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Summary

This thesis explores how students and staff at a university in Papua New Guinea (PNG) experience processes of social stratification and differentiation. In particular, I describe and analyse how students and staff reflect on and enact reciprocal obligations to their kin, how different cultural identities are forged and strengthened at university, and how contemporary politics of leadership become manifest in student strikes. The thesis draws on eighteen months of fieldwork, centred at the University of Goroka in the PNG highlands, including stints at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, and visits to homes of students and staff in different provinces of the country. Archival research was also conducted in the Pacific Research Archives at the Australian National University and the Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology at the University of California San Diego. Through participant observation, life histories, interviews, and discourse analysis, in this thesis I explore how subjectivities shape and are shaped through experiences of social stratification and differentiation inherent to higher education, institutional politics and contests over styles of leadership, and how they link to broader aspects of a consolidating national culture in PNG today.

Following introductory chapters that situate the thesis within concerns of regional anthropological scholarship and contextualise the history of higher education in PNG generally, and in Goroka in particular, ethnographic chapters are organised in two sections. The first section starts with the introduction of a number of life histories of students and staff at the university. I subsequently analyse the reflections and experiences of interlocutors through two different lenses. I first foreground putatively different sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and exchange across the PNG highlands, and then shift focus to analyse these articulations as emergent normative reifications of distinct cultural identities. The second ethnographic section provides a detailed account of a student strike, which I also analyse from two distinct vantage points. First, I focus on the strike as a deliberate harnessing of dynamics of emergent collectivities at the hand of strike leaders to advance their own political ambitions. In a second step, I foreground the perceived lack of recognition of students within the institutional hierarchy of the university, which from the perspective of students leaves few alternatives to the strike for making their grievances heard.

In both ethnographic sections I thus follow a specific structure and analytical strategy of first foregrounding one angle of analysis that I subsequently seem to undermine through

another angle of analysis. Through this analytical strategy, I wish to present these perspectives as complementary rather than mutually exclusive frames of understanding, as which they often tend to become mobilised in public debate. I thus enact an analytical strategy that mimics the reality of appropriate relating to kin and in institutional hierarchies that is the subject of this thesis: what are appropriate forms of action and relating depends on the perspective through which these are presented or enacted, yet these perspectives, in turn, are subject to challenge and negotiation through the ways specific actions are framed.

Acknowledgements

This PhD project grew out of a year as Master student at the University of Goroka, where I returned for PhD fieldwork. I am indebted to the support of many persons at the University of Goroka who welcomed me there and facilitated this project in fundamental ways. Among them is most centrally Wasang Baiio, who sadly passed on before this thesis was completed. Wasang assisted me in arriving to Goroka and conducting master level studies and research with the University of Goroka in his capacity as postgraduate coordinator for the Humanities Faculty in 2010. He was equally central in my return as Visiting Research Fellow at the Division of Indigenous, Environment and Development Studies in 2013 and 2014, for which he was acting as Head of Division at the time. Others who facilitated my return and research at the University of Goroka for PhD fieldwork were Michael Mel as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Helen Vetunawa as Dean of the School of Humanities, and Zengzeng Mari as Head of the Division of Social Science.

While at the University of Goroka for PhD fieldwork, the warm welcome and support I received from members of the university community was so widespread that I cannot comprehensively list my gratitude to individuals, for it would exhaust the space available to keep these acknowledgements to reasonable length. Persons whose generous support in facilitating my research I need to nevertheless mention individually are Gairo Onagi, who in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor showed openness to my research by allowing me to observe university meetings, including of the university's governing Council, Senate, School Boards, and the Student Discipline Committee, given that respective meeting chairs would not object to my presence. Similar acknowledgement goes to the Student Voice Council in 2013, who also allowed me to observe their meeting proceedings. In the School of Humanities, Sam Kari, then Dean, accommodated my research activity while at the same time I assisted Wasang Baiio in establishing the new Division of Indigenous, Environment and Development Studies (IEDS) as part of the School. The weekly tea meetings between staff of IEDS and the Division of Social Science were an anchor of academic community throughout, both for sharing a collegial space, and for bouncing ideas off in an informal academic setting. Many of the staff of these Divisions became valued friends. Besides frequent coordination of my activities with Wasang Baiio, I enjoyed regular interaction with Joseph Tumbe Mangi, with whom I shared a small office corridor throughout 2013 and

many conversations. Donald Gumbis facilitated office use at the Centre for Melanesian Studies in 2014.

Through my affiliation to a family from Simbu province since my prior time at the University of Goroka in 2010, the Simbu Students Associations provided me with a community away from home, and the association's executives were making sure I did not miss word about the association's activities and gatherings. Bomai Witne, a staff member from Simbu in the Division of Social Science, connected both these communities for me – Simbu students and academic staff in the social sciences – making us share a variety of settings and moments at the University of Goroka and in Simbu. He introduced me to other Simbus that take active concern for their province and invited me to join a Simbu Development Forum in its provincial capital Kundiawa in 2013.

A central inspiration to embark on this project in the academic discipline of Anthropology was Andrew Moutu, through a talk he gave at the University of Goroka in 2010. This was also the first time I heard about Maynooth – a thereto unfamiliar name to me – where Andrew Moutu was mentioned to have done a stint as postdoctoral fellow. Its mention coupled with the intellectually inciting talk by Andrew Moutu sparked sufficient curiosity to look up Maynooth, which led me to Thomas Strong's research in the PNG highlands. There could not be anyone better through whom to be introduced to the world of Anthropology as a disciplinary yet open-ended pursuit than Tom Strong, making for a most exciting intellectual journey.

Maynooth's Department of Anthropology is a pleasant and supportive place to embark on a PhD project. Besides Tom's exceptionally committed supervision, I benefited from interaction with its staff and other PhD students, especially Catriona Coen, Alex O'Connell, Anne Fitzgerald, Tatiana Vagramenko, Lijing Peng, Katja Seidel, Rebekah McCabe, Frank Szabo, Amiee Flynn-Curran, Tara McAssey, Matjaz Pinter, and Nasrin Khandoker (who also significantly enriched my Anthropology of Education seminar through guest lectures). Denise Erdmann and Jacqui Mullally hold the Department together and were always helpful for usual (and unusual) requests and queries that arise throughout PhD projects.

Another connection that came up quickly once in Ireland for this project was to Tine Ningal, who was in the process of completing his PhD at University College Dublin

when I started mine at Maynooth. Tine was not just, most probably, the only Papua New Guinean resident in the Republic of Ireland throughout this time. He is also from Simbu, and more specifically from Gumine – the District of Simbu Province where I myself became affiliated. We became friends quickly and lastingly, casually chatting in Tok Pisin as we debate Gumine politics in Dublin pubs, to an occasional wondering look by someone trying to figure out what tongue or topic that could be. Tine also assisted with the sourcing and modification of a map that is included in this thesis.

There are other people and places that need to be acknowledged also. In Port Moresby, I am grateful to staff at the University of Papua New Guinea for providing guidance and advise towards my project, including Linus Digim'Rina, David Kombako, Bill Sagir (now in Goroka), Betty Lovai, Steven Winduo, and Goru Hane-Nou (previously in Goroka), among others. Alan Robson was a frequent and pleasant interlocutor on several stays in Port Moresby, also assisting with logistics and accommodation at times. David Haro and Wala Iga – whom I have known since times as master student in Goroka when David studied in Goroka too – also provided logistical support, friendship, and often a place to stay when passing through the city. Georgia Kaipu at the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute ensured a smooth and swift process for my Papua New Guinea research visa.

The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra became another secondary base to stop before, during, and after research fieldwork. Chris Ballard assisted in arranging a visiting affiliation at the College of Asia and the Pacific's Department of Pacific and Asian History from September to December 2012 to conduct archival research at the ANU, also allowing me to benefit from its extraordinary concentration of resources and scholars focused on PNG and the Pacific from which my project gained significantly. The number of people I benefited from at the ANU is too numerous to mention, but crucially helpful interaction on this stint at the ANU took place, among others, with Mike Cookson, Colin Filer, Jimmy Weiner, John Burton, Katerina Teaiwa, Margaret Jolly, Deveni Temu, late John Ballard, Gerry Ward, Malcolm Ross, late Bill Standish, and Alan Rumsey. Alan Rumsey facilitated for me to give a seminar about my project in ANU's Wednesday anthropology seminar, which felt like an unusual privilege as pre-fieldwork PhD student and yielded very helpful feedback and discussion. Before arriving at the ANU in September 2012, Warwick Anderson took me out for dinner in Sydney and provided a welcoming introduction to scholarly debates in Australia.

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Many other connections and scholars across the globe became valued interlocutors throughout the time of this PhD. A list of people would again become too long to enumerate here, but especially worth mentioning are the cumulative concentration of anthropologists that came to do research with a primary focus on urban Goroka over the last decade – almost a fashionable frenzy it appeared, though rather coincidentally so – with nearly all of whom I enjoyed an overlap in Goroka at some point. These include Anthony Pickles, Jenny Peachey, Barbara Andersen, Chris Little, Mark Busse, and Olivia Barnett-Naghshineh. Other scholars with a long-term or recurrent interest in Goroka I overlapped with there, and at the University of Goroka in particular, included Mark Eby and Verena Thomas.

On the other side of the Pacific, I was glad for the opportunity to spend some time in San Diego and am deeply indebted to Kathy Creely who was the entry point to the treasure trove of the Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology and other library resources that she helped me navigate at the University of California San Diego (UCSD). Times in San Diego also enabled for stimulating discussion with Joel Robbins, which provided food for thought for long after. Fellow PhD students at UCSD Jordan Haug and Alexis Tucker-Sade were brilliant to get to know and to keep in conversation

with in relation to anthropology in the Pacific, and a number of other anthropology PhD students at UCSD kept roping me into activities during my stint there.

The writing of this thesis eventually took longer than it optimally should have taken. What greatly assisted the writing process, besides Tom Strong's committed and compassionate style of supervision, was a tandem writing process that unfolded with Priscila Santos da Costa after we met at a conference and continued discussing our work thereafter, consisting of sharing 3000 words of written work each week and discussing this on Skype between Dublin and St. Andrews. I am convinced that Priscila Santos da Costa's work will be among the most illuminating contributions to the anthropology of this time.

Finally, many of the initial concerns and contextual insights that both motivated this thesis and grounded its initial idea in people's everyday experiences derived from the deep insights I was allowed to gain through my affiliation to a partially Goroka-based Simbu family from the Dirima area in Simbu's Gumine District. I owe much to this ongoing connection to Jeffry, Sara, Edwick, Carol, Ben, Noah, and the families of Jeffry's brothers Michael, Ignatius, Pastor, and affiliates.

Chapter One - Introduction

This thesis explores experiences of social differentiation and stratification, the formation of cultural identities, and politics of leadership in the setting of a university in Papua New Guinea (PNG) today. It describes and analyses how university actors navigate and contest different pragmatics and moral sensibilities of relating to kin and sponsors, fellow students, and the institutional hierarchy of a university, and how these contests over pragmatics and moral sensibilities of relating shape and are shaped by an emerging PNG national culture in the context of global modernity. A university education represents a node of aspirations and agendas: from the promise of personal prosperity for those who attend it to the training of a human resource base for national and global development, via the formation of educated citizen-subjects. Rather than taking the realisation of these aspirations and agendas for granted, this thesis is a study of how staff and students navigate, experience, and reflect on these aspirations and agendas. How are personal and political hopes realised – or frustrated – in the life of the university?

While this thesis is centrally concerned with a university, the questions it addresses lie beyond the bounds of the university as an institution or its more immediate functions. Here, for example, the pedagogical context of the classroom is bracketed. Instead, I take the university as a setting that enables a broader frame of attention, such as student relations with relatives and sponsors, or an emerging national culture in PNG that shapes and is shaped by the experiences of those attending and working at a university. PNG's universities are institutions in which the nation literally comes together, and they contribute to shaping a national culture, or mirror its tendencies, in important ways. This includes the conduct of politics and emergent notions of leadership, questions of cultural identity, and the perception of an increasing divide between urban 'elites' and rural disadvantaged 'grassroots,' as well as those who fall 'in between' these categories. In the following chapters, I describe and analyse how these processes are navigated by university students and staff, and how they produce forms of social differentiation in terms of kin relations, cultural identity, and politics.

Relations & Obligations

On a Sunday, outside the office corridor of the Division of Social Science, I had a conversation with Thomas[1], a senior non-permanent member of academic staff with training in anthropology. The office corridor of Social Science is located in the so-called 'main quad' of lecture halls and academic division offices. On weekdays throughout academic semesters, it usually buzzes with activity. On weekends, in contrast, the main quad remains much quieter. There is only a reduced periodic flow of students that walk to and from the student mess, which serves three meals on seven days per week. Lecture halls, little insulated from the soundscape of the atrium of the main quad through which the conduct of lectures reciprocally reverberates, mostly remain empty on weekends, though there are sometimes Christian fellowship meetings and provincial student association gatherings. Quiet weekends around the main quad and office corridors usually provide a greater opportunity to stop for a conversation with colleagues too busy during the work week. On this occasion, Thomas told me about changing dispositions towards education and urban employment as he observed them in his natal area in the Southern Highlands Province of PNG over the last decades.

In the past, Thomas said, people were trying to achieve a name and status through involvement and participation in their community, at home, a type of social action which he referred to as 'performance' in the village. Nowadays, in contrast, Thomas continued, people try to achieve status by attending formal education with the hope of finding employment outside the village. Few, however, manage to achieve this, and many do return to the village instead. Those who do make it through higher education and succeed into stable formal employment face a decision of whether they want to be 'with' the community or rather to 'isolate themselves' from the community. These are not neatly delineated stances, but they represent the two poles of common evaluation of someone's orientation towards the community. To 'isolate oneself' here means to focus on looking after one's own immediate family (such as in the idea of the Christian 'nuclear family'), or to be perceived to keep one's earnings to oneself. To 'be with the community', on the other hand, is to maintain an active involvement in its general affairs. This means to contribute to community matters such as exchanges of various forms, for example life-cycle ceremonial events, but also to help when extended kin and community members at large are in need. To be privileged in terms of earning a regular

[1] Throughout the thesis, I have given synonyms to interlocutors who I introduce by first name only.

pay check places one in a position of responsibility to look after the community. This often means financial contributions to others that do not enjoy a similarly regular flow of income. But it also means, and this goes hand in hand with contributing to community affairs and helping people out financially when in need, to use one's exposure and experience in a cosmopolitan, (inter-)national realm, for providing advice and direction in village affairs.

The distinction between participation and isolation, Thomas continued to explain, paralleled other principles, which he named 'politics' or 'business,' that do not go together well. 'Politics' in this instance refers to the ways of achieving status and '*kisim nem'* (to 'get a name') through one's performance and active involvement in village affairs. In financial terms, for a wage earner, this essentially means the redistribution and deployment of monetary resources. To look after one's responsibilities back in the village, in terms of assisting people and the community that enabled one's position in the first place, in other words, is thus a practice and orientation that is per se politically salient. The more one manages to fulfil community expectations and to channel resources to the community, the higher one's political prestige, or demonstration of leadership capacity (a category that I will return to in Chapters Nine and Ten), and therefore the greater one's influence over the affairs of the community. This is what Thomas referred to as 'performance' in the village.

'Business', on the other hand, is associated with the opposite way of handling money and material wealth. It means to hold on to monetary resources rather than to redistribute them. The principle for success in 'business' is regarded as withstanding and evading the pressure for redistribution that is required in 'politics'. Whether running a business or not, those that 'isolate' themselves in terms of not responding to requests of the community are said to follow a 'business' principle, and, while not ostracised by the community, may be regarded as 'greedy', or 'selfish'. For some, this may simply mean to place the focus on one's own nuclear family in the context of urban life. The category of 'politics' thus has a certain association with traditional ways, often referred to as '*pasin*' or '*kastom*' in Papua New Guinean Tok Pisin, equally relevant today, of achieving status through active engagement and redistribution. The category of

'business,' in contrast, carries a connotation of a supposedly modern style of entrepreneurial success and nuclear family life.[2]

On another level, the association of modernity with 'business' is similar to its association with 'development,' and with the idea of 'progress' – these concepts form a semantic cluster around the idea of 'Papua New Guinea' as a modern nation governing modern citizen-subjects. 'Politics', in contrast, becomes associated with past modes of acting that are disruptive or get one stuck without advancing oneself or one's family in the modern world. This is ambiguous, however, as 'politics' in this sense is still also widely understood as the main route to enter the national political arena and, ultimately, to become a Member of Parliament, the highest aspiration for many (and especially male) Papua New Guineans. It is ambiguous too in that it can be evoked both negatively as a disruptive practice, to 'play politics', and positively in terms of the much-debated category of 'leadership' in PNG today, a point to which I will return.

Thomas was not the only person making these conceptual distinctions, yet he articulated them in terms of their salience both to his personal experience and to anthropological analysis. He was thus also careful to stress that the way people 'back' in the village perceive their relatives in town with access to cash are changing. He suggested that the 'performance' of 'politics' – the strategic redistribution of material wealth within one's natal community in order to gain status and influence – is not a conventional expectation any more for those with aspirations, and that there are new ways of perceiving such persons. We decided to part at this juncture of the conversation to sit down for a more detailed conversation after the completion of the lecturing term, and I will return to Thomas and our conversations that followed in Chapter Four.

Cultural Identity

Sensibilities around questions of reciprocity and exchange between educated wage earners and poorer kin are not only subject to long-term processes of social change.

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[2] Although this can also be conceived as going together in other instances. Success in entrepreneurial business generates wealth that can be circulated, and the circulation of wealth in itself is often congruent with entrepreneurial success of highlands big men. 'Business' is thus an ambiguous category of twofold possible association – one with a connotation of entrepreneurial success relevant for the category of 'politics' discussed here (see Finney 1973), and one that connotes a putatively 'modern' disposition to finance associated with individual resource accumulation for the benefit of oneself and one's immediate family.

Such sensibilities are also evaluated among Papua New Guineans as differently culturally marked across PNG and have become part of emergent articulations of regional and provincial identities.

This analysis derived from a conversation with university staff is then also locally specific in terms of some of the details that my interlocutor relayed from his home community in the Southern Highlands. In a way, his story resonates with the kinds of dilemmas that wage-earners are facing generally when relating to kin, and how perceptions and expectations are changing over time. Yet, it also differs in the details of stories told by interlocutors from other parts of PNG.

There are diverse perspectives and experiences in relating to kin in terms of obligations. The common themes of concern felt by university-educated wage-earners in PNG may only on the surface appear as a similarly experienced predicament across the country. Individual concerns are unique in their specific circumstances and respond to a range of different contexts, while also drawing on and manifesting recurrent themes. From a sociological vantage point, it matters whether someone comes from an urban background with university-educated parents that are possibly themselves employed in the public service, whether one is the only individual from a large village community to have obtained a university-level education, or whether one comes from a place far from the transport necessary to access secondary schooling in the first place (often making tertiary education all but impossible). All these variables matter for how attending university is experienced in terms of changing relations to kin in PNG today.

But there is also a different systematisation of experiences and perspectives possible that I pursue in further detail, which is that of ‘cultural’ differences that Papua New Guineans evoke when they talk about these questions. The problem of ‘cultural difference’ relates to the different ways in which exchange systems are organised across PNG, and thus the kinds of reciprocity and obligations people are subject to. It also relates to the active (‘reflexive’) construction of distinct identities and reifications of ‘culture’ along regional, provincial, or otherwise sub-national lines in PNG today. There are, I suggest, both actual differences in the ways that people relate to each other in terms of exchange, reciprocity, and perceived obligations, on the one hand, and different reified cultural ‘identities’, which are associated with a certain abstracted ethos of exchange, on the other hand. Ethnographically, the material I discuss in this regard, in Chapters Five to Seven, combines ethnographic observation with the stories and

reflections that my interlocutors shared with me, including public rhetoric, overheard utterances more generally, and so on. The picture emerging from this does not flatten the heterogeneity of individual experiences but suggests a certain pattern to actual differences in exchange spanning the PNG highlands and beyond (cf. Feil 1987, M. Strathern 1988, Lederman 1990), on one hand, and demonstrates an increasing reification of these differences in the construction of provincial and regional identities, on the other hand.

To systematise putative differences in exchange ethos may appear as a relic of a moribund comparative social anthropology of delineated culture areas. Anthropologists long conceived of PNG as a kind of laboratory for the study of sociocultural variation along different axes of comparative analysis, especially due to PNG's notable cultural and linguistic diversity. This is not my intention here, even if it may appear so initially as I develop my analysis. More significant instead, I suggest, is the construction of cultural identities in PNG today through the reflexive reification of supposedly different practices of exchange and 'culture', in which regional or provincial identities are linked to normatively framed attributes of moral sensibilities and exchange. Such a categorisation of attributes as distinct cultural identities among Papua New Guineans, though always subject to disagreement and contestation, is also evoked in the stereotypes about and the evaluation of what is understood as other 'provinces', 'regions' and their 'culture', in Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin terms referred to as '*kastom*' (deriving from 'custom') and '*pasin*' (which I would roughly translate as 'way of doing things', etymologically deriving from the English word 'fashion').

In the Southern Highlands, for example, my interlocutor above and other interlocutors including younger students would claim, there were no endogenous practices of sorcery or afflictions of witchcraft that wage-earners are worried about when not fulfilling expectations of their kin and community, although this is increasingly changing through spreading ideas about sorcery and witchcraft from other areas (and see Lederman 1981). As Thomas and others of my interlocutors from the Mendi area of the Southern Highlands suggest, not fulfilling requests from kin in need, or not contributing to community affairs more generally, might more usually lead to being ignored by others, being regarded as 'useless', and being talked about behind one's back. To be respected among kin and the wider community, one's participation and assistance in their affairs is crucial. To relatively 'isolate' oneself, as Thomas put it, thus may create resentment, or that people would also 'forget about one'. Such a break with kin and relatives is in no

one's interest, of course, but may always be on the horizon to certain extent for a wage-earner in relying on a fortnightly pay check to make ends meet. As Thomas indicates, however, kin may also come to understand and appreciate their decisions and actions in the long run.

I do not intend to downplay the inadequacy of claiming that this account is indicative of people's sensibilities around exchange in the Mendi area more generally. Other than stories and self-representations from several interlocutors in distinct instances and contexts, I have little direct ethnographic observation of their relations to extended kin. I thus have little evidence to further back up these claims, other than the observation that several people provide similar perspectives that seem to resonate with each other. Yet there is more to this. Much of what I describe above was also echoed by my interlocutors from the bordering Western Highlands Province and its urban centre Mount Hagen (which I will refer to as Hagen hereafter). Taken together, the similarities of accounts of my interlocutors from the areas of Mendi and Hagen stand in contrast to principles of exchange evoked in relation to areas further to the east, such as parts of Jiwaka Province, Simbu Province and parts of the Eastern Highlands Province (See map in Figure 1).

In these locations, further east in the PNG highlands, people suggest more frequently that they are worried about sorcery and witchcraft. The envy of kin or the wider community, which in Tok Pisin and PNG English is usually referred to as 'jealousy', can provoke afflictions of sorcery or witchcraft at the hand of envious kin or greedy witches. My interlocutors from western parts of the highlands, such as interlocutors from the areas of Mendi and Hagen, suggest that the reciprocal return of support received from extended kin or community members may take place after prolonged stretches of time. Further to the east, however, in parts of Jiwaka, Simbu and the Eastern Highlands Provinces, wage earners often feel more constant pressure continuously to level the difference of income vis-à-vis kin. In these areas, it is the more immediate expectations at levelling inequalities of wealth and resources, firmly ingrained in moral sensibilities, that are linked to the threat of sorcery or witchcraft when not met (Strong 2017).

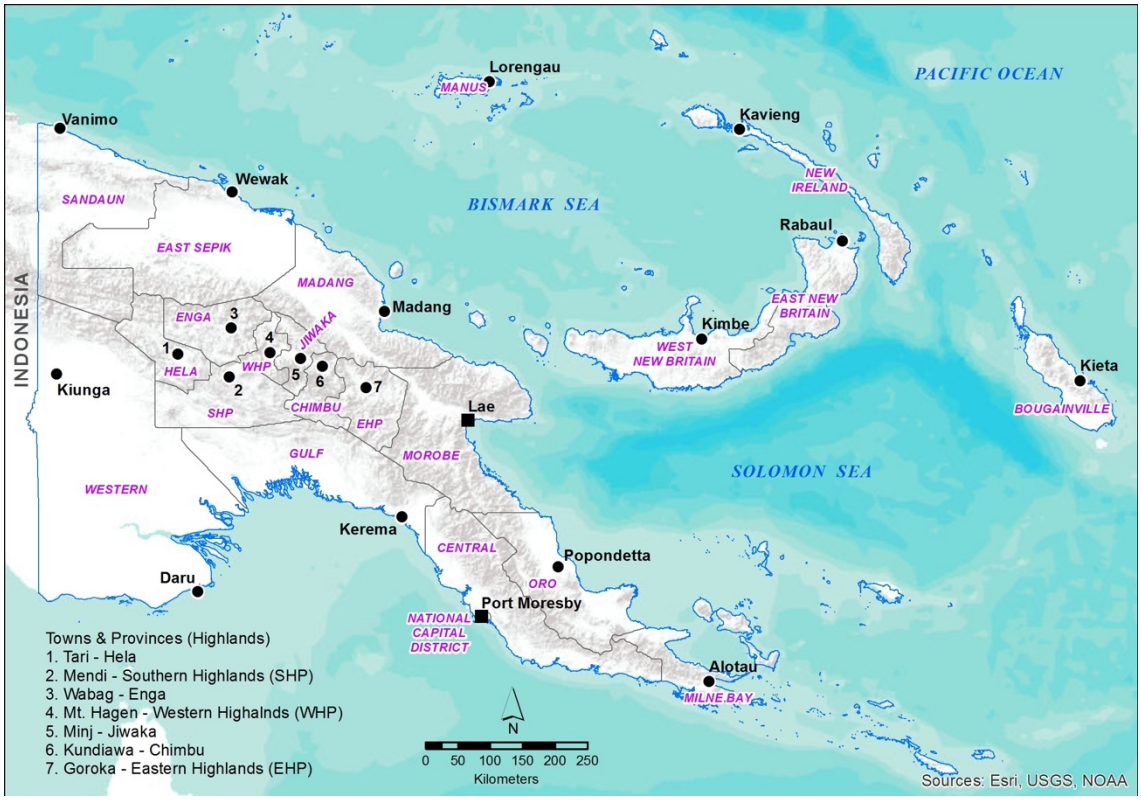

***Figure 1**: Provincial map of Papua New Guinea (created by Tine Ningal through DIVA-GIS based on Esri, USGS, and NOAA data).*

The characteristics thus described, and sometimes stereotyped about others' 'culture' or '*pasin*', are often also commonly agreed categories, even if evaluated differently depending on perspective. Simbus may, to use the evoked categories of provincial identity, for example, evaluate Hageners' conduct as 'greedy', in terms of allegedly being more predisposed to the idea of withholding resources from kin. Whereas Simbus pride themselves for always looking after kin in need, and for a propensity to share with others whatever they have. In another context, someone identifying as Simbu may bemoan feeling constantly drained of his resources by the demands and expectations from kin, jokingly stating he wishes he was born a 'PNG Chinese', meaning Hagener (perceived as never sharing), who are supposedly not subjected to similarly constant expectations for sharing one's resources and monetary income. Correspondingly, Hageners voice pride about their business-mindedness and success at business, alleging that Simbus do not seem to handle money the right way in order to succeed in business. Simbus do not necessarily disagree with this assessment, rather stressing that Hageners' approach to business conflicts with moral values and sensibilities surrounding exchange that Simbus take pride in.

These claims and evaluations are not always voiced explicitly, and neither do they become regularly presented in such all-encompassing abstractions in terms of principles

of exchange that inform varying experiences of differentiation in educational achievement and wealth. For me, this was a gradually emerging image that only slowly assumed its contours throughout the time I spent at the national institution of the university and in urban PNG more generally. This image and understanding also emerges for other university students in PNG in a similar way as it did for me. Many students were explicit about their time at university being marked by learning about other cultures of PNG, and exemplifying this by stories of this sort, describing the distinctiveness of their concerns and experiences in comparison to students from other parts of the country with whom they became friends.

Two contexts, which I will return to in more detail in Chapters Six and Seven, ultimately helped me to make sense of these differences in a twofold way: actual differences in sensibilities around exchange in different parts of PNG that assume some spatially characteristic ('regional') contours on one hand, and their homogenising abstraction into putative principles of exchange elevated to normative qualities on the other hand. One of these contexts was the interaction about these observations with a PNG anthropologist, Joseph Tumbe Mangi, a colleague in the Division of Indigenous, Environment and Development Studies at the University of Goroka. Another context was the evocation of reified characteristics of identity in students' self-representations in terms of provincial cultural identity. Besides personal conversations, these were frequently voiced in gatherings of provincial student associations at the University of Goroka. Looking at these gatherings, and mobilisation in student politics that I will introduce below, it becomes clear how the emergence of provincial cultural identities is linked to ongoing processes of nation-building and an emerging – or indeed consolidating – national culture in PNG.

Student Strikes

When I first arrived in Goroka as a master's student in 2010, just in time for the start of the academic year, I was picked up at Goroka's airport by staff of the university's Student Services. One of the first things I was told, by Mary, whom I will introduce in more detail in Chapter Five, was that there would be lots of time to settle in, as students were preparing to strike. The strike lasted for almost two months and culminated into university managers becoming temporarily side-lined for an investigation into the university's affairs. When I returned in 2013, a strike of similar duration occurred again.

Prolonged student strikes are a regular feature of campus life in PNG public universities, occurring once every few years. Students are likely to experience at least one prolonged strike throughout their university career. Student strikes follow a specific dynamic that leads to a suspension of regular campus operations. Classes are boycotted by students, the library and computer labs are prevented from opening, and staff office areas are policed to prevent staff from working and attending to students. The strike is a collective project, and adherence to the strike is expected from all students. Participation in strike activities, such as student assemblies and marches, is often enforced in either visible or more subtle ways, and strike-breakers threatened with violent retribution. A series of strikes at the University of Goroka in 2010, 2013, and 2015, for example, have revolved around demands for the Vice-Chancellor (VC) to resign or to be dismissed from office, based on allegations of mismanagement and corruption.

A distinctive approach in these strikes, led in antagonism to the university management, was the systematic obstruction of dialogue and communication between students and the university management. Notice board postings by the university management with messages for students, the only way of communicating and reaching out to students in the absence of an established system of email communication, were swiftly removed. Similarly, meetings and assemblies called for by the university management were not attended by students, and university staff or other external actors appearing to speak on behalf of the university management in student assemblies were shouted down or left standing deserted with students demonstratively dispersing. Student strikes are then, as I detail further below, often not only about specific issues – they also contest the hierarchical and formal structure of the university, and the way bureaucratic institutions operate more generally.

These instances also present contexts in which different ways of relating are contested. University managers, the university council, government representatives, and other agents of the state such as officials of the Office of Higher Education (OHE) or police addressing students, on one hand, stressed the need to respect procedural requirements against what some derogatorily dismissed as students' 'bush politics' – drawing on a negative category of 'politics' that I alluded to above, which is here explicitly linked to a putative 'traditional' past through linking it to the 'bush' in contrast to 'urban' and supposedly 'modern' civilisation. As they argued, students needed to learn and appreciate the functioning of modern institutions, and the civic duties of a modern

citizen of a nation-state, as they became educated to show professional conduct and to constitute the future intellectual elite of PNG. Being a university student not only brought rights, the VC frequently argued, but also responsibilities as citizens, which students needed to understand. The university management not only dismissed the content of the students' strike, it also questioned students' approach and legitimacy to strike. University managers did not see a possibility meaningfully to engage with students, nor meaningfully to address student claims of corruption and mismanagement.

Students, on the other hand, felt that they were not taken seriously by the university management. They hardened their demand that the VC be dismissed and refused to engage with the university management any further at all. Students sought recognition as agents that were an important part of the university and the nation, and not just the 'clients' and 'customers' of the university that the VC and Chancellor, chairperson of the University Council, repeatedly claimed they were. An analogy that the VC provided was that at a store or supermarket, customers also cannot simply decide to pay less for goods because they find the price too high. To set the price for goods, or the fees for university education and services, was not for students to determine. For the VC, this was something students had to 'learn', and to become responsible citizens – the university sought to 'discipline' students as consumers (see also Foster 2002 on consumption in the context of nation-making in PNG). Students, in contrast, felt improperly recognised, and their claims about 'mismanagement' and 'corruption' appeared more related at the style of management – in terms of relating to students as agents in their own right – rather than in terms of the formal aspects of institutional management. The VC and other institutional and state agents seemed to suggest that students needed to learn how modern institutions function, and how they are linked to achieving development. Students, in turn, placed the emphasis of their concerns differently. They wanted to be recognised as proper agents themselves within the institution and the polity (nation-state), and to be related to accordingly. Students often emphasised these as Melanesian values and Papua New Guinean forms of relating, which cannot simply be disregarded by others who claim to follow a putatively universal institutional protocol. The strike crystallised important conceptual and moral tensions characteristic of what I am calling a 'national culture' (see also Golub 2014:160-207). In the rhetoric of the strike and the values it conveyed, and in the practices and events of its unfolding, we can observe how the themes of 'rural' and 'urban', 'modern' and 'traditional', 'recognition' and 'rule', are brought into relation in

PNG today.

Politics & Leadership

Thus, student strikes provide an entry point to questions that link back to problems of social differentiation through education and 'politics' that I introduced earlier. To attend university not only carries expectations as a pathway to wealth and income through employment as a trained professional. Obtaining a university education in PNG has historically also been linked to making university graduates facilitators between local communities and processes of government-led 'development', instituting the expectation that students will bridge the concerns of local communities and those of the nation-state and modern economy. University graduates, in an important way, are regarded as becoming agents of development, both for their communities and for the nation. In many cases, students are held in high regard by the communities they come from, to assist and guide important decisions and processes in the community (cf. Munro 2018 on West Papua), while in some contexts they may also become perceived as a threat to traditional forms of authority in the village (Vulliamy and Carrier 1985). For example, one of my informants, Grant, was a mature student friend who returned to tertiary education at the University of Goroka for an in-service degree after many years of teaching in schools (I will return to his story in more detail in Chapter Five). Grant said that community members consult him for any important question concerning his community in the Jimi valley on the northern edges of Jiwaka Province, bordering Madang Province.

At university, students are also frequently told that they constitute the future leaders of the country. Students themselves reiterate this as a self-understanding of their aspirations, and some students actively pursue a pathway towards becoming a Member of Parliament. Indeed, the initial intention of university education in PNG when it was established in the late 1960s was to train a national elite to become politicians and fill positions in the public service in anticipation of national independence in 1975. Opportunities for a quick career high up into the public service or national politics have since dramatically declined. Nonetheless, there are avenues through which students attempt to establish themselves as capable leaders with a calling for higher political office. While the example from the reflections of Thomas above suggest pathways to political leadership in the village, and possibly beyond, through long-term commitment to village affairs and redistribution over long periods of one's life-time, there are other

ways through which students aim to enter the national political arena more directly. For some students, the time at university is not just preparation for a wage-earning job, but also an opportunity to assume the significant leadership roles they view as pathways towards contesting national elections. Recognition as leaders at university credentials some students as possible future politicians.

Student strikes have become a primary pathway to demonstrate leadership capacity for politically ambitious students, and to create a name for themselves as politically efficacious agents. Many leaders of student strikes in the 2010s have gone on to contest national elections in PNG in 2012 and 2017. Since the beginning of prolonged student strikes at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) in the 1970s, strike leaders often went on to pursue careers in national politics.[3] Leading a strike thus appears to be a legitimated pathway for a political career: possibly starting with participation in the informally organised provincial student associations, and then leading to election to the university's Student Representative Council (SRC), with particularly fierce competition to become its president. Successfully conducting a student strike over several weeks, whether as elected student leader or not, has become an ultimate distinction that demonstrates one's personal capacity for effective leadership – by standing up to powerful actors in institutions and the government, by exposing 'corruption' that must be corrected, and by effectively creating a following among students. These are the leadership credentials that, for example, enabled three student strike leaders at the University of Goroka in 2010 to obtain respectable results when contesting national elections in 2012 on shoestring campaign budgets, and then contesting elections unsuccessfully once more in 2017. The leader of the student strike at the University of Goroka in 2013 also contested the PNG national elections unsuccessfully in 2017. While many student leaders remain unsuccessful in the highly competitive races for parliamentary seats in PNG today, circumstances in which candidates with access to financial resources spend considerable amounts of money, a good number of parliamentarians in PNG look back at a personal history of involvement in student politics. Some student leaders are even successful at contesting national elections in direct succession from university studies. In the last national elections of 2017, for example, the University of Papua New Guinea's (UPNG) Student Representative

[3] In the first UPNG student strike in 1974, the then Student Representative Council president Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, a Solomon Islander, later became Member of Parliament and eventually Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands.

Council President of 2013, Peter Numu, got elected as Regional Member (and thus Governor) for the Eastern Highlands Province.

'Politics' is thus an ambiguous category at universities, as it is in villages or other settings (see above). On one hand, 'politics' carries a connotation of past ways, the 'traditions' which stand in contrast to the modern ways of 'business', 'development', and 'progress', that are associated with nuclear family life, wage-earning employment or business. To these supposedly modern ways one may add, in relation to the rhetoric of the university management, the rule-adherent subject that knows not only the rights but also the responsibilities of modern citizenry. In the institutional context, 'politics' is further associated with the obstruction of procedure or authority by personal agendas that do not conform to the university's interests or are not conducive to a harmonious collaboration between agents at the university. From the perspective of university managers, for example, student politics are a reminder of social practices and values that must be superseded, indicating ignorance about things 'modern' and the remainder of past ways that students allegedly need to transcend by learning to adhere to and embrace the rules and regulations of the institution and the law of the state.

On the other hand, politics provide an arena for demonstrating 'leadership' capacity. Leadership is a positive category, and students regard their time at university both as an opportunity to learn knowledge and skills for employment or business, often glossed in the Tok Pisin term for knowledge and skills '*save*', and to become recognised as leaders through the privilege of selection into a university. Attending university is already by itself a significant differentiation of students vis-à-vis kin, community, and compatriots at large, a differentiation that at university is framed in terms of being chosen to become a leader. 'Leadership' is a value that is shared across agents at the university, even if there may be different evaluations of what constitutes good leadership. In general, though, 'leadership' is often stylised as the single most important factor for bringing about the 'development' of the nation. There are different avenues for students to demonstrate their capability of leadership at university. For example, there are executive positions in provincial, religious, or sports associations, alongside the formal roles associated with student body representation. These leadership credentials, however, fall short of propelling one directly into the national political arena. Establishing a platform to contest national elections almost requires involvement in a confrontational politics. The most significant pathway to establish such a platform is from the position of the SRC President, and particularly through leading a student strike.

What stands out in student strikes is the enthusiasm and energy that the student body displays, as a whole, for example through elaborate performances at assemblies. These resembled the phenomenon of a collective effervescence (Durkheim 1912), alternatively theorised as pertaining to emergent dynamics of 'crowds' (Tarde 1890, cf. Tambiah 1996), or more recently discussed under the notion of 'affect' (Mazzarella 2010a). The university management and other observers in turn dismissed the strike in 2013 as propelled by 'emotion'. While the university management insisted that students need to learn to adhere to rules, students rejected this notion, proclaiming that they follow a 'Melanesian Way' (see Narokobi 1983) instead, and also suggesting that the procedural constraints that the university management sought to impose were to benefit their own interests rather than to enable justice and accountable management practices that take into consideration an appropriate relationality.

This contest over kinds of leadership evokes longstanding debates on leadership that have been a staple in the anthropology of Melanesia and the Pacific (Sahlins 1963, Chowning 1979, A. Strathern 1982, Allen 1984, Lindstrom 1984, Lederman 1990, Godelier & Strathern 1991, White & Lindstrom 1977, Martin 2013). In the institutional politics discussed here, there are changes visible in the ideologies surrounding leadership in contemporary PNG. For example, once capacity and prowess in leadership is demonstrated, a leader is regarded as an authority not to be challenged, rather than assuming a formal 'role' that may be performed with uncertain efficacy. Leadership is thus also increasingly regarded as rightful 'authority', such as in relation to the election cycles of parliamentary elections and the practice of formal appointments in institutionalised bureaucracy. While bureaucracy appears to be challenged in student strikes, especially in relation to the management of the university, students nevertheless place trust in other authorities, for example the Prime Minister or the Minister responsible for Higher Education, as 'authority' per se. As I suggested above, student leaders also act with the aim in mind to become Members of Parliament, and thus aim at attaining leadership roles themselves.

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These tensions and contestations, as between rival forms of authority and power ('student leaders' versus 'procedural bureaucracy') take place both in long-term processes of social change and in eruptions of social conflict in which different forms of

relating are pitted against each other in explicit ways. Contestation over forms of relating is enmeshed in processes of social differentiation of university students vis-à-vis kin and compatriots, in the way that people value education as leading towards wealth-generating employment, and in terms of the high status accorded to roles of political responsibility and leadership. In this thesis, I focus on the university as an epicentre of these processes, where citizens shape – and are shaped by – an emerging PNG national culture in the context of a global modernity. I argue, ultimately, that what becomes apparent in the contest over relations and leadership at bureaucratic institutions in PNG today, and in the construction of sociality and cultural identities that form part of manoeuvring and negotiating kin relations and forms of organisation as collective social entities at bureaucratic institutions and beyond, is how Papua New Guineans create – and consolidate – their own meaning and markers of 'modernity' (Sahlins 1992, Gaonkar 1999, cf. Englund and Leach 2000, Knauft 2002).

Method

The events and conversations described in this thesis, if not specified otherwise, derive from fieldwork between January 2013 and July 2014. Throughout most of this time, from late January 2013 to early June 2014, I resided in student accommodation at the University of Goroka. Shorter spans of time were spent at UPNG in Port Moresby, in its staff residences in January 2013, and in its student accommodation throughout most of June 2014. I have also visited students, staff, my Simbu-based adoptive family to which I got connected in my earlier times at the University of Goroka in 2010, and friends and acquaintances from these prior times in PNG, over weekends or during university breaks. Such visits brought me to places in the Western Highlands, Jiwaka, Simbu, Eastern Highlands, Morobe, Madang, the National Capital District of Port Moresby and Central Province.[4]

My small student flat at the University of Goroka was the same that I lived in when I was a student at the university throughout 2010 and early 2011. Having been my home for two and a half years in total, this flat was the single place I have lived in the longest since I completed secondary school and moved out of my German childhood home.

[4] The geographical reach of visiting student informants was limited to places that could be reached within a day travel by regular public road plus sea transport from Goroka, besides Port Moresby / Central Province, which provides a gateway stopover in and out of the country.

When I was at the university in 2010, the 'MSQ flats',[5] where my student flat was located, were a bit of an outlier to the campus infrastructure. They are located by the side of a sports field at the eastern edge of the campus and felt somewhat removed from the buzzing activity of the centre of the campus and the flow of students between their dormitories and the student mess, lecture halls, the library, and the small shop operated by the Student Representative Council known as the 'canteen' open in the evening, all these in closer proximity to each other around the heart of the campus. To reach the MSQ flats next to the sports field, one had to depart the busy heart of the university for the relatively open and wide area of a sports field that generally witnessed far less movement other than for specific recurrent activities. In the daytime, for example, the North Goroka primary school operates on the other side of the sports field, and the sports field itself is mostly used for rugby training by university teams in late afternoons until dusk sets in. The sports field and its adjacent paths were also a throughway between the university and Okiufa village further to the east of the university, where many students reside in rental accommodation, and between Goroka town and the settlements to the north of the campus, such as the one known as Down Under along a topographical fold between the hilltop plateau of Humilaveka on which the university campus is centred, and the Agopeha hill on its north.

I made numerous friends from Okiufa village and the Down Under settlement, besides students and staff from the university, and thus often had visitors calling over in evenings, checking in on me or stopping by for a chat on the way between campus or town and the village or settlements. The sports field and surroundings were not lit at night, adding to the sense of being an outlier to the campus with its otherwise lit paths. As there was not much movement after night fall, some of my international co-residents of the MSQ flats from the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu were sometimes concerned about me moving around after dark, and some fellow students suggested I take care with carrying my laptop between the busier parts of the campus and my student flat late at night. While I tried to avoid the latter, I never felt constrained in my movements even at night, especially as many of the larger campus community and its surroundings quickly came to know me or stories about me, as someone coming alone all the way from Europe to study in Goroka. This was widely appreciated and taken pride in, also arousing sympathy by many who knew the struggle that it meant for many students to

[5] MSQ originally stands for 'Married Student Quarters'. Its smaller flats, the majority, were occupied by single male students, however, sometimes shared for a general lack of dormitory space, while larger flats were also used to accommodate married international students and their children.

come to Goroka for studies, both financially and for being away from familiar surroundings and kin. Many people then passed by on a regular basis and brought me betel nuts, cigarettes, food, beer, or money, actively looking after me and ensuring my well-being as a student coming from a far-away place with no kin nearby.

I introduce these details also to give a sense of how the context of my student flat changed as I returned to Goroka in 2013. By then, additional temporary student dormitory blocks had been erected on the edge of the sports field, and another large dormitory block had its entry gates redirected to the sports field too. The sports field had also been fenced off, no longer a path or through-way, and now also well-lit at night. Closer to 2014, the fence was extended around the university perimeters in general to prevent the campus being a walking route between town and the settlements. Further, the primary school seemed to have largely increased their student intake with the national tuition-fee free education policy that a new PNG government adopted in 2012. With the campus perimeters fenced off from the slopes leading to the Down Under settlement, the increased number of primary school students used the sports field as a playground during their school breaks. All these factors also made the field a convenient location for an informal lunch-time market to cater for primary school students and the university community. In other words, by my return in 2013, the MSQ flats no longer felt like an outlier to the campus infrastructure but were now surrounded by mostly male student dormitories; they had become the centre of much more activity. On the other hand, as the MSQ was thus contained more firmly within campus confines, it was no longer an in-between space where acquaintances that were not part of the university community would stop by.

I was also provided an office space by the Division of Indigenous, Environment and Development Studies (IEDS) throughout 2013, and then at the Centre for Melanesian Studies for the first half of 2014. At IEDS, I assisted with course advising and student registration, and other mostly ad hoc tasks of support in the operation and continuing establishment of the division under a wider university restructure. Through this role, I was immersed in the university's daily operations, as much as I also became immersed in student life through my residence in student accommodation and frequenting the student mess for meals (at least initially again in 2013, before I decided that although it afforded the opportunity to socialise with students, waiting in the queue for a meal three times a day consumed too much time that I could use for other work activities). Throughout fieldwork, I partook in various activities with both students and staff.

Further, the university management permitted me to be present in regular university meetings as an observer, following further specific permissions by respective meeting or committee chairs and a general understanding about confidentiality in relation to some of the content of meeting discussions. I made use of this to experience a range of meetings that I would otherwise not have had access to, such as Faculty/School Boards, the university Senate, and the Council, the university's governing body. Attendance at such meetings was intermittent, and I made no attempt to attend such meetings systematically. While the wide access to university meetings that I was granted, even beyond what I might have hoped when I began fieldwork, might have allowed me to approach research more in terms of an institutional ethnography, I decided to stick to my focus on student trajectories and the experiences of social differentiation that attending university entails. I did, however, spend considerable time in various university meetings and committees to gain a general sense of the internal operations of the university. Importantly, this yielded insights, for example, into the functioning of the university that proved important in relation to students' protest and rejection of the university's formal 'proceduralism' that students took issue with as I describe and analyse in Chapter Ten. Meetings that I attended more regularly and systematically included those of the Student Disciplinary Committee, as well as the meetings of the Student Voice Council (at least throughout 2013). The Student Voice Council ostensibly represented the student body within the governance of the University. It had been temporarily renamed from its prior label, 'Student Representative Council', reflecting changes to its constitution aimed at preventing student leaders from using it as a platform to organise student strikes.

My renewed presence at the university provided both continuity with my earlier stay, and novel experiences. I had many acquaintances at the university and its surrounding community already, including my adoptive family in Simbu with their strong links to Goroka. Many of my earlier student acquaintances had finished their studies, and already moved on, as school teachers or otherwise. Others, who were still students warmly welcomed me back, as did many acquaintances among staff and in the villages and settlements of North Goroka and Goroka town itself. What made my return somewhat different was the frame of ethnographic research. I had already before, as a matter of principal, embraced all invitations to conversations and events I received as much as I could. The practice and methodological ambitions of ethnographic fieldwork added a further layer to this upon my return. Guided by an open ethnographic approach

to university and campus life, I became much more actively invested in trying to further relations to acquaintances I made and was generally more intent also actively to expand the number and range of my acquaintances. Quickly expanding and proliferating networks of relations led to a situation in which I became busy simply by attending to the maintenance and further deepening of relations. Many of the insights of my ethnographic fieldwork derive from the numerous entanglements in ever-expanding networks of relations that I became part of.

I mostly followed a routine of going into my university office in the morning, meeting the Head of the IEDS Division and potentially other colleagues, assisting with administrative and other tasks of different sorts, attending meetings, and conversing with colleagues, many of whom became valued friends also. I would then go with the flow of the day, which could have me going for a stroll to Goroka's main market in the afternoon or chatting with students or staff at the sale points of betel nuts and cigarettes at the bus stop outside the university gates. In the evening, I often had student friends visiting my student flat or me going to visit other students in their dormitory rooms. Certain patterns in daily movement emerged. The routine of keeping in rather continuous movement around the campus space allowed multiple interactions to occur by running into acquaintances or making new ones and allowed the observation of daily campus life.

There were also other student activities that I participated in or observed to a different extent. Important social activities among students are sports, Christian fellowships, and, less regularly, provincial student association meetings or events. I did not participate in sports at all, rugby being the most popular among students, although I could observe training sessions from the veranda of my student flat next to the sports field. Gatherings that I did attend most consistently were those of the Simbu provincial students' association. Through my Simbu 'kinship' affiliation, I was considered an integral part of the association, in contrast to other provincial student association gatherings to which I was invited occasionally, especially those of Jiwaka and Western Highlands students' associations.

I visited some Christian fellowship gatherings, such as the initial and introductory gathering of the Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship in 2013, which is the largest campus fellowship. The opening gathering of the year has a somewhat inter-denominational character, with pastors and priests of different denominations

introducing themselves. I also visited churches and fellowships on single occasions when I was prompted to by people at the University of Goroka or friends and interlocutors that I visited in their homes. Most regularly, I attended the Melpa Lutheran Students Association fellowships on Saturday evenings in 2013,[6] although this was limited to three times that I was invited for special occasions rather than as regular participant in their weekly fellowship every Saturday evening throughout semester times. I made good friends and had interlocutors from across denominations but did not follow any specific fellowship service on a regular basis.

Throughout fieldwork, I took hand-written notes throughout the day, often in the form of jot notes while attending events or in interaction, which I usually transcribed later on either of two laptops I used throughout field work – one in my university office, and one in my student flat. Having two laptops in different locations allowed me to quickly process notes and elaborate on them depending on where on campus I was by receding into my student flat or university office. I often went over these notes and added further observations, reflections, or occurrences of the day in my field diary. During certain specific periods of time, direct and visible note-taking in relation to events unfolding was impossible. This concerns the context of student strikes. Students, and especially student leaders and those taking active roles in conducting the strike, were suspicious about any indication that actions that were attributable to specific persons were documented, fearing that such documentation could be used against them in the future, especially if it would fall into the hands of university authorities.

In the second half of fieldwork, I became more selective in the events and happenings on campus that I attended or followed up on. I then started to focus on deepening interaction with a limited number of students and staff, which did not foreclose making new acquaintances and expanding the range of interlocutors or getting caught up in the flow of social interaction or campus happenings. But it was then that I did not follow the urge to continuously socialise around campus as much anymore. Rather, I placed more focus on following up with specific persons and questions that had emerged through an initial more open and all-embracing approach to fieldwork.

I held prolonged and recurrent interview sessions with 14 formally recruited participants (and another one who preferred not to have interviews audio-recorded), starting out with

[6] Melpa is a language spoken in Mount Hagen and large parts of the Western Highlands Province.

detailed life histories, and subsequent interviews around more specific themes that emerged. I also recorded topically specific interviews with six informants that I did not formally recruit as research participants, and which did not include detailed life histories. While I transcribed some of them throughout fieldwork, and some of them afterwards, I also paid for the transcription of a number of interviews conducted.

I attempted to have a spread of interlocutors and interview participants that reflected a variety of backgrounds, age, gender, programme and year of study or position at the university, to which certain important limitations, however, apply. I had, for example, much better access to interaction with male students in daily campus life than I had with female students. This reflects more general patterns of socialising in PNG, in which it is easier, and often more appropriate, to strike up a conversation to persons of the same gender. I was going with the flow of social interaction in this regard, rather than ensuring that I had a balanced number of female and male interviewees. In terms of the context and spaces that enabled regular interaction with students, this was also due to the gender-segregated student dormitories that are common across educational institutions in PNG. Male students are not permitted access to female student dormitories and vice-versa, and I was thus able to move in and out of male student dormitories to pay visits to male student acquaintances in ways I could not for acquaintances and interlocutors living in female student dormitories. It was also easier to keep chatting to male students into the night, as female student dormitories had their gates locked at 10 PM and residents not inside by then were locked out for the night.

While I did have a good number of friends, acquaintances, and interviewees among female students, the vast majority of my insights and material derives from perspectives, reflections, and experiences of male students and interlocutors. Although no similar limitations to interaction with female staff in comparison to male staff applied, women are vastly underrepresented especially in the divisions of the university I was affiliated with and with whose staff I interacted most closely. These limitations are reflected in the description and analysis of the following chapters. While I point to differences in perspectives, reflections, or experiences, based on gender where applicable, I make no attempt at systematically distinguishing experiences and reflections by female and male interlocutors and at developing them at comparable detail. This may be a limitation especially in relation to the first ethnographic section of this thesis that describes and analyses students' and staff relations to kin and sponsors. The second ethnographic section of this thesis, in contrast, deals with student politics,

which is a more exclusively male domain in PNG today, and thus makes for an explicitly gendered analysis.

Further, the context of the university as melting pot of diverse 'cultures', as Papua New Guineans themselves remarked, was prone to elicit reflections and explanations from my interlocutors that fall into the realm of 'metaculture' (Urban 2001; cf. Tomlinson 2009). In the context of the university, in which emergent reifications of provincial and regional identities are constructed and reflected upon, that in turn afford interpretations of social processes and phenomena that people at a PNG university and beyond experience themselves, it is no mere coincidence that I describe and analyse metacultural conceptualisations in this thesis.

Outline

This thesis is structured as follows. The following three chapters correspond to a review of relevant literature and theoretical discussion (Chapter Two), a chapter that sets the historical context of university education in PNG (Chapter Three), and a chapter on the setting of fieldwork and context of university education today (Chapter Four). In Chapter Two, I start out with a discussion of contemporary forms of inequality and changing forms of sociality, based on recent scholarly attention to changing relations to kin as part of processes of social stratification across rural and urban PNG today (e.g. Gewertz & Errington 1999, Martin 2013, Rasmussen 2015). I continue Chapter Two through an evaluation of recent scholarship on modern institutions in PNG, which included attention to a prison (Reed 2003) and a hospital (Street 2014), followed by explorations of an emergent national culture in PNG (Foster 2002, Golub 2014). I end Chapter Two through a brief discussion of leadership and politics in which I especially touch on the notions of big men and big shots in PNG and the scholarship on the so-called psychology of crowds.

In Chapter Three, I provide a brief account of the history of university education in PNG and the trajectory of the university sector following PNG's Independence in 1975. This includes a discussion about the specific form university planning took in PNG based on attempts to reconcile what by the Australian colonial administration were regarded as wide apart: modern development and PNG's traditional culture. Following a discussion of the early days of universities in PNG, and the dynamics unfolding after

PNG's Independence, I briefly introduce PNG's contemporary university landscape and approach a political economy of education in PNG today.

In Chapter Four, I enter into more detail of the contemporary context that provides the setting of my fieldwork. Here, I introduce the University of Goroka and its students in some more detail. I place some emphasis on the demographics of students that attend universities in PNG today, and the struggles students face in securing funding to attend universities. Following a short introduction of student and campus life at the University of Goroka, I spiral out into the town of Goroka and surrounding, the PNG highlands, and PNG as nation-state. I end Chapter Four through a short discussion of the role of Christianity at PNG universities. Through these chapters, I set the scene for the ethnographic chapters that follow.

The first section of ethnographic chapters (Chapters Five to Seven) deals with questions of exchange and cultural identity as derived from my interlocutors' relations to kin. In Chapter Five, I introduce a number of interlocutors and their life histories. In Chapter Six, I analyse the reflections and experiences recounted by my interlocutors in more detail. Based on my interlocutors' reflections and my own observations, I formulate a systematic understanding of cultural differences between different parts of the PNG highlands based on varying practices of exchange and underlying sensibilities of reciprocity. In Chapter Seven, I take a different analytical approach to these differences. Here I discuss the reification of these differences in the form of cultural identities based on regions and especially provinces in PNG today.

Chapters Six and Seven thus take two analytical entry points to the material of students' and wage earners' relations to kin, which allow for the formulation of different respective arguments that could represent two opposed poles in anthropological or public debates about the understanding of these observations. Does the rhetoric about differences in practices of exchange and sensibilities about reciprocal relations actually correspond to long-standing differences of culture, or are these differences exaggerated in a process of an ongoing constitution of distinct cultural identities? I suggest that both is the case, and that we best understand the interaction between existing cultural difference and the constitution and consolidation of cultural identities as a dialogic process in articulation with other contemporary processes in PNG today.

In the second ethnographic section (Chapters Eight to Ten), I focus on a student strike towards exploring questions about politics and leadership ideologies in PNG today. In Chapter Eight, I provide a chronology of the student strike as it could be observed at the university through its public face. In Chapter Nine, I analyse the internal dynamics among students and the mobilisation for the student strike in more detail, suggesting that strike leaders sought to prove their leadership capacity in preparation for contesting national elections by leading a strike through the clever manipulation of collective dynamics such as described in the literature on the psychology of crowds. In Chapter Ten, in turn, I take a different analytical emphasis for understanding students' approach to the strike by situating it in a larger context of politics at the university. In contrast to the previous chapter, in which I analyse the strike as a cynical pretence to fight corruption for the strike leader's personal political ambitions, in Chapter Ten, I detail the common experience and frustrations of students and staff at the public institution of the university and the context that makes a strike the most promising avenue for students' recognition.

Here again, the distinct analytical frames I apply to the student strike could be separately read as corresponding to two respective common evaluations of the student strikes observed in PNG. On one hand, parts of the PNG public and observers dismissed the student strikes at the University of Goroka by pointing to the way a few student leaders held the university and the rest of students at ransom for the sake of their own ambitions for a political career. This criticism was regularly countered, on the other hand, by positive commentary of the strike as necessary protest of students that was without alternative in mounting real pressure on authorities to address the perceived dire state of public institutions such as the University of Goroka. Again, through my choice of analytical frames in Chapters Nine and Ten respectively, I intend to demonstrate how different perspectives that were or could be taken as opposed to each other in public debate are in fact complementary for understanding student strikes, politics, and struggles for leadership and authority in PNG today.

Chapter Two - Literature and Theoretical Approach

New Forms of Inequality and Changing Sociality

John Cox (2014) recently warned anthropologists not to overlook PNG's emergent middle class of educated urban wage-earners. He argued that this emerging 'class', if we like to call it that, should be set alongside the common rhetorical opposition drawn between the country's majority of poor 'grassroots' villagers and urban settlers and the country's national 'elite'. Against common application of the term 'elite' to anyone who completed secondary education, or who has been admitted to university – something I commonly heard at the University of Goroka – Cox makes the case that the growing stratum of wage-earning Papua New Guineans that struggle to make ends meet, and who often maintain a firm commitment to poorer kin, are inadequately labelled 'elite' in analytical terms. The national 'elite' proper, he suggests, is rather constituted by networks of senior public servants, politicians or business elites, who have little in common with an emerging educated wage-earning class in PNG. While many students are aspiring to constitute the country's future elite, guided by common hopes and rhetorically reinforced expectations, there are few realistic pathways to achieve this for most university students today. By conflating those who attain secondary or tertiary education with the country's 'elite', one risks masking one of the most dynamic social processes that is taking place and increasingly shaping PNG today: the consolidation of a stratum of wage-earning professionals and their relating to 'grassroots' and 'elites' proper. In this thesis, I am focusing on this emerging class in-between or 'not yet', those that through higher education have a plausible hope to one day earn a wage, but who have not yet achieved the status of the elites with whom they may aspirationally identify.

Several anthropological studies explore emerging forms of inequality and social stratification in PNG. Among them, Gewertz and Errington first addressed these dynamics at length in *Emerging class in Papua New Guinea: The Telling of Difference* (1999). They describe relations between better situated Papua New Guineans in Wewak, the capital and major town of East Sepik Province, and less privileged kinsfolk. They draw attention, for example, to the way members of the Wewak Rotary Club manoeuvre, and reflect on, requests from kinsfolk. Wewak Rotarians conveyed a need to regulate demands from kin for financial assistance, as attending to every single one of these demands would inevitably lead to financial ruin (1999:29). The need to limit or to

avoid some of these demands is accompanied by a rhetoric that emphasises individual responsibility, both their own and those of kin in need. Gewertz & Errington analyse this moral sensibility in relation to Christian conceptions of the individual and the nuclear family, and in relation to the ideology of neoliberal structural adjustment that gained prominence in PNG's political landscape following a bailout by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund after a fiscal crisis in 1994. Gewertz & Errington thus demonstrate how the process of social differentiation, in terms of an increasing inequality between the relatively rich and the relatively poor, led to processes in which more affluent people developed ideologies that helped justify dismissing the requests of kin in need. These kin were seen to be caught or stuck in 'traditional' and more 'collective' modes of life, whereas the affluent imagined themselves as having embraced a 'modern', and in their own view more 'reasonable', way of life: a way of life afforded by personal qualities such as individual responsibility, hard work, economising, and 'discipline'.

More recently, Keir Martin (2013) and Anders Emil Rasmussen (2015) have written about social, economic and political differentiation in the New Guinea Islands region. Like Gewertz & Errington, Martin (2013) draws attention to tensions between the idea of the nuclear family and obligations to extended kin, cast here as a tension between reciprocal 'interdependence' and increasing assertions of 'independence' (cf. Gregory 1982). More closely corresponding to my own observations among students and staff at the University of Goroka, Martin describes this tension as a moral dilemma that accompanies the new kinds of sociality associated with the emergence of an indigenous elite. This is not so much a tension between 'customary' or 'westernised' ways of relating. Rather, as Martin shows, often the same relationships come to embody opposite ethical values simultaneously (2013:71,107) that may parallel the tension described by my interlocutor Thomas above between the ideas of 'isolating oneself' with a focus on the nuclear family and reciprocal relations to a wider community, which are constantly and actively negotiated in every act of relating.

Martin illustrates this through the shifting and apparently contradictory moral evaluations of Tolai *kastom*, which can signify mutual aid but is also at times regarded as rhetorical veil for what the better-off perceive as harassment by kin. To look after one's nuclear family first, before meeting obligations to wider kin, may thus be dually regarded as acting in a 'responsible' or in a 'selfish' way by different people or in different circumstances depending on perspective, as I also illustrated already with my

discussion of Thomas' relating to kin. The emphasis of either perspective corresponds to different class positions (Martin 2013:146). Those of Martin's informants that are financially independent through wages, for example, advocate for a separation of *kastom* ritual from day-to-day reciprocal life. Those relying on webs of reciprocal interdependence, on the other hand, regard *kastom* ritual and day-to-day reciprocal relations as conceptually inseparable. There appears, then, a process to be under way in which the category of *kastom* is becoming conceptually separated from 'relations' or 'reciprocity' *per se*.

Martin analyses the emergent indigenous elite in East New Britain through the category of the 'Big Shot', as they are dubbed locally (and elsewhere in PNG, see for example (Hammar 1999). In distinction to the figure of the 'Big Man', who fomented their roles of leadership through the redistribution of wealth, 'Big Shots' are characterised by the perception that they tend to evade redistribution to kin by holding on to resources. Less well-off kin (dubbed 'grassroots'), dispute the moral legitimacy of Big Shots who are fending off their requests for assistance. Grassroots underline their claims through stories about how the standing of a Big Shot himself was only made possible through the reciprocal interdependence in which a person was brought up. The perceived failure to acknowledge this appropriately is often articulated through accusations of 'corruption' against Big Shots. Martin states that he 'soon came to recognise these accusations as often being more about the moral legitimacy of how Big Shots transacted with their relatives, than as being descriptions of actual legal crimes' (2013:141). Martin is careful to add that this should not be perceived as the result of Big Shots' moral character, but that it rather speaks to a dilemma so-called Big Shots face in manoeuvring their own social position in ever changing networks of social relations. This also resonates with how students framed their allegations of 'corruption' against the university management at the University of Goroka through a strike in 2013, seemingly making a stronger claim about feeling inappropriately related to and questioning management priorities and decision-making, as illegitimate, rather than drawing attention to instances of corruption in the sense of illegal dealings. Alice Street (2014) made similar observations in relation to a strike of hospital workers, which I will return to below.

Those dubbed Big Shots in turn showed themselves to be disgruntled by the demands of extended kin. The demands of youngsters – demands as in expressing a sense of entitlement that could be given force through threats of anger or even violence in

distinction to what could be deemed a respectful request – seemed to Big Shots resembling a 'one-way-street' rather than based on a reciprocal relation and obligation. This means demands were made without showing reciprocal assistance in return, but even using threats of violence to enforce demands on wealthier kin, almost resembling extortion (Martin 2013:166-167). This is a different image to that of the Big Man, whose status relies on not antagonising kin, but organising kin and followers into productive exchange relationships (183-184, cf. Sahlins 1963, Burridge 1975, Robbins 2004). The power and leadership authority of a Big Man relied on the support of others. Big Shots, instead, are characterised by a relative independence from kin and wider networks to maintain their status, which is more often supported by formal employment or business activity. The preservation of their status rather depends on being able to resist kin than on being able to recruit them to one's projects (as in bigmanship). Martin presents this as a moral dilemma coinciding with the 'possessive individualism' that plays an increasing role shaping social stratification in contemporary PNG. While those referred to as Big Shots see it as their moral obligation carefully to look after their possessions and nuclear family, grassroot villagers instead perceive that those in a better position are fundamentally obliged to them, which Big Shots fail to acknowledge appropriately.

Rasmussen (2015) presents similar issues in relation to Mbuke Island in Manus Province, where he studied relations between Mbuke Islanders and their more affluent kin in urban centres such as the Manus provincial capital of Lorengau, the national capital Port Moresby, or Australian cities such as Sydney. Like Martin, Rasmussen does not analyse an emergent individualism as radical rupture, but rather as a constantly negotiated process, and what this process means for the transformation of notions of personhood and sociality in contemporary PNG. A central question Rasmussen explores is what kin or Mbuke Islanders in general can expect from others, and how these expectations elicit a sense of 'community'. Whereas Martin mostly describes relations between differently situated kin in relative geographical proximity that includes higher chances of face-to-face contact and therefore more frequent requests, and possibly more frequent refusals, Rasmussen especially deals with remittances from kin at a greater distance. Resonating with Martin's analysis, however, Rasmussen describes instances in which perceived moral obligations are at the centre of giving, or 'demand-sharing', rather than reciprocal gift-giving. Rasmussen draws on Sahlins' notion of a 'generalised reciprocity' (Sahlins 1972:194), where giving does not generate a counter-obligation, but is rather part of an infinite expectation of reciprocity in terms of redistribution to kin

to which one is obliged. The moral obligation to share, Rasmussen argues for Mbuke Islanders, 'is not generated by previous sharing; nor is it primarily motivated by the hope for future reciprocation' (2015:5). Instead, people feel obliged to share to maintain their status and to be recognised by kin back home, both in terms of thinking forward to a future of potentially settling back on Mbuke, and for the fear that not sharing may afflict misfortune in their lives and careers through curses by kin.

The accounts of Gewertz & Errington (1999), Martin (2013), and Rasmussen (2015), resonate with each other in terms of the kinds of (moral) dilemmas that are experienced by those better off as result of new forms of social stratification in PNG. They illustrate transformations in the way persons, and relations among them, are conceived in PNG today. In my discussion of their works here, I have remained on a rather general level about their shared aspects. At such a general level, it seems appropriate to suggest that the dilemmas they describe apply widely in PNG today. In this thesis, I contribute to the scholarship on changes of sociality correlated with emergent forms of social stratification and inequality in two principal ways.

Firstly, I focus on the processes of becoming that take place in the liminal space between the subject positions of 'grassroots' and an emerging wage-earning class – more so than in a dichotomy between 'grassroots' and 'elite' (cf. Cox 2014). Rather than analysing the ways in which established subject positions of 'grassroots', urban wage-earners, or 'Big Shots', are navigated and negotiated as positions of already established social stratification, I place stronger emphasis on the reflexive ideas and practices of university students who find themselves in a transition between subject positions. Many of my student interlocutors saw themselves as moving into a different social position through the educational certification that will enable waged employment, and thus towards a socially stratified position that is not yet achieved. In this thesis, I call this process 'differentiation'. The sense of 'differentiation' I employ is not limited to a Durkheimian sociological process of division of labour, nor only a Weberian conception of 'status,' but also to refer to an individuated process of negotiating one's own subject position and social relations in a shifting space of social stratification.

Secondly, I analyse distinct characteristics of this process of differentiation for persons from different backgrounds in PNG, especially in terms of regional provenance and identity that is increasingly reified as 'cultural' or even 'ethnic' among Papua New Guineans. Such reified regional and provincial cultural identities draw on the notion of

distinct sensibilities surrounding exchange and reciprocity. Martin and Rasmussen, for example, describe in detail the kinds of moral dilemmas that are negotiated as part of new forms of social stratification in relation to specifically localised settings. I add to the literature on these phenomena and processes, and I place further emphasis on the regional or cultural distinctiveness Papua New Guineans attribute to the sensibilities shaping these dilemmas. Many of these experiences and dilemmas of social differentiation are common across PNG and potentially speak to the formation of an emergent national realm, as I will discuss further below. There are, however, as I have already hinted above in respect of different parts of the PNG highlands, also very different perceptions and actual outcomes of what these processes of social differentiation entail for persons. These differences, moreover, increasingly become a part of explicit evaluations and discussions among Papua New Guineans today, especially at the national institution of a university. In public rhetoric, this can become, for example, the reification of regional or provincial 'culture' based on supposedly different sensibilities around notions of exchange and reciprocity, including the articulation of stereotypes based on these reifications.

The Modern 'Institution' in Melanesia - Shared Phenomena & Varied Experiences

Over the last decades, Melanesian anthropology has accorded increasing attention to modern urban 'institutions' in PNG. Notable work in this realm has been contributed by Adam Reed (2003) on PNG's national high security Bomana prison outside the capital Port Moresby, and more recently through Alice Street's (2014) work on a public hospital in Madang. Though the present thesis has a less systematic 'institutional' focus, it is nevertheless an ethnography that is fundamentally placed at another kind of national public institution, a university, and that contributes to themes and discussions that Reed and Street initiated in relation to Melanesian anthropology.

Both Reed and Street deal especially with the 'visibility' of persons as an idiom through which to think about the appropriate forms that relations take in different settings. Relations between prison warders and prisoners, or doctors and patients, or managers and workers, or (in abstraction) between institutions and the state that funds them, are analysed in terms of a kind of mutual recognition that is entailed. How do actors 'see' each other, and what kinds of action does mutual recognition oblige (cf. Bashkow 2006). While Reed and Street work through a similar analytic lens of visibility, connected to Marilyn Strathern's (1988) notion of 'form' that things or persons have to

take to be recognised, their respective arguments about visibility differ based on the institutions they work on.

Reed's historical and ethnographic research on Port Moresby's Bomana prison invites a discussion of Foucault's writings on discipline and panopticism, and thus notions of visibility (2003:109, cf. Foucault 1977). For both the colonial and the post-colonial state, the prison is a centre piece in the creation of disciplined subjects through mechanisms of surveillance. In an important sense, the prison is characterised as an institution of the state that relies on technologies of seeing and surveillance, to make persons 'visible', so as to instil discipline in persons in the formation of a modern society. The constraints of the prison are met by prisoners' acts of concealing – the visibility of their bodies to warders and fellow inmates, or the connection to relations and places outside prison – and new relationships emerge and become visible in the prison.

In contrast to Reed's work that postulates the importance of the state to make persons visible, Street's (2014) ethnography of Madang hospital stresses the work that persons perform to make themselves visible to others and to the state, to gain 'recognition' of a kind. In other words, Street describes the opposite process at the current juncture of nation-building and the functioning of PNG's post-colonial institutions. Here, in the hospital, it is not the state, or those with power over others such as doctors or nurses, that seek to make visible the patient through technologies of surveillance that would allow diagnosis and impose a disciplinary regime towards patients' recovery, a la Foucaultian notions of the hospital as disciplinary institution. Rather, persons in the hospital struggle to make themselves visible in order to be seen by nurses, doctors, and the state. As much as patients struggle to make themselves and their illness legible and attended to by hospital staff, so do nurses seek recognition of their work by doctors and the hospital management. The institution of the hospital as such does not seem to be a means of the state to extend its reach over society, the hospital rather equally struggles to make itself seen by the state, and donor agencies, so as to be recognised for its service, and to be allocated the resources that enable the performance of its functions.

Both of these perspectives, by Reed on the prison and by Street on the hospital, resonate with my observations of the university as an institution. To some extent, the university is also a kind of disciplinary institution – and Reed's interlocutors at the prison themselves compared the disciplinary routines of the prison to boarding schools they

had attended (2003:109). The university works hard to instil a sense of discipline in students for adhering to campus and dormitory regulations. While this of course does not compare to the kind of disciplinary and surveillance regime of a prison, some persons at the University of Goroka in fact likened the university to a prison. Apart from such broad resonance across disciplinary institutions, Street's analysis resonates on different levels with both the specific characteristics of the university and the context of national public institutions in PNG at large. On a general level, all national public institutions in PNG attempt to increase their visibility to the national government and other actors, in order to have their service and importance recognised and be accounted for accordingly in the allocation of a sparse government budget. On a more specific level of interactions and relations among different persons at the university, similar phenomena to those described by Street for the hospital may be expected, as I will touch on in Chapter Ten of this thesis: students struggle to compel recognition by teaching staff; academic and non-academic staff struggle to make their efforts and commitment, under challenging conditions, noticed and appreciated by the management; and the university management is preoccupied by pitching the university's services and successes to the government for seeking the funds to enable its continued operation and expansion.

One specific example of how the search for recognition operates in the hospital is provided through a strike of nursing staff that Street describes. Nurses in PNG, like university students, are notorious for strikes, and in Madang took strike action in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, and 2013 (Street 2014:184). As in student strikes, nurse leaders took issue with the hospital CEO's 'management style' (184), and thus in loud speeches and chanting demanded that he be sacked and challenging him to come to 'speak to his staff directly' (185). The CEO, rather than giving in to either demand, issued numerous memos to staff. Nurses in return collected letters, testimonials and memos for a collated document intended to demonstrate the CEO's 'bad leadership' (185). The document detailed vague accusations of financial mismanagement for personal gain, an allegedly illegal patient fee hike to facilitate personal benefits and questioned his authority for what nurses claimed was a flawed process of appointment, including the hiring of his administrative support staff, which bore no legitimacy for authority over nurses.

The terminology used by nurses, such as 'undemocratic leadership', 'poor governance', and 'a lack of transparency', resemble the rhetoric employed by students in their strike, as do the forms of action and content of communication more generally, as I describe

and analyse in Chapters Eight to Ten. The document collated by nurses, for example, also resembles student petitions in form and purpose, being treated as quasi-legal evidence that make protestors confident that its contents can only lead to the dismissal of their CEO or Vice-Chancellor, respectively. Administrative hospital staff, comparable to the response of senior university staff and managers to students, rejected such claims and instead insisted that nurses fail to understand modern institutional management. Street, however, analyses the nurses' goal as 'less about forcing hospital managers to conform to norms of international management than to provoke a response by which the nurses knew that they had been recognised by those managers as persons of equivalent value' (188). Further, for the nurses' strike leader, it 'was important to show the management that the nurses were a single body (*wanbel)* with a single agenda (*wanpela tingting*)', and the nurses' demonstration provided 'an image of the nurses as a single unified force' (190). This description resonates in both its broad strokes and its specific details with student strikes that I will describe in this thesis. This leads me to analyse them also as a manifestation of an emergent national culture surrounding politics and ideas of leadership in and across PNG today. I will return to questions of both 'national culture', as I employ the term here, and 'leadership' below.

Here, however, I first look at another aspect of the research on national institutions in PNG by Reed and Street, to point to a specific limitation I perceive in their respective work. This concerns the existing differences between persons at national institutions. Besides the emergence of shared imaginaries of politics, notions of leadership, and other realms, which are brought about and fostered at national institutions in PNG, people's navigation of their life-worlds as guided by specific sets of relations to kin that come with their respective sensibilities and practices surrounding reciprocity and exchange should not be neglected as an element that provides for significant differences in individual experiences of a waged employee, a student, or otherwise, in national institutions in PNG today. This is an area that comes up short in the work of Reed and Street, where persons appear to be concerned or guided by varying but profusely generic 'Melanesian' constraints. Such a perceived shortcoming may be linked to the methodological limitations of research carried out at urban institutions alone, I suspect, without accompanying research on the individual life-worlds of persons in these institutions, for example by spending significant amounts of time with them outside the context of institutional relations, but within the context of personal kin relations and wider networks that stretch between urban and rural areas. In these terms, I took a partly different approach to the ethnographic study of experiences of university students and

staff, placing more emphasis on people's personal life-worlds and experiences in relation to kin rather than making the institution of the university itself the exclusive focus of my study.

In Street's work this perceived shortcoming specifically manifests in examples provided about hospital doctors relating back to kin. Street provides the example of a hospital doctor from Enga (2014:162), who sees payments he does to kin at home in terms of investments into projects and people. Such transactions are thus specific events, and as such may constitute one-off transactions that conform to specific notions of reciprocity and exchange. As I will argue through my analysis, such practices of reciprocity and exchange seem to be a characteristic form of relating back to kin for people from these parts of the PNG highlands. Street provides another example of a different doctor at the hospital who instead recurrently sends a part of his fortnightly salary to kin back home. Street unfortunately does not specify where in PNG his kin are based. While such interpretations always need to be done with care and are no ultimate determinant to people's practices, I suspect that this other doctor may be associated with an area in PNG where sensibilities and practices around reciprocity and exchange follow more a pattern of redistribution that aims at the repeated levelling of wealth between this specific doctor and his kin. The doctor from Enga, I would suggest, may be less bound by such expectations of constant redistribution to kin at home but rather participates in practices of reciprocity and exchange that conform to cycles of reciprocal and specific investments modelled on the Enga *tee* exchange system (Meggit 1974, Feil 1985, Wiessner 1998).

Besides the emergence of a shared intersubjective realm at national institutions in PNG today, I suggest that it is important to apply more rigorous analysis as well to the varied ways people in PNG's national institutions subjectively experience their own trajectory and relations to kin back home very differently from one another. I will exemplify such varied experiences for university staff and students in Chapters Five and Six. At the same time, I analyse how the different sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and exchange underlying such different experiences increasingly shape a cultural politics of difference in respect of distinct regional and provincial identities and emergent stereotypy around them. While one has thus to be cautious to not take the ascribed differences as a static or accurate reality, the cultural politics of difference that they give rise to is another element that is shaping a rhetoric and understanding that is also constitutive of PNG's emergent national realm today (cf. Golub 2014:160-207).

Reed similarly draws on perspectives of informants that are presented as generally shared by prisoners in a way that may not do justice to the varied sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and exchange that people from different parts of PNG often hold. For example, Reed discusses how prisoners criticise what they call 'businessmen' (2003:171), who distinguish themselves by their refusal to meet obligations to kin but rather accumulate wealth. These 'businessmen' are further characterised by their generous voluntary contributions to large-scale celebrations but that they cannot seem to be coerced into actions of giving outside such contributions to large-scale celebrations. Again, my critique of such descriptions and analysis is that it may fall short of different perspectives among Papua New Guineans themselves. What Reed describes, for example, resonates with the critique of 'businessmen' I recorded in the Eastern Highlands, Simbu, and Jiwaka, for example, including the Big Shots in East New Britain who Martin (2013) describes, but contrasts to the perspectives I heard voiced from persons proclaiming an identification with the Western Highlands, parts of Enga or the Southern Highlands. As I will detail in Chapters Six and Seven, there may be significant differences in these perspectives depending on whom one speaks to, and a shortcoming or methodological limitation of ethnographies of national institutions of PNG to date is that they represent the persons in them too much as something like 'generic Melanesians', masking differences of perspective that they themselves see as important, and that taken together index an important quality of PNG's national culture: its reflexively recognised diversity.

The Emergent 'Culture' of a National Realm in PNG

In this thesis, I add to the growing body of research on modern institutions in PNG, and thus also to an understanding of the commonalities of phenomena observed across them. The resonances and resemblances of Street's observations at the Madang hospital with my observations at the University of Goroka detailed in Chapters Eight to Ten on student politics, for example, allow for distilling common elements that seem to point to more general characteristics in hierarchical relations, politics, and leadership, in public institutions in PNG. These, I suggest, and besides other phenomena, amount to a consolidating 'national culture' in PNG. By 'national culture' I do not refer to a nationalist vision that lends itself to a rhetoric of national identification in terms of a distinction or exclusion of others perceived as 'foreign'. Rather, by 'national culture' I refer to a generative intersubjective realm in which shared understandings and

comparable practices emerge across PNG, as exemplified in this case at its national institutions. Such an analysis and conceptual terminology leans on the common rhetoric of 'nation-building' in PNG.

Political rhetoric in and beyond PNG often seems to imply a historical and contemporary perspective of PNG as made up of numerous distinct communities and languages that are perpetually difficult to bring together under a single nation-state. This manifests in rhetorical reminders of those working in national institutions, such as the university, for people to conduct themselves as responsible citizens of the 'modern' nation-state rather than foster parochial divisions or interests based on regions, provinces, or personal '*wantok*' networks (see Schram 2015). I suggest that there are social and cultural dynamics observable that indicate a certain 'materialisation' (cf. Foster 2002) of the nation through shared imaginaries and practices, such as institutional and national politics that follow similar patterns across PNG, leading into what Golub calls a 'cultural nationalism' (2014:161).

In broadening the scope of my analysis from specific ethnographic instances and their analytical synthesis to making claims about what I suggest represents a consolidating national culture in PNG, I enter a realm of phenomena in PNG that has received little scholarly attention so far, with some notable exceptions. A landmark work on emergent national culture in PNG is Robert Foster's *Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption and Media in Papua New Guinea* (2002). A more recent contribution is provided by Alex Golub in *Leviathans at the Gold Mine: Creating Indigenous and Corporate Actors in Papua New Guinea* (2014:160-207). Both Foster and Golub draw attention to some recurrent themes in the exegesis of a national culture in PNG. Among them is Christianity, which was tightly interlinked with the operation of education and health services provided by various missionary organisations, preceding and for long exceeding the provision of such services by the state, colonial and post-colonial. Christianity is thus also firmly associated with development and modernity in PNG (Robbins 2004, cf. Keane 2007).

Another element that has become a ubiquitous reference of emblematic quality of PNG as a nation and its national culture is the '*wantok* system' (*wantok sistem*) (cf. Schram 2015). '*Wantok*', deriving from 'one talk', literally refers to a person with the same mother tongue. It is colloquially used today to refer to anyone with whom one can a claim a relation of proximity through language, natal place or province, as fellow Papua

New Guinean or Melanesian when outside the country, or otherwise mutually established relation by acquaintance, for example co-workers, classmates, or belonging to the same Christian congregation. The so-called '*wantok sistem*' that refers to relations of mutual solidarity and obligation, including and beyond kinship, is both a valued source of solidarity and commonly derided for facilitating corruption where state services, employment offers, and the award of contracts are suspected to follow 'wantok' relations rather than bureaucratic process.

Foster (2002) especially looks at the materialisation of the nation in PNG through people's everyday experiences and engagement with, for example, money in the form of national currency, mass media, and capitalist commercial culture, such as the advertisement of brands and products marketed to a Papua New Guinean audience. For Foster, these are important phenomena to look at for understanding people's engagement with and construction of a national culture, especially in the absence of a strong state. Foster suggests that the state has no monopoly on the production and circulation of narratives of the nation. As such, he provides ethnographic analyses of engagement with different forms of media that point to frames of reference of commonly shared intelligibility as the cornerstones of a national culture. Foster is, in his own words, 'proposing a way of thinking about the emergence of the nation in PNG neither as the gradual acculturation of people to a set of shared, univocal symbols nor as the coming into being of a project in Us/Them contrasts between political communities […] instead, what I am arguing for is recognition of the various means by which the nation enters into the daily lives of ordinary people as a frame of reference for thinking and acting reflexively' (2002:17-18).

Golub (2014:160-207), in turn, traces the particular configurations of dynamics and rhetoric that accompanied the emergence of and trajectory of PNG as a nation since its Independence in 1975. Golub illuminates the tension between notions of development and tradition that shaped and continues to inform debate in PNG's national realm to date (which I will return to in more detail in the next chapter in relation to higher education development in PNG). Debate about PNG as a nation relies on a commonly evoked imagery of an innocent 'grassroots' majority that is either living unfazed by urban development or is being betrayed by it. Whichever way the rhetoric and moral evaluation of the country's so-called 'grassroots' population goes, whether as authentic and unspoiled, or as underdeveloped and ignorant, 'tradition' and 'development', or 'culture' and 'modernity', are often presented and evoked as mutually incompatible

concepts. As Golub notes, the PNG national project displays desire for both 'tradition' and 'development', while a common, morally-inflected imagination sustains the constitutive difference between them.

Golub's analysis conveys this moral imagination as a basic set of ideas in PNG that are tantamount to a national ideology. In this thesis, I am not going to deepen this particular set of ideological constructs that Golub discusses in detail in his book. Rather, I add other elements to the description of national ideology and culture in PNG that I suggest have become consolidated over the years. On one hand, this corresponds to what Foster (2002:16) refers to as a dialectic of nation-making and the production of locality. For example, in what could appear as a paradox, I illustrate such a dialectic through the way PNG national culture is highly preoccupied with segmentary and antagonistic schemes of so-called 'ethnic' identities, such as coastal (nambis) and highlanders (hailans), or identities linked to specific provinces. These identities draw on – and reproduce – apparent 'cultural' or 'regional' differences and are normatively stereotyped as either positive or negative depending on perspective (see Chapters Six and Seven). These constructs also relate to shared ideas about leadership, and the tactics and strategies of collective mobilisation ostensibly required for demonstrating effective leadership, which I develop further below.

In this thesis, I thus also illustrate debates about 'culture' and its reflexive reification in metacultural comparison that resonate with anthropological scholarship in other parts of Melanesia (Tomlinson 2009; cf. Urban 2001) and beyond (Handler 1988). Whereas Matt Tomlinson (2009) explores the metacultural politics of Fijians who are lamenting and seeking to recuperate what they perceive as qualities and strengths their ancestors held that are now lost, Richard Handler's (1988) study of Quebecois nationalism more specifically presents analogies to my exploration of the construction of sub-national identities based on the reification of culture. Handler later commented in relation to the concept of culture at play that 'Quebecois culture […] was a culture of objectifying national culture' (2002:32), which corresponds to the metacultural politics I explore, with the difference that the construction of regional and provincial cultural identities I describe in relation to PNG are not motivated by a struggle for national independence. While I do not further develop the comparative discussion of concepts of 'culture' at play, and such metacultural politics in relation to other settings, the exploration of the conceptualisation and use of the concept of 'culture' in Papua New Guinea today does add potential insights for comparative analyses and the trajectory of uses of the 'culture'

concept in popular and academic discourse. Attention to questions such as the reification of regional or ethnic cultural differences and the creation of new forms of national culture and cultural politics, for example, equally feeds into debates on the concept of culture beyond Melanesia and anthropology (see for example Bennett 2013, Mulhern 2000).

Contested Forms of Politics, Leadership, and Social Order

'Leadership' has been a longstanding category of analysis in Melanesian and Pacific anthropology. The figure of the 'Big Man', for example, drew attention in scholarly debates at least since Marshall Sahlins articulated the distinction between Melanesian 'Big Men' and Polynesian 'Chiefs' in 1963. For Sahlins, the diverse polities of New Guinea, with political structures relatively small in scale, were exemplary of 'Big Men' leadership styles, and exhibited their putative 'short comings'. For example, Big Men polities were shifting and unstable. In these, it was for men to create their own position of leadership by establishing followers whose loyalty needs to be continuously reinforced (cf. Read 1965). The leadership of Big Men, then, has been characterised as being about the performance of leadership with uncertain efficacy. Chiefs in contrast, over in Polynesia, were in a position of ascribed authority inherited through descent.

These broad strokes characterised the figure of the Big Man as standing for political orders in Melanesia, and especially New Guinea. Leadership and the Big Man since became a staple of anthropological analysis (see for example Chowning 1979, A. Strathern 1982, Allen 1984, Lindstrom 1984, Lederman 1990, Godelier & Strathern 1991, White & Lindstrom 1977, Martin 2013). In the volume *Big Men and Great Men: Personifications of Power in Melanesia*, edited by Maurice Godelier and Marilyn Strathern (1991), for example, closer ethnographic attention to leadership questioned the broad strokes of axes of differentiation and comparison. This concerned, firstly, Sahlin's axis of distinction between Melanesia and Polynesia, but it also concerned characterisations of more local variations such as that between 'Big Men' and 'Great Men' (Godelier 1987), and differences across the New Guinea highlands, lowlands, and other Melanesian island societies. As the contributions to Godelier & Strathern's volume demonstrate, no such distinction really provides a satisfactory framework for ethnographic synthesis of forms of leadership. Both the ethnographic evidence of local variations within conceptually bounded geographical spaces, and unexpected

similarities across these areas, complicated the articulation of typologies and called for new approaches to supra-local synthesis.

In this thesis, I take a different angle to the question of leadership in Melanesia, or Papua New Guinea more specifically. The breadth of variation of ideologies, systems, and potential typologies of leadership within PNG is without question. It is also without question that the varied forms of leadership are entangled in processes of change that articulate in equally diverse ways with shifting local, regional, and broader contexts, such as illustrated through Martin's work on Big Shots as an emergent leadership category in PNG (2013). These analyses have remained firmly embedded in ethnographic locality. I instead explore changing notions of leadership in a different kind of 'locality', namely those emerging in national institutions such as the university. At the same time, the ways in which notions of 'leadership' become contested resonate with the rhetoric and dilemmas Papua New Guineans voice and experience when it comes to increasing social differentiation and stratification. Namely, they problematise Melanesian sensibilities about appropriate ways of relating and recognising other agents through specific acts vis-à-vis emerging forms of institutional leadership that are ostensibly based on abstract bureaucratic principles rather than on putatively 'traditional' Melanesian ones.

These contests over forms of leadership, besides their grounding in Melanesian sensibilities of relating, also resonate with Max Weber's distinction of types of authority (2013 [1956]). Weber distinguished between three types of authority that derive their legitimacy from different grounds, such as rational grounds in legal or bureaucratic authority, traditional grounds in traditional authority, and charismatic grounds in charismatic authority. While these are ideal types, contests over forms of leadership and types of authority between students and the university management at the University of Goroka resonate with Weber's distinction of types of authority. While student leaders may rhetorically mobilise Melanesian and thus putatively 'traditional' forms of relating in contrast to the bureaucratic management by university administrators, student leaders' efficacy in mobilising fellow students and challenging the institutional hierarchy and authority appears more fundamentally based on charismatic grounds of authority. Whereas Weber describes the legal authority of putatively rational bureaucratic leadership as 'resting on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands' (2013:215), he characterises charismatic leadership as 'resting on devotion

to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him' (2013:215). As becomes apparent in Chapters Eight to Ten, without making these Weberian distinctions a central tenet of my analysis, the types of leadership represented by student leaders and university administrators, respectively, resonate rather well with Weber's distinction between charismatic and bureaucratic leadership.

What is contested in evaluations of different forms of politics and leadership – such as those that revolve around notions of individual responsibility vis-à-vis a rule-governed institutional realm, on one hand, and the achievement of collective mobilisation and efficacy in antagonism to other agents driven by charismatic leaders, on the other – is nothing less than competing frameworks of social order. This at least is the direction to which the struggles for legitimacy between student leaders and university managers point, and which I analyse in more detail. What appears to underlie these competing narratives, of bringing about social order through effective forms of leadership, are competing ideas about 'society' and the appropriate form of social relations in the constitution of social 'actors' beyond kinship and clanship. In university managers' orientation towards an abstract institutional realm of society that is governed by reason, allegedly, we also find the familiar Durkheimian conception of 'society', and a narrative that universalises a certain kind of European modernity. In contrast, student enthusiasm for achieving unity in collective mobilisations that disregard or disrupt established institutional orders, evoke the long shadow that the threat to social order represented by the concept of the 'crowd' has cast over European social theory. University managers and other observers, for example, were quick to dismiss the student strike in 2013 as based on 'emotion', in supposed contradistinction to 'reason', thus echoing longstanding narratives in social thought that, at the same time, may be regarded foundational to ideological conceptions of 'modern' society (and its governance and control).

The phenomenon of emergent collectivities that follow their own dynamics in unpredictable ways, and the fear thereof, was a guiding concern of early sociological thought, as for example in writings about 'crowds' by Gabriel Tarde (1890, cf. Le Bon 1895). Such phenomena were later taken up by Durkheim, although in different contexts and without directly addressing the scholarship associated with Tarde, under the notion of collective 'effervescence' in religious practice, and its significance for social groups (1912; cf. Borch 2013). Mazzarella (2010a, 2010b), more recently, picked

up these threads again, arguing for closer attention to how ‘affect’, a semi-conscious or pre-reflexive process of interpersonal social dynamics, is a constitutive element not just in the emergence of crowds, but is foundational to social orders much more generally, including notions of ‘society’ and institutional realms, more so than the longstanding opposition of ‘reason’ versus ‘emotion’ in social theory suggests.

Through ethnographic attention to forms of collective mobilisation in student strikes, I intend to complicate dichotomies such as ‘emotion’ versus ‘reason’, or ‘desire’ against ‘social order’ (Mazzarella 2010b: 715-716). Student strikes cannot be easily cast as based on affect (or emotion) alone, putting the rule-based reasoning of university managers on the other end of the spectrum. The contest over legitimacy that student strikes entail, instead illustrates different subject positions from which people emphasise appropriate forms of sustaining social relations, comprising a (sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit) critique of the maxim that adherence to learned rules and conventions is necessary to achieving modernity.

Chapter Three - University Education in Papua New Guinea

In early 1966, 58 students[7] were admitted to the newly established University of Papua and New Guinea (later University of Papua New Guinea; UPNG) for a preliminary year of matriculation studies as part of a university education. They were the first batch of students to receive a university education in the territory of Papua and New Guinea, which was then still governed by Australia until eventual independence as the state of Papua New Guinea in 1975. The first admitted students in 1966 were housed in temporary shelters throughout the year and classes were conducted in improvised huts, as the infrastructure of the university had yet to be built, indicating the sense of urgency with which the university started operating (Griffin & de Courcy 1986:3-4).

In this chapter, I provide some background to the higher education sector of PNG. I do this in two parts. First, I briefly outline the history of education and the higher education sector in PNG, especially the establishment of a university sector in the years leading up to Independence in 1975. Secondly, I discuss some of the dynamics following Independence, and briefly map out the political economy of contemporary university education in PNG, providing context for the experiences of students and staff discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

This chapter thus has a twofold aim. First, the background and setting outlined here introduces elements of a broader political economy and sociology of education in PNG, which provides a backdrop against which the experiences of students and staff at university unfold. The ethnographic chapters that follow will illuminate and complicate these narratives through detailed attention to the experiences and reflections of people manoeuvring through university education and negotiating social relations.

Second, this chapter also introduces some of the colonial and post-colonial narratives that accompanied university education in PNG since the initial conception of establishing a university system in PNG. Narratives that refer to certain ideas about ‘development’ and ‘culture’ provide a historical precursor and an angle on the ethnographic approximation of a national culture, the shaping of identities, and an ideological frame of reference for ideas about socially relating in an increasingly

[7] According to Duncan (1971:347), 41 students from the southern territory of Papua; 14 students from the northern territory of New Guinea, and three Australians; and according to Meek (1982:75), 52 male and six female students.

stratified society across urban-rural divides. Concerns voiced, for example, about conceptual conflicts between putatively 'particularistic' relations and traditional cultures versus 'universal' bureaucratic relations and abstract knowledge (to put it into the Weberian terms of 'particularistic' and 'universalistic', cf. Benedict 1967), created an ideological dichotomisation between a specifically cultured and traditional PNG, on one hand, and those contexts of a putatively universal realm of modernity, bureaucratic institutions, and economic development, on the other. This ideological dichotomisation still resonates with certain framings and rhetoric of 'development' versus 'culture' in PNG today, with Papua New Guineans voicing the idea that there are two ways to choose from, Papua New Guinean ways and Western ways (Bashkow 2006, cf. Golub 2014:160-207). These debates and framings provide background to the ethnographic material that this thesis describes and analyses.

The Establishment of Universities in PNG and Their Early Years

The establishment of universities in PNG, arguably, would have happened sooner or later. But the timing, and the sense of urgency to admit students to UPNG before its infrastructure had been established in 1966 derives from a particular historical context and series of events. In describing these events at continuation, I intend to reproduce the kinds of concerns voiced by actors at the time. These especially concern different conceptions of the appropriate way of preparing PNG for political independence through an upscaling of education. While Australia's approach, as colonial administrator, was oriented at a more general and thus much slower process of upscaling education first on primary and then secondary level in PNG before establishing universities – also to prevent the formation of an oligarchic elite – the international community exerted pressure to much more immediately establish a higher education sector in PNG to train an elite that could lead the territories into independence at the soonest possible time.

Long before the idea of university education in PNG was conceived of, formal education for a century (roughly mid 19th to mid 20th century) meant education provided by Christian missionaries, which was the case for both British Papua and German New Guinea prior to the territories' joint administration through Australia following the First World War. It was only after the Second World War that the Australian administration started thinking about a public education system run by the state. The development of schools run by the administration started only in the mid

1950s, about a decade before the university system was established. State-run schools remained in the minority compared to church-run schools, in any case, and were mostly limited to secondary education. It was only then that the colonial administration sought to introduce general standards of education and curriculum that church-run schools had to adopt if they were to be recognised and, eventually, financially supported by the administration in providing education. Central control, however, was limited, and mission schools that were for a century more concerned with 'salvation' and the training of catechists rather than providing a general education, were slow to move away from their focus on religious indoctrination disguised as education. To date many schools in PNG, including some private providers of higher education, continue to be run by missions and churches.[8]

By the early 1960s, most of the United Nations Trust Territories that were under former League of Nations mandates following the First World War had achieved self-determination as, or part of, newly formed independent states. Decolonisation was a political imperative in the United Nations (UN), created after the Second World War, and the territory of New Guinea, a UN Trust Territory governed by Australia in an administrative union with the territory of Papua, remained one of the last territories governed under UN Trusteeship Council supervision that was yet to achieve self-governance.[9] After many of the territories under the Trusteeship Council's supervision became part of newly formed independent states between 1957 and 1962, the pressure by the UN Trusteeship Council exerted on Australia had reached a point where it was becoming increasingly clear that PNG would eventually become an independent state, the only question being how soon this was to happen.[10] Australia, under the Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck, a position he held from 1951 to 1963, followed a policy approach which focused on a 'uniform development' in preparation for eventual 'self-government'.[11] The Australian government sought to gradually prepare PNG for self-government through raising the level of education among the population and allowing for a general economy to emerge on which an independent state and its citizens could

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8 Even if in 1995 many schools were removed from missionary control and integrated into the national education system, with foreign missionary teachers being replaced by PNG teachers.

9 The territory of Papua had a different status and was considered an Australian territory.

10 Trust Territories that subsequently formed part of independent states were Ghana, Somalia, Togo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Samoa.

11 Paul Hasluck used the term 'self-government' rather than independence, which expressed the possibility of some longer-term constitutional association with the Australian Commonwealth (see Denoon 2012:29).

thrive. In terms of education, this meant that emphasis was placed, first of all, on extending the coverage of primary education and basic English literacy.

The UN Trusteeship Council, however, criticised Australia's policy of uniform development towards creating the conditions for an eventually self-governing and independent Papua New Guinea in the long term, and pressed for more immediate steps towards independence, including a stronger emphasis on higher education. At that time, there was little internal pressure from within the territory for self-governance, and Australia's approach displayed none of the urgency that the UN Trusteeship Council was looking for. The meagre allocation of funds from the Australian government in Canberra for Hasluck's policy aim of broadening the access to primary schooling and basic English literacy did not actually allow for a significant upscaling of any of this.

In the eyes of the UN Trusteeship Council, this rather appeared as a sign of neglect and as a denial of the international mood or consensus that made significant steps towards decolonisation a political imperative. This embarrassed the government in Canberra into taking a more proactive approach in preparing for PNG's independence within a foreseeable future. The crucial moment for effecting such policy change in Australia was the UN visiting mission to the territory in 1962, led by Sir Hugh Foot. Its report called for abandoning the policy of uniform development, but strongly suggested an accelerated development in sectors that could facilitate a speedy transition towards independence. This included strong criticism of the Australian aim of working towards universal primary education and English literacy before expanding secondary education and establishing a viable system of tertiary education (see Wesley-Smith 1994:213). The Hugh Foot Mission Report instead suggested that there should be no further delay in providing higher education to Papua New Guineans, markedly departing from the goal of what was regarded as 'uniform development': to make sure universal primary education was in place and secondary education significantly upscaled before tertiary education could be considered an option, and eventually self-government and potentially independence if and when the territory was perceived ready for it. Instead, the Foot Report suggested that Australia should much more actively work towards creating an educated elite that could steer a self-governing and independent PNG at the soonest possible time.

The indictment at the hands of the UN Trusteeship Council Mission came as an embarrassment to Australia and indeed appeared to lead to a policy change towards

prioritising the training of a political and administrative elite in PNG rather than advancing a uniform development through first expanding primary education and English literacy before fostering the creation of an elite through higher education. Another factor that influenced pressure in this direction around the time was the creation of Cenderawasih University in 1962 in Jayapura, in the western part of New Guinea, known as Irian Jaya or West Papua, which was more or less usurped by Indonesia following Dutch colonial administration via a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority. Cenderawasih University thereby constituted the first university established in the Pacific Islands (beyond Australia and New Zealand), and set off university developments across the Pacific (Meleisa and Crocombe 1988).

As a result of this change in direction, the Commission on Higher Education in Papua New Guinea was established under the chairmanship of Sir George Currie, presenting its report in 1964, which mapped out a higher education sector for PNG, including a university. In the same year, a World Bank report on PNG further pushed in this direction by underlining the criticism of the 1962 Foot Report and suggesting that there would be better avenues to more immediately tap into opportunities for economic growth by focusing on sectors with high potential for return, and specifically trained manpower requirements, rather than first creating the conditions for equal participation in economic opportunities across PNG's population. While the international pressure and momentum towards decolonisation was the driving force behind an acceleration of efforts to create the conditions for self-government and independence in PNG, the World Bank's focus on economic growth as the embraced developmental wisdom helped increase the pressure towards effecting what Paul Hasluck in his time as Australian Minister for External Territories had always intended to avoid: the hastened creation of an indigenous elite that would govern independent PNG while the majority of the population at the time neither had access to primary education nor even basic literacy in English, providing the danger of creating lasting structures of inequality and the formation of a small oligarchic elite to control the country after independence. Australian colonial authorities under Hasluck resisted the development of elites in the absence of evenly spread educational opportunities, implicitly because that would create an unequal society. In any case, the acceleration of steps towards PNG's independence through external international pressure led to a significant increase of Australian funds allocated towards the territory, seeking to expand the coverage of all levels of education in an unprecedented way, to counter the UN Trusteeship Councils impression of neglect. Paul Hasluck's successor as Minister for External Territories, Charles Barnes,

who assumed office in 1963, also stood for the change in prioritising interventions intended to show more immediate results, including fostering political progress even if it meant also creating a PNG oligarchy, which Hasluck had tried to prevent (Wesley-Smith 1994:213).

Yet, the Currie Report on Higher Education in PNG met initial resistance, and the recommendations for immediate steps leading to a comprehensive infrastructure of higher education in PNG, including a university and an institute of technology, were uncertain to go ahead for implementation. Decision-making in Australia was slowed by doubts whether PNG would be ready or in need of a university besides manpower training for technical skills, which lead to further reviews of the Currie Report (Meek 1982:71). It was only after another year that in 1965 the Report's recommendations were taken up with urgency again, following some down-sizing alterations for the planned university, and rejecting formal links with the Australian Universities Commission that would have enabled it to seek funds directly from the Australian government in Canberra. Finally, in March 1965, the creation of the University of Papua and New Guinea was officially announced, with the first intake of students for a preliminary year in 1966. Such was the renewed sense of urgency then that the first batch of 58 students were admitted while construction of the university's infrastructure in Port Moresby was still under way.

Besides the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), the Papua New Guinea Institute of Technology was supposed to be on the same grounds allocated to the university in Port Moresby. The Institute's administration though feared it would always unfavourably depend on the bigger sibling of the university, and after early tensions it was subsequently relocated to Lae. It started admitting students a year later than UPNG, a first batch of 37 students in 1967, but then successfully lobbied to also gain full university status by 1973 and was renamed Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Unitech). Thus, two public universities were created that today continue to be PNG's largest institutions of higher education (Howie-Willis 1980:129).

The Currie Report: Problems with 'Development' and 'Culture'

Establishing a university sector was part of preparing for PNG's independence. Primary concerns guiding the planning of a university sector revolved around training Papua New Guineans for taking over higher positions in the administration and the public

service in an eventually independent state, and to establish institutions within PNG that would supply PNG with the skilled manpower to lead a state and its economic and social development. The Commission under George Currie was aware that the model of a state with a self-sustaining economy and related educational institutions was to be a radical departure from the forms of social organisation and the life trajectories people were accustomed to in the territories of Papua and New Guinea. The Currie Commission, moreover, took into account African experiences of university development, and was keen to avoid African precedents where universities seemed negligent of people's own traditions and culture in attempts to carry British university curricula unchanged into new nations. While not disregarding people's traditional ways of life in the planning of tertiary education, the Currie report considered that 'modern education and development must inevitably lead to a break-up of the traditional tribal mores' (Currie at al. 1964:35), in a context in which it was thought that 'cultural satisfactions of tribal society are dead or dying' (1964:9).

In retrospect, the anticipation of the break-up of 'traditional mores' and the terminal state of 'tribal society' were perhaps somewhat premature. Such ideas went together with presuppositions of modernisation theory of the time, including the idea that a universal model of development was achievable and would proceed quickly as long as the context was appropriately set (Rostow's (1960) 'stages of economic growth' that gained popularity in the 1960s come into mind, which continue to be prominently evoked by PNG academics to date). Yet, the Currie Commission was reading the signs of the times and was somewhat progressively departing from the practices of university development that were employed in the new African states, India, and elsewhere, intended to produce 'carbon copies of Europeans'. I quote at length:

> 'Must it be assumed without question, as discussions of 'development' too often do assume, that they are to become simply 'carbon copies of Europeans'? As one of them put it to the Commission, "we must learn also about our own culture, since now we are uncertain and don't know whether or not we should become just another sort of Western people". This is a legitimate and searching observation. There were, to some extent there still are, aspects of indigenous life which are in truth incompatible with civilized living in the modern world. But there are also aspects of cultural and artistic achievement which should not be allowed to go into the discard.' (1964:8-9)

The distinction made between 'aspects of indigenous life which are in truth incompatible with civilised living in the modern world' and 'aspects of cultural and artistic achievement which should not be allowed to go into the discard' might have been progressive at that time. Even if the specific wording may not always go well in

contemporary times, it appears to remain a common understanding that, for example, some aspects of 'custom' are appreciated while others are condemned (Demian 2014). It also finds expression in cultural self-denigrations by Papua New Guineans themselves, aspiring for a dignified position on the world map of development achievement (Robbins 1998). Where 'cultural and artistic achievements', on the positive side, can be channelled and transformed into developmentalist aspirations, or at least do not interfere with them, they are welcome. A significant innovation in modern nation-building: there are indeed aspects of what is regarded traditional culture that can be assets in achieving 'development', while at the same time being the source of a healthy pride in one's identity, both dignifying for the sense of oneself and for identifying with one's new state.

The Currie report further specified what it regarded as 'extremely awkward cultural hangovers', referring to 'cultural inhibitions' such as 'the absence of any developed sense of counting' ('in some groups at least'), and the common 'lack of any strong sense of time and the significance of fixed times'. The report also claims that '[i]n all groups […] it is difficult to transcend the local, the personal, the concrete; yet modern knowledge and skills must use, continuously, the general, the impersonal, the abstract'. In response to these perceived inhibitions, the Currie report stressed an approach of 'education in the widest and deepest sense, not just "schooling"' (Currie et al. 1964:5). It attested that there was 'an immense cultural leeway to make up' with 'very real cultural obstacles' (24), and the right approach to this would not simply be 'training men and women in skills and techniques' (10), but through 'providing the opportunity for developing intellectual and imaginative values' (24).

The Early Years of UPNG

UPNG was from the beginning conceived of as a general university that would cover the full range of academic disciplines, including Law, Medicine, Education, Social Sciences & Humanities, and Natural Sciences. The Institute of Technology, in contrast, was to focus on more applied technical careers, such as Engineering, Agriculture, and Forestry. Even as the Institute of Technology was accorded university status, this distinction remained. There is, to date, hardly any overlap in programmes offered at these institutions. While these two universities remain the largest and most prestigious universities in the country, their relation was always marked by a certain rivalry, in which UPNG remained the bigger sibling, based on its larger size and funding

allocation, broader spread of academic programmes, and through its location in the capital Port Moresby, in the Waigani area in close proximity to the PNG Parliament and most government offices. UPNG was always conceived as, and remains so in the popular imagination today, the flagship of PNG's universities. Indeed, UPNG trained an entire generation of national politicians and senior public servants, that continue to dominate PNG's political and administrative elite to this day. More than that, the early years of UPNG were a crucial arena in which to air rising national and anti-colonial sentiments among PNG's emerging political class and elite (Ritchie 2014:305). Prior to the establishment of UPNG, the drive towards PNG's independence was large externally driven, through the UN Trusteeship Council and the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation, created in 1961 and mainly composed of newly independent African and Asian states for whom the rapid relinquishment of the remaining pockets of colonialism was the priority. It was through UPNG that increasing political consciousness was channelled into anti-colonial sentiment and towards forming an active demand from within PNG for the end of Australian colonialism and national independence. In contrast to the Australians with longer experience in colonial PNG, who were overwhelmingly sceptical of PNG's independence within a narrowly foreseeable future, the academics at UPNG, hailing from Australia, other British Commonwealth contexts and beyond, were largely proactive in questioning colonial policy and the status quo; they helped to fuel anti-colonial sentiment. This included, early on, resisting segregated daily life under colonial rule, including the policy barring Papua New Guineans from entering clubs and venues where alcohol was served for Australians and other colonial personnel. It was from within UPNG and the nearby Administrative College that the colonial status quo of segregation was first challenged and gradually eroded. At the Administrative College, the 'Bully Beef Club'[12], an informal debating group of university staff and students had formed, which preceded the formation of the Pangu Party, under which Michael Somare became the first Prime Minister of independent PNG in 1975. UPNG became the first national symbol and institution for what would become the independent state of PNG. But more than that, it was from within UPNG that the road to independence emerged as a national demand and an aspirational project for social actors. The university became a context in which to imagine a Papua New Guinean nation in ways other than a mere project of 'devolution' of power and governance from Australia.

[12] Named after popular tinned meat over which the so dubbed group was meeting (see Ritchie 2014:305)

But UPNG was a pioneering institution in other ways too. Many of the staff members of the early years of UPNG had the sense of being engaged in something distinctively new. On one hand, what was new was simply establishing a university of basically Australian standards in the territory of Papua and New Guinea. On the other hand, the institution was seen as novel in the way that it would specifically serve PNG, reflecting its needs as emerging nation with a diverse society. It was a time when new universities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian subcontinent, were not a mere reproduction of the colonial models, but were increasingly open towards, and indeed demanded to be, attuned to serve post-colonial independent nation-states in their own terms, needs, and peculiarities (Meek 1982). The establishment of UPNG was thus a constant process of innovation and adjustment, and a constant negotiation between the reproduction of global academic standards in curricula and research, which would not lag behind Australian and other universities internationally, and the pragmatic alignment to the context and needs of the emerging nation of PNG and its population. In certain ways, UPNG became a Mecca for innovation of academic institutions.

The young university specifically recruited academics from the new universities established the prior decade, particularly in newly independent African states, who saw UPNG as another opportunity for innovation and experiment in building up a university in a postcolonial state with a distinct social and cultural context. The University of Ibadan in Nigeria, the flagship of British post-colonial university institutions, was a particularly fruitful ground for recruitment. Academics recruited from Nigeria included political scientists, teachers of literature, creative writers, and instructors in arts and crafts. They fostered an anti-colonial voice among emerging PNG writers who were taught African anti-colonial literature, and who experimented with art forms, techniques, themes, and patterns distinctively associated with PNG cultures. They helped shape the aesthetics of a PNG national identity through distinctive expression in arts, crafts, and literature (see for example Ulli Beier's (2005) memoirs, who was recruited from the University of Ibadan in 1967). UPNG was no exception to the explosion of political action and experimental creative expression taking over university campuses and student movements around the world during the late 1960s and the 1970s.[13] All these factors together – the global student movements, the revival and appreciation of PNG cultural expressions, and the unprecedented requirements and challenges of establishing a university in PNG – created a sense of excitement about

[13] I am grateful to David Gole for pointing this out to me.

something distinctively new.

Thus, the establishment of UPNG and its early years of operation brought together the aspiration to achieve standards comparable to Australian universities (rather than becoming a token university operating on a sub-standard level), and the appreciation of the territories' cultural heritage and its people's histories (Howie-Willis 1980; Meek 1982; Beier 2005). The university was able to attract distinguished foundation professors and research took a focus, particularly in the Arts, on issues pertinent to Papua and New Guinea. For example, UPNG attracted scholars like Ulli Beier, who was invited to establish innovative work on literary expression in order to foster a PNG literature, an approach he had been denied in Nigeria (Beier 2005). UPNG thereby became an institution that played a large role not only in preparing students to take up higher positions in the functioning of a new state, but also helped to instil an ethos and identity and national pride vis-à-vis colonial power that was unprecedented.

Yet, for UPNG's first professors, their experiences of working with indigenous students seemed to confirm certain preoccupations of the Currie Commission regarding the putative difficulty of transcending the local, personal, and concrete, in favour of the general, impersonal, and abstract. This problematic was to be reflected upon again in relation to training Papua New Guineans for the top positions in the public service and the national institutions of an independent state. John Ballard, professor of Administrative Studies at UPNG from 1973 to 1976, became concerned that the way social relations work in PNG, such as the 'wantok system', appeared rather antithetical to those forms of social relations required for the running of administrative bureaucracies.[14] Gerry Ward, founding professor of geography at UPNG, makes related observations, noting how people found themselves in a constant personal conflict between different ways of relating: on one hand, what could be seen as family relations (in the widest sense), and on the other hand, in a sort of universalist way of relating upon which bureaucratic and administrative institutions are reliant for functioning the way they are supposed to.[15] Burton Benedict (1967), around the time of UPNG's initial years of functioning though not in specific relation to PNG, had related Max Weber's ideas of 'particularistic' and 'universalistic' value orientations to the challenges faced for integrating so-called small-scale societies into larger political and organisational

14 Personal communication 09.10.2012
15 Personal communication 22.11.2012 and 28.11.2012

structures. In PNG terms, these observations and conceptualisations became familiar discourses around the 'wantok system' in relation to national development.

In the early years of UPNG, the territory had few towns. Most of PNG's population lived in rural areas, and the majority of (temporary) migration away from familiar territories was usually for labour on plantations rather than for settling more permanently into urban areas. Urban space was usually dominated by the colonial administration, and an urban space imagined as a national melting pot of what was dubbed the land of the thousand tribes (and tongues) was only slowly emerging. PNG's basic character was generally understood as distinctly rural, with people demonstrating a strong attachment to local space and relations. In the imagination of an independent PNG, rural subsistence was expected to continue its role as backbone of people's livelihoods. As a result, national discourse placed emphasis on 'rural development', including in teaching and research at University. University students were prepared to return to their villages in rural PNG and become mediators between their home communities and provinces, and the nation-state. Graduates were to spread the word of the nation to a largely illiterate population, educate folks back home about what it meant to become (part of) a nation, and to mediate the relation between rural PNG and the nation-state. The focus on rural development in PNG was also pragmatic from another perspective, as there was no imminent scope or promise of significant industrialisation that could provide its population with urban employment and wages. The focus on rural development was, arguably, both the most pragmatic and least disruptive approach to the reality of its population. An indication of this discursive frame on rural development were the Waigani Research Seminars, annual symposia on approaches and challenges for development in the emerging nation of PNG. In 1973, for example, the invited keynote speakers at the Waigani Research Seminar were Rene Dumont and Ivan Illich, renowned scholar-activists advocating for alternative development approaches through fostering small-scale agricultural communities and by rethinking education through a departure from formal schooling respectively. The radical approaches proposed by Dumont and Illich were not entirely embraced in PNG, but their invitation as keynote speakers and the way the debates in PNG revolved around their proposals give an indication about the particular focus on rural development taken in PNG at the time (as

in the collection of papers presented at the sixth Waigani Seminar (May 1973); see also Illich 1976).[16]

Today, Papua New Guineans understand themselves through constructs of rural identity and local affiliation. Some urban residents consider themselves more 'local' than others through rural roots of regional proximity in contrast to other urban dwellers who migrated from other provinces or regions. Some even suggest that the colonial vagrancy act that limited the movement between rural and urban areas be reintroduced to stop swelling urban growth and halt the change of supposedly 'ethnic' urban demographics. In the popular imagination, rural space continues to be the backbone of the majority of PNG's population, and is understood to be intimately linked with people's identity.[17] It also constitutes a discursive refuge of sovereignty that is often represented as distinctly local and frequently claimed as outside the reach of state authority. The idea of local sovereignty over land, the most significant denominator of local space, for example, periodically hampers or halts altogether attempts at the formalisation of landownership and the incorporation of landownership into formal property regimes mediated through state authority. Indeed, the customary ownership of land has been enshrined in PNG's national Constitution. The formalisation of landownership, putatively to facilitate 'economic development', remains largely unresolved (Fingleton 2004, Gosarevski, Hughes & Windybank 2004, Fingleton 2005, Lea 2009, Lea 2013, Golub 2014, Filer 2017). There remains substantial national debate about the consequences of formal registration of customary lands, particularly since student protests in 2001 at UPNG in response to fears that the government would implement recommendations from the World Bank to formalise landownership resulted in the death of students.

UPNG and the University System After PNG's Independence

With PNG's independence, the funding of PNG universities gradually declined, salaries were decoupled from the Australian university system, and foreign staff was replaced

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16 Some argue, from a contemporary perspective, that the continuing emphasis on 'rural development' in PNG's higher education and policy approach was a result of romanticising rural life in PNG that continues to this day as a sort of 'reactionary ruralism' despite PNG's changing reality, and thus denying PNG's citizens the university education enabling a global and urban outlook (MacWilliam 2014).

17 Which remains true for many; however, there is an increasing segment of society growing up in urban areas without clear regional or otherwise local identity other than the local urban space they grew up in (see Chapter Seven).

by PNG staff as soon as a PNG national acquired the necessary qualification to replace a foreign staff member.[18] This policy was called 'localisation' and was applied across the public service sector in independent PNG, leading to an accelerated exodus of Australian and other foreign public servants and administrative personnel following independence in September 1975. PNG universities were never entirely localised, but there remained a strong ideological preference for local staffing whenever available. The new state was tasked with expanding infrastructure and human resources for transport, health provision, and education services throughout the country. All of this was to be achieved on the dramatically reduced budget of the independent state. As a result, the relatively high-end educational infrastructure of universities, on par with Australian standards and salary packages, was increasingly hard to maintain. Despite it having been the basis upon which the new governing elite emerged, the country's UPNG-trained politicians did not favour maintaining what many perceived as a tiny and very costly isle of privilege in the midst of very basic infrastructure needs.

Further, Prime Minister Michael Somare and other members of government had their strongest critics in the politically active students and staff at UPNG. The relation between the government and UPNG became increasingly antagonistic, to the point where the state threatened to close the university temporarily, while increasingly using police force against fierce student mobilisations (cf. Ballard 1977, Howie-Willis 1980). After Independence, most challenges to government policy in PNG clearly arose from student organising at UPNG, and student mobilisation regularly occurred at the national level with Unitech students in Lae and students from other affiliated colleges and campuses joining in. Even outside the universities, challenges to the government policy or authority were usually stirred by UPNG students returning home over holidays, or after studies, to raise political consciousness and rally for political issues in their home provinces. This increasingly directed debate at students' privileged position as recipients of government scholarships that catered for boarding, lodging, and holiday travel home, as well as a cash allowance. In the eye of the government, these privileges appeared to be taken advantage of by students who stirred unrest and political opposition, rather than focussing on careers to serve national needs. Government actors,

[18] In contrast to the University of the South Pacific (USP), which as a university owned by multiple states was open and receptive for external government funding, continued direct funding to UPNG from Australia would have been regarded as a breach of PNGs sovereignty from its former colonial ruler, especially as UPNG students increasingly became the most vocal source of opposition to government policy within PNG (Low, Back & Terrell 1982:4-6).

and some sectors of the public, frequently accused students of hypocrisy for advocating redistributive policies while at the same time accruing social status and privilege beyond reasonable comparison to their kin and other community members – a position that students themselves seemed unwilling to relinquish. The government was not inclined to continue funding 'troublemaking' students at the expense of basic infrastructure in the country. Politicians seeking cost savings by cutting university budgets and determined to make universities more accountable to government demands often rhetorically exploited the notion that the university was a breeding ground for political critique and unrest, for disorder (Howie-Willis 1980).

The decreasing presence of Australian and other foreign university staff also had an impact on the direction UPNG was to take, as the national staff was less ideologically committed in defence of the principle of university autonomy vis-à-vis the state, and consequently the influence of the government in affairs of the university grew steadily. While university students, particularly at UPNG, remain a major critical voice in matters of political significance, it is not any longer the sole and most important voice directing political debate in PNG that it once was. This is a result of several factors from decreased funding, to less autonomy, to interference in the way political science was taught. Changes in the way student representation in university governance was organised was also a factor. By now, a politically active citizenry is much more broadly spread in PNG and is supported by a (relatively) free press, thriving blogosphere and social media arenas, and a popular anti-corruption movement that is made up of a range of social actors.

Political action by students in contemporary PNG, besides addressing national political issues, is often directed at staking one's own claim within a nowadays much more competitive arena of a national political elite. Political action in PNG was always to some extent, even if more covertly than overtly, enmeshed and related to local and regional identities and loyalties. As I will outline in more detail in the following chapters, regional identities remain strong, and are perhaps stronger than ever before in the qualities they assume, even while university staff, among other actors in the national arena, instead encourage a national sense and sentiment beyond the regional or provincial identities among university students.

The Contemporary PNG University System

About 30 years after the establishment of the first universities in PNG, another four tertiary colleges have been accorded university status through Acts of the Papua New Guinea Parliament, including two private ones. The additional public universities created, both in 1997, are the University of Goroka, and the Papua New Guinea University of Natural Resources and the Environment. The University of Goroka had previously been known as the Goroka Teachers College, which had served as the highland's campus of the Faculty of Education of UPNG. Since attaining university status, it continues to have a major emphasis on education programmes, while increasingly diversifying its portfolio of degrees offered. The Papua New Guinea University of Natural Resources and the Environment (UNRE), formerly known as Vudal Agricultural College and located near Rabaul on the island of New Britain to the north of mainland New Guinea, was affiliated with Unitech before becoming a university on its own. It maintains a specific subject focus as the name suggests. The two private colleges accorded university status are both run by Christian missionary organisations. The Pacific Adventist University (PAU), located outside Port Moresby, and the Divine Word University in Madang, universities that both offer a range of programmes since 1996 and 1997 respectively.

Unitech's forerunner departure from shared grounds in Port Moresby, and its establishment in Lae, led to an immediate decentralisation of university education in PNG, despite the explicit planning conception of having the entire university infrastructure located in Port Moresby. While UPNG remained located in the territory's and later nation's capital Port Moresby, Unitech based itself in the second biggest and more industrially oriented city of Lae, on New Guinea's northern coast, linked by road to the PNG highlands and its major mining sites. After two public university-affiliated colleges were given full university status in 1997, the University of Goroka and UNRE in Rabaul, all four major regions of PNG now have public universities (UPNG in the southern region Papua, the University of Goroka in the highlands, Unitech in the northern coastal region called Momase (derived from the first two initial letters of the provinces Morobe, Madang, Sepik), and UNRE in the islands region). While since then the wisdom to multiply structures of university administration by granting university status to smaller institutions has been questioned, some even recommending its reversal (such as the PNG Universities Review by Garnaut & Namaliu 2010), the political achievement of all four major regions having a university in their realm will be difficult

to rescind again. What is more, there is increasing attention to and demand for opportunities for tertiary education: several new university initiatives over the last years, both public and private, have been proposed, including more recent suggestions by provincial governments to have a university in each province, of which there are 22, though this is an unrealistic scenario. Other university initiatives announced over the last decade have so far not reached operational levels, or only partially so. Announced initiatives include: (1) a university in Port Moresby linked to the Assembly of God Church called the Jubilee University, (2) the Lutheran University of Papua New Guinea in Lae, and (3) the Western Pacific University, announced by PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill in 2013 to be built in the Prime Minister's rural constituency in the Ialibu-Pangia District the Southern Highlands Province.

Towards a Political Economy of Education in PNG Today

In 1966, UPNG began with an admission of 58 students recruited from missionary schools from the coastal parts of the territory for a preparatory year prior to university education itself. In 2015, while UPNG celebrated 50 years of its official founding in 1965, grade 12 leavers hoping to enter PNG's universities have surpassed 20,000 annually. While admission spaces for tertiary education have steadily increased over the decades, they remain far behind their current demand. In 2001, there were 2,400 spaces in tertiary education nationally for 4864 Grade 12 leavers, giving a tertiary placement ratio of almost 50%. The ratio of spaces in tertiary education for grade 12 leavers is currently down to 20% and is projected to fall further based on statistics from the PNG Department of Higher Education (Kavanamur, Baki & Baird 2014). While on average the year-on-year increase of grade 12 leavers since 2001 had been about 1,000 students, since the introduction of free primary and secondary education in 2011 by the O'Neill government, the number of grade 12 leavers increased by about of 2,000 per year. This drastic increase in grade 12 leavers looking for opportunities for tertiary education, particularly in universities, coincided with the Garnaut & Namaliu report of 2010 that recommended stalling admission increases to PNG universities in order first to address perceived issues with the quality of tertiary education currently offered.

But the increasing mismatch between the fast-growing number of Grade 12 leavers and the comparatively slow increase in tertiary admission spaces is not just due to a differing emphasis in the sectors of general and tertiary education. Part of the problem that universities bemoan is the fact that while 'free education' was announced for

primary and secondary education (with government grants paid to schools making up for the loss in fees and obliging schools to admit students even beyond their classroom capacities), there was no concomitant funding increase for universities to accommodate more Grade 12 leavers through additional admission spaces. These policies in fact led to additional problems for the tertiary level, particularly universities, to improve the standard and quality of their programmes. The increase of secondary students without significant expansion of the secondary school infrastructures in PNG meant a sharp increase in student to teacher ratios, over-stretching school infrastructures and inevitably resulting in a decline of the quality of education delivered in secondary schools. The result is an apparently paradoxical dilemma for the university sector: while the number of applications steadily increased over the last years, the minimum grade average for university admissions had to be lowered at the same time to account for the fact that grade 12 leavers were achieving lower results in the national examinations. University lecturers with decades of teaching experience express disillusion about the fact that levels of English comprehension and expression have declined over the last decades among university students.[19]

The 'free education' policy has been popular nevertheless and is despite its problems in general receiving a positive assessment (Walton & Swan 2014). Some claim it was the promise of free education that made Peter O'Neill's bid to contend for the office of the Prime Minister successful, thus addressing the primary concern and aspiration of PNG's population. Indeed, some media commentators claimed that the concern with education had surpassed even PNG's health infrastructure as the primary issue among the public. Education is what captures people's dreams and aspirations, and perhaps more so than ever before.

A caveat appears to be in order. Besides the positive outlook represented by statistics on school enrolments and educational achievements towards achieving some international donors' objectives and the Millennium Development Goals, the question remains: what happens to the remaining 15,000 annual grade 12 leavers who are not progressing into higher education? And while attending university has always been the privilege of a select few in PNG, how does the experience of university education change for those who are no longer the single person from large social networks on whom local pride and

[19] While my personal interaction with university staff members would frequently shift between English and Tok Pisin (PNGs national lingua franca), my interaction and interviews with university students took place almost exclusively in Tok Pisin.

hope is concentrated, but find themselves competing with cousins and school friends for a space at university? One of the most pronounced concerns expressed by the PNG public in newspaper commentaries and social media fora is the increasing visibility of urban public spaces being dominated by disenfranchised youth high on booze and marihuana – figures thought to pose a threat to public order and safety. It is generally assumed that education is a central ingredient to the solution of what in PNG is called the 'social time bomb': large numbers of disenfranchised youth. Inhabiting urban spaces, but not finding gainful employment, these youth are said to be alienated from rural communities from which they have been sent away, either in the hope that they will find jobs and money or in order to protect them from the harms of mystical violence associated with village life. These youths, however, may be denied entry into professional training or university and end up joining a growing young urban settlement population without a productive perspective on the horizon (cf. Little 2016). What does it mean to make it into university in this broader context? How do these experiences differ among university students from different areas in PNG that deal differently with questions of social stratification through education, have different ideologies around social and educational differentiation, and deal differently with questions of envy that can expose people to fear about sorcery and witchcraft? These are the questions I will start to disentangle in Chapter Five, based on life histories with university students and staff, reflecting on the process of their own educational differentiation vis-à-vis their kin networks.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have taken a wide angle to university education in PNG. I have touched on the history of university education in PNG, and the departure from a colonial policy of 'uniform development' in PNG consisting in the slow expansion of primary education and English literacy skills, to the accelerated creation of a PNG elite to lead the country into independence. This is significant for the analysis that follows in the ethnographic chapters. From a sociological perspective, these developments set the course for making the privilege of attending university a trajectory that accompanies increased social stratification and inequality. On a more personal level for those attaining university degrees, it means achieving distinction through status and access to wealth that often has the potential to set them apart from relatives and wider social networks. To manoeuvre and negotiate the social repercussions of this distinction and its associated status entails a complex trajectory of experiences and personal reflections

that I will illustrate and complicate through life histories and other ethnographic observations in the following chapters.

Moreover, a certain pattern has emerged in the way that education is conceptually framed in PNG. Certain values and tensions recur in discourse on education: the personal versus the impersonal, the concrete versus the abstract, the local versus the general, the particular versus the universal, the *wantok* system versus administrative bureaucratic institutions, and so on. These different framings seem related, and many of these framings that were generated around the initial establishment of higher education in PNG have endured into current preoccupations. The portrayal of these issues seems mostly to be directed at an expectation, or active project, to transcend or abandon the former for the latter: from the personal to the impersonal, from the 'particular' to the 'universal', from the *wantok* system to bureaucratic administrative institutions. These issues are often mobilised in speaking about the obstacles towards achieving 'development' and to become a 'modern' nation and people, by transcending the personal and particularistic that seems inherent to 'culture' and 'tradition'. Defying the expectations around the initial establishment of higher education in PNG, these issues are persistent – the transformation has not been completed. One may be tempted to say: PNG cultures are resilient (or as PNG anthropologist Joseph Mangi puts it: 'culture is tenacious'). The dilemma this poses for development has not been resolved and does not seem likely to get resolved anytime soon, but it pervades the preoccupation of Papua New Guineans and outsiders alike.

Through the description and analysis of the following chapters I take a different angle on this apparent dilemma. Rather than taking the dichotomies evoked at face value, be it between 'development' and 'culture', or between Melanesia and modernity, I take these conceptualisations to stand for contested subject positions that are rhetorically mobilised in search for better terms. The search for conceptualisations among university students and staff I spent time with is heightened through the experiences of processes of social differentiation and stratification, and the emerging forms of navigating social relations these entail. In this way, the contextual aspects of university education in PNG developed in this chapter provide the background for showing ethnographically the ways in which subject positions are shifting as part of social transformations that are inherent to processes of social stratification.

Chapter Four - The Contemporary Context: From University to Nation

In this Chapter, I introduce the University of Goroka, the main location of this study, and daily campus life in some more detail. I also place the university in the context of the highlands town of Goroka where it is located, and the nation of PNG of which it is an integral institution.

The University of Goroka has been the primary public institution for teacher education in PNG since its inception as the Goroka Teacher's College (GTC) in 1962 under Australian colonial administration. Steadily growing over the years and gaining the status of a full university in 1997, at the time of fieldwork in 2013-14 the university had over 2000 students. It offers a range of degree programmes up to a PhD in Education. With its flashy new seven-storied student dormitory buildings on the hilltop of Humilaveka on the northern edges of Goroka town, the university has become an icon for the development of Goroka and the Eastern Highlands Province. Unlike the uncertainty of employment opportunities associated with many university careers today, completing an education degree at the University of Goroka sees almost all graduates directly transition into employment, with both public and private education providers competing to attract its graduates through recruitment drives on campus towards the end of the academic year.[20]

The elongated plateau of Humilaveka, meaning 'red soil' in the Alekano language (also referred to as Gahuku or Gahuku-Gama), has been ancestral land of what today are the villages of Okiufa, on the plateau's eastern side, and Asariufa, on its western side. The plateau was used as an airstrip by Australia in the Second World War, and later became a training facility for police when the airstrip for Goroka was relocated to the position of its current airport, around which Goroka town is centred today. In 1962, the Goroka Teacher's College was established on Humilaveka, first as a primary teachers' college, and in 1967 as a secondary teachers' college. In 1975, the college was incorporated into the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). The college's function remained the same, however, training secondary school teachers in PNG to replace non-nationals in the growing secondary school system. By the early 1990s the college had become

[20] The School Liaison officer at time of fieldwork, John De Britto, suggested an employment rate of 99% based on the records of his office for students graduating with a Bachelor of Education in 2013.

recognised as a university campus of UPNG rather than an affiliated college, and by the mid-1990s UPNG's teacher education programmes all became located in Goroka. Then, in 1997, the Goroka UPNG campus was accorded full university status on its own, becoming the University of Goroka, and severing its direct links to UPNG. The University of Goroka has retained its primary focus on secondary teacher education since and remains the most important teacher training institution in PNG today. The university has at the same time sought to diversify its degree programmes through its three Faculties of Education, Science, and Humanities, offering B.Ed., B.Sc., and B.Arts degrees respectively. Recently, the University of Goroka also underwent a restructuring that saw its Faculties changed into Schools, and the establishment of an Institute of Technical and Vocational Education. Teacher education remains its most important pillar in any case.

Most of the university's facilities are located on the spatially-confined stretch of the Humilaveka plateau corresponding to the old airfield. From west to east, the plateau holds the Steven Eka Library building, which also houses the university management, the Mark Solon Auditorium complex, the Vice-Chancellor's residence and some staff housing, the student mess and the main quadrangles of academic offices and lecture halls, student dormitories, a sports field, and another small section of academic facilities towards Okiufa village to its East (see Figure 2). The edges of the plateau are partly lined with staff housing, and larger staff housing compounds extend on and below the slopes of the plateau to its west and south-east. The limitations of space have recently led to multi-storey construction, such as seven-storey student dormitory buildings.

Figure 2: *Bird's eye view of the University of Goroka campus. (Google Maps/Earth; image approximately 2011).*

Students

Student Demographics at PNG Universities and the University of Goroka

Students from all parts of the country attend the University of Goroka, besides a varying number of students from the Solomon Islands for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and occasionally students from Vanuatu, especially for postgraduate degrees, Nauru, and further afield. Although there are thus students from all provinces of the country attending the University of Goroka, they are so in different relative numbers. As a university located in the highlands region, students from highlands provinces exceed students from other parts of PNG. There is a relatively significant share of students from Morobe and Madang also, provinces that are accessible by road.

The demography of students is different across the PNG universities, between the University of Goroka and UPNG or Unitech, for example, or the private Divine Word University and Pacific Adventist University for that matter. Common rhetoric suggests that contemporary university students in PNG often have an urban background with parents in the public service who have themselves attended university or were the first generation in achieving secondary or tertiary education. While this may hold to certain extent for the larger, more prestigious, and more expensive universities UPNG and Unitech, including the even more expensive private universities DWU and PAU, many of my interlocutors at the University of Goroka had a different background. To the contrary, most of the friends and acquaintances I made at the University of Goroka had a markedly rural background, some of whose stories and experiences I detail in Chapters Five and Six.

While necessarily incomplete and overly generalised, there is a certain profile commonly associated with specific trajectories in tertiary education. The children of ‘bigshots’, as students and others call national politicians and successful businessmen in PNG (cf. Martin 2013), are said to be mostly attending university abroad, in Australia mostly, but also in the Philippines and elsewhere. Students whose parents do not have the means to send them abroad for university must rely on the national tertiary sector, of which UPNG and Unitech remain the most prestigious national institutions. Together with the private institutions Divine Word University (DWU) and Pacific Adventist University (PAU), offering a relatively wide range of programmes with well-reputed quality and relatively high cost but commonly associated with a lack of the student

politics present at public universities, these universities are usually the preferred choice for children of parents in higher public service or corporate employment, or running successful major enterprises.

At the University of Goroka, the average demographic is somewhat different. The younger and smaller public universities are less prestigious and more limited in their programme choices even if increasingly diversifying. For well-to-do urban middle-classes, the smaller universities in regional towns are thus relatively less attractive. But beside the element of preference for a prestigious institution, it is also a matter of succeeding in terms of admission and financial aid. In the public university system, entry into UPNG and Unitech requires a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than entry into the University of Goroka for example. For some, the University of Goroka is thus a second choice when not accepted into one of the larger public universities. Unsuccessful applicants to a Science programme at UPNG or an Applied Science programme at Unitech, may thus go for a second choice of an Education degree specialising in science subjects at the University of Goroka. Similarly, first preference applicants to UPNGs Arts or Social Science programmes may have marked the humanities subjects for an Education programme at the University of Goroka as a second choice in their School Leaver forms (which I will return to below).

Further, some students offered a space at UPNG or Unitech may also revert to their second choice at the University of Goroka when unable to obtain sufficient funding support to enrol at these. Especially for students from the highlands region, the proximity and lower fees in Goroka compared to other PNG universities makes it a default option. Several first-year students from the highlands region that I met in 2013 and 2014 mentioned in conversation that they had intended to attend Unitech, where they had been selected for prestigious Engineering programmes based on high GPA scores in high school but lacked the funds to do so. Unable to raise the fees for Unitech, they reverted to their second choice of Goroka, still hoping to join Unitech later if the possibility came up the following year. With their ambition for applied technical work in PNG's flourishing mining industry, they initially opted for the Science degrees at the University of Goroka without the Education component of teacher training. Most of them remained in Goroka in the following years, however, and when the choice needed to be reaffirmed to opt for Science or Education degrees, they took the pragmatic decision for the teacher education programme given its unrivalled employment prospect.

Students usually select their preferences for tertiary education before their grade 12 examinations on the School Leaver Form, through three ranked choices of preference. In this, students weigh their options based on their subject specialisations, performance, and interests. Relatively high-achieving students may thus place their first choices at UPNG or Unitech, for example, with a further choice at a smaller university or college. Students often do not fill out these forms on their own but consult relatives and potential sponsors before marking their choices. Sometimes firm encouragement for a certain preference in programmes and institutions by an uncle in the public service, for example, is taken as a commitment to provide some financial assistance when accepted into the programme of choice, whether these programmes match the interest of the student or not. Some students I met, for example, lamented the programme choices their sponsors made for them, for which they lacked enthusiasm, resulting in risk of failure. This seemed a common occurrence in the very popular Business Studies strand at the University of Goroka's School of Humanities, for example.

Scholarships & Funding Struggles

PNG has a scholarship system in place for national students, the Tertiary Education Student Assistance Scheme (TESAS), with two different award categories. One is the Academic Excellence Scholarship (AES) scheme for top-performing students, of which a relatively small number are awarded each year based on competitive merit with quotas for specific institutions and recognised programmes. The other is the Higher Education Contribution Assistance Scheme (HECAS), which is granted to a higher number of students on a similar basis of competitive selection for participating institutions and programmes. These schemes provide financial assistance for tuition fees, costs of boarding and lodging, travel costs to and from the university (for students who cannot reach Goroka otherwise this includes air travel), a book allowance, and a supplementary fortnightly allowance.[21] While the AES scheme is a full scholarship, HECAS covers substantial parts to these expenses whereas a counterpart for tuition and boarding & lodging is required to be met by the student. The contribution to be met by students themselves are still substantial, leaving some students struggling to raise financial resources from relatives and networks of potential sponsors to realise or continue their university studies.

[21] For administrative reasons, TESAS fortnightly allowances at the University of Goroka were in 2013 and 2014 only disbursed as lump sum at the end of the semester.

The TESAS grants are awarded competitively based on merit calculated through GPAs for respective programme quotas; they are only granted for a year at a time. Students then reapply the following year with their GPA achieved from the prior academic year. These grants thus contain two major layers of uncertainty for most students. First, whether they will be granted at all, based on their GPA performance. Second, whether granted or not, they succeed in raising sufficient funds to finance their forthcoming year at university regardless, or in any case to meet their part for tuition and boarding & lodging when being offered a HECAS grant. A HECAS grant is thus not in itself an assurance that a student will be able to afford university studies. So-called 'self-sponsored' students, without TESAS, most likely rent a room, or a shared one, privately in the surrounding villages, settlements, or in Goroka town. Some students can rely on relatives or contacts in Goroka for accommodation, others bunk up with student friends or distant relatives who have a space in the student dormitories, despite attempts from the university to prevent such practice.

TESAS grants are awarded exclusively based on GPA results from the previous year, and thus do not allow for gaps in educational trajectories. This puts a burden on students to return to studies after taking a year off studies for family issues, health reasons, pregnancy in the case of female students, or simply when failing to raise the financial resources for their counterpart to the HECAS scholarship in the prior year. First year university students apply with the GPA of their grade 12 national examination results, and university students do so with the GPA of their prior year of studies. Usually these results are directly submitted by higher education institutions to the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST), where programme-based selection of awards takes place. These schemes thus favour high-achieving students directly transitioning from secondary to tertiary education, and those who manage to continually achieve high grades in their education. Once a student 'misses out' on TESAS support, the costs of taking up or continuing tertiary education make raising the required funds an even more uncertain endeavour for many. If managing to raise sufficient funds to enter or continue tertiary education regardless, the subsequent GPA will enter competition for TESAS schemes the following year again. But even when granted HECAS support, the reduced tuition and board fees are still substantial, and thus leave some students struggling to collect these contributions from relatives and networks of potential sponsors to continue their university studies.

Sometimes, students also avail of scholarship schemes offered by provincial governments or provincial Governors (regional Members of Parliament), or the local Member of Parliament of their constituency. Some students manage to obtain discretionary support from Members of Parliament through their PSIP/DSIP funds in advance of an academic year.[22] Mostly, however, these schemes serve a supplementary function in the form of varying levels of contributions per student of a given electorate at some unpredictable point in any academic year. DHERST encourages Members of Parliament (MPs) to coordinate these scholarships with DHERST, offering to administer them on their behalf, and thus to make these discretionary schemes more reliable for students in need of support at the beginning of an academic year when fees (or the bulk of them) are due. Often, however, handing over these contributions to students personally in the form of a cheque given to students or university accounts staff, is a preferred mode of MPs to engage with the university students from their respective electorates. At the University of Goroka, where at least 75% of fees are due at the beginning of the academic year, and any remainder at the beginning of the second semester, students sometimes depend on their MPs support, if there is, to come in time for outstanding fees before the start of the second semester. Others with their fees taken care of at the time of these contributions either leave it in the university account for the following year or request a reimbursement of excess fees from the university to send back to relatives or sponsors. Sometimes, they simply regard such funds as pocket money at their free disposal.[23] Some major mining and extractive industry operations in PNG also provide scholarships and different forms of support to tertiary students within the local area or province of their operations. These include the Lihir Gold Mine in New Ireland Province, the PNG LNG project in Hela Province, and the Ok Tedi mine in Western Province, for example.

For most students, in any case, the question how to raise the fees and costs of maintenance for their studies is a common concern. These concerns are most pronounced towards the beginning of academic years when the deadline for fee payments approach. In 2013 and 2014, when I assisted with course advising and student registration for the Division of Indigenous, Environment and Development Studies,

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22 Provincial Services Improvement Programme (PSIP) and District Services Improvement Programme (DSIP) funds are substantial annual budget allocations administered by Members of Parliament in their regional (Province) or local (District) constituency.

23 To prevent students from withdrawing such funds from university accounts, also for the administrative burden, the university successively increased percental fees for reimbursing excess funds. This was a grievance frequently raised by students in strikes.

students from the highlands provinces sometimes returned home for additional fundraising after they found out about the extent of year-to-year fee increases for the academic year ahead. In 2013, for example, fees had been raised at short notice following a governmental budget allocation for the university well below expectations. Not all students are successful in returning for studies after the holidays, and for many the struggle to raise fees still accompanies them through the registration process, during which they hope that their requests to relatives and other potential sponsors pays fruit in the end.

Campus and Student Life

Student life on campus is, of course, in the first instance shaped by the rhythms and time frames outlined in the academic calendar, scheduled lectures, and assessment cycles. The regular workday for most university staff lasts from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday to Friday, which corresponds to the times of the day in which lectures are scheduled. Despite growing constraints for scheduling lectures with increasing student numbers, timing for lectures is not extended into later hours of the day, so that students and staff can be home before nightfall. By dusk, busy town life comes to a stop with the ceasing of public transport and moving around town once it is dark is generally regarded as unsafe.

Some staff arrive early in the day for work, such as the cooks and other staff in the mess, catering for three meals, seven days a week, for students paying board. The first major movement of students on campus in the day is the flow of students from dormitories into the student mess. The student population moving around campus swells in regular office and lecture hours and declines again when staff and students residing off campus return home. Continuing flows of students are then again punctuated by the evening meal for resident students, and sports practice such as rugby, rugby touch, or soccer on the sports field until dusk. Later in the evening, after the evening meal served in the mess, some lecture halls are used for Christian student fellowships, and students from dormitories and nearby off-campus residences move to and from the library, especially when nearing exams and assessments. Female student dormitories close at 10 PM, and in the later evenings movements around campus reduce to a drizzle of male students socialising outside dormitories or visiting friends and fellow male students in other dormitories. University staff working at these hours, and into the morning, are limited to the security personnel sourced from surrounding villages and settlements.

Besides academic activities, sports and Christian fellowships are important pastimes for many students. Student sports teams and Christian fellowships are registered with student services and benefit from support of the Student Representative Council. This may include supporting the participation of sports teams at PNG university games held every two years at one of PNG's universities. Some students also join off-campus mass and Christian fellowships on weekends. Besides such organised or more regular student activities, many students enjoy taking strolls down to Goroka's main market or shops in town in the afternoon or on weekends, attend rugby matches of the Goroka Lahanis at the National Sports Institute in West Goroka or local matches at the sports field in Lopi a little further south.

Other activities of more irregular nature are related to events of the provincial student associations. Provincial student associations often organise at least one event per year to gather all students from the province and their 'fans', as attendees from elsewhere are referred to. These gatherings feature speeches by internally elected executives of the student association, invited guests, often including a patron who is usually a university staff member from the same province, followed by a meal prepared by students that attendees are invited to share. Sometimes dances typical of the province, or parts thereof, are displayed, and provincial dance troupes also feature in other activities on campus and beyond, such as 'culture nights' in the main auditorium, for performances at conferences and events the university is hosting, or even at the annual Goroka show around PNG's independence day that sees a number of dance groups from near and far perform for each other and spectators from locals to foreign tourists.

Christianity at PNG Universities

A note on Christianity at universities is also in order, given the historical role of churches in education in PNG and the continuing importance of Christianity in PNG today. The legacy of Christianity in PNG, including generations of Christian indoctrination in the mostly missionary-run education system,[24] manifests itself in most realms of public life in PNG, including at its state-run universities. Academics at UPNG, for example, in conversation with me conveyed the strong Christian belief of their students, illustrating this for example with reference to the fact that most students

[24] Not everywhere was the adoption of Christianity in PNG the result of foreign missionary influence and indoctrination. Joel Robbins (2004), for example, discusses in detail the adoption of Christianity by a remote community without ever being converted from the outside.

refute the idea of 'biological evolution'. While the commitment to Christian faith among academic staff at UPNG is mixed, many senior academics at UPNG expressed their unease to me about sometimes narrow-minded commitment to religious doctrine among university students. A number of lecturers I spoke to mentioned that they encourage young university students to engage with alternative conceptions or ways of moving in the world to what they learned throughout their primary and secondary education in often missionary-run schools. For example, students should consider alternative (and scientific) explanations of biological life and diversity, or they should participate in sports activities that would otherwise not be considered appropriate by female students in light of conservative dress codes that they learned to adhere to throughout missionary school education. Some academics also are, even if mostly in private, frankly dismayed about the influence and strong hold of Christianity that they do not share a strong belief in. In summary, even though many academics at UPNG live a proactively Christian life, UPNG maintains a spirit of intellectual freedom and inquiry that one may not find at the younger and smaller universities in PNG.

At the University of Goroka, Christian faith and practice was proactively encouraged throughout my times there, with even the hierarchy of the university management proclaiming the university as a Christian university (despite it being state-run), actively fostering Christian student activity and proclaiming yearly mottos for the university's progress that were decidedly Christian in inspiration. Christianity is a taken-for-granted condition of life at the University of Goroka, and if some forms of Christian devotion in university activities are questioned, such as prayers at the beginning of university meetings, the emphasis on Christianity as such hardly is. Formal university meetings and gatherings always start with a prayer, for example, and senior academics can be seen making 'the advancing of Christian faith and devotion' the central proposal for progress towards PNG's development challenges in academic conference papers. Christian faith is elevated almost to a doxa (Bourdieu 1977). My own response, then, to the question which (Christian) denomination I belong to – that I am not a Christian – was usually responded to with an understanding nodding that I would be 'SNB', shorthand for '*stap nating na belief*' (which translates as 'believing without being affiliated to a particular church'). My additional clarification that this is not an accurate description as I do not believe in a Christian God usually provoked disbelief or was assumed to be a blunt joke. One may encounter indifference to religious activity by staff members at the University of Goroka, if not proactive participation, but in general Christianity is mostly a taken for granted fact.

Goroka, the PNG Highlands, the Nation

Goroka is a town of officially about 20,000 residents, according to the last census in 2010. Its resident population is likely somewhat higher today, and in daytime it swells in activity by people flocking into town from surrounding areas and further afar. Goroka is the provincial capital and most important urban centre of the Eastern Highlands. Its importance as urban economic centre reaches beyond the province, drawing migration and visits for different purposes from other parts of the PNG highlands and beyond, especially from neighbouring Simbu province. People from surrounding areas and other parts of the province, and beyond, come to Goroka to sell fresh produce (Barnett-Naghshineh 2018), coffee (West 2012), pigs, and handicrafts, to purchase wholesale supplies for trade stores, store goods at large such as cooking pans, clothes (new in supermarkets or second-hand from dedicated second-hand clothing shops ranging from small stores to those the size of airplane hangars), tools, to access banking services, healthcare, or to stroll, socialise, to gamble or play cards (Pickles 2013) or look for opportunities of different kinds of work.

Goroka is located on the Highlands Highway, also known as Okuk Highway, connecting it eastwards to the Markham valley where the road splits to lead to the coastal port and industrial hub of Lae, PNG's second-largest city, in one direction, and the smaller coastal town Madang in the other direction, and further to Bogia on the northern coast, where the road ends at the Ramu and Sepik river deltas. Westwards, the Highlands Highway connects Goroka to other highland provinces and provincial capitals such as Kundiawa in Simbu, further through Jiwaka province and to the Western Highlands capital of Mount Hagen, the largest city and economic hub of the highlands region, and then further west to Mendi in the Southern Highlands and Tari in Hela, including the PNG LNG project, and another bifurcation into Enga province, its capital Wabag, and further to the mining site of Porgera. Goroka is connected by air to Port Moresby, with several daily flights, and its airport is a hub for smaller planes operated by missionary organisations serving airfields in locations of the Eastern Highlands and Simbu's Karimui region that are not accessible by road.

Within PNG's highlands region, Goroka stands out for hosting numerous national institutions, research organisations, and regional bases for international organisations. Besides the university, Goroka serves, for example, as the headquarters for the PNG Institute of Medical Research, the National Sports Institute, the National Film Institute,

and the Fresh Produce Development Agency. The town further hosts a branch of the PNG National Museum & Art Gallery and a range of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the PNG Research and Conservation Foundation, the Institute for Biological Research, PNG highlands offices for International NGO's such as Oxfam and Save the Children, and a Christian ecumenical research organisation known as the Melanesian Institute.

The town of Goroka sits in a fertile stretch of a series of valleys surrounded by more mountainous terrain. Coffee is a major cash crop destined for the export market. Other crops that are grown for subsistence or local markets are peanuts, sweet potatoes, which is the highlands' major staple, and other starchy tubers such as potatoes, cassava, different kinds of yam, taro, vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cabbage, onions, ginger, beans, pumpkins, capsicum, cucumbers, chilis, and a range of local greens and leaf vegetables, besides tomatoes and fruits such as pineapples, a range of bananas, passion fruits, and many more (cf. Benediktsson 2001, Barnett-Naghshineh 2018).

Goroka is known for its pleasant perpetual spring weather and the fresh produce from its surrounding fertile valleys. The opportunities of Goroka as urban economic centre surrounded by fertile land attracts people settling in and around Goroka from different parts of the Eastern Highlands and neighbouring Simbu province especially. Simbu province, in contrast to Goroka, is characterised by rugged mountainous terrain and a much smaller provincial capital, Kundiawa, that do not provide the same level of entrepreneurial opportunity or access to services as Goroka, which is a common explanation for the number of people from Simbu province that move there. Residents of Goroka also take pride in the peacefulness and friendliness of the town, and their welcoming attitude to visitors. These characterisations of Goroka are evoked when people point to the fact that the town harbours the range of institutions and organisations listed above. Besides their friendly attitude, people explain the importance of Goroka as hub for national and international organisations as representing a trajectory of European contact in the PNG highlands, especially with missionaries that started setting up churches in the Eastern Highlands before spreading further west. Gorokans then sometimes stereotypically present the towns and provincial capitals to the west along the Highlands Highway as more rogue and rougher, for not having been blessed by Christianity for a similar depth of time, for example – a characterisation that I cannot confirm from my personal visits to Kundiawa in Simbu, Banz in Jiwaka, and Mount Hagen in the Western Highlands, where my interaction was just as much

characterised by warm and friendly welcomes and conversations. It is such stereotypical characterisations in the realm of appropriate relating and exchange, however, that I will explore in more detail in following chapters.

The bigger urban centre in the PNG highlands, the city of Mount Hagen, for example, has a resident population of about 50.000 inhabitants. It has less importance as a base for national institutions and organisations but is rather known as a centre of commerce and trade. It is located in the much larger Waghi valley. Hagen is thus at the heart of coffee production and is known for its entrepreneurial spirit and more significant cash-flow. Hageners take pride in this, as I will detail in the following chapters. Hagen is also closer to the major existing and prospective mining sites such as Porgera, Komo, Tabubil, and Mt. Kare, and mining personnel and supplies are flown into the sites not reachable by road through charter airplanes and helicopters from Hagen. I introduce Mount Hagen here, or Hagen as it is usually referred to, to provide a glimpse of contextual background to the analysis of different sensibilities surrounding exchange and the shaping of identities that also inform common stereotypy in PNG today that I will develop in the following chapters.

Similar stereotypy exists between coastal places and the highlands of PNG, comparable to how Gorokans frame their difference in terms of their welcoming friendliness versus the representation of more aggressive attitudes elsewhere in the highlands. People from the coastal regions of PNG, for example, often represent themselves as more laid-back than highlanders who they characterise as more aggressive. Coastal people often similarly evoke the notion of much more prolonged interaction with a European-dominated world system and missionaries for explanations of allegedly having learned to navigate it in more adequate terms, such as respecting bureaucratic procedure over collective affiliation and the expectation of personal favours based on common affiliation and identity versus others. I will not dwell on the specifics of all this stereotypy but refer to it here as a contextual example of the proliferation of stereotypy and representations of PNG's cultural diversity within PNG that I will touch on in following chapters.

PNG in general is today a place increasingly marked by inequality, and much more so than the 'fathers' of the nation had once imagined around the time of PNG's Independence. Much of PNG's economic wealth, and the elite that thrives on it, derives from and feeds on the petroleum and mining sectors. These comprise, in no particular

order, the Porgera gold mine in Enga province in the highlands (Golub 2014, Jacka 2015), the oil fields in Kutubu in the Southern Highlands (Weiner 1994), the gold mine on Lihir in New Ireland, the Ramu-Nickel mine in Madang, alluvial gold mining at Bulolo and Wau in Morobe province, and the notorious Ok Tedi mine in the Western Province (Kirsch 2014). The latest addition to extractive industries having arrived is the PNG LNG project in Hela province, that outstrips other existing mining ventures in turnover and expected revenue, which however has failed to generate the expected windfalls (Main & Fletcher 2018). The Bougainville copper mine at Paguna, once among the largest open pit mines in the world and PNG's largest revenue earner after independence, was closed in course of a civil war between a resurrection on the island province of Bougainville and PNG's army over conflicts of revenue distribution. With an independence referendum for Bougainville scheduled for 2019 as part of the peace process following the civil war, attempts to bring the Panguna mine back into operations have been intensifying over the last years. Other mining projects, such as at Mount Kare in Enga, Frieda-Strickland in the East Sepik, another LNG project in the Gulf province, and a controversial deep-sea mining project off the coast of New Ireland, are in different stages of planning.

PNG further exports agricultural, fishery, and forestry products. Main export commodity crops are coffee, cocoa, copra, and increasingly oil palm, which became the single most important export crop over the last decades (Bourke & Harwood 2009). These crops are grown for export by both smallholders and agribusiness corporations, especially the latter in the case of oil palm. For smallholders, the income from exported commodity cash crops constitutes a vital source for health and education expenses, such as the fees and costs associated with attending university for students without relatives in well-paying public or private employment, which will be a focus of the following chapters. Fisheries and forestry are theoretically strictly regulated sectors, but in practice illegal fishing and forestry exploitation by foreign fleets and loggers add to the legal operations by the like of Malaysian-owned Rimbaun Hijau group of companies in PNG. Over the last few decades, the Rimbaun Hijau business empire has extended beyond timber exports, now being a major player in oil palm plantations, owning one of the two national newspapers in PNG (The National), and becoming a significant player in real estate property development, owning for example Port Moresby's largest shopping mall (Vision City), and the adjacent Stanley Hotel & Suites, located in the heart of Port Moresby's government quarter Waigani. Its PNG website's tagline 'A Genuine Partner in PNG's Nation Building Process' (http://www.rhpng.com.pg/) cannot

be said to be an understatement. Nevertheless, its role within the larger development framework or context based on foreign extractive industry players dominating PNG's economy even beyond their traditional extractive activities is contested in public perception and debate.

In the perception of many Papua New Guineans, the 'partnerships' between the national political and business elite and such foreign extractive industries that increasingly tap into other realms of the PNG economy and the shaping of public opinion, as when expanding into the news media sector for example, are far too close.[25] Papua New Guineans often allege that their political leaders in the form of Members of Parliament (MPs), especially government ministers, in collusion with public service offices, allow and facilitate the unchecked expansion of foreign business and economic interests that show little concern for PNG's long-term economic development. It is a common suspicion in PNG that the majority of MPs are more interested in their own accumulation of wealth than a genuine concern for the people that voted for them in the first place. People acknowledge, however, that the criteria Papua New Guineans use when supporting a specific candidate may be part of the problem that fuels exactly such priority for their MPs: many people, perhaps even most, make no secret of their predilection to give their vote to a candidate whom they either received or are most likely to receive a direct financial benefit from. In other words, while direct vote-buying is illegal in PNG, MPs that want to stay in power may be more concerned about people's evaluation of their performance based on direct material benefits such as cash hand-outs rather than their impact in legislative processes or, arguably, service-delivery and infrastructure development in their constituencies. This adds to a relative absence of 'left' and 'right' ideological frameworks in PNG politics, or their legibility at least appears compromised through these dynamics.

The importance of the MPs delivering a tangible benefit to their constituencies in their capacity as elected 'leaders' has been innovatively acknowledged in PNG's parliamentary democracy by equipping MPs with a handsome annual budget of Provincial or District Service Improvement Programme (PSIP and DSIP) funds. Ever since, however, especially with their rising share in PNG's annual budget allocations, people suspect that these funds are as much used to enrich MPs as they are used to

[25] Another example of a foreign business that has expanded into PNG's news media sector over the last years is Digicel, a telecommunications enterprise that is part of a group of companies owned by controversial Irish businessman Denis O'Brien.

improve service delivery in their constituencies. People then often joke that the election as MP is the fastest way to become a millionaire in PNG. This is not a mere joke, however, and PNG's national elections are among the most competitive in the world, with record numbers of contesting candidates. Party affiliations play only a minor role in personal election campaigns. Indeed, affiliations are frequently changed depending on election outcomes, in order to join government ranks, and candidates often indebt themselves in the campaign process, placing pressure on themselves for recouping financial means in case of being successful in elections.

There are different pathways to achieving a standing in constituencies that warrant an attempt to a candidature in national elections. Among them is success in business that allows for funding election campaigns through personal funds. Another one is the rapport established in constituencies as potential leader. Another important platform for starting national election campaigns is the prominent involvement in student politics as a student leader. Many national politicians look back at careers in student politics, and many student leaders continue to contest national elections, especially those who were leading prolonged student strikes and demonstrated their efficacy in mobilising a following among students that they managed to effectively channel into antagonistic politics against university administrators or the national government. My analysis of a student strike in Chapters Eight to Ten adds to an understanding of these processes and phenomena in PNG today.

SECTION I - EXCHANGE & IDENTITY

Chapter Five - Experiences of Social Stratification

In this chapter, I draw on life histories and ethnographic observations to chart out personal experiences of students and staff at the University of Goroka as they manoeuvre social expectations and their own aspirations in their education and careers. What becomes visible in these trajectories, I suggest, are the kinds of concerns that an educated and wage-earning stratum in PNG faces in social relations to kin. Put differently, I illustrate how Melanesian conceptions of relational sociality are challenged by forms of social differentiation and stratification inherent to university education. Ira Bashkow, for example, calls attention to the peculiar kind of individual attachment that education is for a person: an educational degree as a manifestation of wealth that is attached to a person in ways that defies easy redistribution or dis-attachment (2006:138). According to Bashkow, this creates a moral dilemma for Melanesian notions of reciprocity, redistribution, and related egalitarian ideologies. Following on from this observation, in the present chapter, I explore in how far, or in what specific ways, a university education and ensuing career creates a moral dilemma for my interlocutors; and how they deal with or resolve this dilemma in their relations to kin.

These considerations provide for some basic framing of the material that I outline below. By introducing a number of informants in different stages of their education and career, I trace whether there might be indications for a change in how kin relations are construed in Melanesia today as part of broader processes of social change among educated wage-earners. The reflections of interlocutors and ethnographic observations I outline only provide snapshots of their reflections at a certain moment of time, in any case. The span of time of thesis fieldwork is insufficient to depict change over time in the ways specific individuals may come to think differently about their careers and trajectories. Nevertheless, by drawing on a cross-section of interlocutors from undergraduate students in different stages of study, in-service students that return to studies from established teaching careers, to university staff, I provide a picture of how reflections and ideas about kin relations are shaped and changing over a life course and career. Ultimately, however, the accounts I provide are heterogeneous and correlate to different processes of social change in PNG rather than pointing to a clear pattern in sociological terms.

In this chapter, then, I provide a narrative of reflexive processes of individuation as part of processes of social stratification. By providing these accounts, with a focus on reflections on kin relations, I foreground certain elements of my interlocutors' narratives and observations, while momentarily backgrounding others. In the present chapter, I stop short of analysing the outlined material as potentially revealing different moral sensibilities about kin relations and reciprocity for informants from different parts of PNG. These will instead be a stronger focus in the following two chapters.

Entering University: A Change in Status

Many students remarked that coming to university was a novel experience for them, unlike anything they experienced before. In the first section of this chapter, I focus on undergraduate students coming to university from secondary schools. Their reflections and experiences mark a transition of status, as a privileged few who make it to university in PNG. This often involves a qualitative change in relations to extended kin and home communities in two immediate ways. Firstly, for many it requires expanding the network of kin to request support in contributing to university fees and expenses throughout their studies. Secondly, it sets them apart from many of their peers in the village or in secondary school, as well as extended kin at large, as someone having access to one of the most valued but scarce trajectories to status and wealth in PNG today: a university education. In the first years at university, students learn to navigate this change to their status and new position vis-à-vis kin and peers at home. Their trajectory remains somewhat open and unconsolidated in any case, for it remains uncertain whether they will be successful at university or find employment after. They also continue to depend on kin while at university, and usually more so than before in financial terms, for the significant amount of fees and expenses required to pursue studies. For many students in early stages of their studies, it is hardly clear to them what they imagine their future trajectory to be once they obtain their degree. It is a time of reorientation, both in terms of relations to kin at home, and their personal outlook towards the future. I here introduce some students, and staff, and their reflections on the experience of being at university.

Paul

At the end of the academic year in 2013, I was on an errand in town when I met Paul at Goroka's central bus stop opposite the entrance to the airport. Privately operated local PMV's (Public Motor Vehicles), usually '10-seater' Toyota Hiace models, drop and pick up passengers there. Small stalls of betel-nut vendors cater for waiting passengers, as buses arrive, with their 'bus-crew' calling out their respective destinations: 'north, unigate', 'west, haus sik'. Paul had seen off some friends at the airport who returned home for the holidays. Disinclined to walk my shopping up to the campus, a walk of about 30 minutes from town, but glad to meet Paul at the end of the academic year without him being busy with completing assignments and studying for exams, I offered to cover his bus fare to campus to carry on a conversation. Paul is from a relatively remote place towards the end of the feeder roads linking the southern parts of Simbu's highlands to the Highlands Highway. After completing primary school there, he attended a high school in closer proximity to the highway, where he completed Grade 12.

Paul had just finished his first year at the University of Goroka at the time, in the Science programme, and was thinking about the starting university holidays. An uncle suggested that he stay with him in Port Moresby over the holidays and bought him an open flight ticket from Goroka. Paul, however, was hesitant. It would be his first time in PNG's capital Port Moresby, and he was wondering if he was going to get stuck there and perhaps lose the interest to return to Goroka and his studies. More immediately, however, he was worried about what signal it would send to his relatives back home in Simbu if he was going directly to Port Moresby from Goroka without visiting them. He thus considered returning to Simbu first before embarking on a flight to Port Moresby.

As we got off the bus at the university gate and walked up to the University of Goroka's Humilaveka hilltop campus, Paul mentioned that he often ponders the idea of a life in a distant coastal place, far away from the reach of kin and 'highland influences'. He spoke of 'going into hiding', far away from the pressures and expectations of kin. Even though he just completed the first of four years towards a university degree, the expectations that will be placed upon him once he will earn money presented a marked concern that he spoke about spontaneously. He added that not many kin support him with university fees, but that he anticipates that expectations towards him will be high and widely spread regardless once he finishes his degree and enters income-generating

employment. While it was only Paul's first year at university, his reflections on future relations to kin following a university degree resonate with those of many students, usually becoming more acute for students in their final years of studies and at the brink of employment. What makes these thoughts a salient feature of Paul's perspective is that he is among the first of his extended kin and wider community to enter university, with only one person from his community having obtained a tertiary degree before.

Arriving on the Humilaveka hilltop, we decided to continue the conversation in my dormitory flat, where Paul detailed how he gathered the fees for his study at university. Fees for his programme at the University of Goroka were 3411 Kina, 75% of which needed to be paid upon registration (2558 Kina). He had a HECAS government scholarship (see Chapter Four), so this was a subsidised fee rate that included boarding and lodging at the University of Goroka. The backbone of his fees derived from coffee sales by his father, including coffee that he himself had planted while still at secondary school. Additionally, two aunts from his mother's side chipped in contributions of around 600 Kina, and another uncle contributed 300 Kina. Together with the proceeds from coffee, this was sufficient for initial registration. When outstanding fees were due prior to the second semester, support provided by the Simbu Governor's office to students from the province at the University of Goroka helped cover the remainder. He was able to save another 1600 Kina over the year from proceeds of the coffee he had planted, which he intended to save for the fees of the coming academic year, even though 600 of this he gave to his mother when she fell sick. With only 1000 Kina in his hands, and another 300 Kina excess still in the university accounts, he worried about obtaining the outstanding amount for the coming year. He placed hope on the Simbu Governor to support students more substantially and before the academic year rather than in the middle of it. Regardless, he was hopeful that he would manage to collect sufficient fees but said he would consider joining the army or police if he was not. As for many students, the beginning of the university holidays shifted Paul's attention from exams and assignment to a preoccupation with gathering the fees for the coming academic year. Leaving the university for Christmas holidays is for many students marked by uncertainty whether they will be able to return the following year. This especially applies to students from rural areas, such as Paul, whose families' major income source is through the marketing of garden produce, coffee, or pigs. Paul only started to rely on the support of extended kin when he entered university, while the expenses for secondary school could be met through his family's coffee sales alone. His parents were in fact always committed to cover the expenses for his primary and

secondary schooling all by themselves as long as they could possibly afford it, without drawing on contributions from kin, so as to avoid specific expectations on Paul resulting later. Having made it to university, however, he expects that when they face specific needs people will look to him for support regardless of their contributions to his studies, after he has begun to earn an income.

Paul stressed that he experienced a marked shift in how he is seen and related to back home since he entered university. He is treated with a lot of respect and is accorded a different status within the community. People thus more actively look after his well-being when he visits, and he says that people would bring him anything he requests, going to great lengths to demonstrate the special respect accorded to him now. Paul also had reason to be confident, then, in relying on extended kin and community to gather his fees for the coming year. Being the only person currently at university from his place, and only the second person ever, everyone back home took pride in his achievements and would support him, if he needed. He was also confident that he could count on his uncle in Port Moresby, who already signalled his willingness to support him now by purchasing him a flight ticket to spend the university holidays in the national capital. At the same time, he and his parents continued in trying to limit the circle of people they asked for financial support as much as they could, to avoid the associated '*hevi*' (weight, burden, heaviness) of specific reciprocal expectations in future.

Paul also detailed considerations about his larger ambitions and future plans. He long held the ambition to work in PNG's mining sector, and he worked hard in secondary school towards achieving this goal. He was one of the best students in secondary school. When the time came to fill out the School Leaver's form in the final year of secondary school, he indicated the Mining Engineering programme at PNG's University of Technology in Lae (Unitech) as his first choice. His father let him place his first choice accordingly but indicated his preference for the second choice as the University of Goroka's Science programme, also for the proximity of Goroka, where his family could play a more supportive role for him. As third choice, he indicated UPNG's Science programme.

Paul managed to achieve sufficiently high grades to be accepted into his programme of choice, the prestigious Mining Engineering programme at Unitech. His ambitions for the mining sector were inspired by an uncle who works in the mining sector. However,

once he received confirmation about his acceptance into the Mining Engineering programme, his father became worried about the high fees this required, almost double to those at the University of Goroka, and encouraged Paul to change his mind. The fees were simply out of reach for his family. Paul sought support from his uncle in the mining sector, but he was not able to support him with the fees either and discouraged him from attempting to join the Mining Engineering programme at Unitech. In the end, then, Paul settled on the Science programme at the University of Goroka. Despite having achieved outstanding grades that got him admitted into a very competitive programme limited to 20 annual admissions, the required fees were simply out of reach.

Paul's story is typical for many students at the university in different regards. For one, his ambitions and high grades achieved in secondary school pointed to a different possibility: to pursue his dream of studying the prestigious Mining Education programme at Unitech. As for many other students I spoke to, the University of Goroka was not his first choice. Some students come to Goroka when not admitted to UPNG or Unitech, the more prestigious universities in the country requiring a higher GPA. Others, such as Paul, attended the University of Goroka despite admission to UPNG or Unitech, as they could not cover the required fees. This was a common narrative for high-achieving students of a similar background from rural areas who mostly depended on the marketing of agricultural produce and networks of kin to fund their university studies.

Further, the continuous dependency on kin for the following years at university required him to think about the relations to the kin supporting him, and to navigate these relations carefully. This made him think that he would give the wrong signal to supportive kin at home when he would spend his university holidays in Port Moresby rather than returning to the village. At the same time, he could not deny the offer from his more financially solvent uncle inviting him to spend his holidays in Port Moresby, even though he was hesitant to follow this invitation. It required him to think carefully about how to positively affirm the different relations that he relied on. Besides these thoughts about carefully navigating relations, the experience of being accorded special treatment and respect when visiting home is also a common one for students who, like Paul, are among the first, or a few, to make it to university.

Jack

I met Jack during student registration at the beginning of the academic year in 2014. Jack only arrived at the University of Goroka in the days before. He is from southern parts of the Southern Highlands Province, where he completed secondary school. A number of his close relatives reside in the provincial capital of Mendi, where he went to primary school before. Like Paul, Jack was keenly interested to work in PNG's mining sector and had also applied to Unitech's prestigious Mining Engineering programme. He did not make it into the tight cut of admission, but still made it into the reserve list of the programme's limited admission numbers. The high fees at Unitech were also a concern to his family, and the uncertainty of the reserve list not sufficiently promising to gamble on by declining his offer from the University of Goroka. He then decided to join the University of Goroka instead. He came up to Goroka from Unitech with one of his former classmates in secondary school, who also decided to join the University of Goroka after failing to collect sufficient fees for enrolling at Unitech.

Jack's close relatives in Mendi held positions in the public service and had also started business activities going beyond the Southern Highlands Province. They thus also looked after his university fees. Like Paul, Jack was among the first to make it to university from his community in the southern parts of the province, where no one else enjoyed the benefits of employment apart from the relatives in Mendi. Having been looked after by his relatives in Mendi for many years, he basically regarded them as parents, and their relative standing vis-à-vis kin back in the village made it either futile or inappropriate to gather contributions to his university fees from the village kin who did not have easy access to financial means. His sponsors and adoptive parents in Mendi, however, also faced a period of financial hardship at the time when Jack entered university. They had to pay a substantial compensation the previous year in relation to a sports accident in which one of Jack's brothers was involved. A rugby tackle ended badly and left another player seriously injured, who eventually passed away after prolonged struggle with the effects of the injuries suffered. Jack's relatives took out a substantial loan, which they struggled to pay back, to compensate the family who lost their son. Jack said he could possibly request contributions from his mother's kin in another area of the Southern Highlands, who included many successful businessmen. He said they may support him if asked, but he was hesitant to ask his mother's kin, because of an altercation he had at her place some years back, and relations to his mother's kin were somewhat tense since then.

I kept conversing with Jack about his experience at university throughout the first semester in 2014, and he was a frequent visitor to my dormitory flat. Because of the difficulty of his family to raise his fees, he paid only the tuition component for studies at the university without the subsidised boarding and lodging component that his HECAS scholarship would help him access. He thus used to bunk up with others who had a spot in the dormitories, and for meals usually relied on a relative who was employed in an auxiliary position at the university. I sometimes asked him and his friend from high school days to come over for dinner when I met them. Once, then, they organised for relatives to collect a large bag of their favourite leaf vegetable back in their place, which is not available in Goroka and that I had expressed curiosity about. One of them went to Hagen to meet relatives there – halfway between Goroka and their place in the Southern Highlands – to collect the bag stuffed with leaf vegetables (a 40kg broiler feed bag) and brought it to me (Figure 3).

Figure 3*: A stock feed bag filled with 'black kumu' leaves.*

What this exemplified was another aspect of their experience of the newly gained status of being a university student as 'first among kin.' Like Paul, Jack reported that his experience of going back to the Southern Highlands for visits over the semester were an entirely new experience in the way extended kin and people from his village treated and looked after him. He also used the formulation of a special kind of respect being accorded to him by everyone back home since commencing university studies. As such, Jack and his friend were able to ask their relatives to bring a significant quantity of garden produce to Hagen, requiring time and resources, for handing it over to them.

Jack also gave other examples of how his status was special now back in his village. Those who operated a popular 'piksa haus' (video house) in the village, for example, made sure to start the generator when he returned, and in contrast to others coming to see movies they screened on a TV set, would not ask him the usual fee to enter. Moreover, they also offered him to charge his phone and laptop (which relatives bought him as he entered university) without the usual fee for this service. People would offer him food, buy soft drinks, betel nuts and cigarettes when at the local market, or offer small amounts of money to help with his bus fare to return to Goroka. All this only started when he entered university, it had not been the case before to such a generalised extent. Moreover, he reported that his admission to university sparked enthusiasm in his village for pursuing education. People dismissed focusing on education earlier, as they had no success, and people regarded it as a curse upon them that education did not prove to be a successful pathway for them, effectively diminishing people's desire to pursue it. This has changed recently however, according to Jack, and his achievement of university admission brought enthusiasm for education to his village. While being the first one admitted to university at the time of our conversation, he expected that many others in secondary education at the time would follow in the coming years.

His admission to university also had another effect on his community that may not be self-evident. Jack often characterised his home area as one that experienced many fights between warring sections for different reasons. The fact that his place is located on the route where marijuana is exchanged for high-powered weapons, between the marijuana-growing highlands provinces and illegal arms supply through the Kikori delta, makes for a volatile situation in which local conflicts and altercations can quickly flare up into larger conflicts that involve use of dangerous weaponry that may lead into high numbers of casualties. Another indication of the respect and concern about him by his larger community, then, was for them to stay out of local conflicts and refrain from conflict-deepening spirals of retaliation. They did this out of the concern that anyone with grievances against them could try to harm Jack at university, where he was exposed and unprotected. Killings of university students in relation to local conflicts have been reported earlier from PNG universities, and Jack was careful to retain a low profile at university, refraining from detailing his exact place of affiliation and provenance to strangers at university and in Goroka.

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The reflections of Jack and Paul on coming to university call attention to shifts in relations to kin and in the dynamics of acquiring a new social status, including suddenly becoming the type of person who is accorded special recognition, such as by virtue of being a university student. In contrast to Jack's reflections, Paul's thoughts also considerably revolved around the careful manoeuvring of kin relations through his own actions, such as whom to visit, and when, including an acute awareness that the wider the circle of extended kin that he actively draws to his support, the broader spread may be the burden through specific expectations for reciprocity on him in the future. There may be different reasons for such reflections to not play an equally prominent role for Jack. In general, Paul articulated these concerns saliently in ways that few first-year students whom I talked to foregrounded in their thoughts, or at least in conversation with me – these were rather concerns that became more pressing for students towards the end of their studies, as I will detail below. I will also return to differential dynamics of such concerns in more detail in the following chapter, however, where I suggest that they also correspond to different sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and exchange across the PNG highlands and beyond. For now, however, I shift focus to the reflections of students towards the end of their studies.

Finishing University: Employment and the Reach of Kin

Nancy

At the beginning of the academic year in 2013, just shortly after my arrival at the university for fieldwork, I was helping the Divisions of Indigenous, Environment and Development Studies, and of Social Science, by doing course advising for students in their fourth (and final) year of undergraduate studies. This comprised clarifying the options available to students and signing registration forms to approve selected options after verifying that choices were in accordance with programme requirements and students' selected streams of studies. Many of the students coming in for course advising remembered me from my earlier time at the university in 2010, when they were in their first year of studies. Course advising thus facilitated conversations with students who recalled my earlier presence at the university, greeted me cordially, and inquired about my renewed presence there. Among them was Nancy, a final year student in the Education programme, specialising in Humanities and Social Science. Over the months that followed, we regularly engaged in brief conversations when crossing paths on campus, and she agreed for me to interview her more formally about

her personal trajectory. Nancy is from the Sepik region, named after the Sepik river flowing northwards into the Bismarck Sea. Nancy came a longer distance to Goroka than Paul and Jack, for example, involving flights or a combination of road and sea travel. Her partial government scholarship included airfares to and from university once a year.

Nancy's biological parents are subsistence farmers – both 'biological parents' and 'subsistence farmers' are categories that she herself used. She spent her initial childhood years in their village. At the behest of her father's elder brother based in the provincial capital of Wewak, she transferred to a primary school in Wewak for better quality education. She stayed with her uncle until completing secondary education in Wewak, and then joining the University of Goroka for its Bachelor of Education programme. She was a good student in secondary school, and her uncle suggested that in her School Leaver Form in the final year of secondary school, she should indicate the Law programme at UPNG as her first choice. She said she was hesitant, not entirely confident about joining UPNG and whether her marks would be sufficient. Instead, she marked the University of Goroka as her first choice as a cousin of her already studied there, opted for Goroka Technical College as second choice, and indicated a Teachers College in Wewak as third choice. When her marks turned out good enough to make the cut for Law at UPNG, her uncle was disappointed, and she regretted not including UPNG in her choices. She thus went to the University of Goroka with a HECAS scholarship, while her uncle supports her with the remainder of tuition fees and expenses.

Being in her final year at the university, Nancy evaluated her options for applying to schools for a teaching position once she would complete her degree. Her uncle and kin expected her to apply for schools in Wewak or the East Sepik Province. She, however, mentioned that she preferred to stay in Goroka, or to apply to schools in other provinces and urban centres such as Madang, Rabaul, or elsewhere, rather than in Wewak. If it was for her to choose, she would go to Bougainville, but she thought that her family may not allow her to do so. These were her reflections at the time of the mid-semester break. By the end of her final year, and after doing her practical teaching practice back in Wewak at her former secondary school, she had applied to schools in Goroka, Manus, Bougainville, and the New Britain provinces. A first offer she received was from a school in Bougainville. Mentioning this to her family, her uncle called her to question why she applied for schools so far away rather than back home. She in

response tried to explain that she applied for schools everywhere and that this was simply the first offer she received to date. Clearly, the expectations for her whereabouts were different to her own preferences. Over the Christmas holidays, back home in East Sepik, she also received an offer for a school in West New Britain and was weighing her options. In the end, she decided to go to Bougainville. When I asked her whether her family was now more at ease with her teaching in a faraway place, she replied in a text message:

> Like, I have told you already, there are too many relatives in Sepik, and if I stay in Sepik I won't be able to save up any money, but if I go further away it will be easier for me to send money back home to my family, so my family agreed/is happy for me to go elsewhere
>
> (Olsem mi tkm yu onis,wantok pulap lo sepik so mi stap sepik ba mi nonap save up gud,mi go longwe ba isi lo mi salm money lo family 4 mi,ol family 4 mi 1bel lo mi go longwe [sic])

In the months before, this seemed not a self-evident response by her family, and Nancy needed to negotiate her preferences with her family. After all, when starting to work in a public school, it takes about six months for teachers' pay to be processed by the National Education Department. Those joining the teaching profession for the first time thus have to wait to receive their salary for substantial periods of time, before being on the payroll and receiving their pay backdated to the time they started. This often makes it harder for aspiring teachers to decide to follow their own preferences rather than following the expectations of relatives and sponsors whom they may still rely on for support until receiving their first salary. Some schools offer allowances to teachers in their initial months to buffer the period without pay, but not all schools are in a financial position to do so. Despite Nancy's family's earlier expectations to have her close by, in this case, she was able to make her own preferences intelligible to her family in terms of the abilities to support them. If she was to be at home, she would expose herself to many more people seeking her support. In a place further away, however, she would be in a better position to save money to concentrate on the support of her more immediate family.

Nancy's story illustrates the negotiation of two sets of considerations for those becoming wage-earning teachers. On one hand, as Nancy stresses, there is the wish to escape the close web of relationships to extended kin back home, persons who may expect to be acknowledged through receiving money when in need or met in town. Instead, students finishing their degrees and contemplating their next step articulate the

desire for personal freedom and distance to demanding kin, by being in a place beyond their reach. On the other hand, they also wish to support their more immediate kin and feel obliged to those who supported them throughout their studies. In this case, Nancy was able to convince her immediate family of the benefits of her moving elsewhere for them, as she will be better able to focus on supporting them if not being constantly within the reach of a broader set of extended kin that also may articulate demands towards her. Towards the end of her first year working as a teacher, then, Nancy was categorising her savings of the year according to order of priority: 'family obligations and commitments' came first, things that she wanted to buy for herself were second.

The preference to be closer to extended kin or rather be somewhere else is often also a gendered perspective. Male teachers with long-term political ambitions may opt to remain closer to their extended kin and community to build up rapport through sustained engagement in their constituency. Female teachers, in contrast, may in PNG's male-dominated politics be more inclined to follow their desire for more personal freedom beyond the reach and watch of kin. It remains, however, a bolder step for a female teacher to go to an unknown place as a starting teacher, and the contacts that becoming teachers make throughout their studies at university can be crucial for female teachers to opt for schools in locations where they have some contacts already from their time at university.

Kevin

Another final year student who I spent considerable time with was Kevin, from the Western Highlands. He was taking the Science stream of the Education programme. Throughout most of his time at the university, he shared a dormitory cubicle with a childhood friend of his, with whom he went to primary school together. They went to different secondary schools, but then reunited again in going to the University of Goroka.

Like Nancy, Kevin started telling me his story by referring to his parents as subsistence farmers. He went to a primary school near his village and topped grade 8 exams. He was then selected into a high school that is located in what is today Jiwaka Province. In those times, fees for high school were almost 1000 Kina, and these were collected through contributions by many relatives back in his community besides his parents. His parents made income mainly from selling coffee, wing beans, and peanuts, and to lesser

extent from sales of greens and ripe bananas. He himself became involved in planting and looking after coffee while still in primary school and has continued to work on land and to tend to coffee gardens when on school holidays. As a general rule, he says that people in his community look after needs of community members collectively, by contributing to each other's needs and affairs when they arise rather than through individual families' saving up for future liabilities such as school fees, bride-prices, or other projects and activities that require larger sums of money. He says his parents nevertheless started thinking about his school fees more in advance as he entered grade 11 and 12, as fees had reached 1200 Kina then. While his parents input thus increased, so did the contributions by extended kin and members of the community at large. This is also the way he was funded at university. He was the only person in tertiary education in his community at the time, which made it easier to collect the higher fees for his final year of study, reaching 4136 Kina, through contributions from relatives. As his parents became older with limited ability to raise substantial contributions to his fees through working on land, they requested the community to come forward with contributions. A brother of his father contributed 600 Kina, and many others between 100 and 200 Kina, towards getting the full amount required together in the end.

Kevin says that he had no particular aim in mind throughout his schooling years, he just tried to do as well as he could. His parents inculcated in him a sense that school was important, although there was no particular background of educational experience in his community that could have guided him more specifically in the task of schooling. He stressed that this may be a different experience in comparison to others whose parents or kin had more significant experience in education.

Before starting his studies at the University of Goroka, he stayed back at his village for a year, as he was not accepted into any choices of preference listed on his school leaver form. He was a very good student throughout his school years, but his performance dropped in grade 12, as he started spending more time with classmates on other things. His first choice was the Science programme at UPNG, but he did not make the cut. His second choice was a teacher's college in Hagen, but the drop in his grade average in the final year combined with the limited number of available spaces in such a smaller institution did not have him selected either. With proper advice, he ponders that he should have put the University of Goroka among his choices back then, where he would have been admitted. Instead, he stayed a year at home in the village and applied to the University of Goroka as a non-school leaver for the following year. He was shortlisted

and then passed the entry test. Entering higher education without direct succession from secondary school makes one ineligible for the HECAS scheme government scholarships. As these are awarded on an annual basis based on the grade average of the previous year, however, one is eligible again in the second year of studies based on first-year results.

I had also known Kevin from my time in Goroka in 2010, when he was a first-year student. When I met Kevin again in his final year in 2013, he had successfully made it onto the HECAS scholarship scheme. When he did not count with the HECAS scholarship earlier on in his studies, he had stayed with a family from the Asaro area of the Eastern Highlands Province, who resided in a settlement near the university. For him, the experience of coming to university has been especially significant in terms of learning different ways of different people. It was only at university that he really came to appreciate the varied and diverse 'cultures' people brought with them from both within PNG and beyond. This experience made him aware of a wider world and facilitated a change in attitude, and he extended this assessment to the experience of others. He says it made a difference in the way one sees and approaches other people, who come with their own background that is distinct from what one took for granted before.

One way in which these differences in people's background and 'culture' manifested for Kevin were the relations people had to extended kin and their home communities. Kevin noted that for many places in PNG, those becoming university-educated had ambiguous relationships to their home communities, keeping at a geographical distance as much as keeping general attachment to their kin (as also exemplified by Nancy above). A phenomenon that he mentioned in this regard was envy ('jelesi' in Tok Pisin or 'jealousy' in PNG English) that people were subjected to, and pressures to conform to a certain style of conduct vis-à-vis their community. I will detail such perceived differences in the next chapter, but here just note the way Paul and Nancy also talked about their thoughts to stay at places far away from kin and their influence in day to day life. Kevin stressed that this is different for him, and that there are no impediments or second thoughts for him to go back to stay with his kin. While the entire community places expectations on him once he becomes a wage-earning teacher, these expectations do not take a form that make them feel like a burden for Kevin, as they may for others elsewhere.

When the end of the academic year neared in 2013 and Kevin was finishing his studies, he was quick to take hold of an opportunity for work that arose. A delegation of schools from Enga province and Enga's provincial education department visited the university for the recruitment of teachers among final year students. They offered enticing packages for interested candidates, including arrangements to bridge payments until the National Department of Education got new teachers on to the payroll, and to transport students' belongings directly from Goroka to respective schools in Enga as students completed their time in Goroka. Kevin did not hesitate and signed on to teach in a school in Enga the following year, packing boxes with his books to be taken there.

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In the stories and reflections of the final year undergraduate students introduced here, the attention shifts more markedly to the time of employment after finishing studies and manoeuvring the expectations from relatives and extended kin. This is the time when a person's role changes from that of a student with financial needs to a wage-earner who could assist others and reciprocate the support and care received until then. Even where navigating relations to kin are not perceived as burdensome, as in Kevin's case, it is acknowledged that these are among the most pressing concerns that those finishing a university degree think about. Final year students generally worry about appropriate forms of relating to kin once they move on to salaried employment.

Consider Nancy's case illustrated above, for example. The negotiation of her desire to work at a place distant from home was made plausible by concerns about appropriate forms of relating to close and extended kin. Choosing to be at a place distant from home meant choosing to focus on some relations more than on others. If she worked back home in Wewak, she would not be able to escape acknowledging the relationship to people she would cross paths with in town through material tokens of appreciation. At the same time, she is committed to support her family in the village, as students generally are. What she worried about were the material effects of appropriately relating to extended kin in a place where she would be one of a few kinspersons with regular income among many without. These considerations, in a way, hold for all wage-earners in PNG. As I will detail in the following chapter, however, there are differences to the way these considerations become specific concerns, and ultimately to the sensibilities of reciprocity and exchange that underlie them.

Returning to University: Consolidated Ways of Relating

Grant

Besides undergraduate students coming to university from secondary schools, the University of Goroka also offers in-service degrees for teachers. Many teachers in PNG hold certificates or diplomas from teachers' colleges around the country, and come to Goroka for an in-service programme, often while seconded from schools and supported by provincial education departments, to upgrade their qualifications to a university degree. Others, with degrees already, come for postgraduate studies, although more rarely. Grant was one such in-service student, whom I met at the University of Goroka in 2013 when he did the second (and final) year of his in-service degree. He is from an area in the north of Jiwaka Province, a relatively remote place, from which very few students are at the University of Goroka or other tertiary institutions.

Grant marks a transition between generations from his area, as he stresses, being in his late forties when we met. His area came under control of the colonial Australian administration only by the late 1950s, with Anglican missionaries establishing schools around 1960. His place underwent significant changes when it came under colonial administration. It was previously characterised by animosity with their neighbours, with whom they had longstanding feuds. Although he was still young when it occurred, his father remembered this era. His father was given a special role, according to Grant, to be a sentinel to relay happenings as they happened on the battlefield to those back in the community. This role was made obsolete with the stop to open animosity under colonial administration, and so was the 'belief' in the 'spiritual' forces that allowed one to perceive and relay happenings as they happened on the battlefield from a separate area in the community's *hausman.*[26] With colonial administration, also missionaries that arrived at the time discouraged these aspects of traditional life. His father, as sole custodian to this knowledge, decided to not pass it on to Grant, but is determined to carry it into the grave with him, as Grant remarked in explicit approval of his father's decision. Grant regards this kind of knowledge as not relevant to this time, adding that he is not personally interested to obtain it either. He believes in God, and these practices and beliefs of prior times would not fit today's life and beliefs. To the contrary, he

[26] Men's houses, in Tok Pisin referred to as *hausman*, were a central social institution in the PNG hjghlands before the increasing influence of missionaries. Men and boys from a certain age resided together in the *hausman*, before missionaries promoted co-residential arrangements based on nuclear families.

warns, they could become dangerous in unsettling the chosen path of God and contemporary times, creating unnecessary interference that could, literally, lead into death.

Grant was among the first of his place to make it through school. Only the best in the local mission-operated primary school were sent for high school outside the community. He was selected for another mission-operated school in the highlands, not very far from his community, yet still at considerable distance for the time in question. It was one of the best performing schools in the country at the time. Back then, in the mid- to late 1970s, school fees for high school were about 120 to 150 Kina, money that was hard to gather in his remote community, off the road network and with hardly established marketing possibilities for agricultural produce. His parents sold pigs for his school fees, and, when short, asked other families to contribute. He was clear that collecting his school fees was not a collective endeavour in his community, but that it was his parents' responsibility to raise his school fees, only approaching other specific families for contributions of some 20 Kina or so when short.

Resonating with Kevin's experience of schooling outlined above, who went to the same high school, Grant says that school was something entirely new to relate to, without prior experience among his community that could have helped to guide him. He just tried to do as good as he could, without a specific aim in mind. When nearing the completion of grade 10, one teacher in particular encouraged students to go into technical professions, as there was lots of demand expected in the country. He did not know about the professions the teacher talked about, all he knew were missionaries and teachers. But there was someone from his area who had become an electrician, and so Grant was choosing this too as he applied to join vocational training programmes after completing Grade 10. He was accepted into a technical college in Port Moresby to be trained as electrician.

When he returned to the village, however, people were frightened about the idea of him going to Port Moresby to become an electrician. He was always among the smallest of his age group, and people worried whether he had the strength to cope with life in a distant place away from kin. They were also worried he would get electrocuted and discouraged him from going. He ended up staying in the village, participating in village life like everyone else. He joined a local string band that became popular in the area, which made him travel the district to heed invitations to perform in different places.

This made him temporarily forget the embarrassment of having returned to the village from school, whereas some of his classmates proceeded into nursing and teacher training, and made the village swell with pride when returning for Christmas holidays. Eventually though, when on a rainy day he was sitting in the house he built for storing their musical instruments and to do rehearsals, he came across a pile of information materials about colleges that he had brought from high school. He flipped through them, and the thought of attempting to apply for some professional training took hold of him again. He applied to a teachers college in Lae, Morobe Province, which accepted him.

Upon completing a certificate in teaching, he taught in different primary schools of Morobe Province for some eight years. Usually he was placed in a school for a year, and then again in a different school for the following year. He was placed according to shortages in schools, often remote schools throughout the province. He had become close to a family from a coastal community while at college in Lae, and they kept looking after him to some extent throughout his years in Morobe. After he taught for some years in different schools, they asked him to come to their place to teach in their local school where they lacked a teacher. He followed their call and got married there a year later. He continued to teach another few years in Morobe before he decided to return to his home area in the highlands.

He stayed five years in the highlands, teaching at his local primary school that he himself had attended. Seeing the need for further schooling opportunities for children in this relatively remote location, he started an initiative to establish a high school in their area. While this seemed to advance well, his commitment was soon perceived as a threat both at his school and beyond, where rumours gained traction that he was less interested in a high school than in establishing a platform for a political career. Discouraged by the local politics that increasingly seemed to interfere and disrupt plans to establish a high school in the area, he returned to Morobe again.

Upon his return to Morobe, he was offered a head teacher position, and he stayed in Morobe for another eight years, again being placed at different schools throughout the province for several years. He got promoted up to deputy headmaster but got eventually discouraged by the hardships of the teaching profession, including the distances to travel to remote schools. This is when he decided to go for further studies and went to upgrade his certificate to a diploma in Port Moresby. Once he finished this, he applied

to the University of Goroka for an in-service degree. He was accepted but waited for another year as he was short of money to immediately continue with studies.

Grant's level of education and achievement brings him wide respect within his community in Jiwaka. When he visits, people greet him with food, and his sisters may come from nearby places, where they married, and kill pigs for him. People do not receive him without offering something on his return. He stresses, though, that this is due not only to his achievements in education and employment, but also to the way he relates back to the community. He keeps being involved in community affairs. He guides young people through their education, advises them on the subjects they may need to place stronger focus on at school for desired career paths, and collects application materials for places they wish to attend, and potentially contributing to fees then to make these career paths possible. He says to be the first one whom people will call when major decisions are to be taken in the community. He gives the example of outsiders coming for mining explorations. On such occasions, he would be asked for his advice, or to return to the village to witness things unfolding and to provide guidance. It matters, he says, that he is approachable for everyone and easy to relate to. Wherever he goes when back home, people will give him time to talk and gather people to listen, about whatever matter he sees fit.

There are others from his place who similarly obtained high levels of formal education, but who are more reserved when it comes to community relations. They are said to work to obtain money for themselves, and their wife and children. They do not put their education and income similarly into the service of the community and may be distant and reserved when interacting with people from the wider community. By extension, they will not be greeted the same way when returning home.

Grant ultimately wanted to leave the teaching profession and to take a more active part in driving 'development' in his community. He had different ideas to pursue. One was to propose to his Member of Parliament to undertake research on the need and impediments to improving educational opportunities and success rates within his district. Another one, which he increasingly placed more focus on, was to establish a conservation project in his area, thinking about ways to both protect its environment in the long term while improving livelihood conditions through eco-tourism or other enterprises. In this way, Grant's established status in the community led more to questions how he could put his experience and status to use for the community. Rather

than, as previous examples of undergraduate students illustrated, being concerned about how he would manoeuvre long-term relations to kin following his education. In a way, Grant had found his way of relating to the community over the years. He valued his unique role and status in the community, and neither felt overly burdened by it, nor sought to limit people's expectations on him.

Another in-service student, however, shared a different experience, which I briefly introduce as a contrast to Grant. Patrick, from the Sepik region, was sponsored by his employer to attend an in-service programme at the University of Goroka. Paradoxically, he said, it still became very expensive for him. People back home, so he explained, questioned him about his return to studies, as he was already established in a position as public servant while others could not attain such roles while lacking the funds for tertiary training. How could he advance himself while neglecting others? In consequence, they made him take out a bank loan to pay the fees for a relative to attend university. Patrick did not harbour resentment about these dynamics but made sure to present them to me with dramatic rhetoric effect. Patrick thus also reflexively placed stronger emphasis on the manipulative aspects of kin relations – he presented it as being almost coerced to pay fees for a relative to remain in good standing with kin. This appeared to make him conceive of kin relations in a slightly different way than Grant. At continuation, I will turn to reflections by interlocutors among staff at the university who neared the end of their careers, reflecting back and theorising the changes involved in kin relations between communities and urban wage-earners over time.

A Life-long University Career: Retrospective Reflections

I already introduced Thomas and his reflections in the introduction, whom I briefly return to here. Thomas made the distinction between two rather fundamental stances of relating back to one's wider kin and community, which he referred to as either to be 'with the community' or to 'isolate oneself'. These stances are not neatly delineated, neither in how someone relates back to kin, nor in the ways one's actions are perceived by wider kin, but they play a role in the evaluations rural relatives do of the relations to their kin in town or employment. The form such evaluations take, and the financial expectations to people in employment underlying them, can widely vary, and the reflections outlined above exemplify the fault lines between such evaluations in different contexts, and people's navigation between them. Grant, for example, presents his relation to kin back home as one clearly with the community, suggesting that it is

perceived like that also by his kin back home. There are more complex configurations visible in Nancy's pathway, for example. She moves away to be out of the immediate reach of the potential expectations of extended kin, while at the same time remaining firmly intent on supporting her closer family back home.

In Thomas' experience as among the first persons from his community to go through education and to earn a regular wage, people in the village may expect wealth to return to them, regardless of how one is faring in town or what kind of work one does. He says that it is difficult to keep explaining to kin back home that one's wage in town should be regarded as a something comparable to a garden of someone in the village: that is where he eats from. People living in town rely on their wage to eat, they do not have a garden and can just distribute their wage among kin. People who do channel wealth back to the village, however, gain prestige and status through it, which brings them a standing of leadership and importance in local affairs, and may fuel political ambitions to contest elections. I have alluded to this above in relation to the decisions for people to stay closer to home to be able to build such rapport more systematically than from a faraway town. Thomas, however, also indicated that there may be changes to the way rural relatives evaluate their kin in town over the last generations, and I will now turn to a story that may illustrate such change.

Mary

Another long-standing member of staff, Mary, also from PNG's Southern Highlands Province, as Thomas, and in a non-academic position at the university, related a similar and more personal story to me for illustrating the tension between such differing stances and evaluations of being with the community or isolating oneself. She presented it as her Christian duty to put her own immediate family first. This meant for her to use her salary to look after her children, provide them with an education, to marry them successfully by raising the bride-price for her sons, to build a family home in an urban centre, and to support her children even after marriage when her grandchildren need anything. She said she thus deliberately chose to ignore the requests from the village and extended kin. While she acknowledged that, by being married, she became responsible to her husband and his community rather than her own extended kin, she was nevertheless a focus of expectations from her natal kin and community, based on her exceptional position as a wage earner, and especially again after the passing of her husband. She said that people were talking behind her back because she was ignoring

requests for support and contributions to village affairs but adds that people now seemed to start understanding her choices in life. Following decades of looking after her own immediate family and dismissing requests from extended kin, there are now signs of appreciation of the decisions she took over the years.

Now, she said, when bringing her eldest son to the village, who she kept away from it for long, there are signs emerging that the village appreciates the fruits of her labour and decisions. Now people exclaim in admiring recognition: 'Look what she did, raising her children like this!', and suggest her son should, for the knowledge, experience, and exposure he has, assume roles of political leadership on behalf of the community, such as seeking to contest elections to become a member of the national parliament. At the time of our conversations around 2013-14, she mentioned that she almost finished all her own projects, such as seeing her children married and well established without further need of her support. This, she continued, is the time to finally thank and appreciate those who helped her and her children when in need over all the years, by giving something back. She said some of the support she received dates back to her young years, and some of the people have already died. She reiterates the reason for her choices and decisions in life in terms of the focus on her children. With this all done, however, the time has finally come for her to appreciate the community and the past support she received from extended kin.

Here, in conveying the clues she receives from her extended kin and natal village community who seem, in the end, to appreciate her choices in life, there are perhaps signs of the change that Thomas referred to, in people increasingly acknowledging that there are other ways of conduct, and a slow reframing of expectations to wage-earning kin. Choices that may be perceived as 'isolating' oneself from the village community and extended kin, may thus not necessarily mean a permanent break with village affairs, but that even after longer absences one may prove to retain concern for the village and kin, and that even this can become politically salient in the end.

Conceiving of Kin Relations and Change

Mary never questioned the relation to her kin in the village, although they might have questioned her at times in the absence of the material mediation and recognition they expect from such relations. She did not forget about the support of relatives that she was still to acknowledge, and what for others may have appeared as a rupture of relations,

was not how she perceived it. One may put it this way: while Mary focused on a specific set of relations (the nuclear family she founded), instead of others (her kin in the village), her indebtedness to kin became a future obligation rather than a performative assertion of her relationship to kin over the years. In Thomas' terms, she oriented her life along a principle of 'business' in 'isolating' herself, rather than being 'with the community' through acts of redistribution. Her story also exemplifies the change in how rural kin come to partially change their perspective on urban kin, sharing the pride in the results of her sustained focus on her children, and what became of them.

The stories of Thomas and Mary, then, may seem to complement each other well and seem to speak of similar observations or experiences. Nevertheless, they hardly allow one to generalise beyond, if at all, their respective areas in the Southern Highlands Province. As I will illustrate in the next chapter, there are differences in related sensibilities across different areas of PNG, and people themselves reify these differences as 'cultural' and articulate specific regional identities based on them.

Two further points merit articulation in relation to the material here presented. Social change in PNG does not necessarily, in the trajectories described here, correspond to processes of generational change. Instead, the emergence of a change in the conception of sociality and relations appears to correlate to stages of life-courses in the context of social differentiation from kin as urban wage earners. Changing perspectives about kin relations is thus not necessarily an inherent attribute to social change in PNG at large, but may in the terms described here stronger correspond to the emergent processes of the formation of a class of urban wage-earners. The common attribute of trajectories outlined in this chapter is that all my interlocutors are not raised in the context of such class but come to constitute it as a result of their life-course.

The other note-worthy aspect of the phenomenon discussed here refers to a more global aspect of this emerging urban middle-class of wage earners and global modernity, that of consumption. In the context of commodity consumption as emerging value and source of status, the allocation of disposable resources becomes conceived differently. As Nancy's case illustrates, it is the moment that decisions arise between one's own aspirations for middle-class consumption and obligations to kin that relations are becoming to be conceived differently. Another member of staff, Kenneth from the Western Highlands Province, articulated this in more explicit terms. Reflecting on his academic career, he conceived himself as part of a global academic community. In

contrast to his international peers of academics, however, he perceived himself to be in a significantly different situation. Whereas academics in other countries are able to take holidays and see different parts of the world through travel, in PNG, he and his colleagues were instead held back by their obligations to kin, who regularly expected money and pigs for an array of circumstances.

Chapter Six - Differing Sensibilities of Reciprocity and Exchange

In the previous chapter, I introduced a number of students and staff at the University of Goroka, describing their reflections about their life-courses in terms of processes of social differentiation and stratification vis-à-vis kin. I now want to draw attention to reflections on sociality in contemporary PNG from a different vantage point. In the present chapter, I follow some analytical leads provided by my interlocutors' reflections on sociality in contemporary PNG. While these reflections include, for example, comparisons between Melanesian or Papua New Guinean and 'Western' ways, my focus in this chapter follows a different axis of comparison: that of internal variations within PNG, specifically exemplified through differing (moral) sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and exchange. As I have suggested in the previous chapter, without developing it further there, my interlocutors frequently illustrated their own relations and experience of social differentiation from kin by comparing it to the experiences of other Papua New Guineans, which they learned about while at university or in institutional and urban contexts more broadly. In this chapter, then, I take my interlocutors reflections of different sensibilities surrounding exchange and reciprocity within PNG as the substrate of description and analysis.

To be sure, the comparison of systems of exchange within PNG has been a long-standing concern in Melanesian Anthropology, perhaps most well-known through Marilyn Strathern (1988). Work that I more specifically relate to as resonant with my analysis in this chapter, however, is Daryl Feil's *Evolution of New Guinea Highland Societies*, and the differences in social organisation and exchange following an east-west axis in the PNG highlands that he describes (1987; cf. Lederman 1990 for a different approach to axes of comparison). Feil describes differences in social forms on a continuum from the Eastern Highlands to the Western Highlands, relating to historical processes in agricultural production and exchange. According to Feil (1987), the Western Highlands, centring around the fertile valley of Kuk, have long been an area of 'high production', whereas areas to the east were characterised by a relatively 'low production'. In consequence, the social systems that developed in the Western Highlands formed as a result of an intensive agricultural system where 'excess' production resulted in social institutions of large-scale exchange furthering regional integration along expanding networks of exchange (cf. A. Strathern 1971, Meggitt 1974, Feil 1985, Wiessner 1998). This also set historical precedents for forms of social inequality and stratification within and across groups in the Western Highlands to much

larger extent than in the Eastern Highlands. To the east, in contrast, production has been more inward-looking and less geared towards expansive networks of large-scale exchange. Correspondingly, social relations to the east are stronger marked by an ethos of equality and egalitarianism among groups (see also Read 1959 for the area of Goroka). This historical interpretation, I suggest, resonates with contemporary differences surrounding sensibilities of exchange and reciprocity in PNG. I illustrate and specify this through the experiences and reflections of my interlocutors. In contrast to Feil, I am here not concerned with the historical exegesis of sensibilities surrounding exchange and reciprocity, but with their contemporary manifestations. Yet, my analysis resonates with the axis of differences mapped by Feil, which provides one possible grid for understanding the contemporary concerns about relations and different forms of reciprocity that my interlocutors draw attention to.

Kevin and His Asaro Friends: Between Pride and Looming Envy

Let me return to Kevin, who I introduced in the previous chapter, a student from the surroundings of the city of Mount Hagen, in the Western Highlands. He told me about how coming to university makes students learn about other people's cultures in and beyond PNG. He suggested that it is people's 'culture' that determines how they experience their educational achievements, and what their education means for them and their relatives back home. To illustrate the varying experiences students from different parts of PNG have, he compared his own experience throughout university education with that of friends he made from Asaro in the Eastern Highlands Province.

Kevin says he receives nothing but feelings of pride from his relatives on return home. He feels warmly welcomed and looked after when he returns over university holidays. In general, he is entirely positive about visiting home, with no second thoughts or doubts, but suggests that this is not the case for everyone in PNG. He noted that for many places in PNG, those becoming university-educated had ambiguous relationships to their home communities, keeping at a geographical distance as much as keeping close attachment to their kin – as also exemplified by Nancy in the previous chapter. A phenomenon that he mentioned in this regard is envy ('*jelesi*') that people are subject to, and expectations to conform to a certain conduct vis-à-vis their community. Kevin stressed that this is different for him, and that there are no impediments or second thoughts for him to go back to stay with his kin. While the entire community places expectations on him once he becomes a wage-earning teacher, these expectations do not

take a form that make them feel like a burden to navigate for Kevin, as they may elsewhere.

In contrast to his unburdened returns home over university holidays, and the expectation of smooth future relations to his home area once he finished university and earns an income, he says that his Asaro friends are more troubled by their relations to home. For them, he says, it appears that they develop a sense of constant fear about envy that could turn into a source of danger for them. To keep this at bay, his friends from Asaro report that they have to take care to not stand out when they visit home. They should not wear fancy clothes that would indicate their achievement or use registers of speech associated with an educated person that may be perceived as 'showing off'. They will always have to evaluate carefully for what occasions to return home rather than going and coming carelessly as they please. And once they finish their education and earn money, they may not be able to build a permanent house back home that is better than the houses of others. It would place them in danger of making themselves subject to envy, and thus potentially afflictions of sorcery and witchcraft.

Kevin insists that for him it is rather the opposite way. When he returns home, people expect him to behave differently. He needs to show that his education is worth it and is bearing results. The expectations regarding his appearance and comportment change with his education. It is expected from him, for example, that upon finishing his degree and taking up work he should be building a good permanent house. In contrast to what seems to be the case for his friends from Asaro who appear worried about being perceived as 'showing off' in any way back home, he needs to show that his education is not a 'waste' through a visible differentiation in appearance and demeanour.

On the surface, these reflections may seem to have little direct connection with variations in agricultural production that Feil describes. The reflections about different expectations towards people to either visibly demonstrate and perform their differentiation from kin, in Kevin's Western Highlands context, or to avoid any indications of an established social stratification as for his Asaro peers, however, resonate with Feil's mapping of different social systems based on differential agricultural development. Whereas the Western Highlands have long had established forms of social stratification and social inequality based on intensive agricultural production and expansive networks of exchange based on agricultural surplus production, the more subsistence-geared production that long characterised agricultural

production in the Eastern Highlands correlates with a more egalitarian ideology that does not sanction processes of social stratification the same way as is the case in the Western Highlands.

'*Save*' and '*Jelesi*'

Among the first-year students I spoke to, Jack's reflections resonate with those of Kevin's experiences, in having no second thoughts about visiting home and demonstrating little concern about the future relations to his kin from an eventual position of becoming a wage-earner. In fact, both Jack from the Southern Highlands and Paul from Simbu spoke of the pride that they are received with at home as most notable experience of changing relations to kin and larger communities in their first year at university. What is also visible in their stories, however, is the way in which Paul at the same time expresses thoughts about carefully manoeuvring his relations to kin back home in a different way than Jack does. For Paul, for example, there is reason to consider the '*hevi*' he might be facing later in life by increasing the number of kin he draws in for the support of his studies. This, I suggest, is part of broader considerations that relate to differing sensibilities around exchange and reciprocity. There are more significant aspects that help me to illustrate this at continuation, however, before I return to this in more detail.

Paul's further reflections resonate with what Kevin says about his friends from Asaro. This relates to '*jelesi*', the envy of extended kin that could result into afflictions of sorcery or witchcraft. These concerns were not as foregrounded for Paul as one may come to think listening to Kevin's reflections about his friends from Asaro. Nevertheless, they hover in Paul's mind as something that he cannot entirely neglect. Afflictions of sorcery or witchcraft at the hand of envious kin may result from the perceived lack of redistribution, or in fact any grudge that extended kin may come to harbour against one. Paul offered the following explanation for most common causes of becoming a target of sorcery or witchcraft:

> 'Like, within a community, within a clan, if others see that one family has a car and things like that, they will try to step in – all must be on a same level and they can't reach another standard'

Paul links the envy that may result in sorcery or witchcraft to egalitarian sensibilities, according to which everyone must be on the same level, on par with others. In other

words, afflictions of sorcery and witchcraft are an antithesis to processes of social stratification. While he does not feel to be at a particular risk of envy by his kin, who take pride in his educational achievements, he is aware that it may not always remain thus, especially once he earns a regular income one day. Further, more than he himself being worried when returning home, he says that kin caution him about accepting food or other items from specific persons or people whose intentions and feelings towards him he is not sure about.

'*Save*', a Tok Pisin term for knowledge and skills that is often used to refer to formal education and especially post-secondary education as such, takes a specific place in this constellation. The work of sorcery and witchcraft in relation to '*save*' has more subtle manifestations than the threat to life that is increasingly associated with sorcery and witchcraft in the popular imagination. While less pronounced with people attaining primary or secondary education, this especially comes into play towards tertiary education, which is more likely to attract envy from extended kin. What Paul refers to are instances in which either one's process of attaining '*save*' is blocked, or where its application is prevented through a range of phenomena. Examples of these are the inexplicable disappearance of one's name from selection lists or one's exam papers, mental afflictions to a person preventing to pursue one's education or perform one's job, or a general ineffectiveness of one's endeavours to move forward and progress one's education or career.

For Jack, from the Southern Highlands, there are no such concerns. For both Jack and Kevin, it goes without saying that their successful completion of university and entering formal employment comes with expectations for the support of kin in future. These expectations, however, are not linked to the same pressures of redistribution as is common in Paul's social context or in the way Kevin implies for his friends from Asaro. In Jack's and Kevin's context, social stratification *per se* is socially sanctioned and acceptable – in fact, it is important for them to materially demonstrate their educational achievements vis-à-vis kin through public display of having reached another 'standard', performed through different registers of speech, dress, and status symbols such as a 'permanent' house (made from purchased construction materials) or a car. Paul in contrast describes a context in which he has to avoid any reference to a differentiated 'standard' through his comportment or material display. The pride that the community will take in him in the long term will rather be measured by more immediate forms of redistribution that levels off any emergent signs of social stratification and inequality. It

is in this context that Paul is thinking carefully about the number of kin he now draws on for support in his studies, or the image he gives to extended kin through his decisions or comportment while at university. The more people that he draws support from, for example, results in larger circles of people that expect to benefit accordingly from his future income, and the more difficult it will be to manoeuvre the different expectations directed at him without inviting grudges or envy by extended kin that feel not appropriately acknowledged in future reciprocity.

To be sure, Kevin and Paul will both be subject to significant expectations of support and reciprocity by their kin and sponsors in future, but these are structured in different ways, to which I return below. Here, I wish to stress the specific role that '*save*' takes in these considerations. As in contrast to other attachments to a person that can be dis-attached through exchange and redistribution, '*save*', as in high levels of formal education such as a university degree, sticks to a person in ways that defies redistribution (cf. Bashkow 2006). Instead, it signifies an irreversible form of social differentiation. Such forms of social differentiation are, as we may interpret Feil, socially acceptable in the Western Highlands of PNG and adjacent areas in the Southern Highlands and Enga. They pose a challenge, however, in the context of the egalitarian ideologies in parts of the Eastern Highlands surrounding Goroka and adjacent areas such as Simbu. '*Save*', in parts of the Eastern Highlands and Simbu, may thus more likely attract envy, and the material gain resulting from '*save*' through formal employment and wages is subject to more constant pressures of redistribution to 'equalise' people towards a common level and standard. There is a conundrum then that Paul and others in similar social contexts face in the long term, by being bound to alleviate their irreversible social (or more specifically, educational) differentiation through constant redistribution that prevents lasting social inequality and stratification. Lest, he may invite envy, potentially resulting in afflictions of sorcery and witchcraft. This also impacts the way Paul conducts himself in the short term. Being concerned that his comportment vis-à-vis kin may result in envy that could 'block' his education and further career, he is thinking carefully about his movements and relations. It is in this context that one may understand Paul's careful considerations about visiting his uncle in Port Moresby over the university holidays, and at what particular moment (as described in the previous chapter). For, if he went to Port Moresby directly from university, this could be conceived by kin in his village as step away from them towards asserting his emergent differentiation by choosing to spend his holidays in the national capital rather

than with his supportive kin in the village. He is worried that this may be perceived as an affront and thus chooses to visit the village before going to Port Moresby.

Different Forms of Reciprocity

I have suggested that all my interlocutors above have to navigate expectations from kin in their career after obtaining a university degree, even though the kinds of expectations they are subject to are likely to differ. I now turn to describe different forms of reciprocity that underlie these different concerns about the future in more detail, or their absence, in the way described for Paul. I do so by turning my attention back to university staff who are in a position of wage-earners, having to manage and navigate the expectations towards their income and position, while incorporating reflections from students and other observations too. I first return to Mary from the Southern Highlands, before introducing Robert, another member of staff from the Eastern Highlands. I use their experiences as the basis for a broader discussion to illustrate different forms of reciprocity, and their underlying moral sensibilities.

As I detailed for Mary in the previous chapter, a long-serving member of staff at the University of Goroka, she had put off attending to requests from her natal community for most of her career and life as wage-earner. She explained this to me as a deliberate focus on her children and grandchildren that she wanted to look after first. Yet, towards the end of her career, she was making plans to still acknowledge the support she received from her community in the course of her life. There are many people that she had received help from at some stage over her life, and she did not forget this. It was around the time of our conversations that she felt was an appropriate moment to start thinking about reciprocating this support. There are various explanations that may contribute to understanding her choices to having hold off with such reciprocal acknowledgment of past support she received. Among those that she called attention to herself are the fact that she perceived it to be her Christian duty to look after her own immediate family first – and on recent visits to her community with her son, this was positively acknowledged. Another reason is that, as woman, she would have been expected to have her support more strongly directed at her husband's community to which she became attached through marriage. I suggest, however, that there are also other elements important for understanding the acceptability of delayed reciprocity for the support she received without ever having fundamentally ruptured relations to her

community, even if her decisions resulted in some doubts about her commitments and talk about her behind her back.

Another element, that I suggest may just be as significant, are the general sensibilities around exchange and reciprocity in that part of the Southern Highlands, which more closely correspond to those in the Western Highlands than, say, those in Simbu or parts of the Eastern Highlands I have described. In parts of the Western Highlands associated with Hagen, and parts of the Southern Highlands associated with Mendi, it is actually an appropriate form of reciprocity to have a return of support delayed or even directed to following generations. Take Kevin's case from the Western Highlands again, for example:

> 'That's the tradition, or culture, our society, where all will do (paying university fees) for us and suppose we don't give something to them or look after them, we will look after their children. Especially all my other relatives (other than his parents) or community (*hauslain*), whoever sponsors me now; suppose I don't go back to help them, I will look after their children. They help me (by paying my university fees), so in return I will help them by paying their (children's) university fees or look after them otherwise. That's the custom, so we must do that. Suppose we don't, they will gossip and talk behind our backs. We have to try to avoid this and we must always give a good name (as in maintaining a good name).'

For Kevin, the support he received for his education from extended kin was certainly expected to be returned in some way in the future. As Kevin made explicit, however, this may take place at some rather distant point in the future, and not necessarily take the form of immediate redistribution once he earns a wage. He gave examples of specific forms that this may take. A common way for him to return support he received from extended family and others in the community would be to look after the university fees of nephews in future, say, thus supporting the children of uncles that supported him now in similar endeavours and situations. In this way, and beyond support to his immediate family as wage-earner, there is what I would call 'absolute' reciprocity: he returns the support he was given in kind. This may take different forms, such as supporting someone's business venture or other requests towards larger expenditures and may happen at some unspecified point in the future that may come sooner or later. This stands in contrast to the kinds of expectations that my interlocutors from Simbu or the Eastern Highlands felt subjected to in stronger measure, which constitutes a form of reciprocity that is more strongly oriented at immediate returns through redistribution. I call this a 'relative' reciprocity, in which differentials in resources are prone to expectations of redistribution in a more immediate way. The principle of this form of

reciprocity is not a return of absolute value at a more unspecified moment in time, but a more constant expectation at levelling off differences as they exist at any specific moment. Reciprocity in Simbu and parts of the Eastern Highlands such as Asaro, for example, is thus more oriented at the material inequality between persons, rather than a function of an absolute value to be returned as in Hagen.

I suggest that it is these differences in forms of reciprocity that make Mary's approach to raising her own family and giving back to her extended kin a conceivable practice. While extended kin may have hoped for a more consistent support by her in times of need, or a return in kind at an earlier moment, her actions are generally conceivable as appropriate more so than they would be in parts of Simbu or the Eastern Highlands, where such a long neglect of requests for support may have ruptured relations much more lastingly.

Robert, a lecturer from the proximity of Goroka may provide for another example to illustrate this contrast of different forms of reciprocity. It is important to him to be close to home, as he said, for fulfilling his obligations to his ageing parents. He also maintains a broader 'presence' in his community, although he distinguishes this into different kinds of 'presence' as becomes clear from the excerpt of an interview below. Like other interlocutors, he also makes a specific comparison with other places in the highlands, Hagen in this case, to make his point:

> 'Hagen takes lot of pride in business and big-men mentality. Eastern Highlanders, especially Asaro, they may have wealth, but they don't want to show it. Because here we have that mentality that if you want to show off wealth, you will die, because jealousy (envy) will come in. So, don't attract jealousy! You may have a lot of resources, money or whatever, but just keep quiet. In Hagen, people show it, they get a brand-new vehicle, and go drinking, they make sure people see their wealth when they go to join a ceremony or so. Here, it's more discrete, low profile. Jealousy will lead to poison, death. But there is no poison up there in Hagen […] They are scared of Eastern Highlanders because they think we are involved in this kind of poison and killing people. That's not even all over the Eastern Highlands, but it reflects our attitude too. If you are scared, you take precautions. Like, even though my own land is there, you won't see me there. I have to look after myself, so I don't hang around there. People are very calculating, wondering what they get out of me when talking to me. Previously there was goodwill here among people, whether you have or don't, they looked at people with respect – now it's more about economics. My whole village is there, and they have their expectations, so prevention is better than cure, people may get annoyed with me not buying beer for them, it may lead to losing one's life.
>
> You are expected to contribute to the problems in the village, so that your presence is there. There are some unfortunate situations in which Papua New

> Guineans have to go home and are ignored and are treated like outsiders because they have never contributed to anything at home, bride-price, issues and problems and other traditional ceremonies. If you don't contribute, you don't have a place in society. It depends on how you have been contributing. I don't ignore my contributions, also to my in-laws here. Whenever there is a problem I am always there. So, they have a bit of respect. […] if you are someone who has been avoiding the community and if you come and want to say something, people will not listen to you. Someone may even get up and tell you to shut up: "who are you"? So, I give my contributions, but hanging around there is something that I don't do. So, I go only for some contributions and occasions.'

For Robert, there are two conceivable ways to make himself 'present' in his community and among kin and in-laws. One is to contribute on specific occasions, such as ceremonial exchanges of when problems are to be solved through contributions. In this sense, Robert is keen to assert his 'presence', as doing otherwise would lead to a more general rupture to relations to extended kin and community, as he illustrates. The other kind of 'presence', which he avoids, is a casual presence without specific purpose. In such unspecific presence, his different status as wage-earner may lead to general expectations for redistribution, outside of the frame of specific contributions or occasions. Not fulfilling such expectations or spontaneously arousing demands may put him in danger through people's envy. He thus deliberately avoids a 'presence' without a particular purpose of occasion or specific contribution to make. As he makes clear, and as my informants from these areas indicate in their reflections, this is different in the Western and Southern Highlands where people are not subject to the more generalised expectation of redistributing wealth to the extent that he is in this part of the Eastern Highlands.

This may illustrate the difference in forms of reciprocity between Hagen and parts of the Southern Highlands, on one hand, and Simbu and parts of the Eastern Highlands, on the other hand. In Hagen, and also parts of the Southern Highlands, one becomes less prone to demands of immediate redistribution through one's presence – reciprocity has its time and place. While reciprocity in the Eastern Highlands and Simbu also has its time and place in specific occasions, there is also a more general expectation at redistribution as a constant process of levelling different levels of wealth.

Grant, the teacher from Jiwaka who I introduced in the previous chapter, also calls attention to such a difference between Hagen and the places to its east, in his case the more remote places of northern Jiwaka. What others call 'business-oriented' as a characteristic for Hagen, Grant calls 'competitive', which for him stands for a different form of social life:

> ‘In places that have always worked through personal competitive challenges within the community, education is also channelled through this kind of culture. So, in Hagen, for example, they are culturally a bit different. Their life and culture are different. So, education goes with this culture. They lead a competitive life of challenging competitions, since before, so education happens within that. Even within the family. Look at Paias Wingti.[27] Everyone knows him. But even his small brothers roam the streets of Hagen. If he passes by them in a car, he won’t pick them up. That’s their culture. If he picks them up, he would spoon feed them for their entire lives. So, he leaves them exposed to the reality of life, so they can find their own means and ways. That’s how it works in Hagen.
>
> In Jiwaka it’s different, we have a more sociable life. The social life in Jiwaka, and if you come towards Simbu, is very strong. We don’t have the challenging mentality. We focus more on the social side. So, Jiwaka is very open. When you go, they’ll all give you exceptional welcomes. If I get you to my place, they will take over from me, and everything that I would do for you, they will do. They become me. If we go to Hagen, that won’t be the case.’

For once, here again we have the theme of different forms of reciprocity expressed in a different but related way to Robert’s account. Grant calls attention to his observation that in Hagen, it is acceptable to meet relatives that are at a different level of the social stratum without being drawn to immediate redistribution. This is such an instance that would appear impossible for Robert. When Robert roams around his place, he faces a more immediate pressure at redistribution to those he meets. Whereas in Hagen, according to Grant, a ‘competitive’ mentality allows for people to accumulate without immediate pressure for redistribution. In contrast, he characterises his social context in Jiwaka, and further to the east, as differently focused on ‘social life’ and looking after each other.

Grant portrayed his place as valuing ‘social life’ in a specific way. What he meant by that is that people look after each other without the same kind of competitive pursuing of wealth within the community. He explained this in contrast to Hagen, where he says there is a different culture of competition among people and families. He says his place is more similar to what I may know from Simbu in this regard (e.g. Paul’s place above). If we were to visit his place, he argues, the entire community would look after me as if it was him. He would not even need to be present, or I would not even notice if he was not there, and that wherever I go in the community people would look after me as if he

[27] Paias Wingti is a prominent politician from Hagen and former PNG Prime Minister, serving as Governor of the Western Highlands Province at the time of fieldwork and writing. He was first elected Member of Parliament when successfully contesting elections as a final year UPNG student in 1977.

himself was looking after me. In Hagen, he said, my experience would likely be different. There, he suggests, whomever I visited would make sure to be with me at all times, or at least in company of close family members. I would be considered as a visitor of this particular family, and not a larger community. Similarly, if I would be wandering around alone in a place associated with Hagen (the Western Highlands), people would not immediately approach me and look after me, as they would assume that I am there with someone else already. In his place, as he put it, in contrast, all the community would become him.

These differences that Grant construed between places like Hagen and Simbu indeed resonated with my experience of visiting students in the Western Highlands, Jiwaka, Simbu, and the Eastern Highlands. I visited two students in rural parts of the Western Highlands, and in both of these instances I was introduced and spent time with only a limited number of their immediate family. While they greeted others in passing as taking me on walks through larger hamlets, I was hardly introduced to others myself and was clearly a visitor to a particular family. This was a different experience to visits in Jiwaka, Simbu, and some rural parts of the Eastern Highlands that I visited with students. In these places, I was often much more numerously introduced, passed around people and conversations in ways that made it hard to notice when my immediate hosts were not around me at times.

To some extent, these different forms of relating in terms of reciprocity and redistribution became also visible in more specific ethnographic instances among students at the University of Goroka. Spending an afternoon with Jeremy, another in-service student from Simbu, exemplified this. We were walking down the Humilaveka hilltop towards the university gate, as he wanted to chew some *buai* (betel nut). The closest place to have *buai* when walking down from campus is just outside the university gate at the bus stop. There are often several tables of *buai*-vendors to cater for the university community, especially as the sale of *buai* is not allowed on campus. Jeremy, however, preferred to walk further and enter into a side-street off the main road to a more secluded location. He explained this as not having enough money to also buy *buai* for others that may pass by while we would be having *buai* in such a visible location like the bus stop in front of the university gate. Meeting familiar persons while consuming *buai* without offering *buai* to them too would be an awkward situation, and thus to be avoided. In fact, it was very common for me too to be offered *buai*, cigarettes, or small amounts of money when I passed others having *buai* or cigarettes at the bus

stop outside the university gate. It became a usual and common practice for me to accept such offerings, rather than to deny them, so to acknowledge the relationship or the forming of a relationship through such gifts. At the same time, not offering anything to someone passing by while one consumes something may have the opposite effect, namely not appropriately acknowledging a relationship. This is similar to what Robert pointed to, in stating that he cannot simply wander around his place, as people would harbour expectations to him as a wage-earner, to acknowledge their presence and to positively foment their relationship. While one could not possibly acknowledge each person who one passes by through a material token, it can nevertheless become a potential issue to not be doing so. One thus tries to avoid random encounters that could create such expectations for a specific acknowledgement that might, just as well, cause irritation for not being met.

It became common then for me to receive small material tokens that acknowledged my presence, be that a betel nut, a cigarette, or a 2 Kina note, and to accept them without hesitation or resistance. Conversely, I tried to reciprocate these tokens likewise at similar instances. Yet, again, these practices and their underlying sensibilities may not be easily generalised in such a way. Just as I had felt that I found my way of relating appropriately by accepting such tokens without hesitation and the right level of appreciation, and myself giving such tokens in similar instances to persons I had established closer rapport with, I was surprised to encounter some hesitation by someone I had been in regular interaction with for some time in receiving such token from me. This occurred when I was at a kai-bar[28], and a regular interlocutor happened to enter the place after me. As we both ordered food, I offered to buy him a soft drink to accompany his meal, which he accepted only after considerable hesitation. I wondered about this at the time, and subsequently brought it up in conversation with another interlocutor. When I provided this story as an example of my own attempts to relate appropriately and my surprise about the reaction in this instance, my interlocutor asked me where my friend is from, and he nodded to have his anticipation confirmed when I said from Hagen.

[28] the PNG version of take-away restaurants, usually offering items such as, for example, boiled and/or fried sweet potatoes, potatoes, potato fries, fried flour balls, sausages, chicken, lamb flaps, sheep's tongue, boiled broccoli, among others.

Different Principles Underlying Exchange: Hagen and the Waghi/Goroka Areas

Relatively late in my fieldwork, the contours of these differences became increasingly noticeable to me as a pattern. When visiting a lecturer, James, at his residence one Saturday afternoon, this became one of the topics of our conversation. He needed little more than me expressing that I wondered about certain patterned differences between Hagen and places further to the east as a prompt. James, from Jiwaka, with in-laws in Asaro, in response lamented half-jokingly that he wished he was born in the context of Hagen notions of reciprocity and exchange, rather than in those that he sees characteristic for parts of Jiwaka, Simbu, and part of the Eastern Highlands such as Asaro and Goroka. What he meant was that he wished to be exempt from what he perceived as a constant drain on his resources by his community in Jiwaka and his in-laws in Asaro.

In his assessment, in terms of exchange, this is what characterises these differences: in his relations to kinsfolk in Jiwaka, and Asaro in the Eastern Highlands, he is subject to constant expectations and requests for assistance. These requests are relative to his standing vis-à-vis others. Obtaining a regular fortnightly income, he is subject to requests by those who do not. By matter of kinship relations, and people's expectations for assistance as having assisted him at some point before, these requests are a constant companion throughout one's career and life. For someone in his position, these requests then become increasingly perceived as a 'one-way street'. It follows the constant impulse at levelling differences of wealth. Redistribution thus tends to happen, or be demanded, relative to people's actual wealth. The network of extended kin that have a claim on the redistribution of this wealth is potentially extensive. For my interlocutor who identifies as Jiwakan, this presented itself as a barrel without bottom.

Hageners, according to him, and resonating with my discussion above, do not seem to face the same problem, as in Hagen things follow a different pattern. When someone has assisted you in the past and approaches you for assistance in return, this is more usually a back-and-forth. You return what you received earlier with an increment. But once you have done that, the direction is turned around again. You have done your part. It is a back and forth of exchange, not the one-way street that resembles a barrel without bottom. That is what is called '*moka*', he says, making specific reference to Andrew Strathern's description of it (see for example 1971). That is why, he suggests, Hageners are successful at business. They do not have to hand out at any occasion to whomever

they meet in town. The circle of close family that you may assist more generally in daily needs is much more limited. Exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity have their time and place. That is all to it, you do not have to feed your distant relatives in the meantime. I give his explanation at length about differences between Hagen and Jiwaka:

> '[..] the Tuman. It's a little river by any standard. But the culture of Hagen literally stops on the western bank. Jiwaka starts on the eastern bank. The moka stops there. The use of the tree oil Bagua stops there. We use pig fat. The bark belt, the big bark belt, stops on that river. We use smaller belts. We do the *bogua yungua* – how you call it on your Simbu side, we call it the *kongar* – it stops on that river. *Headpay* stops on that river.
>
> I give you an example. There was a court case, about 1982, where one guy on the Hagen side had married over to our side, and then he, when his bother-in-law was in need, he kept on giving him pigs. So, he had 5 children, 5 boys, and from his Hagen point of view, from his side of view, he was doing *moka*. From our side, he gave *headpay* for the children. And things were ok until about 1982, and the tambu (in-law) on the other side he decided to do a *moka*, […], so, he was expecting his tambu to come, and of course he is going, and his brother-in-law arrived there with one pig. Hell broke loose. "I gave you five pigs! Where are they?" Because in *moka*, I will give you some things, over a while I will give it to you – in *moka* what they do is they give out – and when they want to do the *moka* they recollect, they recall. So, the contribution comes in. One person can stage a *moka*, one individual, and kill over a hundred pigs, by having recalled. Now, we have a *kongar* system. That's our ceremony. What in Simbu you call *bogua yungua*. This is an individual event, where you look after your own pigs, you make your own gardens, you look after your pigs, you kill your pigs, to show your prowess as a pig-raiser. But it's a one-man effort. So, you will kill them – if am not a good pig-raiser, I will probably kill 3 or 4 – but it's individual shows, where I will not call on others. Whereas Hagen, it's manipulating, it's like investing and recollecting, and regathering. Anyway, the court case goes on. They end up in the village court. The Hagen guy says: "I did *moka* with you". The Waghi guy says: "No, you sleep with my sister, that's *headpay*, for the children. These five children, where do they come from? What you were giving is the payment for the children, to their uncles, what are you talking about?" […] We walked away …, we were final year students, about 1981 I think, and we walked away, you know, for a long time we thought about it, and then it … dawned on [us], between the two of us just running around, it became very clear to us that we are culturally very very different. Very different! Even though you can walk across that river. This is where I …, very early on, I developed this idea. So, when I go around, I try and understand differences, but then try and see, where do these differences really, I mean, where is the real boundary there? The Hagen moka follows the same principle as the Enga tee exchange system, or the Mendi where they do the mok-ink. This is a system of exchange networks and rituals, associated rituals, that are very different from those of us to the east. What we do comes through to Simbu.
>
> […] Like Simbus, Jiwakans, Goroka, they will make very bad business-men. We are poor business-people, we are gregarious people who eat everything that we make, then we get our big name and we run around and talk smart. You go to Hagen, Enga, Southern Highlands, that's where the business is, it is in there culturally. The moka concept. It is entrepreneurship at its best. It's nothing new

to them. That's why, you look at the businesspeople in here, most of them are Hageners or Engans.'

At this stage, it may not be entirely clear how these different principles of exchange exactly lead to the conclusion drawn at the end of this excerpt. So why exactly is the concept and practice of exchange referred to as *moka* allegedly making one a good businessman and the principles underlying the system of exchange practiced in Jiwaka are not? James offered the following illustration when I asked him for a contemporary example of how these differences manifest in business activities and people's lives:

'Ok, we are brothers, let's take our Division, our Department. ... I have 5000 and I want to buy a car. What you do, you will give me 3000, A will give me 5000, B will give me 7000. Or, say, I put the most, so if I put 5000, you will all give to me. That car belongs to me. If you jump on top of that car, even if you gave 3000, you will pay for it. You gave it to me. It is mine.'

Me: that is for the Hagen concept?

'Yeah, Hagen. This is the concept of *moka*. What you give, you give. And then you… when you look at the Hageners when they dress up, there is a set of notes that they put across here, it's called the rope of *moka*, this is the record of how much people owe you, in terms of pigs, the longer the rope the more people owe you. You are a more important man. It's called the rope of *moka*. And then you recollect it. So, they will invest, they know how to invest … and, when I give it to you, I know, culturally, you are bound to give it back to me. You will give it back to me. I get my car, I am ok, I am running my business. Then you want to buy a car. Ok, I will give you your money and some profit. … I will give you a little bit more than you gave me. Because you helped me. And then A wants to buy a car […]. But, when they give, they give, they invest. You see, they know, this is investing. In that sense we do not. We don't have the sense of investment.'

Me: How would it go on this side?

'I give it to you and the car will belong to both of us! I own part of the car because I gave you money and you bought that car. And then, in the first place, I won't give it to you. I don't see it as an investment, it is your problem, you go buy your own car. You see the difference? To a Hagener, that's an investment. And he knows. He is culture-bound. He is duty-bound to give it back. Whereas we don't. I will find some excuses to why not to give it to you. But we don't have it, culturally we don't have it. Because when we raise pigs, we raise our own. That is in my name. It is my own hard work to look after the pig and I will kill it […]. But when the pig kill finishes that's it. It's finished. There is no obligation either way. We don't understand business. So, when an in-law comes to visit "oh, a big thing, the children's uncle is here, let us go to the store, get the car, I have money here", "in-laws are important, let's drink". That's for our side. We are a gregarious group … or, whatever we are, we just enjoy life, we sing a lot, talk a lot, but we don't accumulate. Or we don't even care. We don't invest. Seriously. I mean, I can see it manifest now. […] what I am seeing is that the business-acumen that we see in Hageners, Engans, and Southern Highlanders, it is part of their culture.'

To summarise James' argument about different principles of exchange between Hagen and Jiwaka based on the buying of a vehicle for a business venture, this is what this difference looks like when someone seeks to purchase a car to operate a business, raising money to do so from among one's relations. In Hagen, buying the car from the contributions of your relatives, distant or close, it will be your car and only yours. It will be your business. At an appropriate time, in any case, you will be expected to return the investment. Perhaps someone who contributed when you wanted to purchase the car now requests your support for setting up a business. Now you will return what had been contributed from that person, but with an increment to what he had given you. Never less than that. In Jiwaka, this works differently. If a number of people will contribute to your purchase of the car, all of them will maintain a stake of ownership in the car and the profit of your business. Whatever profit you make is potentially subject to immediate redistribution, because it is also their car. You will try to navigate this for a while, but after a while your business is crippled. Your car will run down, and once it requires repairs you may not have the resources to look after these. You are not able to maintain the car properly. And eventually you will give up.

James in the same breath went into a different situation as well, however, drawing attention to the response to an uncle coming to visit and the kind of welcome he will receive. How does this fit into this picture? James provided further examples to illustrate this, which also resonate with my observations above. These reflections may thus help in closing the circle for the argument about different sensibilities underlying exchange and reciprocity in different parts of PNG that I am outlining here:

> 'I lived with the Hageners. You go to the store. There are these guys, walking around and checking their pockets, and they are hungry, and you are in Hagen town, a? [Hageners] will go and say: "*amana kumone*". What they are saying is "brother, I don't have money." And what they will do is, they will get a 20 toea flour ball that they will eat by themselves. Now, you go with [someone from Jiwaka, Simbu, or Goroka] … you will take a 20 Kina note and say: "everyone, take this money and buy flour balls and scones to eat". You give it to them. Because they are your *wantoks*. You will not see that behaviour in Hagen. It is taboo! Money is a big thing. But this old man saying "*amana kumone*", who is eating his flour ball, when it comes to doing the bride-price, he will give 500 Kina, clean, brand new notes. He has the money. But he knows that if I buy you a coke, you are not a good investment. But when you are in trouble and I come and give you money, I know that I'm investing in a formal way, informally they will not spend money. And that's why they will walk around everywhere. They have this idea "*kumone*". I used to just think, what's wrong with you guys? I am not saying that they are stingy. It is just that in their mind, it's a waste of money. Because there is no return in the end.

> That's exactly what you will find in Hagen, because they have this *moka* concept. And that's a traditional ceremonial exchange thing […]. You look at Strathern's, Andrew Strathern's work, and you'll see a lot of it there. And to this day, they still do it this way. They help each other buy buses. They have taken that principle over across. They are very aggressive businessmen. Whereas we are not.'

That is the difference between exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity in Hagen and to its east in Jiwaka, Simbu, and Asaro, for example. This also manifests in the experiences and challenges that accompany educational differentiation among actors from these different backgrounds. In the Hagen *moka*, and the related Enga *tee* and Mendi *mok-ink*, exchange is competitive in a specific way, in which differences in wealth between families are acceptable and result in further competition. Among those to the east, in Jiwaka, Simbu, and parts of the Eastern Highlands that include Asaro and Goroka, differences in wealth always go hand-in-hand with demands for more immediate redistribution among much wider circles of extended kin. This is what we see for example in Robert's unease of just casually spending time in his village without specific business to attend to, and these are concerns that are making inroads into Paul's reflections from Simbu, for example. In contrast to this, the differences in reflections and experiences from Kevin from the Western Highlands, and Mary's and Jack's reflections from Mendi and surroundings in the Southern Highlands, can be made intelligible through James' explanation of the different sensibilities and principles of exchange that are associated with these respective areas.

To the east, in Jiwaka, Simbu, and towards Goroka, the manifestation of differences in wealth is not acceptable. Not sufficiently cooling off the sentiments of those made to perceive an existing difference in wealth may indeed be dangerous for creating envy. Such envy, which a permanent social differentiation through education may always evoke no matter how hard one attempts to stem it through acts of redistribution from regular income, makes people live in fear. Fearing that such envy may provoke sorcery or witchcraft against them, people living in these circumstances are in an uneasy spot for maintaining their relations with extensive kin networks and home. Either they meet the requests as much as they can and make sure no one feels left out, or they better keep distance to the community to not expose themselves to danger. As James elaborates:

> 'Part of it is because of the idea of *kumo* [witchcraft]. It doesn't go in Hagen … it didn't in the past. The *kumo* business never was there. They didn't believe in it. It is here with us. From the Jimi, towards this area here. Sorcery, when they talk about it, now everybody talks about sorcery, there are different components

> to it. The sorcery that we talk about now is a mixture of a lot of things. Sorcery in terms of somebody who is in possession of, or who is being possessed, or who has the ability to destroy people, there are certain tell-tale manifestations so that people go, oh, this is *sanguma* [witchcraft], and this is something else [...] Hagen, no. In some cultures, they never had it.'

James here refers to the fact that what is often generally referred to as 'sorcery' in PNG lumps together a range of different phenomena. What is commonly referred to by the Tok Pisin term *sanguma* in Jiwaka, Simbu, and Asaro, for example, which James also refers to as *kumo*, corresponds to witchcraft rather than sorcery (Eves 2013). It is this witchcraft that people particularly live in fear of, and that has not been present in such way in Hagen and some neighbouring parts of Enga and the Southern Highlands, for example.[29]

Conclusion

In the above, I have focused specifically on the differences between two areas of the PNG Highlands extending westwards from Goroka, and what these differences mean for people in processes of educational or social differentiation and stratification. The areas discussed here, as corresponding to different sensibilities and practices of exchange, cover, on the one hand, Goroka itself, Asaro, the highlands of Simbu, and Jiwaka, and, on the other hand, Hagen and adjacent areas of Enga and the Southern Highlands towards Mendi. I have focused on these areas as they both correspond to the areas that I got most familiar with myself, and as it has been an axis of difference most commonly presented and evoked in people's reflections, references, and discursive representations, including James' anthropological appraisal of the underlying principles of these differences.

There are other such regional differences between different areas in PNG, which according to James may cross linguistic boundaries in forming areas of similar principles of exchange and reciprocity that are mutually intelligible and recognisable. If one goes further to the east, there are the Huli mostly comprising what is now the Hela Province and Porgera in the Enga Province. According to James, these again share fundamental principles and practices of exchange, including a distinct land tenure

[29] Notwithstanding the fact that the torture and killing of people accused of witchcraft has also arrived to these parts of the country more recently, as gruesomely illustrated by the killing of Kepari Leniata in Hagen in early 2013 that attracted international media attention.

system (see Wardlow 2006 for Huli, Golub 2014 for Porgera). Further west towards the Indonesian border are the Ok groups, which share different practices and sensibilities again. Places further east from Goroka, such as Kainantu, and other areas of the Eastern Highlands, exhibit practices and sensibilities that are very different again to what are shared sensibilities of Goroka and the areas to its west outlined above. If one crosses the Kassam pass of the Eastern Highlands down to the lowlands of the Markham valley in Morobe Province, things look very different again. For example, whereas James characterises practices in the Highlands as generally 'competitive', in that social stratification in itself is possible, where the urge to redistribution may create issues as outlined above, sensibilities in the Markham are much more geared towards maintaining social equality in the first place. James here calls attention to work he did with farmers growing peanuts as a cash crop. As he recalls, while people could extend the area of cropping, they were reluctant to do so for a tacit understanding that a certain size would be the maximum appropriate, and that any attempt at surpassing the level of income-generating cropping beyond those of others would be inacceptable and would result in misfortune and ultimately death. James attributed similar sensibilities to areas in the Papuan Gulf, such as Kikori. These characterisations were in turn echoed by Jack and his friend from the southern parts of the Southern Highlands, bordering the areas towards the Gulf of Papua and Kikori. Still other areas, such as Mekeo in Central Province, and the Trobriand Islands in Milne Bay Province, have chiefly systems, in which educational qualifications may be perceived as threat to chiefly authority, as a student from Mekeo at UPNG also explained to me.

James has a proposal for dealing with these differences in contemporary PNG. As a first step, he proposes acknowledging the different practices and cultural sensibilities in different parts of PNG. This includes incorporating learning about oneself and PNG in the education system from early age, to both acknowledge and appreciate one's own stories and realities, and to gain a better understanding of the different people and values that make up PNG. On the other hand, James calls attention to what he sees as pitfalls of contemporary PNG: it does not seem to be considered that there are as much fundamental cultural differences across PNG as there are striking commonalities spanning different language groups that should not be overlooked. James insists, against much of contemporary anthropologists' scepticism about the drawing of cultural boundaries, that it is often fairly clear where these boundaries between culture-areas are in PNG, such as the Tuman river separating what is now Jiwaka and Western Highlands Provinces. As he stated elsewhere about the Tuman river:

> ‘The border between Hagen, Western Highlands, and now the Jiwaka Province, is a little river. Just a river like the Zokizoe here [in Goroka]. But that river could very well be a mountain. It could very well be an Ocean. As a cultural divide, between Hagen and the ones to the east.’

This is one example, where a new province, Jiwaka, has been carved out of the Western Highlands based on claiming a distinct identity. Similar reasons may be argued for the Hela Province that separated from the Southern Highlands at the same time. James does not advocate for the redrawing of provincial boundaries in any case, but makes clear that in policy and planning, it would be worth taking the similarities between areas into account, so that policy frameworks can be elaborated that correspond to local and shared similarities in certain geographical areas. The principal difficulty standing in the way of effective political processes, according to James, are two competing perspectives in policy-making in PNG that end up leading to the same results of inappropriate policy-making. Either, he states, PNG is seen as a homogenous entity that could be governed by general policy strokes; or, PNG is seen as a land of thousand tribes in which diversity is just overwhelming. Neither is the case, he suggests, and insists that overly emphasising PNG’s diversity is creating unnecessary confusion and is a sign of ignorance about the similarities that exist, leading to the same ineffective results as when one is treating PNG as a homogenous entity. James attributes these perspectives by policy-makers and public servants as deriving from the lack of acknowledging and appreciating the differences and commonalities across PNG throughout the colonial period and the lack of addressing these through the education system since.

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In this chapter, I have followed the leads provided in reflections and suggestions by students and staff at the university to draw out what seems to reveal the shape of patterned differences in sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and practices of exchange across the PNG highlands. It is according to these sensibilities and systems of exchange that students and staff experience their own social differentiation and stratification, and reflexively situate themselves in relation to kin and natal communities. What I suggest through this chapter, then, is that one cannot ascribe a generic ‘Melanesian’ or ‘Papua New Guinean’ experience of processes of social stratification in urban and/or institutional contexts. The kinds of moral dilemmas persons face in these settings may be similar or resonant across PNG to certain extent, yet they may also significantly differ. In the following chapter, I turn to a different reading of the rhetoric of regional

and provincial differences in PNG, by placing these in a broader context of the consolidation of cultural identities in PNG today.

Chapter Seven - Cultural Identity

There are, of course, limitations to what I outlined as James' proposal. There are two different sides to the systematic understanding of different sensibilities and forms of reciprocity and exchange outlined in the previous chapter. On the one hand, the understanding of these differences in a more systematic way proffered by numerous observations, and in correspondence with the historical anthropological record (cf. Feil 1987), does facilitate a basis to address different ways in which educational differentiation and social stratification at large is responded to in the social dynamics of and personal experiences in PNG today. On the other hand, it provides the risk to reify cultural differences between regions in PNG in ways that do not do justice to the nuances of local variation in general and processes of contemporary processes of social change more specifically. In this chapter, then, I provide a different reading of the rhetoric around cultural differences in contemporary PNG through the lens of questions of cultural identity. Here, I critically interrogate the ways in which cultural differences are presented by my interlocutors in view of the emergence and fomentation of regional and provincial identities in PNG, in which specific notions of exchange are postulated as normative principles towards distinct (pseudo-)ethnic identities.

The Citizens of Towns and Cities

James himself proposes limitations to the general applicability of taking an understanding of regions with distinct cultural sensibilities for granted in contemporary PNG:

> 'There is also another trend, which, I do not know whether people notice, but, the inter-marriages that we have, there is an emerging group of people – like we are tribal people, foreigners here – the town people, who really are citizens of towns and cities. They are a group of what I basically call the landless. We are going to have a landless group of people in the country. And then, you will begin to see things like food riots. Because that group will be the ones who are dependent. They are not self-sustaining, they are not subsistence agriculturalists, they don't have land, they depend on cities, towns, livelihoods like that… And we fail to… like, you keep on hearing people telling "send them home!" Send them home to where?'

James provides different examples that put into perspective the inappropriateness of imagining everyone in PNG today to either retain links or a specific identity associated with rural PNG that is tied to customary landownership. Even if a specific identity is maintained that corresponds to distinct places or regions of PNG, this does not mean

that people would be able to live in places to which their identity is connected. Take the following example:

> 'In Moresby, there are Taris there. When Taris get together and have a few beers, they ask each other: "Are you Tari from Tari or Tari from Moresby?" The thing is that the Moresby-Tari cannot go and get land in Tari. The land tenure system up there is so that, suppose you go away, and – say, I am your uncle – I can come and get your land. So long as I put fences around and I am there, you can't come back and say this originally belongs to you. So, you are going to see an emerging trend of a group of landless people in this country. And seriously they can't go anywhere. This is the city generation that we now see emerge. It's a lot of people today. It's not just mixed parentage or so. It's that people even don't bother to take them to wherever they were.'

As hinted already, however, this is not simply a question of access to land by someone who retains a specific identity based on specific regions or places in PNG. Today, there are now also more and more people in PNG who fundamentally identify with urban areas:

> 'Go to Sabama [a Port Moresby suburb] and ask people. They come up with a really colourful family tree. "Mum is from Kerema, dad from Simbu. My father's mother must have been from Enga, and my mother's mother was Tolai". So, who … are you!? "I am a mangi Sabs [boy from Sabama]". True, he is mangi Sabs, he is from Sabama! And you want to repatriate him? Tell me where you are going to put him?'

Not only urbanisation but also other migration movements in PNG challenge the image of a PNG that one could understand through correlating people and identity with regions and places:

> 'All the Sepiks that are now in New Britain they are going to stay there! […] They are there. The popular band Alopops; that name comes from Alotau Popondetta. There is a large population from Alotau that now lives in Popondetta. So, they call themselves Alopops.'

In other words, while not discounting the merits of a more systematic understanding of the commonalities and differences of sensibilities surrounding reciprocity and exchange across regions in PNG, there are limits to taking regional commonalities in principles of exchange and reciprocity as a guide to understanding people's practices and experiences in PNG today. What has been emerging at the same time over the last decades in is a national culture that finds expression especially, but not only, in urban PNG and its institutions (see Chapter Two). A national culture in PNG (see for example Foster 2002, Golub 2014:160-207), is not the same as 'national identity' in any case. What is striking, and this is the focus of the present chapter, is that alongside emergent

expressions of a PNG national identity, provincial identities – as a Simbu, Hagener, etc. – enjoy great leverage in PNG today and seem to be constitutive part of a national cultural phenomenon. I will illustrate this through the example of the lead up to a bride-price between the families of a Simbu bride and a Jiwaka groom, to show how people deploy of the rhetoric of distinct provincial identities. I take this as an entry point to discuss the role of provincial identities at the national institutions of universities in PNG today, with a focus on the University of Goroka.

Difference and Provincial Identity in a Highlands Wedding

In April 2013, I joined a visit from my adoptive Simbu family to in-laws in Jiwaka. My Simbu sister and her partner from Jiwaka both graduated as teachers from the University of Goroka and took up teaching positions at a school in the newly formed Jiwaka province. They met as students at the University of Goroka. To the disapproval of their respective families, two children had preceded their graduation and prolonged the time of their studies. For her family, who struggled to raise the fees and costs for her studies, it came as an unpleasant surprise that she would proceed from studies to look after her own newfound family rather than supporting her parents and sponsors from her initial salary for some time before getting married. For his family, and for his father in particular because he was a church pastor, it was thought shameful that a son had had children prior to formal wedlock, tarnishing his standing in front of his parish.

Her family wanted their expense of coming up with her university fees and living costs in Goroka for several years reflected in a high bride price. His family seemed in no hurry to contribute to a high bride price. Further, the relationship between the couple has been ridden with conflict over the years, which was a great source of unease for both families. When, ultimately, they seemed committed to continuing their relationship, it was decided in early 2013 to proceed with a bride-price exchange to formalise their marriage, and thus also to have her properly recognised as an in-law among his family and his father's church parish.

The lead up to the bride price payment, however, saw more conflict, and things became uncertain whether she and her family wanted to go ahead with the marriage. Our visit to Jiwaka, then, was a reaffirmation to go ahead with the bride price at an already scheduled date in the following weeks. This reaffirmation was substantiated by presenting a pig and crops that are valued in exchange, such as yam and marita (Pandanus conoideus), through which she apologised for casting into question their

marriage and forthcoming bride price by voicing doubt about it to her parents and sponsors.

Upon our arrival, her father-in-law welcomed us with explicitly bewildered surprise. He expressed that it was 'not good how we came' – he suggested that a cultural norm was not being met. He was under the impression that her parents would come to finalise some details about the upcoming bride price but had not expected about 20 people to show up. He said they would have prepared for us if they knew. He also voiced unease about the pig and crops we brought, suggesting that he did not see any reason for why we did so. This applied as well to why we took the cost and effort to come in the first place.

These points remained parts of discussion afterwards on either side. For his side, our entire trip and the pig presented was essentially regarded as a waste of resources. It appeared even more startling for them as the Simbus clearly were the family among the two with much less resources at their disposal. It also became a topic of discussion and reflection among our group visiting from Simbu as we were sitting around the fire overnight before returning home. The discussion centred around another specific instance that occurred that night. When in the evening both the fathers of the couple went to a nearby store to purchase coffee for us to drink overnight, the following occurred, as recounted by her father: As his father started counting small notes and coins towards meeting the cost for a pack of instant coffee, milk powder, and sugar, her father was said to have pulled out a 20 Kina note to hand to the shopkeeper, and saying directed to his father: 'let me help you with this'. To which the groom's father is retold to have responded: 'Why are you wasting so much money? You don't have money!'

Whichever way the episode really unfolded, in the story lies presented all the contention between these families that was discussed and evaluated as the '*pasin*' (way of doing things) of the other. For the Jiwakans, the Simbus engaged in a wasteful use of their resources without apparent purpose from the Jiwakans point of view. My adoptive Simbu family, in contrast, stressed their pride in the efforts taken to please their in-laws. It was clear to them, however, and as such it was made explicit in the speeches and remarks of their Jiwakan in-laws, that they in turn regarded this as wasteful and unnecessary. Those less inclined to a sympathetic reflection of this difference in '*pasin*' of the other family, however, perceived this as 'greedy', as economically calculative in a way that they themselves felt to be morally questionable, displaying a character

contravening their perspective on the pride of giving and demonstrating appreciation to the other. For the others, however, the costs incurred by my adoptive Simbu family appeared to fall outside the frame of appropriate relations of exchange. They were preparing to pay a bride price to the other party, what was this visit and the gifts about now? Was this a strategy to rack up the bride price? What the groom's family hinted in their assessment was that her family did not know how to handle money. They appeared looking down on the Simbus of the southern edge of highland Simbu several hours interior from the highway, their *pasin* seemed stuck in a way that defied the requirements of the contemporary world operating on money, which one thus needs to know how to handle.

What in this different take on practices was a particular style of this family of Jiwakan in-laws that our Simbu family found deplorable? What were actually differences in '*pasin*' or cultural sensibilities? In their respective reasoning, emphasis was given to locating the source of difference in provincial identities linked to respective forms of exchange. For them, it appeared to constitute differences between Jiwaka and Simbu, with both sides taking pride in specific practices and appropriate forms of relating and deploying resources that became associated with provincial identities.

For James, however, what such an episode demonstrates are aspects of social change. For example, the stronger focus on the immediate family and a savings culture displayed by the Jiwakans in this instance may be more connected with representing church leadership in accordance with the litany of the father's own pastoral work. It also represents broader processes of social change visible along the road corridor of the highlands highway from which their Simbu counterparts were further away. Additionally, much of the initial bewilderment of our visit may rather have to do with plain misunderstanding and miscommunication in the lead-up to events, as neither such a numerous visit and presentation of a pig and food items to reaffirm a shortly expected bride-price payment is a usual practice in Simbu itself, nor indeed was it clearly communicated beforehand to our hosts.

For the Simbus, however, the experience of difference and conflict among the respective families was interpreted as one of different '*pasin*', as in different moral sensibilities and practices underlying exchange, that became extrapolated as corresponding to 'Simbu' and 'Jiwaka' identities respectively. I am not in a position to argue in how far this instance speaks to differences in culture or '*pasin*', or instead

corresponds more to two different styles of families that are somewhat bewildered by the way the other side engages. Such interpretation is not my intention. Rather, I here want to demonstrate how the category of provincial identities in itself is a forceful rationalisation of difference in PNG today, whether culturally or otherwise.

The context that I focus on to demonstrate the appeal and entrenched process of shaping provincial identities in which specific cultural practices, or notions thereof, become reified as normative markers of provincial identity is the role of provincial student associations at PNG universities, here illustrated through the University of Goroka.

Provincial Student Associations and Identity

The student body of PNG universities is organised in provincial student associations. This has been a feature of PNG universities since their establishment in the 1960s. Provincial student associations provide a network of support and socialising among students. They also used to function, especially at UPNG and Unitech in the earlier days of PNG universities, as platforms to discuss political processes and development in students' home provinces. While less frequent today, provincial student associations historically played a role in students reaching out to their provinces for political awareness campaigns and to discuss other matters relating to provinces' development over university holidays. To date, provincial student associations host Governors or delegates from the Governor's office of respective provinces on visits to universities to meet and address the provinces' students. Provincial student associations thus also often coordinate the efforts of Governors to support students at universities through financial contributions, if that is part of a Governor's policy. For example, they keep updated lists of students from the province, and sometimes lobby provincial representatives to pay such contributions to students directly rather than depositing them into university accounts or organising such tertiary student support schemes through the Office (now Department) of Higher Education.

Moreover, provincial student associations play a pivotal role in student representation at universities. Their annually elected presidents usually become, ex-officio, constituting members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at universities. The common member composition of SRC's at public universities has been through provincial student association presidents and a set of executives elected through the general student body. This was how the SRC was constituted when I first arrived at the

University of Goroka in 2010. In the years after, however, the university tried to reform the process by extending elections to all positions in a reformed student representation (Student Voice Council), with positions for specific roles (e.g. mess rep), to represent specific programmes, or to represent students in specific fora (e.g., school boards, council, student disciplinary committee). The idea behind this was to have the student representation more focused on student welfare and academic matters rather than on what was perceived as competitive 'politics' that took the form of antagonism towards the university management regularly culminating in student strikes (see next section of Chapters Eight to Ten), and through which student leaders appeared to seek to position themselves in relation to the national political arena more so than student welfare and academic matters. After all, the annually elected presidents and executives of provincial student associations did not come under formal election processes of the university's student services (such as the elections of SRC executives), and the perception of university managers was that leadership at the level of provincial student associations is too little connected to academic matters and the functioning of committees and processes at university. I will return to the 'politics' of student representation in more detail in the following section. Here I want to draw attention to the way in which provincial student associations are linked to provincial identities in PNG.

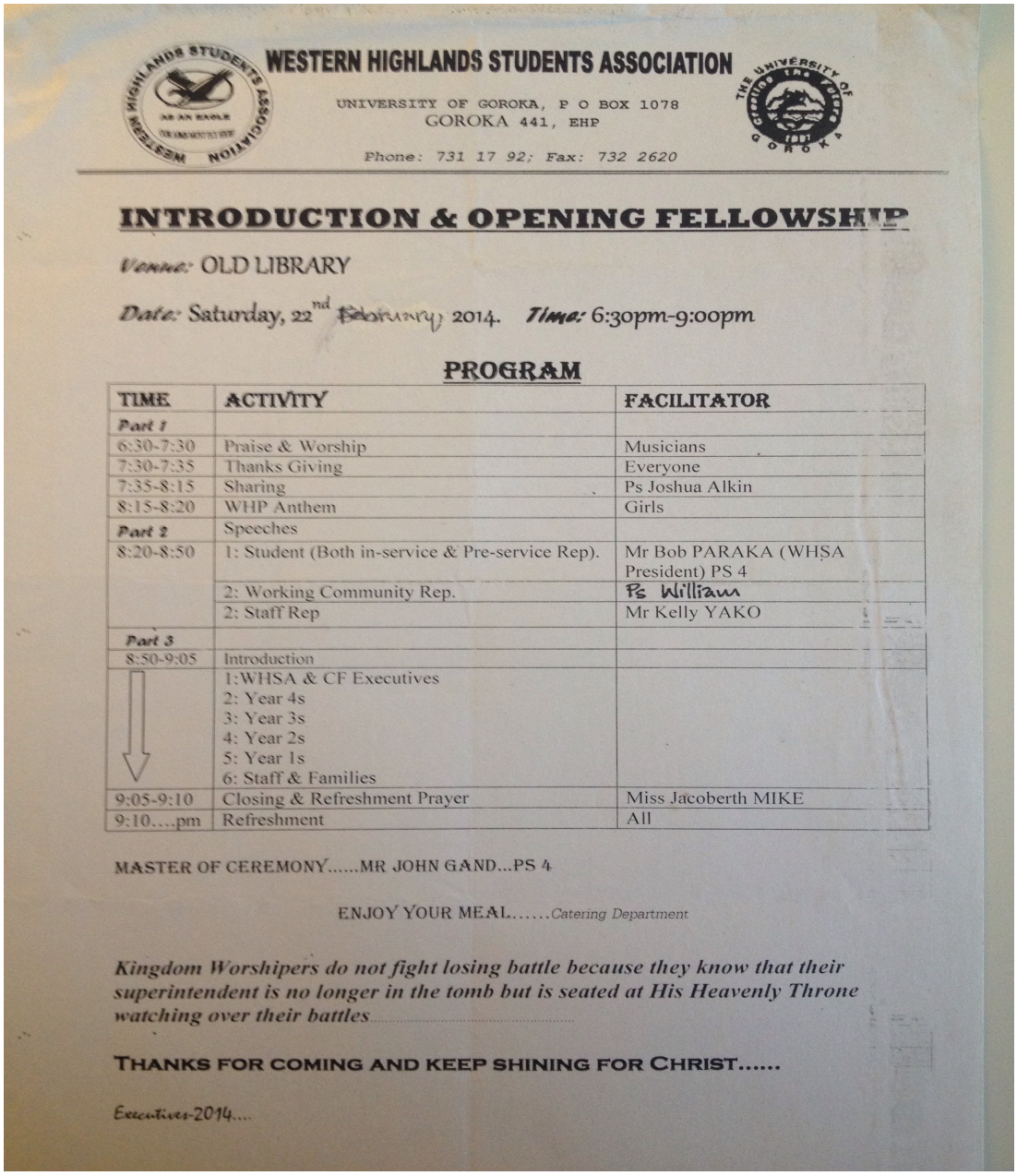
Apart from a sense that student politics are antagonistic to the university management in general, there is a sense that provincial student associations promote parochial province-based interests that compete with a spirit of national unity and national citizenship. Students see this differently, and provincial student associations continue to play an important role at PNG's public universities. Provincial student associations also do constitute an important social support network for students coming to university. Usually, provincial student association hold gatherings at the beginning of the academic year, in which students introduce each other, especially welcoming new students to university. There may be other gatherings organised throughout the year, sometimes around visits of provincial Governors or authorities visiting students to disburse financial support. Such gatherings constitute collective organising efforts, such as procuring a venue, inviting guest speakers to address students and other invitees, decorating the space, preparing food for those in attendance, and sometimes choreographing dances and performances. Another provincial association gathering is usually also organised at the end of the academic year again, in which the executive roles for the association are passed on for the next year. Through my previous affiliation with a Simbu family, I was regarded as part of the Simbu student association and

always notified about activities or gatherings. I also attended some provincial student association gatherings that I was invited to by friends, especially of the Jiwaka and Western Highlands student associations.

Provincial Student Association Gatherings

Gatherings of provincial student associations usually follow a similar structure of proceedings. To give an example, Figure 4 depicts the programme of the introduction meeting of the Western Highlands student association at the beginning of the academic year, which I attended in 2014. A specificity of the Western Highlands student association introduction meeting was that it functioned, at the same time, as the inception for the Western Highlands Christian fellowship meetings held on Saturday evenings throughout the semester. The programme thus had a shared emphasis of fellowship proceedings and speeches, before the introduction of participants to each other, whereas other provincial student association gatherings often have a stronger emphasis on speeches by invited guests (as for example the Simbu student association farewell programme shown in Figures 5 and 6).

In the provincial student association gatherings, specific characteristics of the respective province are drawn out, its uniqueness evoked, its particular development challenges emphasised, and a sense of pride fomented about provincial heritage and identity that appears familiar from nationalist rhetoric and identity-making. Note also, for example, the singing of the provincial anthem in the proceedings of the Western Highlands student association gathering. One speaker further emphasised that with the separation of Jiwaka from the Western Highlands Province, the latter will have to make up for the loss of provincial revenue that was gained through coffee and tea plantations in what is now Jiwaka province.



WESTERN HIGHLANDS STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA, P O BOX 1078
GOROKA 441, EHP

Phone: 731 17 92; Fax: 732 2620

INTRODUCTION & OPENING FELLOWSHIP

Venue: OLD LIBRARY

Date: Saturday, 22nd ~~February~~ 2014. *Time:* 6:30pm-9:00pm

PROGRAM

TIME	ACTIVITY	FACILITATOR
Part 1		
6:30-7:30	Praise & Worship	Musicians
7:30-7:35	Thanks Giving	Everyone
7:35-8:15	Sharing	Ps Joshua Alkin
8:15-8:20	WHP Anthem	Girls
Part 2	Speeches	
8:20-8:50	1: Student (Both in-service & Pre-service Rep).	Mr Bob PARAKA (WHSA President) PS 4
	2: Working Community Rep.	Ps William
	2: Staff Rep	Mr Kelly YAKO
Part 3		
8:50-9:05	Introduction	
	1:WHSA & CF Executives 2: Year 4s 3: Year 3s 4: Year 2s 5: Year 1s 6: Staff & Families	
9:05-9:10	Closing & Refreshment Prayer	Miss Jacoberth MIKE
9:10....pm	Refreshment	All

MASTER OF CEREMONY.....MR JOHN GAND...PS 4

ENJOY YOUR MEAL.....*Catering Department*

Kingdom Worshipers do not fight losing battle because they know that their superintendent is no longer in the tomb but is seated at His Heavenly Throne watching over their battles

THANKS FOR COMING AND KEEP SHINING FOR CHRIST.....

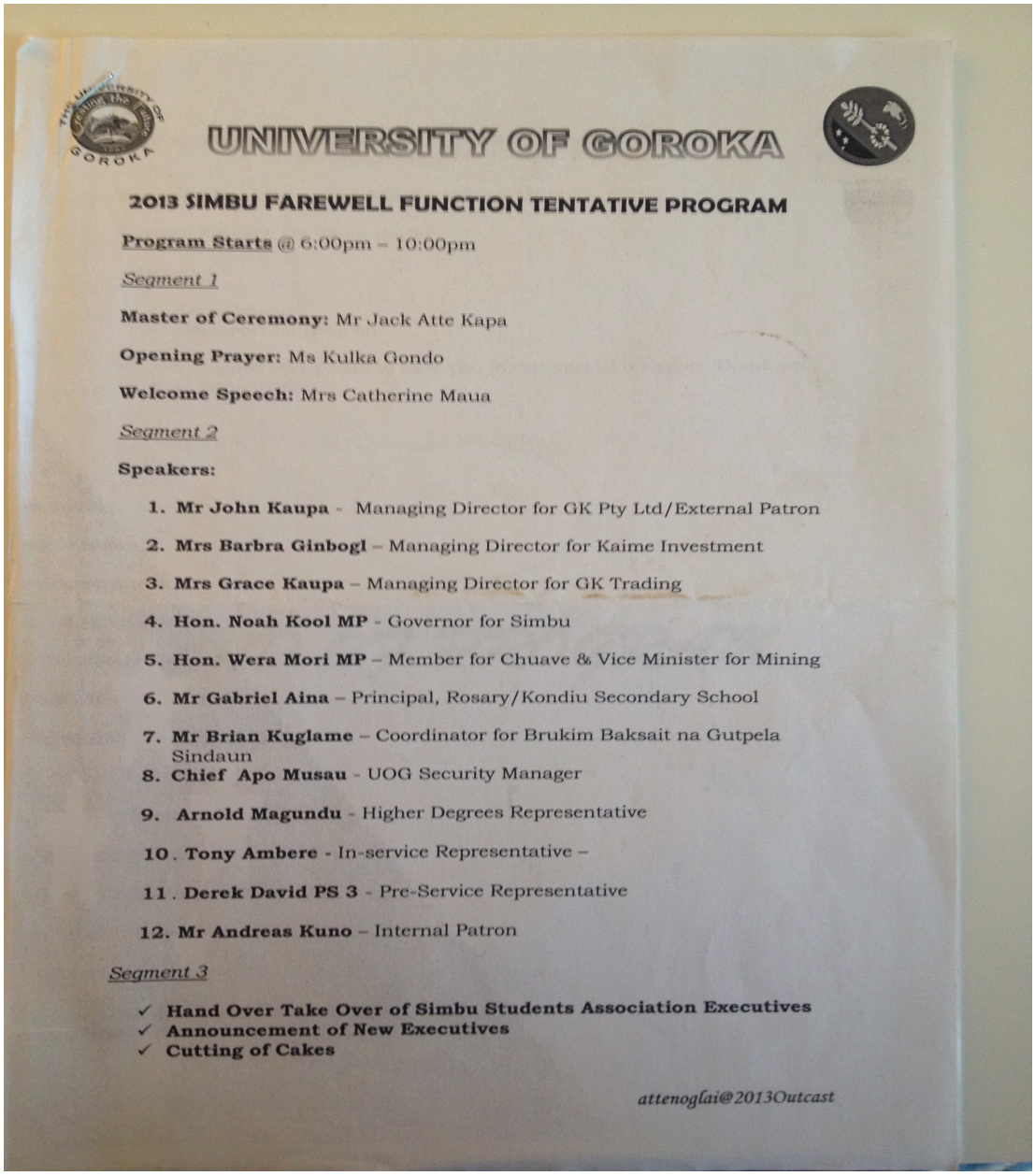
Executives-2014....

Figure 4*: Programme of Western Highlands student association introduction & opening fellowship for the academic year 2014.*

It is not only through the speakers and programme proceedings that a sense of provincial identity has been conveyed to me in the gathering. Students sitting around me also in comments to me complemented the message of speakers. A final year student sitting next to me, for example, told me that Hageners, as standing for the Western Highlands, are very 'business-minded'. Unlike students from other provinces, he suggested, students from Hagen would not simply settle in paid employment as teachers or in other professions, but that what they are really thinking about after graduating from studies is to set up their own business. He further outlined that the Western Highlands have good soil enabling to produce abundant food, and that thus Western

Highlanders are well built and nourished. It is common to present provincial characteristics, identity, development opportunities and challenges with reference to a provinces' resource base. For the Western Highlands, for example, commentators are specific in mentioning that without having large-scale extractive resource projects in the province, Hageners rely on their land and their business ventures for income and economic success. To this, in the context of the university, tertiary education is also added as a pathway enabling wealth.

Fomenting a specific sense of provincial identity is linked with motivational speeches to advance the province through one's own commitment. What is stressed in these speeches also seemed to differ among the different student association gatherings I attended, which again becomes linked to the characteristics or principles of exchange associated with the culture or identity of respective provinces. These speeches are not necessarily always explicit in drawing the full circle between putatively 'provincial' modes of exchange and characteristics to, say, associated notions of moral sensibilities. Providing examples in the content of speeches and commentary and discussion about these, however, adds to understanding how such differences become drawn up and associated with provincial identities. One example are the personal comments a lecturer from the Western Highlands made to me following the speech of a pastor, in which the pastor stressed that students were not at university to start studies, but for the purpose to complete or finish them. The lecturer I spoke to said he would even take that further in stressing the need for students to learn to be 'independent', and to act as 'individuals' who are independent in their decision-making vis-a-vis groups or social pressure. On the one hand, this sounds like a frequently heard rhetoric on campus. On the other hand, it specifically resonates with the representation of the business-minded Hagener, as I will show by contrasting these statements to the content of speeches and commentaries in the Simbu student association farewell function for the year 2013 below.



UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA

2013 SIMBU FAREWELL FUNCTION TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Program Starts @ 6:00pm – 10:00pm

Segment 1

Master of Ceremony: Mr Jack Atte Kapa

Opening Prayer: Ms Kulka Gondo

Welcome Speech: Mrs Catherine Maua

Segment 2

Speakers:

1. **Mr John Kaupa** - Managing Director for GK Pty Ltd/External Patron
2. **Mrs Barbra Ginbogl** – Managing Director for Kaime Investment
3. **Mrs Grace Kaupa** – Managing Director for GK Trading
4. **Hon. Noah Kool MP** - Governor for Simbu
5. **Hon. Wera Mori MP** – Member for Chuave & Vice Minister for Mining
6. **Mr Gabriel Aina** – Principal, Rosary/Kondiu Secondary School
7. **Mr Brian Kuglame** – Coordinator for Brukim Baksait na Gutpela Sindaun
8. **Chief Apo Musau** - UOG Security Manager
9. **Arnold Magundu** - Higher Degrees Representative
10. **Tony Ambere** - In-service Representative –
11. **Derek David PS 3** - Pre-Service Representative
12. **Mr Andreas Kuno** – Internal Patron

Segment 3

- ✓ **Hand Over Take Over of Simbu Students Association Executives**
- ✓ **Announcement of New Executives**
- ✓ **Cutting of Cakes**

attenoglai@2013Outcast

***Figure 5**: Tentative programme of the 2013 Simbu student association farewell function.*

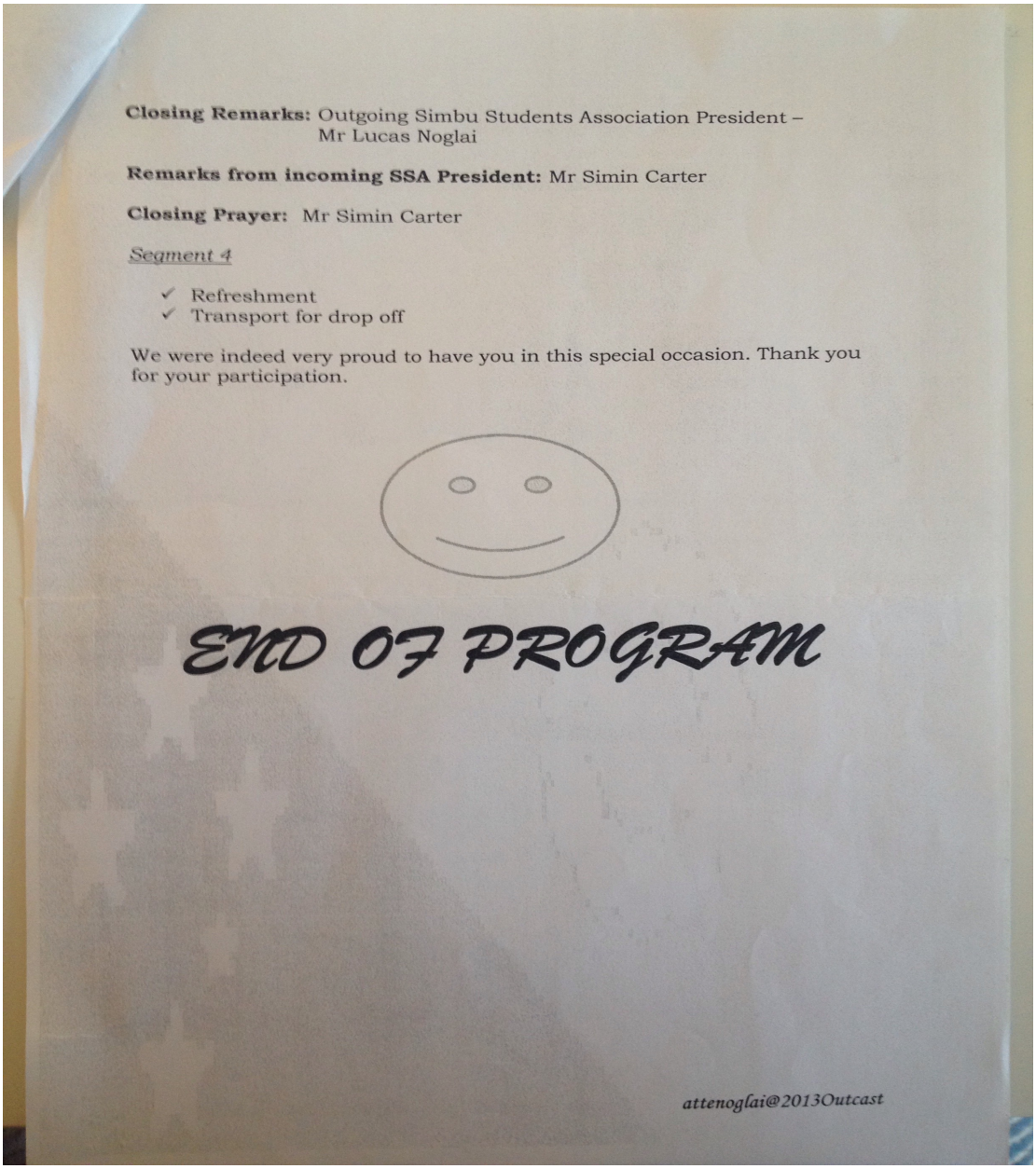


***Figure 6**: Tentative programme of the 2013 Simbu student association farewell function (continued).*

As the name of the 'tentative programme' for the 2013 farewell function of the Simbu student association suggests, the list of invited speakers does not correspond to the speakers that actually addressed the function in the end. In this case, the MPs scheduled to speak were not present, besides some other changes. In this meeting, a lecturer took the opportunity to remind students that they are not on their own, but that there are expectations on them to look after their respective clans and tribes, and that students should do well in supporting those who enable students to be the privileged ones to attend university. This is a different tone to the comment of a lecturer from the Western Highlands above who urged students to free themselves of peer pressure and group expectations and to advance as individuals. It is worth pointing out how these different

messages resonate with the sensibilities upon which provincial identities become constructed.

This became clearer to me when attending the Simbu student association introduction gathering for the academic year 2014, which was held on the same day as the Western Highlands introduction detailed above, preceding it in the afternoon. Students pointed out to me on this occasion that there is no 'independence' in their personal conduct, and that in fact there cannot be. Rather, people depend on each other, and that while students are supported by a range of sponsors to be at university now, they will have demands directed at them when they are finished. One in-service student poignantly said that he cannot advance himself without advancing others, which for him meant that he had to take out a loan to chip in for fees of a relative attending university while he advanced his own studies further through an in-service degree. Otherwise, he said, people would question why he advanced his own studies when already a wage earner while others would struggle to get the education to find employment themselves. People said that they encounter demands that surpass what they are able to shoulder. If they choose not to heed these demands and expectations though, they risk becoming rejected, and moreover they expose themselves to envy that would lead them to live in fear of afflictions of sorcery or witchcraft.

This, again, is in marked difference to the common tone experienced in and around the Western Highlands student association gathering, where individual success and initiative in business was stressed. It resonates with the scheme drawn up by James in the previous chapter, although in these instances the underlying sensibilities surrounding exchange and reciprocity are specifically associated with provincial identities of 'us Simbus' or 'us Hageners' that is drawn up in specific distinction to other provinces. Again, a province's resource base is made mention to in relation to this, and the specific characteristics of Simbu, for example, as a place of rugged mountainous terrain in distinction to neighbouring Jiwaka and Eastern Highland provinces that enjoy fertile valleys and thus much better cash-earning opportunities through coffee, for example. In motivational speeches at Simbu student association gatherings, in contrast, it is frequently mentioned how Simbu relies on education, and people's brains, to advance the province, naming prominent Simbus who went on to complete PhDs and work in admirable positions both in PNG and abroad. Rather than acknowledging potential commonalities with neighbouring provinces, as James' assessment suggests,

also the Simbu student association gatherings fostered a sense of the uniqueness of the province and fomented an associated identity.

After the gathering, I continued the discussion with a first-year student, Gregory, as we walked back to our respective dormitories. He picked up the thread of the in-service student who claimed that in Simbu 'culture' can block people's advancement in education. For him this was a pertinent point that he experienced in his own way. He grew up in Port Moresby to parents from rural Simbu. He says that he does visit the provincial capital Kundiawa occasionally, but that his family does not allow him to visit the village, for the fear they have that people there could seek to spoil and block his education through their envy that could manifest in sorcery or witchcraft directed at him or his education. This story resonated with the account of Paul who I introduced earlier. While for Paul there was less of an immediate concern for having grown up in the village and being confident about his relations there, for Gregory, who grew up in Port Moresby, the concern his immediate family harboured for him and his education made him loathe to visit the villages of his parents and relatives. While then there is little doubt about the shared experience of certain sensibilities about appropriate forms of relations and one's own conduct among students from certain areas, and the contrast to experiences to other areas, as here between Simbu and Hagen, it is remarkable how these become associated with a peculiar notion of being part of the provinces' respective uniqueness in comparison to other provinces. They thus feed into provincial identities in which, in effect, shared experiences of students are constructed as normative principles of relating and exchange that stand for a specific province. This is manifested in instances where someone's actions are evaluated negatively in relation to provincial identity, by alleging that someone's course of action does not correspond to the spirit of a provincial identity by not adhering to certain expectations of sharing or acknowledging relations appropriately.

The Emergence of Provincial Student Associations in PNG Universities

The phenomenon of the emergence and continued consolidation of provincial identities is not a new one in PNG. In fact, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, it is inherently tied up with the establishment of universities as among the first institutions to foment a sense of national unity and identity. While the first batches of students at UPNG from 1966 onwards had some role in the development of a PNG nationalism (see Chapter Three), once a national elite emerged that took charge of national politics by 1972,

university students' role shifted markedly, from first actively shaping national consciousness to then contributing to the emergence of provincial and parochial politics (Ballard 1977). Partly, as John Ballard suggests, this constituted an alternative to the national politics by the new PNG elite that was characterised by growing pragmatism in PNG state-formation, which lead to increasing ideological opposition from students. By then, students had become to have a much more active role in contributing to the emergence of provincial politics rather than shaping national politics and consciousness.

The important role of the early years of UPNG and its student body to shape the forms of politics and processes of identity-formation for the years to come should not be underestimated. The establishment of UPNG, for example, marked a radical shift in Australia's policy towards the territories of Papua and New Guinea. Up until the 1960s, Australia was determined to prevent the emergence of a PNG elite. From the Australian perspective, the goal was to gradually increase levels of education universally across the territories, and to thus allow for a long-term bottom-up process for the establishment of a state. Australia intended a slow preparation of the ground for the possibility and viability of PNG's independence through a long process of styling an education system, that was least disruptive to local forms of organisation, and preventing the premature consolidation of an elite before the territories as a whole were more prepared towards self-governance through an inclusive political system and robust political education.[30] This meant, however, that when Australia was basically forced to change its approach towards the territories of PNG through international pressure through the UN Committee on Decolonisation, for example, it had to accelerate and do in little time what it always deliberately obstructed, that is, to establish national institutions that could create a national elite within the shortest possible time. UPNG as a national institution with a clear mandate to produce a national elite thus filled an empty space. Once a national elite had emerged to steer politics through a national government, antagonism between the government and students ensued, and campus politics became increasingly centred around provincial politics.

[30] Regardless of the spirit of this policy, there were hardly determined steps to actually advance this policy goal. Raising universal education in the territories of PNG through establishing a school system of primary education to cover the territories was an expensive exercise that Australia was, in reality, not committed to fund. In effect, Australia's most important policy stance seemed to be one of minimising further interference with local organisation and subsistence patterns while blocking the emergence of political or economic organization beyond local levels for preventing the emergence of an elite.

Bougainville and Tolai (East New Britain) students were the first to form separate student associations in 1968. Bougainville had its own sense of identity, and students were calling for a referendum on Bougainville's future constitutional status. Tolai students' political organisation was in response and protest to land alienation in the Gazelle Peninsula. A regional highlands political student association was formed by a student at the Goroka Teachers College at the time also. Other district student groups (corresponding to provinces today) were formed on a social or sporting basis. While those politically active remained a small minority until then among students, the House of Assembly elections in 1972 had a much larger segment of students become politically active for the first time. This was also a time when, with larger student numbers entering UPNG, students often remained confined to social contacts from their own district. In 1973, UPNG officially recognised and encouraged district student associations, especially with a view towards constituting a form of organisation to maintain social control and discipline among growing student numbers. The university thereby also created the pathway for the constitution of the Student Representative Council (SRC) through student representatives elected through district student associations. By 1976, the university was criticised by students themselves for this move, following clashes and violence between district student associations. Some students, at the same time, started to mobilise political identities in their home districts over university holidays, and students' attention to this level of political organisation and identity formation increased further with districts becoming provinces with their own provincial governments. By that time, almost all students were involved in activities of provincial student associations. National politics remained a concern and cause for general student mobilisation (something I will return to in the next set of Chapters), but most political attention had shifted to provincial levels, and social contacts at university were most notably defined through provincial student associations (Ballard 1977).

Provincial Identity as Normative Ideal and the Emergence of Stereotypes

As my own observations above confirm, provincial student associations remained an important form of student organisation at PNG universities. It does not constitute the only form of students' social contacts, which extend to networks and collectivities based on common university courses, shared corridors in student dormitories, Christian denominations and mass or fellowship attendance, and sports teams not composed along provincial boundaries (compare Reed 2003). Overall, however, student sociality based

on provincial boundaries and identities were a visible feature throughout my times at the University of Goroka. The majority of my student contacts socialised most consistently among students of the same province of their own origin or identification. When I saw my student friends from Simbu, they were likely to be in the presence of other Simbus. The same occurred with my friends from the Western Highlands or Madang provinces. This was not exclusively the case, however, and some students were explicit to me about their own ideological stance as Papua New Guineans who took pride in actively establishing friendships and personal networks across provincial boundaries and throughout PNG. Before I return to instances of shifting the focus away from provincial boundaries and identities by some students and staff, I exemplify the way in which the preference for, or the confinement to, sociality based on provincial affiliation and identity is normalised at the University of Goroka.

One evening, as I entered one of the male student dormitory blocks to see a friend, I met another acquaintance from the Western Highlands who stayed in another dormitory block. We exchanged some words and I casually asked what he was up to. He responded that he was looking to buy a flex card (a top up card for mobile phone credit), and that he came to check on a friend from the Western Highlands who he knew was selling them, as our common friends from the Western Highlands who were selling these too in his dormitory block ran out of stock.[31] His friend in this dormitory block, however, had none left to sell either. I pointed to others who may have some stock left for sale nearby, but he responded that it was not urgent and that he would wait for tomorrow. He added that he was only going to buy a flex card from his friends and wantoks from the Western Highlands, and that he would thus return to his dormitory rather than looking further. In general, such preferences of sticking to established contacts for economic transaction is common. The notion presented here that my acquaintance would only purchase from friends or others from the same province is a somewhat exceptional example of the form this may take; however, it conveys the vigour and extent that provincial identification can take.

[31] It is common for students in dormitories to sell items of popular demand in student dormitories, such as mobile top-up cards, biscuits, loose cigarettes and rolls of local tobacco. Often a notice pinned to the dormitory door room alerts fellow students about the sales, while others do so simply by word-of-mouth through their friends and acquaintances.

There are further indications of the consolidation of provincial identities in other ways too. Making new acquaintances in PNG, and introducing myself as anthropologist, often elicits a common pattern of response in conversations. Interlocutors frequently point to PNG as a country of over 800 languages, and secondly as made up of 21 provinces.[32] Following this, an interlocutor often specifies the province he is from or identifies with, detailing some iconic characteristics and pointing me to where in the country the province is located. In smaller gatherings of students of a province – for example when discussing the approach to lay to rest quarrels between students from different provinces through shaking hands and exchanging some money to affirm good relations – students often allude to a normatively idealised way of how in their province they go about exchange or making peace, and thus aim at displaying the pride in their ways when relating, as provincial group, to groups of students from other provinces. In these instances, as in provincial student association gatherings, provincial identity is positively defined.

There are instances, however, in which provincial identity also becomes negatively defined. One example of this, presented above, is the discussion following the visit of Simbus to Jiwaka prior to receiving a bride price, which is followed by construing provincial 'others' through representations of differences in moral sensibilities or appropriate practices surrounding exchange. Such representations also occur in other contexts, and some of them have taken the form of stereotypes that are brought up in utterances, presented as alleged truisms of ethnic difference between regions and provinces in PNG. Negative stereotypes about other provinces were certainly less common than the positive construction of one's own provincial identity; they appeared nevertheless common and could be overheard frequently.

A common form this took in my observations were moral evaluations of others' actions. Many of my Simbu interlocutors judged Hageners, often evoking negative stereotypes. They said that Hageners are 'greedy' for example. Or 'money-faces' in PNG jargon. That they would be stingy in holding on to money and accumulate rather than re-distribute. Supposedly just what Papua New Guineans associate with Chinese storekeepers and entrepreneurs active in PNG. In such stereotypical representations, as I already pointed to in the previous chapter, Hageners sometimes get referred to as 'PNG

[32] When I first arrived in PNG, Jiwaka and Hela were not formal provinces on their own yet, and sometimes the National Capital District is included in this count and sometimes it is not, the number I was told could thus vary.

Chinese'. Simbus take pride in sharing, they say, and in compassionate giving if anyone is in need or asks for something. Hageners in contrast, so Simbus allege, and again as alluded to in these contours already by my interlocutor in the previous chapter, are totally fine with eating a lavish meal at a kai bar in town while ignoring a hungry relative passing by.

Hageners in turn take pride in their success in business. Look around in Hagen, Hageners say, and you see that all the businesses are run by locals, not like in Goroka or Kundiawa where mostly foreigners run stores while locals fail. They allege that, unlike themselves, people in Goroka and Kundiawa do not know how to handle money. Whatever they get, they spend on others straight away. Or they give in to requests by relatives and their business goes down. Hageners instead handle their resources differently and are thus able to advance in business.

As developed earlier, there is a basis to this assessment in terms of different sensibilities surrounding exchange in respective areas of the PNG highlands. While pride is taken in respective sensibilities surrounding exchange, and disapproval of the respective other practices of exchange is sometimes voiced, there is also a different reflexive engagement with these differences. The concerns about their own movement in public spaces where relatives or acquaintances could be met, which Simbus and Eastern Highlanders from Goroka and Asaro voiced to me as developed above, based on demands for redistribution by kin and the problems that not fulfilling such requests may bring about, sometimes led to statements that they wished they were born in the context of Hagen practices of exchange, which they regard as less burdensome on their own resources and allows unrestricted movement without worry. Others also seek to engage with these differences productively. One acquaintance from Simbu living in Goroka told me about saving money for building a house in a few years' time. He further mentioned that he had recently substantially contributed to the bride-price of a distant in-law in the Southern Highlands, and that he saw this as an investment in his strategy to save money. He was explicit about how in Mendi in the Southern Highlands, his contribution to his in-law's bride-price was dealt with similar as in Hagen. It would lock his resources away, and once he intended to start working on his house, or had other needs coming up, he knew that he would be getting returned what he had offered, and even a bit more. He treated this like an investment, based on his own understanding of exchange in different parts of the PNG highlands.

Wantokism and Provincial Collectivities

There are other ways in which provincial identity matters in everyday life. There is the notion of the *wantok* that I introduced earlier for example. A *wantok*, literally, is someone who speaks the same language (*wan tok* = one language). It enjoys wider use, however, to mean friend or acquaintance in general (cf. Schram 2015). One such application of the term refers to someone from the same province. Paul for example shared reflections on what seemed to him a peculiar manifestation of provincial identity, for the case of Simbu, in the national sphere of PNG. He told me that a particular challenge within Simbu is competitiveness, envy, and jealousy proper, even among close relatives; or rather, sometimes especially among close relatives. He used his own example as illustration. One reason that his uncle who works in the mining industry discouraged him from pursuing studies in mining engineering, he alleges, was that his uncle feared being overtaken by Paul in his own achievements in the industry. Paul supplied another series of examples within schools and other institutions within Simbu. While people generally take pride in the achievements of others in their village, if it is in their hands to determine the fate of close relatives, they, so Paul alleged, would rather keep their own relatives down in personal competition with them than to seek their advancement. For Paul, this constituted a peculiar problem of ambivalence in relations to kin that emerges in specific settings within Simbu province. In contrast to commonly voiced critiques of alleged nepotism occurring in institutions of different sorts, Paul's account seems to suggest the opposite. People's jealousy in personal competition with relatives – or perhaps more adequately – often those from the same community or village rather than immediate family members, in effect works in favour of people from other places in Simbu whom people are more comfortable with advancing, as they will not challenge their standing in their own community. Outside the province, this takes another form then. The provincial identification as Simbus, and especially when not from the same community where persons stand in competition to each other, may, so Paul alleges, indeed lead to the nepotism of favouring those from the same province over others. He says that nepotism based on common provincial identification is a common problem in PNG's national institutions, but that it is peculiar for Simbus that they will try to block persons that are so close to themselves that they could compete for standing in the same community.

Another manifestation of provincial identities at the University of Goroka is through the emergence of provincial collectivities outside student association gatherings. It is

common, for example, that if there is a conflict between two students from different provinces, the conflict becomes dealt with and defused through informal gatherings of provincial groups to discuss the conflict, mediate between parties, and to restore positive relations. While this sort of solving conflicts is discouraged by the university administration, it is nevertheless a common practice to resolve conflicts among students. Such conflicts are usually solved in a low-key way, to not draw more attention to them than necessary, while ensuring enough relevant witnesses to the process so to assure a lasting resolution to the conflict that is being dealt with. Depending on the scale of the conflict, provincial student association executives may be asked to take charge in these proceedings, and in some instances university security staff has been asked to witness such conflict resolutions. While the policy of the university is firm that any breach of disciplinary regulations must be dealt with through formal processes rather than informal conflict resolution mechanisms among students, security staff nevertheless endeavour to assist in ensuring harmonious relations among students, and thus usually follow the invitation by students to witness such proceedings.[33] Even if it is related to a conflict that is dealt with through the university's formal channels, as in proceedings through the student disciplinary committee, students usually still resolve conflicts and restore relations through such informal approaches in a complementary way.

In conflicts among students and their resolution, in any case, individuals come to be regarded as part of larger social entities that will step in at the time of conflict, which I here call a collectivity based on provincial identification. Such collectivities may become visible first of all in a phase of escalating conflict, in which the circle of those involved becomes widened through others identifying with the respective provinces of the persons involved in conflict, and shared provincial identity many times remains the denominator for collective social entities through which conflicts are solved.[34]

Conclusion

In this chapter, my concern has been to demonstrate the prominence and role of provincial identities in PNG today, and especially how these become manifest at the

[33] Arguably, the student disciplinary committee results in punitive justice while informal student approaches to resolve conflicts are characterised by a principle of restorative justice.

[34] Sometimes other collectivities emerge in conflicts, such as that of different dormitory blocks (compare Reed 2003 for the different forms of collectivities emerging in the context of a prison in PNG).

University of Goroka and in students' lives. The articulation of provincial identities frequently draws on differences surrounding sensibilities and practices of exchange, as those that I demonstrated in more detail in the previous chapter. What becomes backgrounded through the articulations of provincial identities, are both the continuities of respective sensibilities surrounding exchange across provinces, and the heterogeneities within provinces. Provincial identities thus propagate the idea of provinces as bounded spaces, for which dominant sensibilities and practices surrounding exchange become elevated to normative ideals connected to a specific provincial identity. In a way, provinces thus come to resemble the kind of imagined communities (Anderson 1983) that are otherwise familiar from nation-states.

Provincial identities thus constitute a reification of aspects of culture and exchange. To be sure, they often draw on reflexive objectifications of cultural difference as observed and experienced by Papua New Guineans today. In the previous chapter, I explored both the continuity and differences in sensibilities surrounding exchange across parts of the PNG Highlands from an anthropological perspective (including the perspective of a Papua New Guinean anthropologist). In the present chapter, I described and analysed how such differences become re-mapped and articulated based on provincial boundaries. Actual differences (or continuities) between provinces seem to matter less than provincial boundaries in this process of reification and identification. This goes so far that in contemporary PNG, urban conflicts between collectivities that emerge based on provincial identities, are termed 'ethnic' clashes in common rhetoric and media news items.

What we see in action here as well then is how the concept and category of culture is produced, reproduced, and takes on its own life and meaning in PNG today.
Culture has of course been a concept of central importance within anthropology (Geertz 1973, Wagner 1975, Clifford and Marcus 1986). Culture has become a contested category within anthropology since, and its usefulness as a central tenet of the discipline has increasingly been questioned (see for example Kuper 1999). My rendition of processes how culture is mobilised in PNG today as an emic concept, rather than solely as an etic anthropological category of description or analysis, resonates with scholarship on the mobilisation of culture in processes of sub-national identity-making that for example Richard Handler describes for Quebec (1988). In contrast to Quebecois identity-making, the provincial cultural identities formed in PNG are not necessarily linked to projects of break-away national sovereignty. They point, however, to an

emerging realm of metacultural reflexivity and politics that builds on historical trajectories of the culture concept (Mulhern 2000, Tomlinson 2009, cf. Urban 2001), and the performative effects of culture as a concept (Bennett 2013).

There is then also a further process of differentiation taking place as part of the experience of higher education. Besides the social differentiation and stratification vis-à-vis kin that I started this section of chapters with, the time at university also differentiates people according to provincial and regional culture and identity. This process is not limited to higher education in PNG today, and is visible also in other realms of urban and institutional everyday life in PNG. Universities, however, remain a place where these processes can both be saliently observed, and where they historically emerged in important ways.[35] There is a twofold process occurring then, on different levels. Students entering tertiary education, on one hand, are, through the relative privilege vis-à-vis kin, drawn to reflect on the changing relation to their kin and sponsors as they progress through higher education towards paid employment. The specificities of these reflections, and the specific challenges that these processes of social differentiation and stratification entail, on the other hand, both shape and are shaped by the reflexive metacultural abstractions and politics that are contained in the ongoing construction of provincial and regional cultural identities in PNG today.

Seen from a different perspective, provincial identities conform to a segmentary structure of identification, from family, to larger community, district, province and nation, and thus resonate with segmentary forms of organisation that have been described in earlier studies of social organisation in PNG (Merlan & Rumsey 1991, Brown 1972). It resonates for example with forms of social organisation that I am familiar with from Simbu, in which family lineages, ideologically exogamous social units of larger size, and wider alliances of territorially contiguous social units provide different identifications on a gradual scale that are most commonly evoked in antagonism to respectively opposed units at every level (Syndicus 2011). Provincial and national identities may be seen as a continuum to this, where provincial identities become evoked especially in specific distinction to other provinces. On the other hand, and that is an increasing concern at both the university and for other observers and

[35] Robert Foster, who wrote about the materialisation of the nation in PNG in relation to mass media and consumption (2002), in a personal remark while we met at UPNG in July 2014 noted that notice boards at UPNG seem to display little of a materialising nation with all their announcements in relation to activities of specific provincial groups.

intellectuals in PNG today, provincial identities are appearing to compete with the project of identification with PNG as national citizens. From this perspective, the vigour of provincial identities is perceived as a threat to nation-building and national unity. In such a reading, provincial identities seem to compete with narratives of national identification as Papua New Guineans. In the following section I turn to student strikes, in which provincial identifications and collectivities based on them are successfully overcome in the creation of a united student body that constitutes a single collective entity.

SECTION II - POLITICS & LEADERSHIP

In this second ethnographic section of three chapters, I turn to politics and leadership at the university. I approach questions of politics through the description and analysis of a student strike at the University of Goroka in 2013. In the first chapter of this section, Chapter Eight, I provide a detailed descriptive chronology of the strike. This chronology corresponds to a perspective of how the strike could be observed from the vantage point of an observer at the university who pays close attention to the turn of events based on the publicly visible face of the strike.

In the second chapter of this section, Chapter Nine, I enter into more depth of a perspective from among students, to illuminate the internal dynamics within the student body, and how specific dynamics were stirred by strike leaders. This is where I start a more detailed analysis of the dynamics of mobilisation for the strike and its prolongation in time. I suggest that strike leaders cleverly harness and manipulate collective dynamics, and that they do so primarily with their own interest for higher leadership roles in mind. I demonstrate, for example, that there seems to be a clear link between leading a student strike and subsequently contesting national elections. Chapter Nine provides an account of how strike leaders use a strike as an opportunity to prove their leadership capacity by means of violent threat and clever manipulation rather than by advancing student issues from which their strike draws legitimacy.

In the third and final chapter of this section, Chapter Ten, I again take a different perspective. Here, I discuss the issues and grievances that arise for students and staff in the everyday operations of the university. This is the context in which grievances arise and frustrations build up to levels that make a strike appear as the only approach left to effect change. In Chapter Ten, I suggest that regardless of the intentions of the students that led the strike in 2013, there is a widespread sense among students that they are not sufficiently recognised as agents and part of the university community, perceiving that their plights are ignored and not being appropriately related to. This creates an environment in which a strike gains wide legitimacy among students for raising their issues that are perceived to otherwise remain unaddressed.

The choice of these different analytical lenses and narratives about the strike in respective chapters is deliberate. The two frames of representation about the observed strike that form the basis of my analysis correspond to two possible perspectives and common evaluations in public perception about the student strike in PNG – which tends

to be either dismissive of the strike leaders' political aspirations through which the university is held at ransom in regular intervals, on one hand, or sympathetic with students who are groomed as future elite of the country but rightly and bitterly disappointment about the state of the university and education they receive, on the other hand. By presenting these perspectives through two different chapters, I seek to make both these perspectives intelligible in an inclusive rather than antagonistic way.

Through the analysis presented in this section, I focus on a different aspect of processes of social differentiation and stratification that are experienced and advanced at university – that is, how students seek to establish themselves as leaders towards becoming part of the national political elite of the country through their involvement in student politics and successfully mobilising for student strikes. As I have detailed in Chapter Three, universities in PNG were historically created to train a national elite, and the association of attending university with becoming a constitutive part of the country's national elite still resonates in common rhetoric at universities in PNG today. While there are no obvious pathways to enter positions of leadership at the national level in direct succession of university studies today, some university students seek to distinguish themselves by demonstrating leadership capacity through the role of a student leader and by mobilising for student strikes. By differentiating themselves as effective and capable leaders, such politically aspiring students use the renown of leading students and strikes in antagonism to powerful institutional or political actors to contest national elections. In terms of general processes of social differentiation and stratification through university studies, to become a student leader only concerns a tiny segment of students. It is significant, however, in the broader picture of the processes of social differentiation and stratification inherent to university education in PNG today, as student leaders aspiring for a direct succession into national politics seek to bypass the reality of most graduates at the University of Goroka today: to become an entry-level public servant as teacher to become part a growing lower middle-class in PNG with little hope for further upward mobility (see Chapter Two), despite the common rhetoric of university students being equated with the future national elite.[36]

[36] For another and comparable account elsewhere on how student leaders pursue politics as an alternative career path in the context of a lack of perspective to proceed into public service employment following university studies, see Craig Jeffrey's *Timepass* (2010) on lower middle-class college students in north India.

Chapter Eight - Chronology of a Student Strike

On an inconspicuous Tuesday evening in April 2013, food is served as it rains heavily outside and my phone registers an incoming text message. I am near Kudjip in Jiwaka province, with a numerous contingent of my adoptive Simbu family to present a pig, yams, and marita, to future in-laws prior to a bride price to be received in the near future (an episode I detailed in the previous chapter). I became accustomed to receiving numerous text messages around early mornings and evenings by friends and acquaintances that wish a good morning or a good evening/night, and I finish eating before opening the one received. But instead of a variably generic greeting, the text suggests that in the case that I am in my student dormitory room at the university, I should make sure to stay inside. I send a response clarifying that I am not home and ask what this is about, inferring my assumption that, as in Kudjip, Goroka must be experiencing a heavy rain. The response tells me instead that a big fight is occurring on the university campus.

The next morning, as I make my way to the nearby Highlands Highway to return to Goroka, I receive a 'please call me' request from a casual worker at the university. Making the requested call, he asks me what is happening on campus, sounding obviously surprised. Clarifying that I am not on campus myself and wondering what is so different today, I am told that a number of vehicles are damaged and students apparently preparing to assemble. With several hours travel away from Goroka, I grow increasingly impatient to return. On the bus, the radio announces the news: students at the University of Goroka are going on a strike, raising a number of complaints and demanding for the Vice-Chancellor (VC) to resign or to be removed from office for students to return to classes. A student is interviewed, proclaiming to speak on behalf of all students, even if not being one of the elected student representatives.

Reaching the university's back gate at about 3 PM in the afternoon, I walk up to the hilltop campus of Humilaveka through staff compounds, spotting university staff at home, a sign that offices are unattended. Passing the library and the administrative heart of the university, I see university administrators in conversation in proximity to the university shuttle bus with broken windscreens. Walking further up into the campus that usually teems with people and movement on an early afternoon in the middle of the semester, I meet a lone member of staff taking a walk in an otherwise deserted space. Even the construction site of the new student dormitories, usually noisily buzzing with

activity, turned quiet. I am told I missed the riot police dispersing students that were about to set the university shuttle bus on fire about an hour ago, the police firing shots into the air and teargas into students, at least one of them hospitalised. Some broken windows in a nearby university building are further signs of the recent incidents.

Specific Triggers

In the days preceding the start of this strike there were problems with the university's back-up generator that usually provides a seamless transition of electricity supply to university offices, computer labs, and student dormitories when Goroka town experiences a blackout. In contrast to staff residences, which are not connected to the back-up grid, one is hardly aware of the source of electricity at any moment in student dormitories, learning to take it for granted that as soon as the light goes off, it will be on again in a split second. A transition quick enough for a power cut to go unregistered if one is not consciously paying attention. This abruptly changed with the problems of the back-up generator. It was only days before the strike when the back-up generator showed first signs of failure, which made me realise how little I was prepared for this myself, not even in possession of a torch and without candles at home, things I recalled being constant companions in prior rural fieldwork in PNG.

The run up to the strike was just such an evening. After the ongoing problems with the back-up generator on previous days, study lamps and computer screens merged into the darkness of the night once more with another blackout. Students assembled outside, and in what they claimed was a spontaneous expression of frustration started marching down the Humilaveka hilltop towards the main gate facing the town, with chants asking for the VC to resign. From the university's main gate, assembled students proceeded up to the campus again towards the gated administrative heart of the university. Under continuing chants for the VC to resign, students forcefully made their entry past the locked gates and vented their anger at parked university vehicles.

The next morning students assembled, in what students recall as an open forum to assess what happened, and to discuss if or what should happen further. It is at this stage, until which nothing specific was resolved, that a particularly vocal student appeared to be suggested by others to take the lead on behalf of the student body, and thus to transform the spontaneous venting of frustration of the previous night into an actual student strike with the principal demand for the VC to resign or to be removed from

office. This narrative was congruently shared among students that attended the forum. This understanding was also shared by the university management, which was aimed to be ousted, who believed that the mounting of a strike served to cover up the acts of vandalising purported by a drunken few the night before, to avert their persecution.

The Broader Context for Another Student Strike

Three years earlier, in 2010, a prolonged and well-prepared student strike of six weeks paralysed the university at the beginning of its academic year, with the primary demand for the university management to be dismissed. The Student Representative Council, through its elected representatives and the presidents of provincial student associations, led the strike that was supported by the university's national academic and non-academic staff unions. Besides calling on the university management to be dismissed and their administration to be thoroughly investigated, the strike called on the government to re-establish a full university council that had been disbanded after turmoil at the university several years before; and, finally, to guarantee that there would be no negative disciplinary repercussions for students and staff leading the strike, who stood up for the transparent and accountable running of the university according to due process and towards substantial appointments of management positions by a legal and fully established university council.

The strike's achievements in 2010 were mixed. After an extended stalemate and student and staff representatives traveling to Port Moresby to personally present a petition and lobby with relevant government and state actors to heed their demands, the university management was side-lined, an investigation into its administration commissioned, and the process set in motion to get a full university council established. Despite remaining resistance to return to normalcy before guarantees were given for the side-lined management not to be reinstated, and for no disciplinary action to be taken against students and staff associated with the strike, university operations were allowed to resume to avert calling off the academic year.

By the end of the year, the investigation report cleared the side-lined university management of any allegations that would warrant their dismissal and issued a number of recommendations to be implemented at the university that were made public, in contrast to the full report. A full university council was convened, which reinstated and substantially appointed the side-lined administrators into their former positions. To

avert such disruptions in the future, several measures were taken in relation to student and staff representations. Student representation was reformed from the Student Representative Council, as comprised of provincial student association presidents with a set of generally elected executives, into a Student Voice Council that was to operate under much stricter guidelines. To diminish the role and influence of provincial student associations, representatives to the Student Voice Council were all to be elected as representatives of specific academic programmes and to specific university committees, such as the governing council, academic board (under a following restructure to be replaced by the Senate), Faculty (later School) Boards, and the Student Disciplinary Committee. Elected members were then to elect the executives of the Student Voice Council among themselves. Meeting notes were to be provided to the university management and its funds, collected from students as part of university fees, only disbursed for purposes approved by the university management. Staff unions were discouraged from organising at all and had not been in operation since.

In a further bid to avert premeditated strikes at the start of the academic year, student voice council representatives were only to be elected at the beginning of the academic year and not anymore at the end of the previous one. In 2013, this resulted in a considerable delay in getting the Student Voice Council established. The Student Services division responsible for organising these elections first of all needed to attend to matters of distributing dormitory rooms, conducting induction programmes, and to attend to the usually extended period of getting an academic year into smooth operation that takes several weeks. The process of getting the student council established then took a further few weeks through nomination processes, screening and approving of candidates, and a campaign period before elections were conducted. Once elected, the student council was first convened by the university management and given an induction into the constitution governing the Student Voice Council (SVC) and its supposed operation, before another meeting date was set to elect its executives from its members. This process was then interrupted by the university management after allegations were brought to its attention that contenders for posts were engaged in attempts to pre-mediate the election of executives though presumably improper means. After SVC executives' elections finally took place, and after SVC members had another meeting to reconcile with the university management after this initial conflict, a further delay for the council's operation occurred when the newly elected council president unexpectedly resigned from his post and the council instead of convening its first ordinary meeting to take up students' issues. By that time, it was already two months

into the academic year. Another meeting was convened to elect a new SVC President, and the following week the SVC finally had its first ordinary meeting on the evening of the 15th of April 2013. Several student issues were discussed and ways to approach them identified to be taken up immediately. Student representatives were dispersing from the meeting with an immediate agenda for work, and students were shortly to be informed on the first measures of their representatives' work in the days after.

It was the evening of the following day, the 16th of April, that students left their dormitories after a renewed blackout, venting their frustration at university vehicles. By the 17th of April, a strike was called by a different set of students that drew their legitimation for effectively taking over the representation of students and their concerns through the claim that the SVC had been rendered powerless and had until this point not addressed any of the students' issues. Whether the timing of the student strike was indeed entirely coincidental when the SVC had just taken up its work, yet before it could show its first results, and whether the venting of frustration about another blackout was indeed a spontaneous affair that only through its *fait accompli* presented the context leading to a strike that was neither designed as such nor instigated with such outcome in mind, I cannot say for certain. To do justice to my sources, not a single person I spoke to doubted that this was a spontaneous turn of events, rejecting the notion that this was a premeditated affair. The only person that ever seemed to suggest such interpretation of the events in conversation with me later refuted them again. Nevertheless, as an insider to the lengthy process of establishing the SVC in 2013, having attended its meetings, the coincidence of timing does appear peculiar. The strike unfolded within the small window of time between the SVC's eventual establishment as functional entity and just before it could finally demonstrate its attention and effective command over students' issues. The argument that the SVC proved ineffective to address students' concerns constituted a major argument of those taking the lead in the strike for the legitimacy of their actions.

Week 1

When students assembled on the morning of Wednesday, April 17th, following the tumultuous night, the lead of a strike was delegated to a vocal student who proclaimed the primary demand of the VC to resign or be removed from office. The elected SVC was asked to step aside, being presented not only as ineffective but as seriously compromised in its independent representation of students for its close monitoring and constraints imposed by the university management. Hopes by the university

management that a reformed student representation would prevent student strikes were thus squashed, it led instead to a novel situation in which a student strike was spearheaded exclusively by students that were not formally sanctioned student representatives.

The university management reacted swiftly by alerting university council members, and an extraordinary council meeting was scheduled to be convened on Saturday, the 20th of April, to address the situation. One of the council members, a local Member of Parliament from the Eastern Highlands Province, appointed to the council as representative of the national government, happened to be nearby and came to the university campus on Wednesday morning to address students. Students expected him back on Thursday morning to receive a petition from students, a petition they intended to hand over to him not simply as a member of the university council but as a member of the government, which students expected to address their petition in ultimate instance.

Nevertheless, students did eventually, in the early hours of the same Wednesday afternoon, return to the spot of the rioting of the night before, and resumed targeting the already damaged university vehicles once more, particularly the university Shuttle Bus that became a symbolic target of what students perceived as a money-making venture of university administrators rather than a service to benefit the university community.[37] Just before students could set the Shuttle Bus on fire, riot police intervened and dispersed students, as already outlined above.

On Thursday morning, students assembled again, and students' signatures were collected to be attached to the petition that was to be handed over to the government representative to the university council. Strike leaders suggested that, based on legal

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37 The Shuttle Bus had been recently introduced as a university-operated scheduled service between the university campus and the town centre of Goroka. It was partly welcomed and enjoyed increasing popularity among university staff for easing grocery shopping trips to town for departing from and arriving on the university campus on the hilltop of Humilaveka directly, while other private town bus services stopped at the university gate, leaving passengers with a steep uphill walk mostly without shade cover under the highlands sun. Some staff and many students resented the Shuttle Bus as it charged slightly higher fares than the privately-operated bus services and was thus seen as a bid to further extract cash from the university community rather than being a meaningful service to students. The shuttle bus thus became a symbol for larger debates on campus about the university as either a 'service-' or a 'business-oriented' institution, as the PNG government pushed universities to generate more of their recurrent budget themselves (See Chapter Ten).

advice, they aimed at collecting at least 70% of students' signatures, which they did get together. The government's representative to the council, however, did not return on Thursday. Students marched around campus on Thursday afternoon, displaying banners demanding for the VC to resign and for their demands to be met before returning to classes. Arriving at the administrative centre of the university, some students raised their voice for proceeding to set the Shuttle Bus on fire, but strike leaders managed to contain this urge and students eventually dispersed. The situation was tense in any case, particularly as the government representative to the council did not return to campus to receive the students' petition.

He eventually arrived on Friday morning and received the petition, students giving a 24 hours ultimatum to receive a response, with the governing council meeting scheduled for the following day. The petition contained four major demands: 1.) that the VC resign or be removed from office; 2.) that there would be no disciplinary implications for students involved in the strike; 3.) that the Student Voice Council (SVC) was abolished and the Student Representative Council (SRC) based on provincial student representations and generally elected executives reintroduced; 4.) and that the operation of the university was to be thoroughly investigated by none other than the Task Force Sweep team.[38]

On Saturday, students reassembled after lunch to await a response to their petition. Tension grew as no one appeared to address them, regardless of the fact that the council meeting was probably just under way (in Goroka town rather than on the university campus). Around 2.30 PM, students marched towards the gated administrative heart of the university again to await a response. Without anyone to address them there, students started rattling the gate towards another forceful entry into the compound. Police arrived again and managed to calm the situation, conveying a message from the two Pro-Vice Chancellors requesting time until Monday to respond to students' demands, which students eventually accepted and dispersed.

On Sunday night some male students held a rather secluded meeting between two male dormitory blocks to discuss strategies for potential scenarios on Monday when students were to receive the response to their petition. Alternative scenarios that the male

[38] Task Force Sweep was a high-profile investigation task force set up by the PNG government in 2011 to investigate corruption and misappropriation of national budget funds.

students present seemed to consider in case the petition was not addressed in their favour was, for example, to still set the Shuttle Bus on fire to create a level of attention that would force the national government to intervene, or if nothing else yielded the expected results, to try to physically remove or to deny the VC entry to the campus. This gathering and the strategies brought up, however, clearly appeared to stem from a more radical section of male students that did not necessarily speak to the strategies that were to be adopted by strike leaders, or which thus could be expected to frame the student body's response to a potential council deliberation not in their favour, as also becomes clear in the turn of events that followed.

Week 2

As expected, members of the university council came to campus on Monday to address students at the informal assembly ground for student fora, the 'lukaut', a partially shaded area with a view over parts of Goroka town. The delegation comprised the university's Chancellor in his capacity as chairman of the university council, the government representative to the council who interacted with students on the mentioned earlier occasions, one of the university's Pro-Vice Chancellors who used to enjoy a good rapport among students, and an officer from Goroka's police station. They informed students that the council deliberated negatively on all four points of their petition, on grounds that there was no evidence presented to the council that would enable taking such decisions as terminating the VC or calling for another investigation into the university following the one conducted just a few years earlier in 2010. It was further assessed that damaging state property was against the law, and that it is not a matter for the university council to determine whether perpetrators could be exempted from legal persecution. Reinstating the former mode of student representation in form of the Student Representative Council with its provincial representations and a set of executives elected by the general student body was also rejected as this had been an intentional move away from provincial student representation and related politics, and towards a representation based on academic programmes and specific committee work. It was stressed however, that the door of the Chancellor would remain open for students to approach the university council with any issue they felt in need to be considered or based on documentation and evidence that would warrant taking further steps. The delegation addressing students managed to quell rising tensions and students dispersed to reassemble on the sports field at the far end of the campus near student dormitories. What was resolved at this gathering was for students to start the process of mass

withdrawal from studies, so as to force authorities to react differently, and to thus create further attention at the level of the national government.

The Shuttle Bus had not been touched further by Tuesday, and neither were more radical strategies pursued by sections of students, although talk still circulated about some students preferring more drastic steps to force government intervention. On Tuesday morning, students lined up to collect the university forms to withdraw from studies, which the relevant offices thus started multiplying in required numbers. It was Wednesday until the forms were ready to be handed out to students, containing an additional cover page from the VC stating that the withdrawal was to be dealt with on the same day if students were determined to go ahead, and that whoever signed the form and returned it was expected to leave campus immediately. Academic staff, however, was unsure how to proceed with students' threatened mass withdrawal. Many academic staff members, who were required to countersign forms for respective programmes, voiced discomfort with the idea of signing students' withdrawal forms for the impact it would have on students' future careers, such as by losing government scholarships and the expenses they already incurred by making it to university for this year. Students were no less uncertain if they actually wanted to withdraw from studies but trusted the wisdom of strike leaders that following their advice to proceed was in their best interest, or simply saw that they had no choice but to comply with what they were asked to do.

The threat of mass withdrawal was successful, however, in capturing the attention of the national government, and word spread that the Minister for Higher Education was about to intervene directly to avert the imminent jeopardising of the academic year. Word about the Minister's intervention to address the situation resulted in rumours that the Minister was already in Goroka and would be personally addressing students the same day. Students assembled in the early afternoon in hope for the Minster to address them, which did not eventuate, however, and there was no sign of the Minster in Goroka. It helped to defuse students' anxieties about the mass withdrawal process in any case, and students were instructed to fill their forms to hand them in the coming day.

The Minister did in fact intervene based on the continued stalemate and the apparent inability of the University Council to address students' concerns satisfactorily for a return to normalcy. The Minister thus requested the council to meet again as soon as possible to reconsider the students' petition in more detail towards addressing students' concerns more favourably rather than dismissing students' demands altogether. The

Minister further suggested that he was siding with the students' concern that some form of provincial student representation should be maintained at universities and that this was one area the university council could reconsider more favourably. It was further requested that the university management not attend the meeting. Rather than proceeding with the mass withdrawal, students thus waited for the council's renewed deliberations. Students saw their position strengthened through this intervention, which reinforced students' enthusiasm to continue their strike and the boycott of classes until their demands were met.

It was Saturday, ten days into the student strike, when members of the university council came to address students again, following the renewed consideration of the students' petition. More council members were present this time for conveying their deliberations to students, without any representation from the university management. The only concession they made to students' primary demands was to give in to the Minister's request to consider retaining some form of provincial student representation in its representative body. They insisted, however, that the student representation would not simply revert back to the former Student Representative Council, as students demanded, but that all concerned actors must sit down together to identify an appropriate model of student representation.

Unsurprisingly, students were not happy with the announced deliberations, and questioned council members why they chose to address students again at all without having anything substantially new to convey. Students started mocking the council members present, demonstratively laughing at and ridiculing their announcements. Strike leaders, taking the word in response to council members' deliberations, further announced that based on the council's request to provide evidence to back students' demands and to enable their assessment more specifically, that they had prepared a new petition that contained all the documentation of evidence that was allegedly lacking in their first petition. The new petition, however, would only be presented to the Minister in person, they announced, as students had no trust in the council and their decisions. A spokesperson of the Minister who was present asked whether he could receive the petition on behalf of the Minister, who was expected to be overseas for the following week. Students refused, stating that they had all the time to wait for the Minister while they would in any case not return to classes in the meantime, despite the Minister's demand for them to do so.

In a further bid by the university to break the strike and to de-accelerate the almost daily emerging new twists and turns of a back-and-forth between strike leaders and the university management that only perpetuated stalemate, the academic schedule for the year was revised to advance and extend the mid-semester study break. According to this revised schedule, students were to go on holidays for two weeks, for which the university would shut all but its most basic student facilities, and to return for a study week before classes were to start again. Strike leaders, however, refused to leave campus for a proclaimed holiday, and urged students not to do so either.

Week 3

As the strike entered its third week and following the revised academic schedule that the university announced with a two-week holiday, student numbers on campus dwindled drastically. Meanwhile, strike leaders called on students to contribute financially for strike leaders to travel to Port Moresby to meet the Minister the following week to deliver their petition personally. The university administration further reacted by suspending the main strike leader from studies and banning him from entry into the university campus. This created tension on Tuesday and in the early afternoon a large cohort of police arrived on campus to address students. Students regard police presence on campus as a highly inappropriate intrusion, and demonstratively dispersed from the informal meeting grounds where daily assemblies were held and where strategic moves and updates were announced to students. Spokespersons of the police went ahead regardless, with the help of a megaphone, announcing that they would not allow for the university to be held at ransom by a few students proclaiming to act in the students' interests, and reminding students that they were not above the law, but that they had to follow the established processes and procedures to have any grievances addressed appropriately. It emerged that while some members of the police made these announcements, others manhandled a number of students and transported them off to the police station, later claiming that the students in question had been swearing at them. This led students to reassemble around the police, displaying outrage and anger while drawing closer to heavily armed police personnel. Students approaching closest to the police members were eventually sitting down around them as a sign of de-escalation and averting a violent clash between hundreds of students and armed police, which allowed the police to withdraw eventually.

This incident, however, resulted in the university management refraining from asking the police for any further patrolling or maintaining of order on campus. The police further refused to release the students in question following requests from the university management, instead suggesting that they would be brought to court in Kundiawa in neighbouring Simbu province. The student's position was again strengthened by this incident, which widely appeared as inappropriate actions by the police, once more reinforcing the students' perception that they held the higher moral ground.

The following day, Wednesday, as students collected contributions for strike leaders to travel to Port Moresby, another local Member of Parliament (MP) then addressed students on campus, assuring them all the support they required as far as he could, followed by the MP proceeding to the police station to also (unsuccessfully) request the release of the students held there. Later the same day, the governor from another highlands province also came to the university campus, equally assuring students that he would do everything in his powers to ensure their demands were met. Both MPs reassured students that they had their support in parliament and that they were looking forward to taking the matter of the petition up with the responsible Minister personally. At this time, as the strike had entered its third week, and as the tide of public sympathy reached a new peak following the police intervention that was widely regarded as scandalously inappropriate, students felt more confident than ever that their demands were eventually going to be favourably met. A news story appearing in The National newspaper that day about the government 'to get tough' on universities further reinforced students' enthusiasm. The report announced, among other points, that legislation would be introduced to vest more power with the Minister responsible for Higher Education to directly intervene in public universities' affairs to ensure their smooth running. Another point mentioned, which was paid less attention to in relation to students' immediate interests but would rather be less congruent with their sentiment, was to make the management of universities more 'business-like' (Nalu 2013).

Strike leaders went to Port Moresby around the end of the week, and campus became quieter for the combination of the university's proclaimed holiday that made many students return home, and the absence of vocal strike leaders. Daily student assemblies ceased to take place. While there was no information about strike leaders' activities transpiring for days, it also seemed that the Minister responsible for Higher Education whom they intended to meet was only expected to return to the country on the following Tuesday.

The university's move to suspend the main strike leader from studies and to ban him from entering campus, in any case did not have the intended effect of disintegrating the strike. While many students returned home over the quickly called break, those who remained on campus were more convinced and enthusiastic than ever that their demands would be met once their case was brought to the attention of the responsible Minister and other government actors through the strike leaders directly.

Week 4

Campus became even more quiet in the week after strike leaders departed for Port Moresby. Now it was to wait for what they would achieve in Port Moresby, although hardly any news from strike leaders transpired to ease the waiting after the intensity and constant thrill provided by the pace of events in prior weeks. The enthusiasm that students showed in relation to their uncompromising stance of either having their demands met or withdrawing from studies appeared in private conversations more openly in tension with increasing anxiety about the fate of the academic year and one's personal study. It was clear that the following week would become something of a showdown, as final year students of the education degree programme were to go on practical teaching assignments in surrounding schools (referred to as 'micro-teaching'), which would be difficult to postpone, and as strike leaders were in the process of petitioning the highest possible and thus last instances in relation to their demands.

It was on Wednesday that word went around first that strike leaders were able to meet the Minister of Higher Education in Port Moresby and that the Minister received students favourably, supposedly questioning the university's strategy to target the strike leader with suspension from study. This was conveyed as a positive indication toward another demand, that there should be no negative repercussion for students found involved in the strike or unrest at the university. With the level of antagonism reached between students and the university management, however, students were clear that they feared negative repercussions if the management, and in particular the VC, were allowed to continue in their positions. Little else transpired, however, over the course of the week, and there was no channel of communicating updates between strike leaders and the students on campus. Students were waiting for updates from strike leaders and monitored national media outlets for potential government announcements in relation to student demands, but nothing was forthcoming in that regard either.

There was a surge of rumours building up, particularly on Sunday, as the next week and the supposed resumption of academic activity drew closer. There was uncertainty about whether strike leaders had returned from Port Moresby, and despite no one having sighted them back in Goroka personally, rumour affirmed their return. Other rumours were more specific about news to transpire over the days to come. Perhaps the rumour of widest circulation that was treated as a genuine announcement was that the Prime Minister and/or the Minister for Higher Education were to come to Goroka the coming Wednesday to announce the decision to side-line the VC. The apparent coincidence of the mentioned date with the day when final year students were supposed to start their micro-teaching seemed to indicate a mixture of deliberately gearing students' mood towards remaining uncertainty until mid-week – and whether micro-teaching would go ahead – while on the other hand suggesting that victory in having students' demands met was imminent.

Week 5

On Monday morning students congregated at the *lukaut*, students' usual informal assembly ground, eager to receive updates on the fate of the strike and the supposed resumption of academic activity. As it became clear, strike leaders had not yet returned from Port Moresby and there was no specific update about their achievements or expected return other than an increased circulation of rumours excelling prior ones in content by the day. On the one hand, sentiments were strong among students to await the return and briefing from strike leaders, and having their demands met, most fundamentally, before resuming studies. On the other hand, a number of final year students grew increasingly concerned about their micro-teaching to start by mid-week and sought clarification from the relevant university offices what the implications were if not starting micro-teaching on Wednesday the same week. There seemed to be a growing rift between final year students who wished to proceed with micro-teaching as it was scheduled, and some first, second, third year, and a small number of final year undergraduate students who fundamentally opposed abandoning the strike at this stage.

Nothing of this was resolved on Monday in the continued absence of confirmed updates from Port Moresby, and the situation grew more tense on Tuesday. A number of final year students met in front of the female students' dormitory following requests by female final year students who wished to proceed with micro-teaching the following

day. Other students commented that any attempt to break away from the strike by a minority should be met with violent retribution for the betrayal of fellow students on selfish grounds, a theme throughout the strike that seemed increasingly explicitly evoked now (which I take up in more detail in the following chapter). The possibility of violent retribution was also intentionally voiced as a threat, as it became increasingly difficult to maintain the strike as a collective endeavour of students acting as a 'single body'. The university's office for school liaison, in charge of coordinating the micro-teaching assignments with schools, in the meantime announced a meeting for final year students in the university's aula maxima (known as the Mark Solon Auditorium) for the coming morning, Wednesday 9 AM. Tensions were clearly rife among students at this stage, with a majority of final year students anxious to proceed with micro-teaching but without anyone having the courage to make this explicit and break away from the strike in the atmosphere of threat that surrounded such intentions.

As could thus be expected, final year students did not make their way to the meeting called for on Wednesday, and those who wished to attend and hoped for the meeting to go ahead privately voiced fear of retaliation if they proceeded to the scheduled venue. It was obvious that some students who had a more radical hands-on take to the strike were closely watching students' movements. Groups of students assembled around the 'lukaut' and in front of the nearby office premises of the university's school liaison office that coordinates the micro-teaching programme, waiting for how things would unfold. Staff from the school liaison office emerged and students were pressured to make their stance clear whether they wanted to go for micro-teaching or not. Students raised the issues of suspension notices handed to strike leaders, and that students were unwilling to proceed when some of them were suspended and thus excluded from micro-teaching, and with potentially further suspensions looming for others. Others insisted that they should wait for the delegation of student leaders that went to Port Moresby to return and brief them first. It was clear, however, that by then these voices pertained to a minority among the final year students present. Among final year students there seemed an overwhelming preference to go ahead with micro-teaching, and the difficulty of postponing micro-teaching in coordination with involved schools did make an impression on many students. While it thus at times seemed possible for the tide to change, when asked to say yes or no to micro-teaching, vocal students raised their voice to affirm a 'no', while no single 'yes' could be heard. By the afternoon, the school liaison office informed students to spread the word that all suspensions for students involved in leading the strike had been lifted by the university management to allow for

micro-teaching to go ahead, and that thus final year students were called to come to the same spot again on Thursday morning for a briefing on going ahead with micro-teaching.

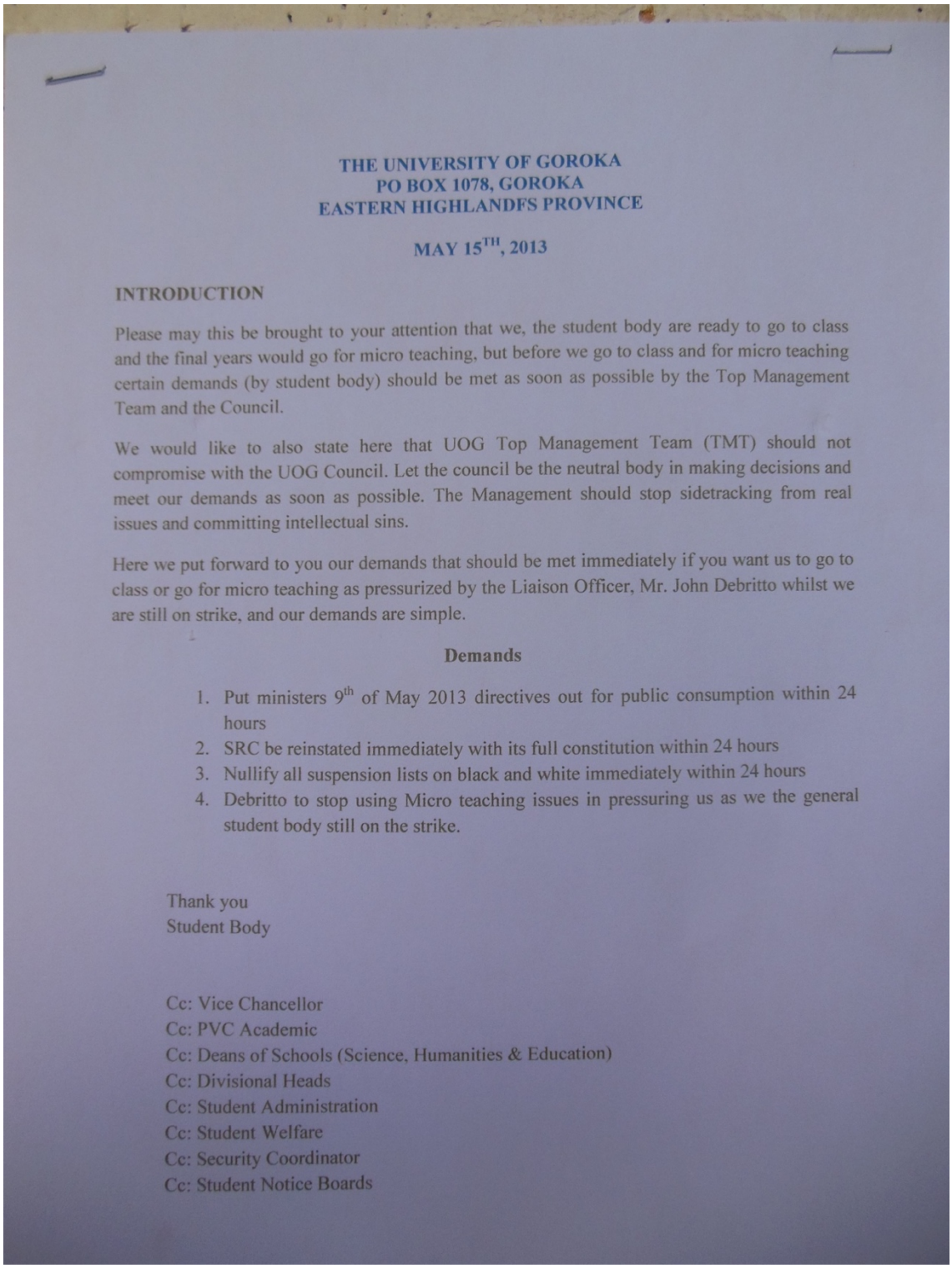
In the meantime, strike leaders were returning from Port Moresby and thus assumed a more active role again of steering things on campus, also helped by the university lifting suspensions that had barred them from campus. This also meant that there was no resolve for going ahead with micro-teaching. Strike leaders called for a student assembly on Thursday morning and maintained that they were waiting for their demands to be met, such as the former student representation of the Student Representative Council to be reinstated, and for the government, through the National Executive Council, to address their petition. The latter point was in regard to the outcome of strike leaders' meeting with the Minister of Higher Education who, according to strike leaders, promised to present the case to the National Executive Council around the parliament sittings in the week to follow, not being able to take such action of direct intervention at universities through the Ministry alone.[39] Strike leaders thus also requested students to ignore the pressure exerted on them by the school liaison office in regard to the scheduled micro teaching.

On Friday, the presidents of provincial student associations were to meet following a request from the strike leaders, presumably to back their approach of maintaining the strike based on the former channels of provincial student representation that they hoped to re-establish. Another student assembly called for the Friday afternoon to update students from outcomes of that meeting did not take place due to heavy rains.

The reinforcement of the strike through its leaders returning to campus and resuming to conduct general student assemblies went hand in hand with increased correspondence on the university's notice boards. Strike leaders pinned briefings about the details of their trip to Port Moresby and presented the issues as being in the hands of the university management to resolve before returning to class and allowing micro-teaching to proceed, which was articulated in another note pinned on notice boards (Figure 7). The university management responded by meeting some of the procedural demands and

[39] Such unilateral intervention by the Minister happened in 2015 based on changes that were done subsequently to the PNG Universities Act, which were giving the Ministry extended powers for direct intervention into PNG state universities that led to dissolving the university council and sidelining the management following a similar student strike in 2015.

suggesting that it now was in students' hands to determine whether they wanted to continue their studies or not (Figure 8). This increasingly drifted into what appeared petty issues obstructing a return to normalcy, expressing the mistrust between strongly antagonised actors. Student leaders were adamant that the response of the management was not sufficient.



THE UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA
PO BOX 1078, GOROKA
EASTERN HIGHLANDFS PROVINCE

MAY 15TH, 2013

INTRODUCTION

Please may this be brought to your attention that we, the student body are ready to go to class and the final years would go for micro teaching, but before we go to class and for micro teaching certain demands (by student body) should be met as soon as possible by the Top Management Team and the Council.

We would like to also state here that UOG Top Management Team (TMT) should not compromise with the UOG Council. Let the council be the neutral body in making decisions and meet our demands as soon as possible. The Management should stop sidetracking from real issues and committing intellectual sins.

Here we put forward to you our demands that should be met immediately if you want us to go to class or go for micro teaching as pressurized by the Liaison Officer, Mr. John Debritto whilst we are still on strike, and our demands are simple.

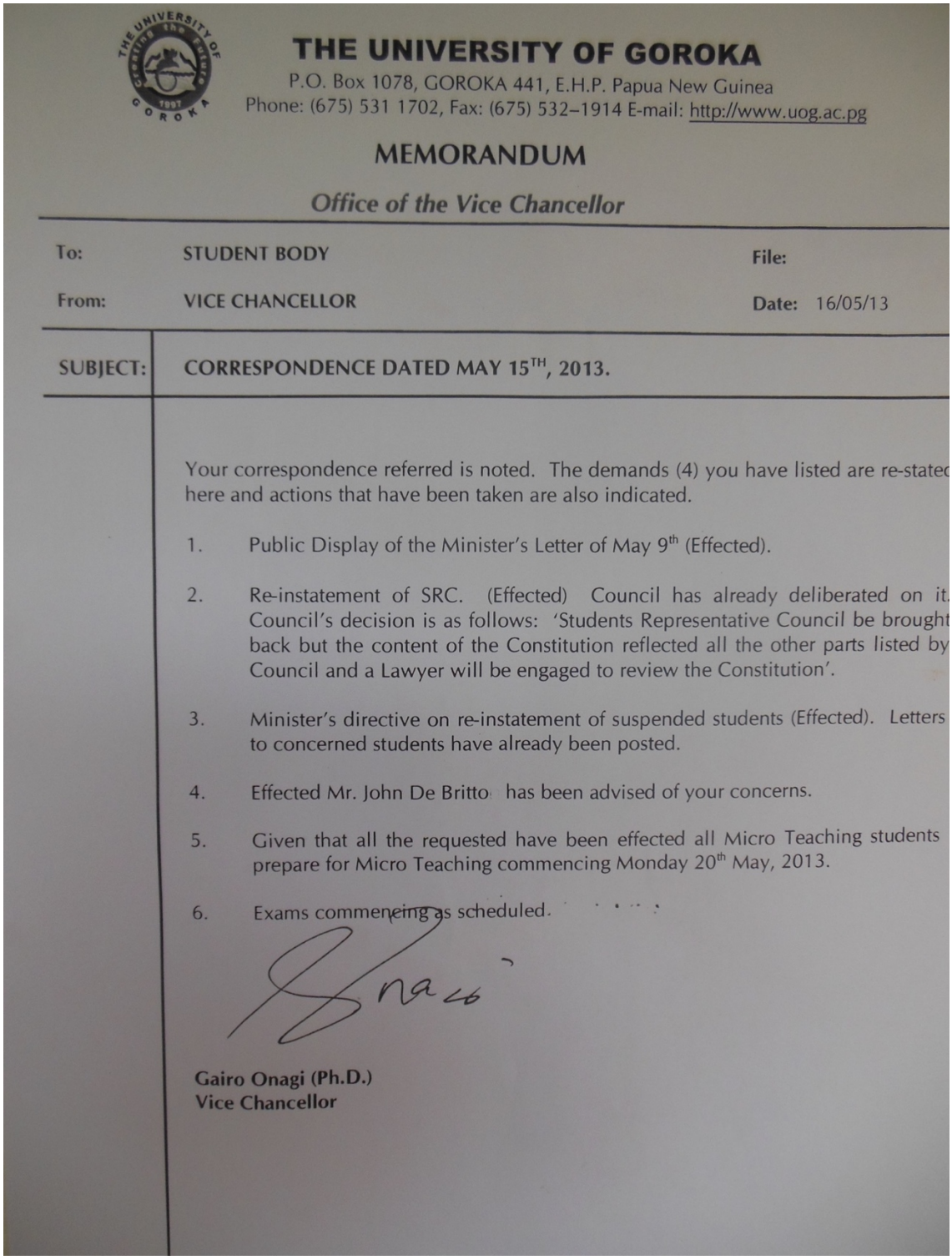
Demands

1. Put ministers 9th of May 2013 directives out for public consumption within 24 hours
2. SRC be reinstated immediately with its full constitution within 24 hours
3. Nullify all suspension lists on black and white immediately within 24 hours
4. Debritto to stop using Micro teaching issues in pressuring us as we the general student body still on the strike.

Thank you
Student Body

Cc: Vice Chancellor
Cc: PVC Academic
Cc: Deans of Schools (Science, Humanities & Education)
Cc: Divisional Heads
Cc: Student Administration
Cc: Student Welfare
Cc: Security Coordinator
Cc: Student Notice Boards

***Figure** 7: Student's demands to be met before allowing micro-teaching to go ahead.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA

P.O. Box 1078, GOROKA 441, E.H.P. Papua New Guinea
Phone: (675) 531 1702, Fax: (675) 532–1914 E-mail: http://www.uog.ac.pg

MEMORANDUM

Office of the Vice Chancellor

To: STUDENT BODY File:

From: VICE CHANCELLOR Date: 16/05/13

SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE DATED MAY 15TH, 2013.

Your correspondence referred is noted. The demands (4) you have listed are re-stated here and actions that have been taken are also indicated.

1. Public Display of the Minister's Letter of May 9th (Effected).
2. Re-instatement of SRC. (Effected) Council has already deliberated on it. Council's decision is as follows: 'Students Representative Council be brought back but the content of the Constitution reflected all the other parts listed by Council and a Lawyer will be engaged to review the Constitution'.
3. Minister's directive on re-instatement of suspended students (Effected). Letters to concerned students have already been posted.
4. Effected Mr. John De Britto has been advised of your concerns.
5. Given that all the requested have been effected all Micro Teaching students prepare for Micro Teaching commencing Monday 20th May, 2013.
6. Exams commencing as scheduled.

Gairo Onagi (Ph.D.)
Vice Chancellor

Figure 8*: The Vice-Chancellor's response to the latest student demands.*

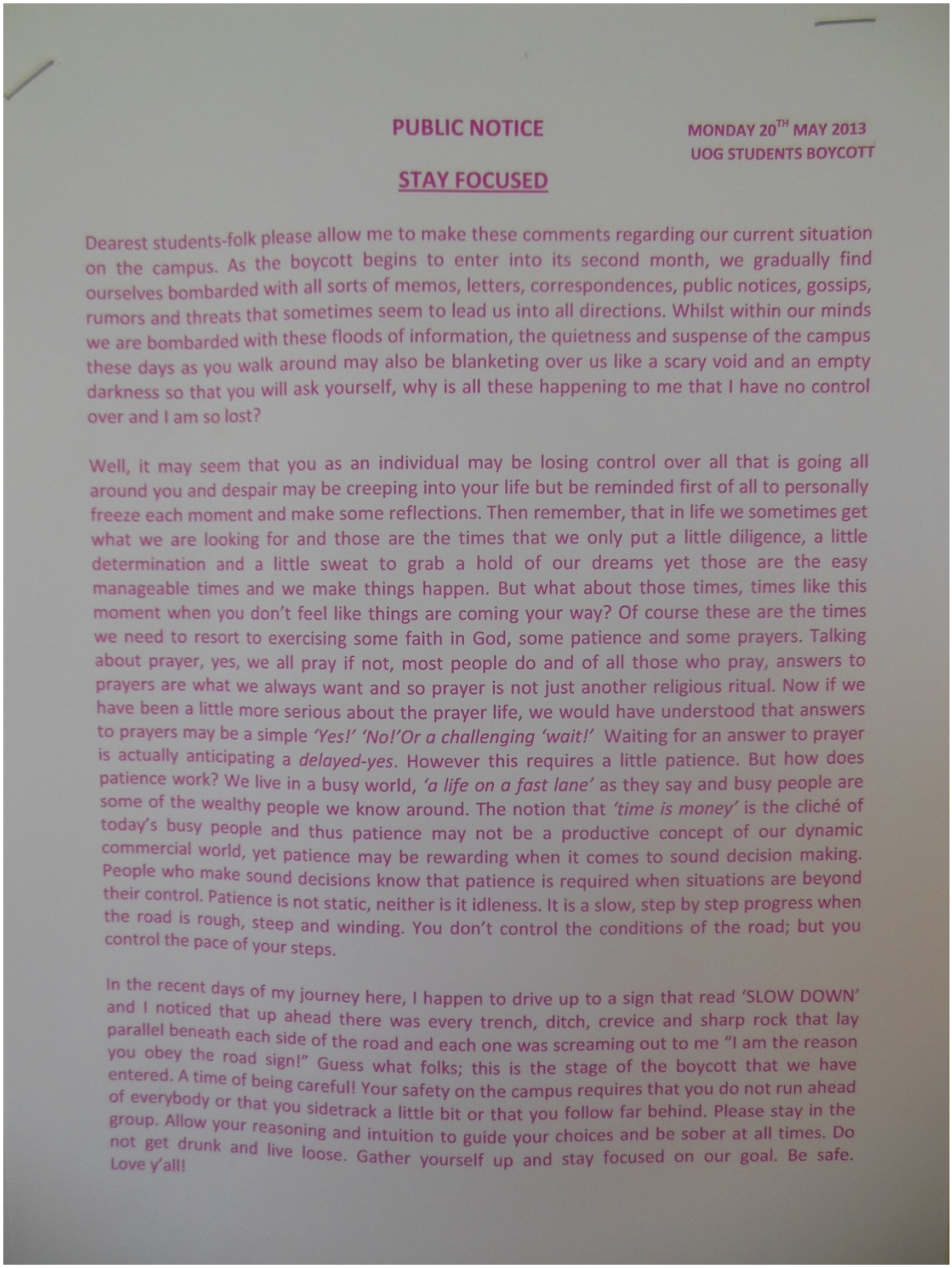
In the meantime, the rumour-mill and the messages strike leaders conveyed to students continued to suggest that victory of having their demands met was imminent, and that within the week to follow the government through the National Executive Council would address students' issues and dismiss the VC. Students continued to expect seeing their demands entirely met before returning to normal university operations, and only saw this as a question of time until the national parliament sittings resumed, and when

the National Executive Council would take up the issue over the following week. Students remained firm in this stance despite the request from authorities in Port Moresby for students to allow normalcy to return while their issues were being addressed. Students, however, were wary that allowing normalcy to return would make it easy to just place their issues off the agenda and were thus eager to see their demands met before resuming studies.

Week 6

Disquiet grew over the weekend as a return to normalcy by Monday appeared out of reach, with exams scheduled the week after. Indeed, Monday saw a renewed note by strike leaders on notice boards that the return to normalcy was in the hands of the management by addressing students' demand for an immediate reinstatement of the Student Representative Council, pledging to allow all other matters to be dealt with at the national political level.[40] This meant that library and computer lab facilities remained closed rather than allowing students to prepare for upcoming exams and to complete outstanding assignments. Students vowed to not hold further assemblies but to wait for the management to respond positively to their demand relating to the re-establishment of the Student Representative Council, despite the management's insistence that the review of the constitution of student representation would be a process to take place and not to be done from one day to another. Strike leaders, through another notice circulated, also urged students to remain patient and united as their demands were being addressed, warning students not to step out of line from this approach pursued by strike leaders (see notice dated the 20th of May 2013 in Figure 9 below).

[40] Strike leaders indicated they would contest elections for student representative council executives' positions, which they demanded to be conducted immediately.



PUBLIC NOTICE

MONDAY 20TH MAY 2013
UOG STUDENTS BOYCOTT

STAY FOCUSED

Dearest students-folk please allow me to make these comments regarding our current situation on the campus. As the boycott begins to enter into its second month, we gradually find ourselves bombarded with all sorts of memos, letters, correspondences, public notices, gossips, rumors and threats that sometimes seem to lead us into all directions. Whilst within our minds we are bombarded with these floods of information, the quietness and suspense of the campus these days as you walk around may also be blanketing over us like a scary void and an empty darkness so that you will ask yourself, why is all these happening to me that I have no control over and I am so lost?

Well, it may seem that you as an individual may be losing control over all that is going all around you and despair may be creeping into your life but be reminded first of all to personally freeze each moment and make some reflections. Then remember, that in life we sometimes get what we are looking for and those are the times that we only put a little diligence, a little determination and a little sweat to grab a hold of our dreams yet those are the easy manageable times and we make things happen. But what about those times, times like this moment when you don't feel like things are coming your way? Of course these are the times we need to resort to exercising some faith in God, some patience and some prayers. Talking about prayer, yes, we all pray if not, most people do and of all those who pray, answers to prayers are what we always want and so prayer is not just another religious ritual. Now if we have been a little more serious about the prayer life, we would have understood that answers to prayers may be a simple *'Yes!' 'No!'Or a challenging 'wait!'* Waiting for an answer to prayer is actually anticipating a *delayed-yes*. However this requires a little patience. But how does patience work? We live in a busy world, *'a life on a fast lane'* as they say and busy people are some of the wealthy people we know around. The notion that *'time is money'* is the cliché of today's busy people and thus patience may not be a productive concept of our dynamic commercial world, yet patience may be rewarding when it comes to sound decision making. People who make sound decisions know that patience is required when situations are beyond their control. Patience is not static, neither is it idleness. It is a slow, step by step progress when the road is rough, steep and winding. You don't control the conditions of the road; but you control the pace of your steps.

In the recent days of my journey here, I happen to drive up to a sign that read 'SLOW DOWN' and I noticed that up ahead there was every trench, ditch, crevice and sharp rock that lay parallel beneath each side of the road and each one was screaming out to me "I am the reason you obey the road sign!" Guess what folks; this is the stage of the boycott that we have entered. A time of being careful! Your safety on the campus requires that you do not run ahead of everybody or that you sidetrack a little bit or that you follow far behind. Please stay in the group. Allow your reasoning and intuition to guide your choices and be sober at all times. Do not get drunk and live loose. Gather yourself up and stay focused on our goal. Be safe. Love y'all!

Figure 9: *Notice urging students to have patience and not to step out of line.*

While no assemblies were held at the lukaut, the students' usual assembly ground, some smaller gatherings took place at the far end of the campus on the sports field between student dormitories, reinforcing the call for patience and to wait for the National Executive Council's deliberation and for the university management to agree to the prompt re-establishment to the former student representative council. One such

gathering was held on Tuesday that saw a further sharpening of tone from strike leaders warning students in metaphorical yet clear messages about negative personal repercussions if they tried to subvert the ongoing strike, alternating with messages stating that no one is forced to strike but that this is the resolve of the democratic decisions of the entire student body and that leaders were only doing what students wished them to do.

On Wednesday, then, a turn-around occurred. Strike leaders indicated to students that they were allowing a return to normalcy for the following week. This apparently followed a call by the Minister to strike leaders, expressing that he could not do anything for them if they did not follow the commitment expected from students to return to class while issues would be addressed at the appropriate levels, particularly through the Office of Higher Education. As the return to normalcy was resolved, students' anxieties about imminent exams came to the fore, and students successfully requested the university management to postpone exams until the end of the coming week, and towards another week later for final year students, with micro-teaching then rescheduled to take place after the exams when other students would have a reduced two weeks' holiday before the second semester.

Return to Normalcy

On Monday May 27th, after almost six weeks of boycott, the campus thus came to its usual life again with student computer labs, the library, and other facilities resuming normal operations, staff office corridors and doors were open again and students were able once again to move freely around campus without creating suspicion about their destination or intentions. Staff from the Office of Higher Education also arrived on campus to speak with different actors, which was kept as a low-key presence in any case without being announced over notice boards to the general campus population.

In contrast to students' expectations, the petition delivered to the Minister was never taken up in any prominent way in the national parliament or National Executive Council but left in charge of the Office of Higher Education. Nevertheless, the renewed occurrence and apparent regularity of such prolonged strikes did appear to heighten political rhetoric towards reform of the University Act to allow for direct ministerial intervention that students had hoped for. In effect, none of the students' primary demands had been achieved through the strike. Arguably, however, the strike created a

conducive environment for the government to introduce legislative reforms to vest stronger control over university governance with the minister rather than university councils. A move that, under different circumstances, may possibly have invited protest for constituting a deliberate erosion of universities' autonomy.

Resurging Tensions

Around the start of the second semester, in early July, rumours emerged that the strike might be taken up again. The sentiment remained among some students, staff, and factions in the local community on the northern edge of Goroka town that the VC should resign or be removed from office. Part of this sentiment was additionally fuelled through the alleged invisibility and hiding of the VC throughout the preceding crisis, although his hiding seemed, ironically, to good extent due to exactly the approach of strike leaders to systematically obstruct and reject any dialogue or communication with the university management, and the rhetoric among students to physically remove the VC from campus if not leaving otherwise.

By the end of July, rumours surged that the university again started serving suspension and termination notices to students that were in one way or another seen to have participated in the strike. Rumours claimed that up to 400 students were to be suspended or terminated (about a fifth of the university's total student population), and that a number of university staff was being terminated too for an alleged involvement in and support of the strike. This wave of heightened rumour started gripping campus the weekend before final year students were to go on their six weeks teaching practice and industrial training in different parts of the country. It was thereby alleged that the off-campus practical training would be taken advantage of by the university management to suspend or terminate students while final year students and many strike leaders would be away from campus.

While throughout July there was a regular supply of rumours about a resumption of the strike, the idea seemed to be opposed by most students, especially final year students that were looking towards a smooth completion of their studies. The sudden emergence of rumours with claims of suspensions and terminations of such unprecedented proportions, however, fuelled disquiet among students and helped change the tide towards calls for resuming the strike. Most students I spoke to voiced dismay at the prospect of another strike, while others voiced their expectation that the strike would

resume and that final year students would not be allowed to proceed with their final year practical training while matters remained uncertain. It was the spread of this message that most clearly indicated to final year students the threat against anyone who dared to speak up against resuming the strike. It is also worth emphasising the general context of uncertainty on campus that was produced by these rumours among students, where the sheer amount of continuously escalating claims spread through rumours is impossible to keep up with through verification, if at all possible, especially on weekends. Sometimes I was pointing to inconsistencies, exaggerations, or simply false statements through such rumours.[41] Interlocutors usually insisted, however, that the content of rumours was significant information that could not be ignored.

Those who led the prior strike made appearances in student association meetings and other venues over the weekend to express the need to do something and requested students to meet at the lukaut over the weekend to address emergent issues and discuss a response by students. Over the course of the weekend, many students thus became convinced that the strike would again resume on Monday whether they liked it or not. The ensuing meeting of a number of students at the lukaut that weekend seemed to have resolved this as well.

On Monday, the 29th of July, campus life remained almost normal despite indications that the strike may be taken up again. Many students, however, were hesitant to leave their student dormitories to take up their usual study activities for the indications and actual directions to the contrary. The university management and relevant offices, through a notice board posting, also clarified that no suspensions had been renewed or served to that point in relation to the preceding strike but left no doubt that disciplinary action would ensue in relation to an unspecified number of cases following the evaluation of evidence. A number of actual suspensions were based on academic

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41 As an observer to many committees and meetings where decisions that the content of some rumours referred to were taken, I was in a rare position to recognise some rumours as false claims. This conditioned my personal experience of how these rumours swept campus and students' reaction to them. Notable in this context was that while most national staff intuitively kept rather quiet in relation to such rumours without apparently taking them very seriously, many expatriate staff members displayed more trust in circulated rumours and thus helped to reproduce them and give them additional credibility. The constitutive role of rumours that induce fear in people in processes of social mobilisation has been pointed out by Stanley Tambiah (1986) in relation South Asia, for example. Georges Lefebvre (1973[1932]) also details how generalised fear in a context of crisis was exacerbated by rumour in the lead-up to the French Revolution. I will take up questions of mobilisation and their theorisation going back to the French Revolution in more detail in the following chapter.

grounds relating to students that failed a threshold of courses, in accordance with usual practice of the university. The number of failed exams after the disruptions caused by the strike were, expectedly, higher than was usual in other times. They were nowhere near the hundreds that rumours claimed, however. Inflating numbers of students that were expected to be affected by suspensions on academic grounds and the opening of a number of disciplinary proceedings in any case helped to mobilise general disquiet among students towards a potential resumption of the strike. It did not help in this context that some of the students against whom disciplinary proceedings had been opened appeared to have had no relation to the strike. To the contrary, some appeared to be implicated by misinterpreting their visible involvement when trying to calm down escalatory enthusiasm in key moments of the strike that could have seen worse damage to university infrastructure if it was not for their intervention. The seeming arbitrariness or questionable evidence on which disciplinary proceedings were apparently based, helped to fuel anxiety among students by suggesting that anyone could face a suspension or termination from studies if it was not made sure that the university management is dismissed. In this context, while most students I spoke to had hoped to avoid going for another strike, many were equally voicing that they felt not being left a choice but to comply with the demands of those male students steering the action.

Students gathered at the *lukaut* around lunch time that Monday, and those who led the earlier strike called for boycotting classes for the week and to assemble again the following day. When asking students for their views on proceeding to strike, no one dared to speak up against it. The applause and supportive voices to this announcement were also limited, however, despite the attempt to represent this decision as taken collectively. Tension for the following day now seemed inevitable, as final year students were scheduled to start departing for practical training in different parts of the country by then, and the general mood seemed to be against putting this at risk. At the same time, no one seemed prepared to take the personal risk to go against strike leaders.

In the evening, dynamics geared further towards increasing tensions. A drunk male student appeared to go on a rampage in dormitory areas, which was said to be a response of anger to the university management's conduct. Such an outburst of apparently incontrollable violent anger clearly indicated the need for increased alertness again among students moving around campus. A little later, a prominent local leader from the traditional landowners of the grounds of the university appeared in the male student dormitory area and addressed students. Male students in support of a renewed

strike made sure students from the adjacent dormitories were attending. The address suggested that the local landowners were taking matters into their hands the next morning to get the VC out of the university, thus suggesting taking the burden out of students' hands, in a move that was likely to further increase tensions by additional actors putting weight behind a renewed strike that most students did not seem convinced to support.

The display of anger among sectors of the students and this move of landowners to take over the lead in the strike to drive out the VC seemed to stem from a termination letter with immediate effect to the strike leader in response to calling for a renewed strike and related disruptions. Copies of the termination letter were posted in student dormitories. The speaking of local landowners was accompanied by rumours that the terminated strike leader was arrested by police shortly before, and that specific staff members with links to the local community were being terminated too. These rumours heightened anger further, while over the week turning out to not be anything but unfounded rumours to stir up momentum for another strike.

On Tuesday morning, then, a number of local landowners came to the *lukaut* to address students. They asked whether students wanted to go ahead, which prompted students to reassemble in smaller groups for discussion. As was almost to be expected in this form of decision making through assembly, only affirmations were voiced. This was then brought back into the forum with the local landowners. At this instance, however, a courageous final year student raised his voice to state that students were in fact divided about the issue and that final year students overwhelmingly wanted to go for their practical training. This provoked some attempt to drown his voice by angry shouts, but the message was clear for the delegation of landowners then proceeding to meet the management. Once the delegation had left for this purpose tensions among students rose further. Final year students broke away from the *lukaut* and reassembled on the other side of the road and parking lot next to the *lukaut*. The division over the renewed strike became now a spatial division between two groups of students facing each other in mutual opposition on two sides of the road. The two groups of students never really separated in demarcated physical space with an empty gap between them, although some angry voices could be heard demanding just that. Instead, a few students demonstrably took a middle position on the road and tried to thus calm the situation and avert the actual separation that became rife with tension and anger, with apparent potential to burst into a violent confrontation. Some loudly demanded for the final year

students to return to the *lukaut*, which could also be read as request to reunite and not break away as separate entity of students. Another final year student who took a position in the middle of the road tried to take the word to calm things down a bit, and at least a physical clash between students could be averted and the tensions defused to some extent while waiting for the landowner delegation to return from their meeting with the management.

Affairs were kept very brief upon their return. The sharp prior rhetoric had clearly made way to a much more tamed announcement that the practical training for final year students was to go ahead as scheduled and that a reconciliation meeting was to take place later in the afternoon in the university's major auditorium. The student strike leader, who defied his termination and ban from campus with his presence and usual vocal lead of the day's gatherings, took the word for a last time to say that he would continue to fight his termination and thus exclusion from studies, but made clear that he would not force students to anything further. The afternoon meeting initially announced as a reconciliation turned out to be a last logistical briefing for final year students' practical training.

Aftermath

The main student leader remained terminated from studies, and at least one other vocal strike leader seemed experiencing the same fate. Most other disciplinary proceedings, however, were eventually abandoned, nevertheless following a lengthy process of uncertainty for a number of students against whom disciplinary proceedings were initiated. Rhetoric by the university management remained strong in insisting on disciplinary or legal proceedings against students implicated in rioting or instigating the strike. As time wore on, however, the university management took a pragmatic decision to not pursue these proceedings further, both to not trigger renewed tensions and disruptions that might be instigated by implicated students, and for the difficulty of bringing specific evidence of charges against particular individuals and their roles in the initial riot and ensuing strike. The student representation was for the subsequent year changed into a Student Representative Council again, although not corresponding to the exact model that student leaders had sought to return to. Several more specific issues that students had raised as grievances in their strike were also addressed by the university management, sometimes reluctantly when against the spirit of the policy it

wished to pursue, for pressure by the Minister.[42] Other than that, things remained the same at the level of the university management, which recognised, however, that it needed to do more to make management operations better understood and appreciated by the student population. Specifically, rhetoric by the VC the following year more explicitly incorporated funding issues that the university faced, and petitioned student representatives to work together with the university management to see these concerns addressed by the national government, rather than remaining in a state of antagonism between students and the management that seemed to put into question whether the university was worth additional investment by the national government.

Conclusion

The chronology of the student strike at the University of Goroka in 2013 that I developed in this chapter shows the strike as a power struggle through which students seek to assert their agency. Characteristic of this power struggle is how students contest the proceduralism and rationality of the abstract institutional bureaucracy of the university. This resonates with Golub's (2014:194-98) argument of Melanesian societies as manifesting a certain predisposition to challenge regularising processes of institutionalisation and their Weberian bureaucratic objectivity of hierarchy and standard procedures, law, and the state (Weber 2013 [1956]). Through the strike, students instead sought to re-negotiate the relations of power at the university in ways that deliberately defy its regularising bureaucracy. This, I may add, also seems to parallel processes in which notions of '*kastom*' and reciprocal obligations are constantly negotiated in kin relations (Martin 2013, Rasmussen 2015). As in students' construction of provincial identities in an institution that seeks to foster a national identity, the student strike constructs a distinct social entity of a united student body that subverts university managers' ideas about the ways the 'modern' institution is supposed to function and the forms of sociality that guide its conduct.

In this chapter, I have introduced a description of the student strike at length, as a substrate for more specific analysis that I leave for the following two chapters. This chapter, however, already challenges what was a widely held representation and narrative about the strike as addressing corruption and mismanagement at the university

[42] One specific grievance raised by students, for example, were the high percental fees deducted for the reimbursement of excess fees, and the percental deduction was subsequently somewhat lowered (see Chapter Four).

and standing up for students' rights. The external image that strike leaders managed to cultivate of their actions, and the internal dynamics of the student strike, are rather different, and will be taken up in more detail in the following chapter. In particular, I take to analysing the initial mobilisation for the strike and its prolongation in time. By exploring the interplay between strike leaders and the general student body, I prepare the ground for a more specific analysis of notions of 'leadership', the way these notions play out in contemporary institutions in PNG, and as based on a longer trajectory linked to higher education and processes of social differentiation and stratification in the country.

Chapter Nine - United Students and Their Leader

Going back to the beginning of the strike, I now take a closer look at how the mobilisation for the strike took place initially, and how the strike was maintained in time. I have already hinted in more detail at the processes of the strike's disintegration for internal tensions among students that become increasingly visible in the rather public face of the strike with time. Yet, there is considerable initial work required in the less visible background towards achieving a collective unity of students in the first place, and distinct dynamics surrounding the prolongation of that unity in time. I conceive of this as establishing a veritable type of 'regime' among students that characterises the student strike and the sought unity of a 'single student body', which constitutes the strike more than any democratic decision to undertake it. In this chapter, I analyse the internal dynamics of the student strike in more detail, and the way these dynamics became steered through strike leaders. Drawing on the literature of the so-called 'psychology of crowds' and, to some extent, affect, I illustrate how strike leaders seem to have skilfully deployed a series of techniques to harness a sense of collective identification and enthusiasm about the strike among students. In other words, in this chapter, I present an understanding of the strike as a demonstration of strike leaders' capacities of leadership, to effectively create and guide a group of followers that become positioned in antagonism to more powerful actors. I suggest that it is the demonstration and display of this kind of leadership credentials that paves the way for strike leaders to enter the national political arena by contesting the PNG national elections – a special form of social differentiation that university education facilitates.

In the next chapter, I contextually amplify my analysis through attention to the broader relations and politics between students and the university administration in times of regular university operations. This makes for an analysis of a different perspective that enables a better understanding of the experiences of students at a PNG university that underlie a certain disposition to be mobilised for protest. The following chapter then also returns stronger to questions of sensibilities of appropriate relating, where putative Melanesian values are evoked in contrast to the bureaucratic machinery of the university. Through the present chapters I thus shift emphasis from what appears as distinct sensibilities and identities among Papua New Guineans that I discussed in the previous section on exchange and identity, to narratives and modes of identification that unifies students based on established commonalities. The differences evoked in the conflict of the student strike are between students and university administrators –

largely independent of associating these differences with distinct regions and provinces. Instead, the differences about sensibilities of appropriate relating I discuss run along lines of different generations and subject positions in relation to processes of social differentiation and stratification, as in corresponding to young university students and an older generation of university administrators. Ultimately, I demonstrate how the conflict and phenomena described here point not only to a consolidating national culture of shared practices and ideologies, but also to the way Papua New Guinean modernity is contested.

Student Assemblies: The *Lukaut* Forum

The events surrounding the start of the strike in 2013 followed a quick pace that took many by surprise. For the majority of students, the experience of such events was unprecedented and, especially in the initial days, events were unfolding much faster than their implications could be comprehensively grasped. While on the night of Tuesday the 16th of April a number of predominantly male students started vocally demanding the resignation of the VC on a march through campus, other students, particularly those living off campus or in the female student dormitories, only learned about these events, their actual nature or any representational narrative about them, over the course of the following day. Before anyone was able to provide me an explanation of what the turn of events was, on the day following the initial rampage while I returned to the university campus from another highlands province, students suggesting to be delegated by the general student body were already giving interviews about a student strike to a national radio programme. This experience of being behind in time in relation to these turns of events, and only finding out after the fact, was a common experience for many students throughout the strike, chasing updates on the latest happenings. As I suggest below, however, there is a peculiar correlation between students converging at the *lukaut* to learn updates about the strike, and to actually constitute the strike in itself by the act of convergence in the first place.

Most students, in conversation with me, explicitly remarked being in the dark about what was happening around them in the first few days following the initial rampage.[43] The focal point for finding out about the latest updates were the frequently conducted

[43] This is apart from the mostly final year students that, like me, had witnessed the previous extended student strike with similar demands in 2010, who thus had a vague foreboding on what was apparently occurring.

student assemblies[44], held once or twice daily in the initial days of the strike at the *lukaut*. Student assemblies at the *lukaut* are significant for the establishment of such a strike in several ways, and observations in 2013 closely mirrored observations of an earlier prolonged strike at the university in 2010. In a certain way, student assemblies at the *lukaut* constitute the epicentre of a student strike. This is so for several reasons. First, it is a regular event that brings regularity into students' movement in time and space, where everyone converges. The *lukaut* forum is where information is shared, and further steps are announced, which is crucial for coordinating the strike among students. But it is more than the strike's visible epicentre. *Lukaut* assemblies are actually crucial in establishing and constituting a strike as such in the first place. Student assemblies are not just bringing everyone together for sharing information, but at the heart of such assemblies are elaborate performances[45] of different styles and genres centring around speech.[46] Such performances not only foster a common narrative among students about the strike, but at the same time affectively align students into a collectivity of moved spectators.

Some senior students that had also witnessed the earlier prolonged strike in 2010, for example, shared their observation with me in how far distinct styles and speech genres made use of by different strike leaders displayed certain conventional forms of speech resonating with sensibilities of students from different regions of the country, from the 'cool' aggressive and authoritative voice denouncing corruption and the heroic act of exposing it for the good of the nation despite the personal odds of sacrificing one's studies, to the 'emotional' re-enactment of the hard work of parents in remote highland

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44 These assemblies were usually referred to as student 'forum'. This reference to 'forum' goes back to established usage at UPNG, which counts with a roofed space for such student assemblies that is also called 'forum' as a physical space of intentional design.

45 For suspicions about my presence by strike leaders and the concerns by those involved about documenting their specific involvement in the strike, I categorically refrained from any attempt of systematic or detailed documentation of these performances at any time of the strike, despite the valuable analytical resource that such audio-visual material would undoubtedly constitute. In line with this, and to enable my continued observation of the strike from the rare vantage point among students, I also refrained from direct and generally visible note-taking on campus among students throughout the strike. While in other times I sometimes audio-recorded public events and speeches without necessarily making my audio-recording apparent or explicit, I also decided to refrain from audio-recordings altogether in the student fora of the strike for above outlined reasons.

46 The importance of speech performances in PNG has been highlighted for different ethnographic contexts in PNG, see especially Merlan and Rumsey 1991, Rumsey 1986, Rumsey 2005 (also, more generally, Bauman's Verbal Art as Performance, 1975).

locations carrying coffee bags over mountain ranges to pay for their children's university fees while being denied value-for-money education by allegedly corrupt university managers. These performances were delivered with angry fervour or the actual shedding of tears, left a deep impression on its audience and are a crucial aspect in fomenting a sense of shared purpose in the conduct of the strike.

The 'Pressure Group'

Many students initially attended student fora driven by a sense of curiosity, excitement, or simply for finding out what is going on and what will happen next. As long as attendance to fora is given, the actual conduct of fora takes on its own dynamic for constituting the strike both in its visible manifestation and its steering through a potentially small group of strike leaders. Forums thus serve as a venue to systematically drive home certain narratives and their affective tying into a sense of shared purpose and unity for addressing these. The successful staging of the forum is the uncertain achievement, while the unfolding of the forum once it is successfully brought about towards a reinforcement of the strike appears a rather inevitable outcome in the circumstances described. Once a call for a forum is successfully made, intervention in the course of events unfolding at such a forum is very difficult. This is in stark contrast to the notion of a student forum as a venue of discussion and democratic decision-making among students based on disseminated information and perspectives, as in what the idea of a 'general student assembly' seems to convey. In contrast, introducing an articulated or visible difference of opinion to the agenda of a forum driven by strike leaders becomes perceived as an inappropriately divisive move that invites branding as selfish traitor and that may in most likelihood be followed by violent retribution. The uncertain element for the effectiveness of a forum is thus less the dynamics of the forum as it unfolds, but rather the mobilisation for forums to ensure that the highest possible number of students actually attend in the first place.

Besides the general curiosity and excitement that made many students attend fora, the general attendance by students in the initial days had been achieved through what students dubbed the 'pressure group'. While strike leaders were predominantly final year male students from different parts of the country, the 'pressure group' was mostly made up of male students of earlier years of study and predominantly from Goroka and surroundings, including some students from further afield even if mostly other highlands provinces. They operated based on a notion of constituting '*asples*' or '*papa*

graun' ('landowners') in an extended sense of being from the local region, thereby suggesting that they have legitimacy over a certain monopoly of violence in relation to students' and the university's affairs. Strike leaders rejected notions of having control over this 'pressure group', a divesting from the pressure groups' activities which seemed to serve a double function of disassociating themselves from responsibility for the acts committed by the 'pressure group', while at the same time increasing the level of threat this segment appeared to pose for non-complying students, by suggesting that strike leaders had no control to save deviant students from retribution by those associated with the 'pressure group' (which in the previous chapter I refer to as the more radical section of students pushing towards more violent measures of the strike). Strike leaders regularly made statements in student fora suggesting that students need to be watchful and careful of their individual actions in not going against the general student body's 'democratic' wish to strike, stating that one can never know about the background of each and every student on campus, that there might be former 'murderers' and 'rapists' among them and that no-one could know how they would react to being provoked and angered by individual students' actions.

In student fora, this pressure group does not become visible as an operating entity, other than through the vocal support and cheering in reaction to strike leaders' announcements, thus leading students' response to strike leaders' questions about further conduct of the strike, and thereby equally making clear that there is no alternative acceptable answer. This in turn becomes the 'democratic' legitimation for the conduct of the strike: there is always only one answer to be heard in perfect unison for going ahead with the next step as suggested by strike leaders. Equally important as the supposed democratic legitimation of this practice, however, appears the affective effect of multitudes synchronically shouting in unison. Here again, the student forum serves two purposes at the same time. On the one hand does it constitute a public manifestation of the strike as the collective unity of students pursuing their 'democratic rights' and drive to extinguish 'corruption'. On the other hand, does it affectively create and reinforce the collective unity of students as a 'single body' in the first place. Student fora are basically public events, they become spaces of representation towards external actors, university staff and other members of the public witnessing them from the surroundings or monitoring them closely to find out for themselves what is going on and what can be expected to happen next (just not too closely so as to become a perceived threat by being found 'spying' on students' actions, towards particularising and individualising elements of the strike in relation to specific persons). In this context,

there is no indication for outside observers that there is such an entity as a 'pressure group', and for outside observers the staging of a collective unison of vocal affirmation leaves a strong impression of students' 'democratic' will and determination.

The more visible presence of the 'pressure group' occurs in the student dormitory areas of the campus. Especially in the initial days of establishing the strike, clusters of aggressively posing young male students armed with sticks are patrolling dormitory areas, ensuring that students leave dormitories to attend to student fora, knocking on individual dormitory doors, hitting fences and metal surfaces with their sticks to make sure that no-one could possibly pretend not having got the message. While clusters of this male 'pressure group' have no entry into female dormitories, passing sticks over the solid metal fence around the female student dormitories creates a sufficient device for communicating their message, reinforced by vocal announcements for students to assemble at the *lukaut*, and waiting for the last students to emerge from dormitories and closing in after them in what evokes images of cattle herding. Asking female students whether they consider staying hidden in the dormitory as there is no way for anyone to verify and police their presence in the dormitory,[47] it was suggested that the threat of facing retribution for not having been seen in student fora was too much to risk. This equally held for students residing off-campus. Even if there was no way to physically enforce the presence of students who resided outside campus, many of those students continued coming to campus for strike activities and suggested that they were afraid of not being seen at the strike, or that someone actually may spot them elsewhere rather than being supporting fellow students at such crucial time.

As the regime of the strike became established within the initial days, the visible patrolling of dormitory areas by the so labelled 'pressure group' diminished. This seemed to accord to several phenomena. One is that the threat exerted through the pressure group did not require further visible assertion but was by then firmly internalised by students. Equally important, and more interesting as an 'ethnographic moment', was that at this stage a narrative rhetoric about the strike had achieved a certain routinisation among students that became enthusiastically reproduced at every possible moment, which further indicated the effective constitution of students as a 'single body' also beyond the temporarily visible sphere of student assemblies.

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47 Respecting as off limits the entry of male students into female dormitories was the most notable reminder of a broader institutional order that campus life is embedded in, while many other elements characteristic of a broader institutional order governing student campus life seemed all but suspended in times of a strike.

The Routinisation of Rhetoric

The initial confusion of the majority of students in relation to the quick pace of events and its evolving dynamics was accompanied by lively debate and conversation among students, who expressed varied opinions and perspectives outside student fora. Students conversed about their grievances in relation to services rendered by the university, about possible approaches to address them, and what the avenues would be for further action or approaches from this point of interruption of normalcy after the rampage. This also included their stance on potential demands to be formulated, whether at all a strike would be the right approach to take, and whether the aim of such strike should then be the dismissal of the VC as primary demand without compromise. Content and arguments of these conversations were diverse, but often contained uncertainty or doubt about both the directions that emerged over the initial days of the strike, and admission of a lack of knowledge or opinion in relation to some of the issues discussed, particularly by students in earlier stages of their studies. This picture of open debate among students and diversity of perspectives and opinions, however, dramatically declined within two days of the initial rampage and quickly took the shape of a uniform narrative that was structured along some key elements. This was noticeable both in conversation with individual students as it was in the general dynamic of student interaction around campus. I illustrate these emergent dynamics through my interaction with two close acquaintances among students, Matthew and Jason, with whom I interacted as events unfolded. Matthew is a mature in-service student, a teacher by profession, from the New Guinea islands region. Jason studied the pre-service education programme and is from the highlands region.

There were a number of students I interacted with regularly as the events unfolded, thus achieving a sense of shifting perspectives and considerations from day to day or just between different times of the day following further turns of events. In conversations among students following student assemblies in the first days after the initial rampage, Matthew actively participated in debates about the events unfolding in quick succession. Matthew did not argue for a specific framing of the happenings and issues at hand, but carefully and critically evaluated the situation and the announcement of the strike. Among the questions that Matthew brought into conversations were the evidence for mismanagement and corruption at the hand of university managers, whether a strike was the best way to address student grievances in general, and whether the strike should then be framed around the principal demand for a change to the university management.

Over two days, these were recurrent themes that Matthew discussed with other students, in evolving yet open and inconclusive ways. In the second day following the initial rampage, however, a noticeable shift took place. Questions and doubts that Matthew still articulated in the morning, seemed to have vanished by the afternoon. By then, Matthew advanced a compelling narrative why the strike was necessary, and why it was the only way to address the situation.

I did not see Jason as often as Matthew in the initial days of the strike. When I met Jason several days into the strike, he brimmed with enthusiasm for the strike. Skipping any of the usual interactional patterns of meeting in other circumstances, Jason immediately gave me a lengthy and passionate reasoning of the necessity for the strike that he fully stood behind. The narrative Jason advanced was like the one Matthew articulated, and both were remarkably congruent to the framing of the issues and the approach fostered by leaders in assemblies. In fact, the enthusiastic and forceful reproduction of this narrative began to constitute most of the interaction among students two days into the strike. The strike and its reasoning were noticeably foregrounded in everyone's mind. Clusters of students formed outside dormitories, reproducing and expanding on elements of the narrative that had become a strong element of common identification and shared commitment. It became rare for students to walk around campus alone at this point. When I walked alone, it invited being approached and drawn into conversations revolving around this narrative, and the need to go ahead with the strike. Debate and open-ended conversations all but ceased, replaced by the enthusiastic embrace of what became a routinised narrative among students, as if they spoke with a single voice. I paraphrase this narrative, which was mostly conveyed to me in Tok Pisin, in English below, attempting to retain its rhetoric as it was reproduced in many similar versions:

> The university management, particularly represented in the person of the Vice-Chancellor, is corrupt. This is the root cause for students to experience grievances in their education at the university. And the only solution is thus for the Vice-Chancellor to be removed, and his dealings at the university to be thoroughly investigated. As students are the future educated elite of the country, a country marred by corruption, it is students' moral duty to fight corruption. Students can only be successful in fighting corruption, and in bringing betterment to the management of the university, and thus the quality of their education for them and future students, if they are determined to continue the strike, without any compromise, until the Vice-Chancellor is leaving. Students have to do something now. This is the only way to free the university from corruption, and thus to bring about a better Papua New Guinea. Power hungry and greedy people that are holding on to and misusing their positions for illegitimate personal gain, such as the Vice-Chancellor, should not be allowed to

> get away with it, contributing to the demise of the nation. Enough is enough. In a country marred by corruption like this, what does a university degree count? A university degree compromised in quality through a mismanaged university, to look for employment in the midst of corruption and nepotism? No. Students could just as well go home. And students will go home if the Vice-Chancellor does not depart. This would be the ultimate way to force the government to intervene. And rather than pretending to not see what is wrong and to play the game as if everything would be normal, students need to be strong now and hold together to win this fight, to bring about change. Accepting any hastened move to address students' grievances cannot be accepted at any cost, as it would not attack the root of the problem. Things would revert back to their status quo, corruption would continue as usual to have its grip over the university, but now is the time for change. This needs to be addressed by the national parliament and the government now, students will not listen to anything from the university management. The time for talking is gone, this went on for too long already.

From two days into the strike onwards, I was told this narrative several times per day with minor variations yet closely resembling what I paraphrased above. Strike leaders could be seen mingling among students in and outside male student dormitories reinforcing this narrative, and it almost appeared as if everyone felt the need to assert and reinforce this narrative to others at some point in another variation, or while moving around to a different cluster of students, rather than remaining a listening bystander throughout. Strike leaders also reminded students in the fora to not keep to oneself or move alone on campus in these times, and to not let doubt creep up within oneself, but to stay in groups, and to 'psyche up', to 'think critically', and to see the wrongs that required rooting out.

The taking over of this rather uniform narrative is what I label a routinisation of a certain rhetoric among students. No dissident voices appeared to be present anymore among students on campus, or if there were, one would not hear them. Even when meeting usual interlocutors of mine, I was regularly exposed to a lengthy re-enactment of this narrative rather than having a conversation of an otherwise more familiar course. Individuated or personal content seemed to have all but disappeared from verbal interaction. In the context of the strike it was rare, moreover, to meet any of my interlocutors alone. This would happen more often in regular campus life when students go about 'their own business' and studies, but was discouraged, and even met with suspicion, in times of the strike, potentially indicating ulterior or divisive motives.[48]

[48] Similarly, in times of normal campus operations, students prefer to move around campus in company, and several of my interlocutors shared their observation with me that it seemed that I myself was often seen 'walking alone', which appeared sufficiently unusual for students' way of moving around campus to be worth a remark. In times of

Between Fear and Fervour

Even though it happened less frequently that I met any of my interlocutors alone a few days into the strike, encounters with only one or two students sometimes took on a remarkable dynamic that surprised me. The strike appeared foregrounded in everyone's mind, and any encounters usually started with the reproduction of the narrative paraphrased above, elaborating on different details, and reinforcing an enthusiastic sense that the aims of the strike were attainable, if not inevitable, through the collective action of students. I usually kept asking questions about details of the narrated reasoning for the strike, such as about the basis for claims about corruption; why the strike is so enthusiastically framed in anticipated success when an earlier strike with such aims failed, which was moreover based on similar allegations that were refuted through lengthy investigations; why, if the strike was a 'democratic' expression of all students, it appeared to rely so much on the threat of violence against fellow students, etc. The better I knew the students that I interacted with in such encounters, the more critical were my questions about the nature and conduct of the strike. Often the response was simply the repetition of elements of the routinised narrative even if this did not answer any of the questions posed. In less frequent encounters with a single person a further exploration of these questions and elaboration of responses to the questions that I actually posed usually ended in two scenarios. Most often, the ultimate answer I received to my questions about the strike turned the causality around, suggesting that something as big as this strike would not be able to come up if it was not for things going fundamentally wrong at the university.

In other instances when I met a student alone, and away from other students and activities associated with the strike, for example over tea or coffee in my student dormitory flat, such interaction took a different turn. While initially also revolving around the same narrative and its reinforcement, it happened a few times that my questioning about the strike and directing questions to more personal considerations about commitment to the strike, seemed to trigger a thorough change in my interlocutor's composure. The confident reinforcement of the narrative ceased and to the fore came intense personal doubt and anxiety, now expressed in a low and trembling

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the strike, some of my more mature regular interlocutors (usually in-service students) also explicitly warned me about moving around campus alone at night in the time of the strike, though this was rather out of concern for my safety than meant as an implicit threat, which such a reminder could also constitute, as me moving alone at night could be misunderstood by other students in relation to my motives.

voice. The apparent collective fervour here made way, in a rather abrupt shift, to individuated fear. Moments after confidently reinforcing the strike's narrative, there appeared nothing but doubt and uncertainty about one's position and future in these events happening around, mostly relating to one's studies. The phenomenon of the abrupt shift between confident fervour and disorienting fear was driven home to me initially in an interaction with Jason, who suddenly grew very anxious with personal concerns despite stressing just before that those were no issues. This became a patterned response to personal interaction, however, when bringing up students' personal trajectories and their own studies in conversations when at a certain distance from other students or the activities of the strike. Such abrupt shifts between collective fervour and individual fear resonate with Stanley Tambiah's (1996) description and analysis of the constitution crowds in South Asia, and I found more resonance with the processes observed in the literature on crowds and affect, which I discuss below.

The Psychology of Crowds and the Emergence of a Collectivity

While little reference has been made to this in Melanesian anthropology to date, the processes and phenomena here described also appear to resonate with the subject matter of 'affect' (Mazzarella 2010a; White 2017; but see Harrison 1985), and the genealogy of the literature on the 'psychology of crowds' (Tarde 1890; Le Bon 1895; McDougall 1920; Freud 1921; Canetti 1960; Moscovici 1985; Tambiah 1996; Mazzarella 2010b; Borch 2012; compare Durkheim 1912; Turner 1969). This literature sets out on questions related to mediated orders of collective mobilisation. In brief, the psychology of crowds sought to address phenomena in which human collectivities, or crowds, appeared to assume a distinct set of qualities. Or, framed differently, how does such a 'collectivity' emerge in the first place? What sustains it?

I can only speculate as to why this literature appears to have been bypassed by scholars of Melanesia to date when seeking answers to these questions (but see Candea 2010). The most compelling reason for this may be the kinds of arguments that writers associated with the psychology of crowds advanced. Le Bon, for example, often credited with popularising the analytical category of the crowd, wrote about the French Revolution from a reactionary perspective that sought to discredit its uprisings as driven by savage mobs instigated by emotional processes that eclipsed faculties of reasoning and otherwise present inhibitions of performing violent acts. Effectively, Le Bon argued that mass uprisings were a terrifying manifestation of human capabilities from a time

thought bygone of no reason but fervent emotion (Candea 2010, Borch 2012). Le Bon and other writers of his time appeared to operate on a similar conception of seeing the constitution of crowds as remnants of bygone times that needed to be kept in check, drawing parallels between the mentality of crowds and a pre-anthropological broad category of primitive others outside the bourgeois fortresses supposedly governed by reason.[49] As Mazzarella observes: 'Classic crowd theory tends to assume that crowd energy is inimical to social order' (2010b:720).

Lately, however, anthropologists have taken up these threads again while carefully purging some of its baggage, incorporating some of the older foci into a recent anthropological attention to affect and emergent collectivities (Mazzarella 2010a, 2010b; Tambiah 1996). Against much of the psychology of crowds literature that saw the crowd as the expression of a primordial human nature that needs to be kept in check, and more recent formulations of concepts such as the 'multitude' as a supposedly purely non-mediated emergence in contrast to mediated crowds (Hardt & Negri 2004), Mazzarella pursues 'the question of how one might actually find a way to talk about the emergent potentials of group energy that is at the same time a theory of social mediation' (2010b:715-716).

Mazzarella's and Borch's re-readings of Gabriel Tarde's Laws of Imitation (1890) suggest that it contains the seeds for understanding the emergent dynamics of crowds, or collectivities, as a source of social orders rather than the opposite. It is in this way that I refer to the student strike as a veritable regime that has been established among students. Tarde postulates a semi-conscious process of suggestion and imitation as the basis of a dialectical process of the constitution of individuals and society. We become

[49] More nuanced work on the constitution of the crowd in the French Revolution has later been provided by historians, especially George Rude (1977[1959]) who more carefully dissected the background, motives, and activities of different actors in the crowd and crowd leaders, and analysed patterns that the crowd in the French Revolution shared with other popular movements. Georges Lefebvre also contextualises the scientific rationalism of the time, following for example Descartes, which informed understanding of the mobilisation of crowds as based on 'emotion' in opposition to 'reason' (2001[1930]:55-57). This opposition is also prominently evoked through debates on student strikes in PNG, although I question its explanatory force through my analysis drawing on Mazzarella and affect theory here and I will not deal with the opposition of 'reason' and 'emotion' drawn in the history of the social sciences in general and in popular thought across these instances of mobilisation in particular. I thus do not enter here into a – certainly desirable – wider comparison of the observed student strike with details of historical crowd formation on a global scale but limit myself here to discuss certain theoretical aspects about the phenomena of the emergence of a crowd, or collectivity.

social individuals only by imitating others, whereas the variable in this process is the gap between the stimulus of suggestion and the response of our imitation. The dynamics of an emergent collectivity, in this sense, becomes the purest form of sociality, in which suggestion-imitation happens most immediately without friction, a phenomenon also referred to as 'mimesis' (cf. Canetti 1960).

In the student strike at the University of Goroka in 2013, it was only after the process of initial mobilisation that distinct dynamics of an emergent collectivity started to become visible. Two days after the initial rampage, students came to constitute a more clearly bounded entity, mobilised in antagonism to the university management around shared experiences of disappointment about their education, and physically brought together into assemblies where they shouted in unison. These are all important aspects to allow for an affective mediation of emergent group dynamics in student assemblies, through which collective unity and order becomes more distinctively fostered.

It is through the assemblies that sentiments are brought onto a common course. This is the primary work of affective mediation, to transform a dense congregation of several hundred students encircling strike leaders into an affectively aligned single collective entity. Common feelings are harnessed in these assemblies, where the performance of strike leaders elicits the response of a performed collective unity of students. The experience of these impressive aesthetics of students forming a single united entity standing together and shouting in unison, as if of a single body and voice, creates a sense of achieved collectivity, and makes manifest a higher state of order among students. There is an overwhelming sense of energy, enthusiasm, and determination among students during and after assemblies, and additional work is done by strike leaders in male student dormitory areas at night to keep students 'psyching up' each other.

Mediation and Magnetisers

What had happened? How did it occur that students, who were rallied together in a quick pace of events initially characterised by confusion and uncertainty, exhibited such overwhelming unity and forcefully pressed for a shared agenda after two days? In Marilyn Strathern's words, students' minds had been successfully brought onto a common course, and states of feeling had been inflated into collective proportions (1985). Students became united as an interest group in opposition to the university

management, and they now seemed unstoppable in their shared commitment. As is clear from the account above, students' collective determination around a common agenda did not arise spontaneously on its own terms. The constitution of a collectivity of students in the strike was a mediated process, which set free dynamics that perplexed me as an observer. These dynamics resonate with what is described in the genealogy of scholarship on crowds, and more recently, affect.

Copeman & Street (2014) draw on Marilyn Strathern to understand the phenomenon of 'affect'. Affect, as Copeman & Street employ it, refers to pre-discursive and 'non-representational ways in which images might implicitly shape a person's emotions, attitudes and motivations and compel them to act in particular ways' (190). Images here refer to an aesthetics more broadly, and affective power derives from 'persuasiveness of form' (M. Strathern 1991:10, quoted by Copeman & Street 2014:189). For the student strike, this puts a spotlight on the aesthetic form of student assemblies as compelling force that aligned students' minds, rather than the content of the narrative of the strike as such. My interaction with Jason described above seemed to confirm such an interpretation. When I kept querying him about aspects of the reasoning that he presented to me through the above narrative, his ultimate answer was that the magnitude of the strike by itself provided evidence that something was wrong at the university, which needed to be urgently addressed. What compelled action was the impressive display of student assemblies, bringing hundreds of students together and constituting them as a collective subject through emotionally charged performances that students could identify with. Student assemblies work through creating a shared focus of attention to performances that resonate with spectators, which turns spectators into active agents as a collective subject.

While Copeman & Street draw attention to images and the persuasiveness of aesthetic form in the mediation of affect, Mazzarella turns to Tarde's notion of the 'magnetiser' and its mediating role in the constitution of crowds (2010b; cf. Tarde 1890). A magnetiser may refer to an image, as is the focus of discussion for Copeman & Street, or the acts of a crowd leader, which similarly work through a persuasiveness of form. Thinking of a strike leader, it is not simply the content of speech that has magnetising effect, but the kind of images conjured or even mere gestures that trigger a response from the audience. The magnetiser's success depends on the audience recognising itself in his acts or the images he conjures up. Spectators identify with his acts, which triggers the actualisation of potentials that seemed just waiting to be released. In the student

strike, this had been achieved through the varied performances in assemblies that resonate with students, stirring anger about widespread corruption in PNG, or sadness and frustration about the hard work of sponsors' marketing of horticultural produce for university fees that allegedly become misappropriated. It is in this context that suggestion and imitation work most frictionless. Anger and frustration become shared among spectators, as is the enthusiasm about collectively acting on it.

What are the inherent potentials that seemed waiting to become realised? Here the juxtaposition between a specific ethnographic focus on conceptions of order in Melanesia on one hand, and the scholarship on crowds, affect, and social theory of Tarde, on the other hand, may be productive. As several scholars have demonstrated, the efficacy associated with collective unity is a widespread value in different parts of PNG. Scholarly descriptions include, for example, M. Strathern's discussion of mediated collective exchange in Hagen (1985, 1988), Bashkow's depiction of Orokaiva as longing for a level of social harmony that appears elusive for the perceived inability to align people's inner selves (2006; compare Robbins 2004 in relation to Urapmin), the accounts of nostalgia for bygone times characterised by people's memories of superior states of collective efficacy and order among Guhu-Samane speakers in Morobe Province (Handman 2016), and the Asaro valley in the Eastern Highlands (Strong 2007), or the collective projects that were infelicitously referred to as 'cargo cults' on the northern coast of PNG and the New Guinea Islands (Jebens 2004). In many of these accounts, the collective unity or efficacy that is remembered from past times or is aspired to today, remains as elusive as it is a focus of people's reflexive concerns. In a way, collective unity and efficacy appears as an ideological ideal across many parts of PNG. The more forceful, I suggest, then becomes the energy generated when collective unity is realised, when minds are successfully brought on a common course, actualised in the here and now. It is in this way that the emergence of a collectivity in a student strike, for participants, also becomes an enthusiastically celebrated achievement of a superior kind of order.

There is a further implication of this that brings us back from Melanesian notions of order to social theory at large. The affect harnessed through assemblies in the student strike is not only sensuously contagious, it is also reflexive. While the underlying dynamics of an emergent collectivity described here are not uniquely Melanesian, their actualisation nevertheless relies on the specific resonances with ideologies, values, and experiences of the individuals that constitute the emergent collectivity. These are not

only the widespread longing for collective efficacy present in different parts of PNG today, which contributes to making the embrace of its realisation so energetic. Equally important are the resonances of the narrative fostered by strike leaders that decry widespread corruption in PNG and that relate to the grievances and dissatisfactions that students experience in an underfunded university system. The strike leader as magnetiser manages to bring these elements together in a way that elicits a collective response of minds aligned to a common focus, taking on a dynamic on its own as a collective subject. While the emergence of the collectivity is mediated through the harnessing of affect, it relies on a substrate of shared experiences, values, or memories, to do its work. Once it does its work, the details of the narrative of common focus become almost secondary, so far as they present an overall coherence that resonates with students' experiences. What fuels its reproduction and validates its content retroactively, surpassing all the doubts voiced in earlier debates, is the achievement of collective unity as such.

Strike Leaders' Political Ambitions and Styles of Leadership

What I want to emphasise and illustrate through the above excursion of analysing the student strike through the psychology of crowds and affect theory is not a phenomenon of how a common set of ideas and their coordinated advancement yielded dynamics with distinct features of an emergent collectivity. Rather, I suggest that strike leaders skilfully employed a set of social techniques to bring about the emergence of a united collectivity of students that acted as a single student body. As I will detail below, and as much as this seems a reasonable claim with the evidence at hand, the characteristics described for the student strike at the University of Goroka in 2013 are not unique but present common features in student strikes in PNG. I want to take that one step further, by suggesting that this is part of a longer-term process of shaping political practice within a larger trajectory of student strikes in PNG – and thus a certain national culture of a style of politics and ideologies around leadership whose elements can be observed at PNG universities and beyond. Not all student strikes rely as much on threats of violence in initial mobilisation before emergent collective dynamics can unfold. I suggest, however, that the threats of violence, including the occasional application of violence, in combination with a skilful harnessing of the dynamics and potentials of an emergent collectivity, presents a sophisticated state of the arts in political mobilisation and national-institutional politics in PNG today. Since the inception of universities in PNG in 1968, and the first student strike in PNG several years later in 1974, student

leaders often became national politicians. There is no necessary correlation today between leading a student strike and becoming a Member of Parliament. What has changed in the conduct of student strikes since 1974, however, is that strikes become instigated by students with the ambition to become a Member of Parliament in mind. As I have suggested elsewhere, student strikes will thus remain a recurrent feature at PNG's public universities, regardless of the reasons they are claimed to be done for (Syndicus 2015).

Student protests and strikes have a distinct history at PNG universities (Ballard 1977; Howie-Willis 1980; Meek 1982). Some of my observations have precursors as far back as the first major student strike at in 1974. Robertson, in an undated working paper, examines the strike in 1974 as a collective expression of students, focusing on group dynamics. Robertson characterised the strike as 'a popular movement which expressed the opposition of students to all those formal structures which make decisions on their behalf; a challenge to authority' (Robertson, n.d., 8). Drawing on Turner's notion of communitas (1969), Robertson suggests that '[t]he strike strengthened the students as an interest group, increasing the sense of boundary between them and the community and eliminating all sources of internal conflict' (n.d., 18). Robertson refers to a level of excitement in student assemblies that 'produced a sense of danger' (n.d., 7), and characterises 'violence and confusion of the strike' as 'a secular form of the frenzied trance states which mark millennial movements' (n.d.:16; leaning on Turner 1977 [1969]:111). As Robertson himself remarks, however, this analysis was only a work in progress, and seemed to stop there. While thus being more suggestive than ethnographically illustrative, Robertson raises questions about students' group dynamics and affective collective expression. The charismatic student president leading the strike in 1974, Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, became a member of Solomon Islands' Legislative Assembly and its first ever Leader of Opposition in 1976, and was Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands between 1997-2000.

Student strikes have since been a recurrent feature at PNG universities, and many student leaders went on to become prominent politicians in PNG. Student strikes stem from concerns over student welfare and other internal institutional matters, national politics, or a combination thereof. A well-remembered example is the escalation of events in student protests in 2001, when UPNG students were killed in confrontations with police. A sense of déjà vu ensued at a strike in 2016 when police shot at UPNG students again. While archival sources and personal reports hint at numerous past

student strikes at PNG's public universities, there is little documentation about their internal dynamics since Robertson's working paper. This may have to do with the difficulties of observing these dynamics from among students and student dormitories, a perspective that can hardly be deduced from a strike's public manifestation alone.

In 2010, an earlier strike I observed at the University of Goroka as a student displayed similar patterns to the strike in 2013. It was led by a charismatic leader who was the elected student president. It was supported by provincial student associations, whose presidents used to make up the Student Representative Council together with a set of elected executives. It was also supported by the staff unions at the university, although some dissent remained among staff. Some provincial student presidents also privately suggested that they supported the strike only as they saw no alternative than to follow the student president in his decisions. Again, most students I interacted with voiced support for the strike, but it appeared still necessary to police students' movement. Groups of male students prevented others from attending meetings called by the university management, for example. While the threat of violence for non-compliance was not as explicit as in 2013 – there were no assaults of students as far as I am aware – it was clearly lingering in the background. The strike had no success, but it made the student president and several other strike leaders sufficiently confident to build on their thus gained renown as effective leaders to contest the PNG national elections in 2012. None of them won, but they gained respectable results for low-resource campaigns. The then student president was also unsuccessfully contesting the 2017 elections again, in Obura-Wonenara. His successor as student president, in 2011, and part of the team leading the strike in 2010 contested the South Fly seat in both 2012 and 2017 without success.

Another prolonged student strike took place at Unitech in Lae in 2014. The student president called for a strike to pressure the government to re-issue a visa for the university's foreign Vice-Chancellor, whom some forces at the university and the national political and bureaucratic machinery intended to get rid of by revoking his visa over the Christmas holidays. Their prolonged strike was successful, and the student president was widely celebrated for a well-led strike that restored proper university management and defied political interference. It was, however, only after weeks of hesitation that the pressure of students eventually convinced their president to take the lead of a strike rather than to stand in its way. Observers alleged that his hesitance stemmed from concerns about his own political future, and for political association with

the previous student president and other political actors who colluded in bringing about this situation in the first place. His leadership of the successful strike that followed, however, was widely appreciated, and he was contesting the 2017 election in Lae. Coincidentally, the strike leader of 2013 at the University of Goroka contested the same seat. Both were unsuccessful.

It is not my intention to call into question the achievements of this strike at Unitech, which was widely regarded as a rare instance of successful mobilisation around a progressive agenda against government interference in university governance. But I wish to take note of certain dynamics among students that became visible here again. The PNG government went to lengths to curb the strike and to stand its ground without giving in to students' demands. At one stage, some provincial governors threatened to withdraw the scholarships of provincial support-schemes from students that refused to go back to class. Students protested that even if they wished to go back to class, entering lecture halls for scheduled classes would only put them in danger without making any lectures happen. No amount of enforcement for making them return to class, or security provided, would make it safe for them to go against the instructions of strike leaders. Students who approached national media outlets with these complaints about the governors' announcements did not frame this in terms of being personally in favour of the strike or not, but rather apprehended politicians about the impracticality of their expectations for students from certain provinces simply to turn up for lectures that were impossible to conduct under the circumstances. As in strikes in Goroka, and independent of the cause or intention of strike leaders that a strike advances, the mobilisation and maintained unity of students in such strikes relies on, or is aided by, the threat of violence.

In the same year, 2014, the student body of UPNG started debating whether to initiate a strike to protest against the PNG government's decision for a UBS loan to purchase shares of Oil Search Ltd. The elected student president, associated with the Prime Minister in regional political divisions that would become even more visible in university unrests in 2016, attempted to thwart these debates unsuccessfully. When the moment came that other students tried to push ahead the idea of a strike regardless, the president and supporters dispersed students with bush knives that they retrieved from a vehicle parked nearby. In response, students demanded for their president to be ousted by the university management. The university management declined, however, probably to prevent the prospect of a student strike against the government that would be likely to

ensue. In summary, a strike did not eventuate in this instance, and the dynamics were different. Yet, what this instance has in common with other examples brought up is that force and violent threat by the student president and his supporters was in a certain way legitimised by allowing it to happen. Supporters of the student president argued that as a mandated leader of students, he could not be deposed just for some voices demanding so. What it also seemed to have in common with many other strikes is that the actions by student leaders were determined by the political capital it promises, more so than the issues at hand. The UPNG student president of the time was in 2017 unsuccessfully contesting the seat for Koroba-Lake Kopiago in Hela Province.

Regardless of whether a strike is motivated by pressing issues that are widely regarded as needing to be addressed among students, or by students deliberately seeking to prepare a platform for national election campaigns by turning anything into a strike, the intimidation and threat of violence against fellow students is a common phenomenon in prolonged student strikes at PNG universities today. Such threats have also been noted in the unpublished working paper by S. Robertson about the first student strike at UPNG in 1974. Back then, Robertson qualified that the rhetoric of violence did not translate into any real danger for anyone. This, however, has changed in recent student strikes, and the assault of fellow students occasionally is a deliberate strategy to deter others from non-compliance.

Further, successful leadership and legitimacy as leader is gained by demonstrating efficacy in mobilising collective action. What matters is the effectively established unity of students, capable of swaying external observers and reinforcing enthusiasm among students alike. To achieve this is to become a legitimate leader, irrespective of how this is achieved. In this way, student strikes in PNG also do not fit the image of liberal or progressive politics that some academic observers and foreign anthropologists of the region would like to see them as, generically regarding mobilised university students as the progressive force that keeps a political elite in check. Instead, without discounting progressive elements among them, student strikes became part of the repertoire of playing the game of politics and getting ahead in it with ambitions to become a Member of Parliament.

In the 2013 student strike in Goroka described in detail above, its leader successfully mediated the emergent dynamics of a collectivity for his own ends. It served to establish him as efficacious political leader to contest the PNG national elections in 2017, rather

than to facilitate a collective subject to address issues at the university or their perception of widespread corruption in PNG. The strike failed to oust the university management, lacking grounds on which this would be warranted, and ended with the strike leader terminated from studies. The only tangible result for students was the interruption to their studies, which characteristically resulted in a disproportionately high number of students failing courses once the academic activities resumed with assessments and exams.

Strike leaders, I suggest, thus ably instrumentalised a moment of dissatisfaction and confusion among students towards fomenting collective dynamics towards furthering their own ends. This should not be read as dismissing student strikes in PNG in general, nor as dismissing the dynamics of an emergent collective subject. To the contrary, and as Mazzarella observes (2010b:726), these are dynamics that are inherent to social process in general, and it depends on their context whether we recognise them as progressive, revolutionary, or reactionary. The student strike at the PNG University of Technology in 2014, for example, was successful in pressuring the government to stop interfering in the university's affairs, and to reissue a visa for the university's foreign VC that had been revoked for unknown reasons over Christmas vacations. The important point here is to recognise how these dynamics are mediated both by harnessing affect and collective states of feeling, and how accompanying narratives or reasoning allow participants to identify themselves with them. Whether we highlight a reasoning that we agree with, approvingly, or an alleged appeal to emotion more than anything else, dismissively, is usually our retrospective decision in judging the emergence and efficacy of collective subjects. A beacon of hope for student politics, and the incremental threats of violence against fellow students in student leaders' bids to enter the national parliament, may be the fact that the only recent student leader successful in entering the national parliament did not prepare his election campaign through a strike, but managed to distinguish himself through his leadership qualities without a strike as UPNG student president in 2013, and became elected as the Governor for the Eastern Highlands Province in 2017.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed the dynamics of the student strike based on the drive for leadership by student leaders. I have illustrated, by recourse to the literature on the psychology of crowds and affect, how student leaders cleverly manipulate social

dynamics among students to establish a united student body that assumes distinct qualities of a collectivity – namely the enthusiastic and energetic alignment of minds and bodies towards a common cause that has been described especially in the literature on crowds but also, to less extent, in relation to collectivities in Melanesia (M. Strathern 1985, 1988; cf. Harrison 1993, 1985). Through this, student leaders achieve to distinguish them as effective leaders through the mobilisation of a following in antagonism to powerful institutional actors. I have further contextualised this through comparative illustration to other student strikes both contemporarily and in the history of student strikes at PNG universities, to illustrate how the observed dynamics and their strategic manipulation by strike leaders follows a pattern that became both a recurrent form for student leaders to demonstrate their leadership capacities towards contesting national elections, and a part of PNG's national political culture in ways that transcends localised, provincial, or regional sensibilities of effective leadership.

The phenomena of recurrent student strikes and the approach to lead them by student leaders follows a particular historical trajectory of pathways and ideologies of social differentiation and stratification that are inherent to university education in PNG. This follows the initial conception and continuing rhetoric of university students constituting the future elite of the country, for example. While there were realistic pathways for the very first generations of university students in PNG to constitute a newly forming national elite (see Chapter Three), the ongoing rhetoric at PNG universities today that groom students as 'future leaders' does not correspond to the reality of students' pathways and real opportunities for such levels of social mobility today. An exception to this, although seldomly coming to fruition, is the distinction and renown gained as effective student leader, a position that is perceived to enable contesting national elections to become Member of Parliament.

In the following chapter, I describe and analyse student politics and the experience of students in times of normal campus operations in more detail. In doing so, I shift the emphasis to an understanding of students' grievances in higher education and sensibilities surrounding appropriate forms of relating by the administrative hierarchy. I thus provide the context for students' disposition to protest and mobilisation for student strikes, further contextualise the contests over ideologies of leadership in PNG and return to questions of appropriate relating – now in institutional hierarchies rather than among kin relations as detailed in Chapters Five and Six.

Chapter Ten - Students and University Politics

A student strike presents a climax event that channels students' sentiments and grievances towards a particular direction. I have suggested that the 2013 student strike at the University of Goroka was brought about and sustained through a combination of violent threat, smart charismatic leadership, and a clever use of techniques for the manipulation of the dynamics of emergent social collectivities. In this chapter, I look more broadly at the context and trajectory from which such student strike becomes possible and takes place. For this purpose, I first discuss the everyday experience of studying or working at a PNG university, and the issues and grievances actors are concerned about. In a context of perceived consistent infrastructural demise since PNG's Independence, universities witness frequent discontent by staff and students about the state of their institution. This concerns not only perceived inadequacies of infrastructure or services rendered by the university, but also, as in universities elsewhere, debates about ideological positions and the values a university should strive to embody, represent, and instil in others. Secondly, I explore how discontent at the university paves the way for certain styles of leadership for addressing students' grievances at university. I suggest that an understanding of the context of students' grievances and the way these are dealt with at university are crucial towards the understanding of contemporary student politics at the University of Goroka and beyond.

Through this chapter, I suggest another link between processes of social stratification and ideologies of leadership in the 'modern' institutional context of a university. University managers who insist in bureaucratic procedure as source of their authority, for example, act from a perspective of an established position of social stratification with an inherent conviction of representing 'modern' PNG. Students who in the process of their own social differentiation still identify stronger with the egalitarian sensibilities ascribed to PNG's less privileged 'grassroots', in contrast, allege that university managers disregard modern values of transparency, accountability, and participative decision-making and university governance in ways that would acknowledge and recognise students as important institutional agents in their own right at the institution, allegedly to further their own ends. What becomes contested here are not only styles of leadership, but what 'modern' means in PNG today, as perceived from distinct subject positions of different social strata and generations.

The Context for a Strike: Budget Shortfalls in Universities

As hinted in Chapter Three on the history of higher education in PNG, public universities in PNG face complex challenges. University funding decreased significantly after PNG's Independence, and as analysts of the time have pointed out (Ballard 1977, Howie-Willis 1980, Meek 1982), it is difficult to justify high levels of university funding from a limited national budget when funding allocations are competing with rolling out basic health services and increasing the coverage of school education across the country. Universities are expensive to maintain, and are a significant financial commitment that, in comparison to other public services, benefit only a small share of the population. There are, of course, also pressing arguments for sustained high levels of funding for universities for a country's future and progress, but budgetary constraints are hard to overlook.[50] Recent policy directions have not helped to alleviate the perceived woes of PNG universities. The tuition fee-free education policy up to grade twelve in secondary schooling rolled out since 2012 again helped to significantly increase the number of school leavers vying for university admission, pressing universities to increase admission spaces rather than focusing on stemming perceptions of quality decline. Global trends in neoliberal university funding models making inroads into PNG are further aggravating the funding shortfall by governmental budget allocations, as PNG's universities are pressed to form public-private partnerships and to raise larger shares of their budget through business arms and other revenue streams (cf. Heatherington and Zerilli 2016, Jessop 2017). The University of Goroka's annual budget allocation thus hardly goes beyond covering basic operations and the salary of existing university staff, with unsteady annual budget increases hardly covering more than balancing inflation, if at all. While this was the situation at the time of fieldwork in 2013/14, more recent macroeconomic difficulties have further led to an actual decline in university budget grants from the state by 2016, causing concerns at universities about keeping operations running until the end of the academic year. Resulting funding shortfalls are thus substantial, and university managers face pressures to raise additional funds within short spans of time for meeting multiple expectations by the government, university staff, and students. All eyes are on university administrators in this regard, especially the VC's, to make the magic happen despite the adverse circumstances. This is also expressed in common reference to the VC's position as the

[50] In contrast to the University of the South Pacific, which was able to receive direct funding support through Australian development aid, the PNG universities were after independence only subject to the redistribution of Australian supplementary budget grants to PNG at the discretion of the government of the day.

'hot seat'. Planning challenges for universities are further aggravated by the late notice about actual funding allocations for the coming year, often only made known very late in the budget year relative to the following one.

Some of the measures routinely taken to make up for shortfalls in budget allocations are highly unpopular and directly affect students and staff at universities. For 2013, for example, the University of Goroka submitted a recurrent budget[51] of 31 million PNG Kina to the government, of which it was granted 17 million Kina, a slight increase to the previous year but well below expectations. The university subsequently trimmed its budget to 28 million Kina, still falling short of 11 million Kina to be raised through other means for the academic year.

The first measure following the government's budget grant announcement for 2013 was an upward revision of university fees for tuition, boarding and lodging. As the budget was only announced shortly before the start of the academic year, some students only became aware of the extent of fee increases (see Figure 10 below) when returning to university after the Christmas break, in some cases leading students to return home once more to raise further funds. Other additional revenue streams fell into the broader policy implementation of raising more of the university's budget through its business arm, such as taking over the operations of the student mess and catering services that had been run by external operators before, and the bookshop and printing shop among other ventures. The university also increased fees for other services rendered to students, for example introducing fees of five Kina for printing additional transcripts requested by students, increasing the gown hire fees for graduating students, and deducting higher percentages for the reimbursement of excess fees that students had in their name in university accounts. Further measures that may broadly fall into the category of alleviating the university's financial woes were to retain students' government scholarship fortnightly allowances until the end of the semester rather than paying them out regularly, presumably both due to delays of these funds becoming available to the university, and for limiting the workload burden on the university's accounts section; or, for example, to tie students' government scholarship book allowances to purchases

[51] The recurrent budget basically covers operational costs of the university, while proposed major infrastructure developments are usually addressed through the Public Investment Programme (PIP). This may only be a basic guide to different financial liabilities or public funding streams to the university, however, which I have not analysed in further detail.

at the university's bookshop rather than paying them out in cash or depositing them in students' bank accounts.

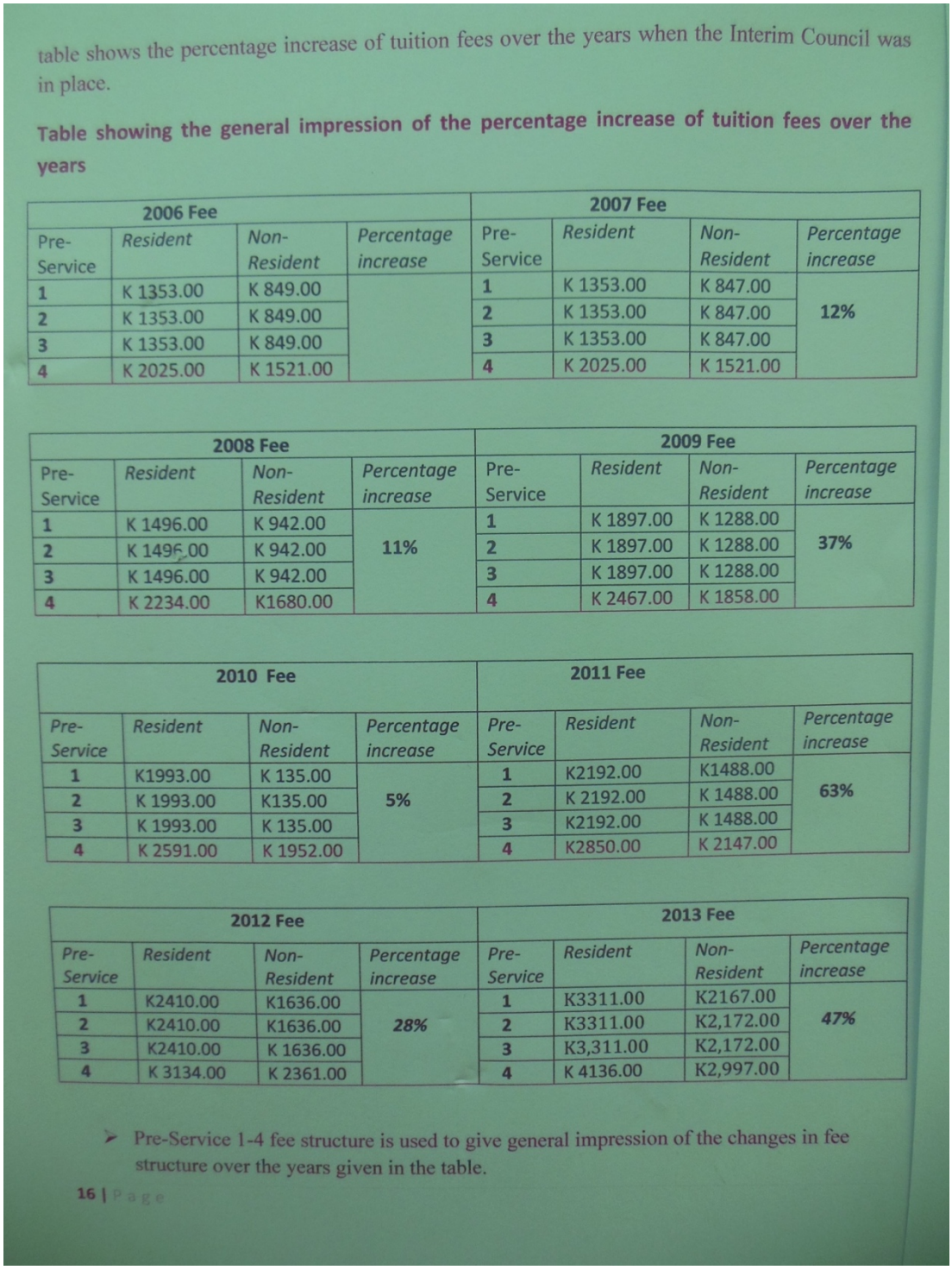

table shows the percentage increase of tuition fees over the years when the Interim Council was in place.

Table showing the general impression of the percentage increase of tuition fees over the years

2006 Fee				2007 Fee			
Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase	Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase
1	K 1353.00	K 849.00		1	K 1353.00	K 847.00	12%
2	K 1353.00	K 849.00		2	K 1353.00	K 847.00	
3	K 1353.00	K 849.00		3	K 1353.00	K 847.00	
4	K 2025.00	K 1521.00		4	K 2025.00	K 1521.00	

2008 Fee				2009 Fee			
Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase	Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase
1	K 1496.00	K 942.00	11%	1	K 1897.00	K 1288.00	37%
2	K 1496.00	K 942.00		2	K 1897.00	K 1288.00	
3	K 1496.00	K 942.00		3	K 1897.00	K 1288.00	
4	K 2234.00	K1680.00		4	K 2467.00	K 1858.00	

2010 Fee				2011 Fee			
Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase	Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase
1	K1993.00	K 135.00	5%	1	K2192.00	K1488.00	63%
2	K 1993.00	K135.00		2	K 2192.00	K 1488.00	
3	K 1993.00	K 135.00		3	K2192.00	K 1488.00	
4	K 2591.00	K 1952.00		4	K2850.00	K 2147.00	

2012 Fee				2013 Fee			
Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase	Pre-Service	Resident	Non-Resident	Percentage increase
1	K2410.00	K1636.00	28%	1	K3311.00	K2167.00	47%
2	K2410.00	K1636.00		2	K3311.00	K2,172.00	
3	K2410.00	K 1636.00		3	K3,311.00	K2,172.00	
4	K 3134.00	K 2361.00		4	K 4136.00	K2,997.00	

- Pre-Service 1-4 fee structure is used to give general impression of the changes in fee structure over the years given in the table.

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Figure 10: *Annual fee increases for the University of Goroka's four-year pre-service Bachelor of Education programme as compiled by students as part of their petition to government in the 2013 student strike. Percentage increases are incorrect as stated but are significant. For 2013, percentage increases ranged from 26-37% depending on year of study and boarding and lodging status.*

In the experience of students, two parallel processes take place. On the one hand, students are subject to significant annual year-on increases of university fees communicated at short notice, and a range of services of the university that are no longer free or charged for at higher rates than previously. On the other hand, increased spending of students on their education does not appear to produce any perceived positive improvement in educational experience, sometimes the contrary. Students thus ask where their money is going and feel drained financially for, so the interpretation easily goes, the personal benefit of corrupt administrators. Indeed, their monies hardly warrant for additional leaps of services rendered by the university but are in the order of ad hoc measures to ensure university operations to the end of the academic year. The specific issues that make it into lists of students' grievances is long, and the temporary problems with a consistent uninterrupted electricity supply that haunted the university into triggering the events that led into the strike in 2013 based on the faulty back-up generator is just one of them. Among other issues there are the disappearing chairs from lecture halls that take too long to be replaced (that are allegedly ending up in the settlements around the university), overflowing lecture halls in the campus infrastructure that had initially been built for a few hundred rather than thousands of students, difficulties to retain senior academic staff, and insufficient academic staff to avoid having tutors with an undergraduate degree being responsible for courses where higher qualified lecturers should be in charge.

Concerns about these issues are often shared by academic staff, who are overburdened with teaching and administrative duties. They bear the brunt of a shortage of staffing and too few additional positions being created to keep up with increasing student numbers and demands of updating course contents. On top of this, academic staff is asked to redesign offered programmes in line with university restructurings that demand breaking up familiar departments into new divisions and schools, and the reordering of disciplines and strands among them. Many of these issues are familiar to academics in most parts of the world today, including an increase in short-term teaching contracts that rarely extend beyond a single semester or academic year, lacking the benefits for longer contractual staff, yet similarly implying the expectation to contribute to administrative and other unpaid duties, including to design new courses and content over non-teaching periods, and to continue teaching in the following semester despite temporary contracts still not being renewed by the start of the semester. At the same time, systematic university performance 'audits' were introduced in PNG in 2013, including lengthy performance indicator sheets to be filled in by staff. These processes

were brought under way with Australian funding support, are overseen by Australian advisory, and seem to follow a generic international model. To staff who feel overburdened with teaching and administrative demands, detailed questions about research output, for example, appeared absurd, and there is a widely felt mismatch between academic staff's struggle to keep up with work demand while appearing to have little to show in relation to many of the performance indicators they were requested to report on.

Mismatching Perspectives and Interpretations

Many of these issues related to changing funding models and an increasing 'audit culture' at universities are hardly a specific phenomenon limited to the University of Goroka but contain familiar themes in universities around the world today (M. Strathern 2000, Wright & Rabo 2010, Shore & Wright 2015, Syndicus & Ivancheva forthcoming). Students and staff are unsympathetic of these struggles facing university administrators at the University of Goroka, as much as students are unsympathetic about the workload of staff. University administrators, particularly VCs, are often measured by other university actors in relation to their ability to maintain and improve existing conditions despite the adverse conditions to university funding and demands placed on them by respective governmental expectations. This is part of a broader familiar tendency to reduce public grants to universities while demanding universities to support operations through public private partnerships, attracting external funding, or otherwise generated revenue by the institution itself. There is a common rhetoric audible from university administrators that certain processes are necessary to keep up with the contemporary world, such as periodic performance audits, the comprehensive restructuring of former faculties and departments into newly delineated schools and divisions, and the development of new curricula to stronger align course contents to what is of perceived relevance to the demands of the employment market. From the perspective of students and staff, the benefit of these reforms is not self-evident at all.

A simple example of this is the reference to students as 'clients' or 'customers' of the university. This is not simply a terminology that appears increasingly used by university administrators but also exhibits a particular logic within which the services rendered by universities are framed. In a meeting with elected student representatives, for example, the VC explained the limits of student representatives' roles through an analogy to a grocery store, stating that as a customer in a grocery store, one is not in a position to

demand a change to the price tags of the goods displayed on the shelves. Such statements, and the logic behind it, might be self-evident truisms to university administrators and the contemporary crop of policy-makers and political advisors in higher education sectors. Among students, however, the analogy drawn to them as 'clients' or 'customers' of the institution appears outrageous and scandalous. Students often retold among themselves how inappropriate they found such rhetoric and its underlying logic. It does not correlate with their sense of students as being at the heart of the purpose of the institution, as stakeholders of an academic community of learning that prepares them for professional leadership roles to serve their country, rather than as customers to a business that derives its profit from them.

Part of the problem of the tensions resulting from these mismatching perspectives, I suggest, is the lack of mutual awareness about these perspectives, and the sensibilities underlying them as differing in the first place. This not only holds for university administrators who do not get tired of repeating these statements that they regard as truisms, without even seeming to anticipate that these might be contentious statements that feed antagonistic reactions. Students equally seem unaware, at the same time, that what they are presented with is hardly just a personal trait of approach by their current VC, but that these contests over the role and meaning of being student at a public university are taking place at universities elsewhere too in the contemporary world that is swept by new wisdoms of higher education management. Students did not seem to notice, for example, that in the same year Sydney University in nearby Australia went on strike for taking issue with similar rhetoric and logic applied there (Riemer 2013).

This holds similarly for staff at the university. In informal staff discussion, many academic staff members voice their perception that a public university should be concentrating on its function as a service-providing institution and not become a business-oriented institution, less so when it comes to generating revenue from within its own operations, such as through student mess catering or its bookshop and print shop. Yet, staff also seem often inclined to attribute these developments more exclusively to the person of the VC rather than broader processes that have a larger trajectory and wider reach not just at the University of Goroka, or in PNG for that matter. To the contrary, rather than seeing the VC's approach at least partly within larger processes, at times the conviction is expressed that if the government was aware about the extent the university appeared to be turned into a business-oriented institution, and the scale of internal revenue recycling (for example by compelling academic

divisions to source their stationery needs through the university bookshop at higher prices than competitors in Goroka town), it would not support such moves by a public institution.

It is at this point where the reaction and interpretation to these processes appear to take a specific form that may differ from those elsewhere, or at least in relation to the, for me personally, more familiar frames these issues are placed into in Ireland or Germany, for example. What I suggest is not that interpretation differs by any relative lack of awareness about these general directions of corporatisation and decreasing shares of public funding that universities are allocated by governments. Rather, what is different in this case is that students, and some staff members, allege that the increased extraction of monies from different university actors serves the direct personal gain of university administrators themselves – rather than, say, being a misguided policy approach that needs to be resisted. It is the suspicion that the increase in tuition and other fees, and the profits of the university's business ventures, illegitimately and illegally end up in university administrators' own pockets. This is where the unspecified allegations of corruption come from. These allegations are fuelled by the dual experience of being charged higher fees year by year, while at the same time failing to see their higher financial contributions materialising in an improved educational experience. The suspicion this raises is that the math of what students give and what they receive at the institution is distorted for their input being branched off for the conspicuous consumption of university administrators.

These sentiments are strengthened through other experiences of students in relation to university managers that reinforce the suspicion and interpretation of corruption at play. For one this is the perceived distance of the VC and other university managers. In a context where personal recognition is often considered as awarded through mutual relating or interaction between persons (compare Street 2014), the VC appears aloof and non-cognisant of other actors at the university. This again is differently perceived based on the perspective of differently positioned actors. The VC and other university staff in administrative positions at times point out to students that they see more of their VC than students at other universities internationally usually do. For students, however, the relative distance of someone passing by quietly and obviously preoccupied by other matters instead of advancing some personal recognition through a greeting or similar reinforces suspicions about what may lie behind a perceived avoidance of relating. In this case, personal styles of managers do play a role for students' perception, even if

more in relation to social sensibilities than regarding formal conduct in administrative affairs. What may need to be differentiated here is, on one hand, corruption as a potentially systemic issue in PNG's national bureaucracy, as for example pointed out by Thomas Webster, then director of PNG's National Research Institute, in an address at the university's annual graduation ceremony in 2011 (Webster 2011). On the other hand, 'corruption' has become a general cultural theme in PNG, where accusations of corruption among people relating to each other can be, as Martin puts is, more about contested 'moral legitimacy' than about 'actual legal crimes' (2013:141). This may apply also for Street's analysis of nurses' strikes at the Madang hospital (2014).

There are further elements in the perceived relation of the management vis-à-vis students and staff that are reinforcing suspicions of corruption. As hinted earlier, students allege that the VC's management style has been 'dictatorial' by suppressing students' voicing issues of their concern, or by threatening elected student leaders that they would face consequences if overstepping their mandate by organising strikes and politically motivated disruptions to university operations. A specific issue of contention among students in 2013, for example, has been a pledge that students were made to sign as part of the registration formalities for studies at the university, which stated, among other points under the heading 'I will NOT':

> 'Participate in <u>any activity</u> that will compromise the university and its activities in safe-guarding and maintaining my being a student of the University of Goroka and bring the name of the University of Goroka into disrepute. More than ever, I agree that I will not endorse nor participate in the activity/ies if any of these have not been sanctioned by the Authority of the University (Authority can mean Head of Department, Dean of Faculty/School, Director, Manager, Bursar, Pro Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Chancellor or University of Goroka Council).'

Students perceived this pledge as a questionable mechanism of suppressing their rights to protest. This pledge to be signed further included the statement that a mere allegation to be in breach of the pledge would lead to suspension from the University, and, if found guilty, leading to be expelled and forfeiting fee payments made to the university. Discontent with this pledge figured prominently among the grievances retold among students in 2013.

Here again, there are two different perspectives at play, mutual awareness about which do not seem sufficiently apparent to their respective bearers. On one hand, students perceive themselves to be denied their constitutional rights as PNG citizens and their

rights as students to take up matters of concern. On the other hand, the university management struggles to find ways to prevent disruptions to university operations that circumvent established procedure, and that moreover overwhelmingly appear to revolve around parochial and personal politics, or political ambitions that have little to do with the university. Both of these perspectives are highly cogent in their own right. The problem appears to be in the lack of their mutual articulation, or indeed in the failure of recognising, acknowledging, or even establishing meaningful avenues of communication about these concerns towards their mutual appreciation and integration. To make this clearer, I will turn in some more detail to the notion of 'politics' that the university management is eager to suppress.

Everything is Politics

The university as an institution primarily enables careers and personal trajectories based on educational certificates and degrees that students obtain, and by providing employment to academics and others that facilitate the university to advance its mandate and mission. There is a constant concern by different actors, however, that the institutional context of the university could be misused to pursue other career paths and trajectories for obtaining status and wealth. Students allege, as pointed out above, that university administrators may be placing more attention to see the institution as an illegitimate business venture for their own profit rather than their mandated role of ensuring that the institution provides the best possible education. Such perception may also derive from experiences or stories of petty corruption at the institution, in relation to academic and administrative staff, or in other institutional contexts in PNG. As hinted above, 'corruption' presents a common cultural theme in PNG. At the University of Goroka and other state universities, this translates in rumoured irregularities in relation to initial university admission, the allocation of dormitory rooms, or the adjustment of assessment scores and course grades, sometimes couched in the language of little acts of help and support among wantoks.[52] University administrators, on the other hand, are constantly concerned about the possibility of students or staff making the institution and its processes a platform for politics towards their own advancement in political terms, as in preparing their candidature in national election cycles through student mobilisation and newspaper headlines about leading a strike against corruption,

[52] A staff member of UPNG relayed to me the perception that the pressure placed on staff to admit children of powerful national figures to UPNG, who have missed out in usual procedures of selection, is misnamed as based on the 'wantok system' as in fact driven by blunt personal threat and intimidation.

such as detailed in the previous chapter, instead of advancing through education or professional service, in the case of students and staff respectively.

As already outlined above, students are sometimes inclined to perceive the actions and pronouncements (or lack thereof) of university managers as inappropriately suggesting that they might be more interested in illegitimately gained personal riches than the fate of the institution. University managers might be either unaware of or dismiss such perception as misplaced allegations about their mandated performance of duty. Analogous to these doubts that students harbour about university managers, the latter in turn appear to be suspicious that issues raised by students (or staff) may not be based on actual issues of concern but are instead vehicles for advancing personal political ambitions through the challenge of institutional authority so as to acquire renown. This relates as much to student leaders vocally raising issues affecting their studies or welfare at university, as it relates to staff raising issues of working conditions. Interlocutors assert that Papua New Guineans love to 'play politics', and that at institutions such as the University of Goroka, 'everything' is politics. For many Papua New Guineans, corruption and politics appear omnipresent in institutional life, at least as a concern to be watchful about. Against the background of shared ideal that the university should be about facilitating education in the best possible way, different actors remain suspicious that other actors have other ends in mind. As much as any increase in fees for students, for example, may then be interpreted as motivated by corruption, similarly, any voicing of concern by students about the experience of education or their welfare on campus is feared to be about politics for its own sake rather than to raise a legitimate issue. These mutual suspicions are tightened into stalemate in such strikes: students' stated reason to strike is to fight corruption by the university management; the university managements' response, in turn, is to urge students not to play politics, but to take grievances through established formal channels, and otherwise focus on their education that suffers in times of a strike.

Thus, the stalemate acts to heighten each other's suspicions. For the university management to not even directly respond to the allegations of corruption other than categorically denying these allegations in a way that is as unspecific as the allegations raised against them in the first place, seems to harden students' suspicion about corruption. Students' disengagement from dialogue about their allegations or grievances in this regard vis-à-vis a university management that does not seem to take students seriously, in turn, only hardens the university managements' stance that student leaders

are playing politics towards other outcomes than seeking to have actual issues addressed.

Playing politics is usually related to personal politics. It is done by actors wishing to achieve status and power for themselves, and it is often directed against persons rather than issues. The repeated strikes at the University of Goroka appeared thus clearly as driven by students that wished to advance their own political standing based on a personal campaign against the VC of the institution. Such reading, as I suggest in the previous chapter, may provide a major frame of action for student leaders. However, for the majority of students, such indirect dismissal of the issues rhetorically addressed through a strike, or vocally voiced student grievances otherwise, reinforces the sense that university managers are only interested in their own gain without showing concern for students' grievances. The suspicion by the university management that student leaders are primarily motivated to advance their personal interests may not be inaccurate, but the outright dismissal of students' protest thus only hardens the frustrations of students at large. On the losing end are thus always the majority of students. When their issues are actually taken up, then often by student leaders who have their own political ambitions ranked higher than to have students' grievances addressed. This is manifest, for example, in strikes that appear to prepare for student leaders' national election campaigns by focusing on maximum antagonistic demands that are unlikely to be achieved, rather than addressing specific issues affecting the university in the first instance.

What remains is a generalised suspicion about actors raising issues or becoming politically active for their own interests rather than actually improving anyone's situation. This situation is accompanied by a perpetually increasing frustration of students who are not taken seriously when raising issues of concern for exactly that reason. Students thus lament the lack of meaningful consultation and participation in institutional decision-making processes by being dismissed as incapable to be effectively contributing to it.

Lack of Recognition and its Backfiring

The above analysis pits the university management against individual students and staff members that deliberately employ political means to advance their own political ambitions. There is little reason to dismiss this perception as inaccurate, and the more I

got to know staff members and participated in university meetings that I was allowed to observe, the more I understood the frustration of university actors that issues raised and sides taken in meetings seemed often informed more through political manoeuvring than other considerations, even if never openly presented as such.

The energy exerted through such political struggles between multiple institutional actors, however, leaves other actors, namely the majority of the student body, in a state of perpetual frustration. Students have little means to voice concern or to seek improving their conditions. It takes courage to voice concerns openly in an environment that easily denounces such action as potential politicking. In the formal avenues that students are encouraged to use to address grievances, students are hardly taken seriously and shown their place at the bottom of the institutional hierarchy, further heightening frustration. This in turn leads to elected student representatives to certain committees not even showing up after initial disillusions.

This became apparent for example in the student disciplinary committee, to which students found in breach of university regulations are subjected to explain themselves before a decision about sanctions against them is made. In the first student disciplinary committee proceedings of 2013, the student representative appeared visibly uncomfortable as witness to the interrogation of students about their reported misdoings. He seemed further alienated through the discussion among disciplinary committee members about the sanctions to be meted out to students following their interrogation and evaluating their cases, often involving the suspension from studies for one or two years. This context must appear intimidating for a student representative, and the agreement about sanctions between a well-rehearsed team of committee members does not provide a welcoming environment for a student representative seeking to raise a point in relation to proceedings. The student representative quickly realised that he could not be of any help to students in this setting and spared himself the discomfort of attending future meetings. Other committee members got used to this absence, and quickly stopped wondering about the non-attendance of the student representative to the committee meetings. When I asked him about his non-attendance personally, he told me that he felt there was no point in him attending these meetings, and that he felt he was not of any help to students trying to avert sanctions for their wrongdoing in the setting of these meetings.

The scenario is a more general one in relation to student representation to various committees and university bodies. Students are alienated through the conduct and proceedings of university meetings in which their perspective is given little space and where they are expected not to interfere with the proceedings or to delay the advancing of agenda items. Students are neither particularly welcomed nor mentored about their roles in these meetings. In other words, there are huge barriers for the student representatives to navigate these meetings and to contribute to them, including a tacit understanding that critical perspectives in relation to agenda items are highly unwelcome. While student participation in these meetings is supposed to be an important aspect and primary avenue for student representatives to have an impact, effectively students were hardly able to leave any mark on the meetings I attended. To the contrary, in many meetings students were not present, and I suspect this was often due to not even having been made aware of the meeting to take place at all.

It is an art in itself to speak in these meetings in an effective way. A speaker has to carefully gauge his alignment to others present and seek their approval by demonstrating both a grasp of the discussion and matters at hand, and by alluding to a shared set of principles or concerns about these. Only by creating this basis in the first place may a speaker then proceed in making a point that shifts the emphasis or adds additional concerns, always remaining careful thereby not to antagonise others present, and for being positively received towards making a hoped impact. Few of the student representatives, however, have the confidence and experience to engage in this kind of discussion effectively, or learn their ways quickly enough to participate in these meetings meaningfully in representing the interest of students. This perceived futility of student representation in university meetings is a shared perspective among students, staff, and the university management. Students do not see how to advance their interests or concerns through such meetings effectively. Staff and management, on the other hand, at times allude to the fact that student representatives are hardly present or take the word in meetings. They thus either make a point that student representatives fail their students, missing the chances and avenues to voice their concerns where appropriate, or that student representatives themselves are not prepared enough for these settings based on a misguided idea of what student politics are about, i.e. that student politics would be about advancing one's own standing vis-à-vis political ambitions rather than a primary concern for student issues for which a student representative takes responsibility for making them heard.

The mismatch between the avenues provided for student representation, and the lack of actual possibilities to make an impact in these avenues, creates resentment and frustration. Moreover, it normalises a sense among students and student leaders that these meetings and formal processes of the university are not the avenues to target for making an impact in addressing students' concerns. As such, a strategy of more openly antagonistic politics that disrupt university operations appears as the only remaining option to have students' concerns taken seriously and actually dealt with in a favourable manner.

The observations I made in 2013 were also part of a longer trajectory. For example, as detailed in the first chapter of this section, following the prolonged student strike in 2010, the university management reformed the constitution of the Student Representative Council into a Student Voice Council, in which students were then elected as members to specific committees rather than as ex-officio members as provincial student association presidents, besides an elected set of executives. To curb what was seen as a misuse of the student council for an antagonistic style of politics against the university management, for the political ambitions of a set of students, the constitution of the new Student Voice Council circumscribed and monitored the activities of the council much more rigidly, including its funding to be contingent of meeting minutes forwarded to the university management and approval of specific releases of student council funds following evaluation thereupon. It also limited students' ability to conduct student forums, limiting these at two per year following prior approval for specific purposes relating to student welfare or important national political issues.

The effect achieved through this reform of student representation was the opposite than what was expected. Students were further antagonised through these reforms as it limited their ability to voice concerns and seek improvements to their welfare and study conditions even more. Limiting students' possibilities to voice issues to their participation in formal meetings seemed to effectively take the voice of students away altogether, given the experiences students had with such meetings outlined above. In the eyes of students, it appeared a strategy to sink their voice and participation in university affairs altogether, in contrast to the university management's aim to re-channel students' activity and voice to the meetings where they mattered most in terms of the procedural operation of the institution.

Paradoxically, and in complete opposite direction of the intended, the reform of the student council thus was not improving students' participation in the committees and meetings that addressed their welfare and experience of university and campus life. To the contrary, it made students feel even more barred from voicing their concerns and issues affecting them. The result was detailed through my description of the strike in 2013. For the first time in the history of student protests in PNG, an alternative set of non-elected students led a strike to reclaim the voice of students that they alleged was muted through the reformed student representation. The elected student representation was thus effectively side-lined through a different set of students, declaring it for compromised and through its constitutional circumscriptions ineffective to represent students. Thus, what was an attempt to limit the inherent antagonism of student politics against the management, led to novel heights of it through a student strike that was entirely disregarding any formality or procedure for having student issues addressed.

Recognition and Leadership

From the perspective of students, the firm antagonistic stance by student leaders is what constitutes them as effective leaders. Leaders prove their calibre and leadership qualities by the courage and ability to stand up against authority and the institutional hierarchy, to be undeterred by legal or procedural threats against them, and by the charismatic ease that characterises their rejection of statements by the university management as flawed and self-serving attempts to evade accountability and change. It is these aspects that signals students that they are indeed effectively represented.

There is one more point, however, that favours these antagonistic student politics over other forms of protest or articulating demands. In students' experience, they do in fact harbour the best chance that at least some of their grievances are addressed. As outlined above, student leaders had no success with the major demands that they proclaimed to advance through the strike. Still, some specific grievances of students were addressed. These were successes that were possible because the respective Minister was effectively lobbied to demand these changes to be done by the university council. For example, the Minister agreed with students that the elevation from 25% to 30% in the deduction fee for recovering excess fees from university accounts were excessive, and this elevation has subsequently been reversed by the university management. In 2010, achievements were more substantial, even if student leaders' central demands were not met either, and despite then leading into a stronger circumscription of students' political activity. In

2015, however, another set of students leading a similar strike were eventually successful in their demand to the government to dismiss the university management and to disband the university council (Syndicus 2015).

Evaluating the effectiveness of strikes from the perspective of students, to stage a prolonged strike through a markedly antagonistic frame of politics remains the most effective way to address student issues and to have their demands eventually met. While the university management seems acutely aware of this, and thus appears to take an equally antagonistic stance against students in categorically refuting to bow to such strike politics that drive decision-making away from the procedural processes of the institution, government politicians are repeatedly and successfully lobbied by student leaders to intervene in university affairs. From the perspective of students, strikes lead to serving (partial) justice of having some of their demands met and the hegemonic authority of the institutional hierarchy of the university kept in check by forcing it to respond favourably to at least some student demands. It thus reinforces the expectations that while other procedural avenues that students are supposed to voice their concerns in are consistently failing, a disruptive strike that is antagonistically disengaging vis-à-vis the university management promises more success.

What may be at the heart of the matter is a lack of recognition by the hierarchy and authorities of the institution. It is such persistent misrecognition of students as institutional actors, further strengthened by the intent to limit student leaders' political ambitions, that creates the basis for students' grievances and frustration at university and vis-à-vis other university actors. It is this shared position of grievances that set the conditions for the mobilisation of students to strike, be that in relation to specific issues, or for the call that the VC step down for impersonating these frustrations and grievances of students through a particular leadership style that fosters these perceptions.

These experiences, on the one hand, foster specific approaches among students to get their grievances addressed – namely, strikes that student leaders often come to regard as a convenient platform towards personal ambitions to contest national elections. The way these student strikes are conducted and legitimised among students, on the other hand, also points to ideologies of leadership more broadly in PNG today. There are two elements that I want to stress specifically, which I already discussed in more detail in the previous chapter. One element is the notion that effective leadership becomes manifest and demonstrated through forms of collective mobilisation in antagonism to

other actors or entities. The achievement of effective leadership is then indicated through the successful establishment and differentiation of a collective entity in antagonism to another. The other element that stands out is the role of violent threat and intimidation. This is an element that has become normalised in student strikes in PNG, without significantly diminishing student leaders perceived legitimacy among students. This seems paralleled by an increasingly normalised application of violent threat and actual violence in other aspects of life in PNG today, including elections, vigilante violence tied to accusations of witchcraft and sorcery, and police violence.

On the other side, university administrators place stronger emphasis on the legitimacy of their leadership based on their office of authority. What bestows their leadership with legitimacy is the bureaucratic basis of their authority in the institutional hierarchy. For them, students' perception of how they relate to students as persons is not irrelevant but does not constitute a reasonable ground to have their authority questioned. This appears to be a similar difference in perspective to the ways in which Thomas and Mary described the change of how status is achieved in the village (Chapters One and Five): from the performance in the village based on direct involvement and participation among the community on a continuous basis, to gaining status through employment in town that may carry a perception that those in employment away from the village tend to socially isolate themselves more from daily village affairs. Whereas the relations between students who become wage earners and their rural relatives are subject to constant negotiation and manipulation, the relations between students and university administrators are not – or rather, their negotiation is categorically refuted by university administrators, which from the perspective of students only heightens the impression of (moral) corruption.

What these styles of leadership and the ideologies about their legitimacy also seem to mirror rather closely are Weber's (2013[1956]) types of authority. Students leaders, on one hand, display charismatic leadership, that builds on their capacity to sway student audiences through performative style and popular demands. University administrators, on the other hand, ground their authority and legitimacy for leadership based on bureaucratic principles and their rational execution. Neither of these sides mobilises 'traditional' grounds of leadership in a significant way – Weber's third ideal type of authority – although these form an implicit backbone to either side's perception and representation of the other, even if in less conclusive ways. Students, for example, proclaim that their action and demand for recognition is based on 'Melanesian' values

and sensibilities of mutual relating, and allege that the VC violates such norms by appearing aloof and unwilling to directly engage with students. The university administration in turn derogatively alleges that students engage in a kind of 'bush' politics, which characterises students not only as stuck in past ways associated with the 'bush' in contrast to urban life, but also as being ignorant about the functioning of 'modern' institutions. The university administration would not label this 'traditional' though. Some would rather remark that the force and threat of a student strike combined with the disregard for authority is a new phenomenon that they do not associate with what they regard as 'traditional'. While a positive casting of traditional values is often also indicated by reference to the 'Melanesian Way', what represents the 'traditional' and the 'modern' in PNG today in this context, remains contested.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have taken a wider angle in describing the and analysing the institutional politics in which the student strike detailed in previous chapters of this section took place. This has allowed me to dissect in more detail the basis of contemporary student politics in PNG and the ideologies of leadership that underlie student leaders' success in student mobilisation and university administrators' own approach to leadership and authority. I have illustrated how their respective leadership derives legitimacy on different grounds, both of which are not mutually recognised by antagonised actors to an extent that would allow resolution or preventing the stand-off through prolonged student strikes in the first place.

In the current context, there seems little else for students to do than to strike occasionally to raise their issues. It is still another matter that besides some minimal short-term gains and general publicity about grievances of students at universities, in the longer term these strikes do not work in students' favour. I suggest this to be the case for two reasons. The first is that successive strikes and antagonistic approaches to university politics lead to a gradual diminishment of powers by student representation and channels through which students can meaningfully partake in institutional decision-making, as opening up processes of institutional decision-making for students is by the university management perceived as inviting unnecessary trouble rather than meaningful engagement by students. In this regard strikes have the opposite effect of what students wish for: instead of leading to increased recognition of students and their grievances at university, from the perspective of the university management the practice

of politics and conduct of strikes seem to indicate that students are unprepared to productively contribute to institutional processes of decision-making, thus further diminishing their recognition as institutional agents.

The other reason for which I suggest that the kind of student strikes observed at the University of Goroka do not favour students in the long term relates to their specific positioning within the national political arena and political agendas, which also marks observed strikes at the University of Goroka as different from recent strikes at UPNG and Unitech. Student strikes at the University of Goroka, for example, sought to align themselves with agents in the national government while acting in specific antagonism to the university management. This differs from many student strikes at UPNG and Unitech that are often characterised by their primary antagonism to the government. The repeated student strikes at the University of Goroka calling for government intervention to dismiss its management seemed to be reflected in the legislative agenda by the national government to vest more power in the Minister for Higher Education for directly intervening at universities, for example, by dismissing VCs directly and dissolving governing councils. Such powers became enshrined in the Universities Act of 2014, whereas previously possibilities for direct interference at universities by the government were more limited and such powers more exclusively concentrated at university governing councils. Students leaders at the University of Goroka demanded exactly such direct government intervention to dismiss their VC. In this context, little critical public discussion and assessment took place whether vesting stronger powers with politicians at the expense of the governing autonomy of public universities in PNG would work in favour of universities' or students' long-term interests.

In students' personal pathways and life-courses, to enter university is a significant step in their own social differentiation from kin and PNG general populace at large. They have made it, in a way, and common rhetoric at universities in PNG reinforces this self-understanding of students through repeated reminders that they constitute the future leaders and elite of the country. The pride and distinction of status that students experience upon entering university, however, stands in no relation to the lack of recognition and increasing frustration that students' quickly come to experience at university. What they feel to be offered at university stands in contrast to the recognition they gain among peers and kin, and they feel let down by both the perceived quality of university education and learning infrastructure offered, and the perceived lack of recognition as persons who are rhetorically groomed as the key to the nation's

future development by institutional authorities who appear preoccupied with other matters or interests. It is in this context that student strikes restore students' faith in themselves as those at the helm of the future of the nation – which they are rhetorically groomed to be so consistently – by seeking change to the ways the institution and the country at large are operated by older generations of institutional leadership who they perceive to be failing their mandate or not doing enough to steer the institution and the country in the right direction.

It is in such instances that students unite behind the idea of the nation, its institutions and future. In student strikes and such institutional conflicts, the divisions and social constellations along regional and provincial lines that are subject to ongoing construction through provincial cultural identities are transcended and bring about a different collectivity representing an internally united nation. It may not be what university administrators and other political actors have in mind when reminding students that they are at a national institution where they should leave parochial politicking based on provincial and regional identifications behind and to direct their focus to the development of the nation as a united entity. Indeed, I suggest that it is these instances such as student strikes and similar institutional conflicts and forms of mobilisation, that through their pattern across the country make visible the consolidation of a national culture, built on shared experiences, imageries, ideologies and practices, that shape the nation and 'modernity' in PNG.

Concluding Remarks

In this thesis, I have explored some realms of experience for students and staff attending universities in PNG today. On one hand, I have focused on relations of students and staff to their kin and personal networks, and how these relations are perceived to be changing based on processes of social stratification and differentiation that university students and staff are, or have been, subject to in their career. I have further analysed the differences in practices of reciprocity and exchange that become manifest in these relations for people associating themselves with different parts of PNG, and how such differences become reified as part of provincial and regional cultural identities. On the other hand, I have described and analysed student politics and explored its culmination in student strikes. I have analysed student strikes as means for some students to shortcut their career by intending to propel themselves into the national political arena to become a Member of Parliament rather than to trot the path of public service employment as teacher that is common for graduates from the University of Goroka. I have, in a further step, also placed student politics and strikes in a broader context to demonstrate how student strikes that bring universities to a halt appear to be the only way how students can bring themselves in a position to be heard and their issued be noted in PNG today – irrespective of whether they manage to achieve meaningful change from their perspective or not. In this regard, I suggest understanding student strikes that take antagonistic positions to university managements (or the government at other times) as both ambitions for and contests about styles of leadership in PNG today.

What these instances exhibit, I suggest, are not only specific and singular manifestations of a practice of politics and ideologies of leadership, on one hand, or the reification or specific practices of reciprocity and exchange as part of cultural identities, on the other hand. They also amount to expressions of a veritable national culture that has been taking shape in PNG over the last decades. This does neither diminishes PNG's diversity nor does it imply that PNG is subject to some general process of cultural homogenisation. It does, however, indicate the emergence of a national realm of shared experience and understanding that becomes especially manifest in urban institutions such as universities – indeed, one could say that universities, and the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby in particular, are the birthplace of the formation of such a national culture. The ways in which recognition is sought through antagonistic strikes in a top-down bureaucracy, as Street (2014) also exemplifies for the Madang hospital, the way collectivities are brought about for social action, as Reed (2003)

illustrates for the Bomana prison outside Port Moresby, and the way the relations to relatives are reflected on in these institutions in different parts of the country, appear to resonate across urban institutions in PNG today, and bring into view commonly intelligible frames of thought and action that become normalised or at times even specifically marked as Papua New Guinean. I have thus described and analysed phenomena that belong, I suggest, to a field of national culture, as Foster (2002) and Golub (2014:160-207), but also Hirsch (1990) have written about through different angles. While such national culture of course fundamentally builds on diverse Melanesian ideas and sensibilities, in this thesis I have tried to understand these ethnographic observations in their own right, and by being attentive to other urban institutional contexts, rather than seeking to trace and establish the continuities with precedents in rural ethnography, for example in terms of ideologies surrounding leadership or politics. This is different in my analysis of different practices of exchange and reciprocity in kin relations, where I do establish links to localities. Even in this instance, however, my perspective is especially meant to illustrate how such reification of cultural identities is constitutive of a national realm in PNG as such, that crystallises in the urban and institutional contexts in which people are pressed to reflect on relations in certain ways.

An underlying current throughout this thesis is how students and staff navigate different processes of social differentiation and stratification vis-à-vis kin and other institutional agents, which is inherent to obtaining a university education, working as an urban wage earner in PNG, or in institutional hierarchies. This creates new forms of inequality that are the subject of specific forms of reflection, social negotiation and evaluation (Martin 2013, Rasmussen 2015). Gewertz & Errington, for example, describe reflections they document among an emerging affluent class in PNG as amounting to an 'epistemological subordination of those leading traditional lives' (1999:122) who are thus made 'ontologically inferior' (141). On the surface, this resonates with my observations at the University of Goroka and among urban wage earners more broadly. A rhetoric on conceptions of the urban modern and entrepreneurial self with focus on nuclear family life, individual responsibility, and personal discipline, for example, which is placed in contrast to the alleged mindset and attitudes of rural dwellers that are used to rely on others (resonating with Martin's (2013) distinction between values of 'personal independence' versus 'reciprocal interdependence') featured frequently in the reflections of my interlocutors and public discourse at the university.

One can, however, hardly speak of university students and staff as a clearly established and differentiated class that adopts a dismissive narrative of kinsfolk or rural Papua New Guineans living a traditional life, as Gewertz & Errington's interlocutors do (1999). University students, instead, are at the beginning of a journey that may lead to similar processes of differentiation – and, as Mannheim suggested earlier (1936), it is the social position people have that influences the perspective and ideologies they hold about social constellations. While wary of the prospect of the demands of kinsfolk once they become wage-earning professionals, students' reflections about less privileged kin are more benevolent and less disparaging in general. Students at the university, for example, also depend on kin for financing their university studies. While thinking about the expectations placed on them and the difficulty to fulfil them once they earn a wage, they are hardly applying an 'epistemological subordination', as Gewertz and Errington describe, when talking about their kinsfolk. Most of the students at the University of Goroka will come to constitute the emerging middle class struggling to make ends meet that John Cox (2014) calls attention to. In this thesis, I have placed emphasis on the reflexive manoeuvring of university students as they pursue tertiary education with the prospect to be earning a regular income that will set them apart from kin, rather than corresponding to an already established stratum of affluence and privilege.

Akin to changing forms of sociality emerging with increasing social stratification, in which tensions between different ways of relating are actively negotiated, the practice of 'politics', and what it means to demonstrate effective leadership, are similarly contested between different subject positions at university. Stronger resonating with Gewertz & Errington's 'epistemological subordination', university managers dismiss students' protesting through collective mobilisation in antagonism to the university management as based on past ways that allegedly need to be abandoned. Instead, university managers insist that appropriate leadership is based on rule-adherence and personal responsibility, which is presented as 'reasonable', in contrast to the form of students' protests that is dismissed as based on collective force through a mix of stirring emotions and intimidation, which allegedly prevents individual reasoning and responsible decision-making among students. Students, however, proclaim different sensibilities of appropriate leadership, which they impute university managers to be failing at. Students place stronger emphasis on forms of relating that properly recognise and acknowledge them as agents rather than making them feel to be shielded off through bureaucratic procedures. This can be seen as analogous to claims of rural kinsfolk to urban wage earners, with the former seeking recognition and support of their

more affluent and privileged kin while often experiencing to become a secondary concern for their urban kin who insist that their wage is locked into expenses for urban survival.

Interestingly, these differences in perspectives are not between generations here. it is instead often the older generation that stands for ideas of modern urban life, personal independence from kin, procedural bureaucracy and power vested in position of formal bureaucratic authority. PNG is subject to rapid social change between generations. The contests over ways of relating and leadership authority described here, however, seem to play out more specifically as a function of social stratification. To earn a wage in urban employment, for example, presents a fundamental pathway towards changing perspectives on social relations and leadership authority. This becomes evident also in the rhetoric of university staff who emphasise that students need to learn how to conduct themselves in the urban world of professional wage-earners, in which they need to take responsibility and make decisions for themselves, independently from rural kin who have a different understanding of life and a different set of expectations directed at them.

Generational change, in this regard, cannot be equated with a generic category of social change that embraces putatively global forms of modernity at the expense of culturally different or specific forms and sensibilities of relating and the shaping of social hierarchies. To the contrary, as new generations of PNG professionals replace a generation of urban wage earners and senior staff who learned to run bureaucratic institutions under Australian colonialism and expatriate mentors, one may expect that specific sensibilities of relating to others, including bureaucratic hierarchies, in PNG institutions may become increasingly informed through a consolidating PNG national culture. This may, on one hand, resemble common aspects of a global modernity of a middle-class consumer culture, as Foster (2002) describes. On the other hand, however, such a process of replacing the first generation of post-colonial elites through a different generation of emerging ‘Big Shots’ (Martin 2013), may also make manifest more specific Papua New Guinean modes of relating, including institutional politics and leadership, drawing on elements of PNG’s cultural heritage and its contemporary transformations into a unique national culture. As PNG anthropologist Joseph Mangi put it to me: culture is tenacious, it may shift the forms in the way it manifests, but it is here to stay, it will not simply be replaced by a different way of life.

What I intended to demonstrate through this thesis then, is how social change in PNG today is fundamentally occurring and driven through social stratification and other forms of differentiation pertinent to participation in modern institutional forms of education, politics, and leadership. These institutional forms change the basis for relating between kin and persons in PNG, and thus, I suggest, appear to have a more fundamental immediate impact in terms of driving social change than the process of generational change that is taken to represent and respond to broader socio-economic and technological changes in society. This becomes illustrated, for example, through the ways how those earning a wage in urban areas regard their less privileged kin, who have yet to learn about putatively modern forms of being and relating. This is comparably expressed in university administrators' rhetoric on students who still need to learn about proceduralism and professional conduct in modern institutions.

This conclusion is thus also a nod to the kind of Melanesianist ethnography that I have deliberately not relied on directly throughout this thesis, which posits a critique to the common Euro-American notion of 'society' and 'individuals' as co-constituting the structural composure and the defining source of tension of human social existence, by instead shifting focus to the relation between social entities however defined (or only through such relations objectified as 'individual', 'collective', 'society', etc.) (M. Strathern 1988, Wagner 1967, 1974, cf. Josephides 1991). The observations and analysis advanced through this thesis thus contribute to question the common conceptualisation of social change and continuity. Here, I guard against the idea that an entity such as 'society' simply changes vis-à-vis its complex and changing context (of capitalism, socio-political and economic structures, etc.), through continuous processes of social reproduction and generational change. Rather, I suggest that an ethnographic exploration of social change needs to pay attention to how the mode of relating between persons in itself becomes reconfigured through processes of social differentiation and stratification. From an ethnographic perspective, this is what drives social change from within the social fabric, and at times in counter-intuitive direction, as when older generations of town-dwelling relatives or university administrators tell younger generations or students in tertiary education to leave behind their ways to become 'modern'.

Needless to say, what constitutes the 'modern' in the terms referenced here is in the eye of the beholder. I have above attributed the 'modern' to the rhetoric and ideas of stratified urban wage earners and university administrators, who associate the modern

with common global forms of urban middle-class life-style and consumer culture or bureaucratic governance, for example. One could draw out other elements, certainly, that would recognise young university students as 'modern' in contrast to more conservative older generations of university administrators. The use of the attribute 'modern' here may be as varied in contextual application as is '*kastom*' and what constitutes it in PNG today (Martin 2013). In a broader scheme, then, 'modernity' in PNG cannot be equated with what its post-colonial and urban elite regards as 'modern'. Rather, I suggest, PNG's younger generations create their own markers of modernity (cf. Sahlins 1992, Gaonkar 1999). These may find expression in PNG's consolidating national culture, as in, for example, 'modern' leadership a la 'Big Shot', more aloof and of more lasting differentiation than the traditional figure of the 'Big Man' whose status and prestige as figure of authority notionally depended stronger on continuous emphases on reciprocal relations. Such changes are visible as well in student strikes and national politics, where violent intimidation and coercion becomes a characteristic and normalised feature.

This is not meant to provide a decidedly negative outlook on PNG's future. The point I wish to make is again more conciliatory dialogic than towards an antagonistic dialectic. Rather than clinging to certain ideals of the 'modern' as located in global homologies and applied to the country's heritage of post-colonial institutions, the way forward in shaping modern urban and institutional life in PNG may well benefit from actively designing institutional forms and processes in a way that correspond to common sensibilities and practices of relating in PNG rather than institutionally denigrating them. By seeking to understand and recognising the social and cultural sensibilities that are becoming visible in PNG's national culture, nation-building can become a deliberate project of more actively designing modern Papua New Guinean institutions in ways that work for PNG, rather than following generic global models that may instead exacerbate the tension between modes of relating that people experience in its institutions today (cf. Syndicus 2013).

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