

Those of you who come in with me now will receive a big piece of the pie. Those of you who delay, and commit yourselves later, will receive a smaller piece of the pie. Those of you who don't come in at all will receive---Good Government!--- Huey Long, ca.1934. ¹

Introduction

Nancy Sullivan

From 2005, Nancy Sullivan (ed.), *Governance Challenges for PNG and the Pacific Islands*, Madang: DWU Press, pp.1-35

Leave it to America's original bigman, the populist-tyrant, Huey Long, to capture the spirit of governance in Papua New Guinea. It appears that *good* governance is left for those who don't roll with the pork barrel. But it grows harder and harder to see how this happens. It may still be possible for elected officials to face the challenges of governance without planting their snout in the public trough, but there is no lack evidence to the contrary. The authors in this collection all argue for change, or more importantly, for the political will to effect it. But as they describe, there is no fine line to cross, no correct posture to assume that can mark one as observing *good* rather than faulty, weak, failing or *failed* governance. Is there a Pacific Islands way to define good governance? Or, do we apply a universal standard—and if so, what is that? Perhaps the questions are whether or not serving the local good must always undermine the greater good, or whether broadened loyalties can ever satisfy local needs. Governance is a balancing act at all levels, whether that be local level electoral politics or the global game of foreign relations. Holding the right objectives must mean more than mere pandering to them, and in developing countries the trick is made infinitely more difficult by the need to negotiate indigenous models of leadership.

This volume is a contribution to what is already a prolific debate on the subject of governance in Melanesia. Much of the discussion has been initiated by the scholars of the State Society and Governance in Melanesia Project at the Australian National University.² But there are other voices, as well. The Australian think-tank, The Centre for Independent Studies, entered the dialogue with the 2003 article by Susan Windybank and Mike Manning, 'Papua New Guinea on the Brink'³, and this has been followed by Helen Hughes' 2004 piece, "Can Papua New Guinea Come Back from the Brink?"⁴. ANU and UPNG also collaborated on a related discussion in their 2003 volume (edited by Kavanamur, Yala, and Clements) called *Building a Nation in Papua New Guinea: Views*

¹ From Christopher Hitchens, 1999, *No One Left to Lie To*, London: Verso, pp.17

² See, for example, SSGM publications listed below:

1996/1: Peter Larmour, *Research on Governance in Weak States in Melanesia*

1997/1: Sinclair Dinnen, *Law, Order and State in Papua New Guinea*

1997/5: Peter Larmour, *Corruption and Governance in the South Pacific*

1998/1: John Hagleam, *Traditional Leaders and Governance in Melanesia*

2000/2: Bronwen Douglas (ed), *Women and Governance from the Grassroots in Melanesia*

2000/3: Bronwen Douglas, *Weak States and Other Nationalisms: Emerging Melanesian Paradigms?*

2000/4: Philip Hughes, *Issues of Governance in Papua New Guinea: Building Roads and Bridges*

2002/2: Sinclair Dinnen, *Building Bridges: Law and Justice Reform in Papua New Guinea*.

³ In *Issue Analysis* No.30, 12 March.

⁴ Can Papua New Guinea Come Back From the Brink? *Issue Analysis* No 49 13 July 04, pp1-12.

*of the Post-Independence generation.*⁵ Here we offer the collected voices of SSGM scholars along with Papua New Guinean statesmen, civil servants, students, politicians, and scholars: a true mixture of subject and object, of governed and governors, Melanesians and observers. Didn't Dante say that the hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who in time of crisis remain neutral? This is our enlistment. Let this also be the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration between the SSGM and DWU on the challenges of good governance in PNG and Melanesia.

We could almost guarantee complexity to this volume by the variety of its contributors. Where else might you find the Charge d'Affaires for France, a PNG Major General, a Divine Word student and a Solomon Islands educator in the same volume? This is characteristic of collections from Melanesia in general, which tend to be pluralist and reflective of the region itself. In this case, the papers together have a certain flow to them. Starting from the widest perspective, foreign affairs, their subjects move progressively closer to the finite and local challenges of governance. This Introduction will describe each contribution in sequence, embedded in a discussion that also moves from the wide to the local the way a lens might rack focus. Along the way, discussants raise points on the nature of a 'failed' or 'weak' state, national electoral and parliamentary corruption, civil society, provincial government reform, education, the participation of women in government and the character of the modern bigman-politician in PNG. There are a number of recurrent themes, as readers will see, regarding leadership and accountability in the New World Order, and, not the least, regarding the trouble articulating ancestral identities with newly imagined communities.

Because good governance is based upon a democratic principal of *communitas*, challenges to it occur beyond the nation-state, within the global community. At this level the world often appears through the looking glass, as if a different set of rules apply. It appears to many to be a community where a handful of international finance institutions (IFI's) surround a bully pulpit of American foreign policy, dictating, indeed even defining 'good governance' to and *for* everyone else. The common complaint about this system is not so much its inequity, as the hypocrisy of mandating ideals that none of the big players themselves seem to follow.⁶ In fact, the current definitions of *good governance* can best be found in World Bank, IMF and WTO documents with respect to lender rather than donor states.⁷ Do multi-party elections take place? Is it a stable inflation-controlled economy? Is there financial transparency?

And yet, in reality, International relations are hardly governed at all. In the opinion of one scholar,

⁵ Canberra: Pandanus Books, ANU RSPAS.

⁶ See, for example, the Abid Ullah Jan Op-Ed piece in *Pakistan Times* 18.12.03: Jan's come-back to US accusations of Pakistan as the next failed state; ticking off all the symptoms of the phenomenon, Jan establishes that the US is indeed the biggest failed state of all.

⁷ As Peter Lamour, for example, explains, (1997:12): "The World Bank's definition of 'governance' includes public sector management, accountability, legal framework, and transparency. Ideas of transparency and the rule of law derive particularly from microeconomic concerns to insure the proper conditions for a freely competitive market. For development to take place, domestic and foreign investors need to know the rules and to be able to rely on their enforcement."

we have a system that might be called *global governance without global government*, one in which a few institutions—the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO—and a few players—the finance, commerce, and trade ministries, closely linked to certain financial and commercial interests—dominate the scene, but in which many of those affected by their decisions are left almost voiceless.⁸

The gravest threat to this system is said to come from *weak* or *failed* states, nations with *poor* governance records and unhealthy climates for foreign investment. Always liable to forge their own regional alliances, they are the cagier party members who threaten always to cross to the Opposition. For this reason, global governance strategies like structural adjustment programs and trade restriction policies are somewhat fraught with risk, and urgency. If the smaller states do not actually wield power, they can certainly inspire fear in these domineering allies and trade partners.

In the southern hemisphere, these ‘smaller’ states may also be less convinced of northern hemisphere domination. Like camera-heavy tourists in island villages (‘How they must envy us!’), it’s hard for some to imagine not being the epicenter of everything. China, Singapore, Japan and others have come started to feel and speak of the East Asian Century. Even the Asian Development Bank has acknowledged that there is more than one kind of capitalism, that the Asian economic miracle may come in various sociopolitical packages. Singaporean statesman Kishore Mahbubani tells us that the fulcrum of these overlord relations pivots around ‘the West and the Rest.’ In his now famous essay with the ironic title, “Can Asians Think?”⁹, he rails against this brand of triumphalism in the West, and the idea that the ‘Rest’ need be remade in its image.

In the more than 100 countries that are subject to the prescriptions of the IMF, World Bank and WTO, the definition of ‘good governance,’ as a state of compliance with a structural adjustment program (SAP), is not only unquestionably written in English, but it is also spoken in American. It is said that a ‘Washington Consensus’ between the IMF, the World Bank, and the US Treasury effectively determines policy for all developing countries served by the IMF-WB-WTO triumvirate¹⁰. The internationalization of Western macro-economic policy, and its recent incarnation as a form of laissez-faire fundamentalism,¹¹ transforms countries into open economic territories and places their very social, not to mention cultural, independence in question. “At no time in history has the ‘free’ market—operating in the world through the instruments of macro-economics—played such an important role in shaping the destiny of ‘sovereign’ nations,” says economist Michel Chossudovsky.¹²

In return, they offer boomerang aid packages, punishing structural adjustments and ‘beggar-they-neighbour’ trade policies, all of which have succeeded in keeping a

⁸ Stiglitz, J.E. 2003. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., pp21-22.

⁹ Mahbubani, K. The West and the Rest, In *Can Asians Think?* 1998, Singapore: Times Books International, pp37-56.

¹⁰ Stiglitz, *Op cit*.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 12-13.

¹² Chossudovsky, M. 1998, *The Globalisation of Poverty*. London: Zed books, p 37.

developing world less than developed. Beginning twenty years ago, the U.S. adopted a 'trade not aid' policy that emphasized the need for developing nations to promote free trade and foreign investment, and de-emphasized the responsibilities of the wealthy world in combating world poverty. As economic growth expanded, trade-not-aid and neo-liberal reforms became the dominant agendas of economic development agencies nationally and internationally, and as a result middle classes enlarged and millionaires were produced in several developing nations. The adoption of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, and the transformation of the GATT into the WTO, confirmed the ascendancy of this neo-liberal trade agenda. And yet free trade is a funny term. There is a distinct selectivity to the 'free trade' bias in the way industrialized nations call for removal of trade barriers and subsidies in areas *other* than those (such as textiles, apparel, or agricultural products) in which many developing nations are often competitive.¹³ Indeed as one WTO lawyer has recently pointed out, "Unfettered free trade seems to have become the only acceptable route to development."¹⁴

"Critics of globalization accuse the Western countries of hypocrisy," declares former Chief Economist for the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, "and the critics are right."

The Western countries have pushed poor nations to eliminate trade barriers, but kept up their own barriers, preventing developing countries from exporting their agricultural products and so depriving them of much-needed export income.¹⁵

And yet if it is no surprise that the world economy is dominated by the wealthiest countries, it may come as a jolt to know that the big international institutions are themselves dominated by the commercial elites of these dominant countries. At the IMF it is the Finance Ministers, Treasurers and Central Governors who hold sway; and at the WTO it is the Trade Ministers.¹⁶ Democracy at the global level is not even an ideal. And yet the IMF, for one, was founded on the principle of global economic stability, acknowledging the fact that markets can and do create gross inequities. By now, however, it deals less with global imbalances than with policies to ensure the status quo, which does not mean local market expansion. Today, Stiglitz reminds us, "the IMF typically provides funds only if countries engage in policies like cutting deficits, raising taxes, or raising interest rates that lead to a contraction of the economy. Keynes" he adds, "would be rolling over in his grave were he to see what as happened to his child."¹⁷

There is far and away more foreign investment in the developing world today than there ever has been before. But these gains have not been evenly distributed. Eighty-nine countries are now worse off than they were 15 years ago. Economic growth has failed for a quarter of the world's people, leading to more global polarization than integration. 358 billionaires in the world, including the Sultan of Brunei and Bill Gates of Microsoft,

¹³Carl, Beverly M. 2001. *Trade and the Developing World in the 21st Century*, Transnational Publishers. Ardsley, N.Y., p. 465.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 459.

¹⁵ *Op cit*, p.6.

¹⁶ By custom, the head of the World Bank is always American, and the head of the IMF always European. *Op cit* Stiglitz, p19.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.12.

have more assets than the combined incomes of countries representing nearly 45 percent of the planet's population.¹⁸

None of this would be remarkable right now if it weren't that prominent members of this club of corporate shills appear (to some) to have humbugged the world on the subject of terrorism. To understand why, we need only turn to what has become one of the pillars of the neocon canon, Samuel P. Huntington's 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article, 'The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.'¹⁹ The profound ideological schisms between the Western and nonwestern world, Huntington warns, can never be surmounted. Nor should they be. Sounding the clarion call to a fundamentalist capitalism (aka neo-neo-liberalism) and its global relations, he hails the triumph of Western Civilization with a capital 'C.' In this post-Cold War moment, and in the face of so many failed and failing states, Huntington urges the West to take up the rich man's burden²⁰ and learn to love imperialism again:

World politics is entering a new phase, and intellectuals have not hesitated to proliferate visions of what it will be --the end of history, the return of traditional rivalries between nation states, and the decline of the nation state from the conflicting pulls of tribalism and globalism, among others. Each of these visions catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet they all miss a crucial, indeed a central, aspect of what global politics is likely to be in the coming years. It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural...Conflict between civilizations will be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world.²¹

The vast social and economic imbalances around the globe are perceived by Huntington to be catalysts of profound ideological cleavages, and not just symptoms of them. Thus, the New World Order yawns and contracts according to the centripetal-centrifugal force of Western globalization and, not unexpectedly, *non*western tribalism.

In response, Mahbubani takes aim at this kind of xenophobia, arguing that for all its 'mysteries' the Rest of the world is fairly explicable even to laypeople.²² It is not, to be sure, the enemy. Nor is global capitalism the sole property of the northern hemisphere, as it is clear by now that Asia seems to be enjoying its own renaissance.²³ In its galloping certitude, the West has been blinded to its own flaws, and (again, like the empathetic tourists) assumes every aspect of its culture is to be envied. Thus democracy and individual freedom is said to be critical to economic growth insofar as they are the

¹⁸ Carl, *Op cit*, pp.17-18.

¹⁹ Huntington, S.P. 1993, The Clash of Civilizations, *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 72, no.3, pp22-8.

²⁰ Mallaby, S. 2002. The Reluctant Imperialist: Terrorism, Failed States, and the Case for American Empire, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April.

²¹ Huntington *Op cit* p. 22.

²² Interestingly, however, the Asia Development Bank is said to allow competitive pluralism, based on an Asian model of development.

²³ "Huntington fails to ask one obvious question: If other civilizations have been around for centuries, why are they posing a challenge only now." Mahbubani *Op cit* ,p. 86. Note Huntington's retort (*Op cit* p. 24).

linchpins of Western culture. But from Singapore, Mahbubani points out, the new century already looks distinctly Asian, and the Asian economies may become the hinge of 21st century history. Who is to say whether the Eastern ideals of deference and cooperation won't become the hallmarks of the new century? He cites Robert Kaplan in the *Atlantic Monthly* (December 1997), as saying²⁴:

The post-Cold War effort to bring democracy to [Eastern European] countries has been reasonable. What is less reasonable is to put a gun to the head of the peoples of the developing world and say, in effect, 'Behave as if you had experienced the Western Enlightenment to the degree that Poland and the Czech republic did. Behave as if 95 percent of your population were literate. Behave as if you had no bloody ethnic or regional disputes.'

It's easy to transpose this discussion to Papua New Guinea, and see why some of the criticisms of its governance ring with the sounds of reanimated imperialism. If Windybank, Manning and Hughes don't exactly subscribe to a Washington Consensus, (and may even abhor American tactics), Windybank and Manning, at least, conclude that

In this emerging era of cultural conflict the United States must forge alliances with similar cultures and spread its values wherever possible. With alien civilizations the West must be accommodating if possible, but confrontational if necessary.²⁵

It is fair to say their notion of 'similar' cultures does not include PNG. Or does it? It would appear that words like 'tribal' and 'atavistic' are being brushed off again in discussions about PNG. Indeed, they hold a rather gloomy view of PNG's future, riddled as will be with more of the crime, corruption, deficit financing and overall infrastructural decline it has shown since Independence. They conclude that Australia's "longstanding 'hands-off' approach of respecting PNG's sovereign right to make its own choices"²⁶ has simply not worked. At very least, AusAid must pull back, and Australia cut its losses in the face of an emergent 'failed state.'

The unspoken assumption is that into every failed state, like anarchy to a vacuum, rushes the cultural-ideological enemy and the apparatus that support terrorism. (Huntington, for one, is just as wary of Confucianism as he is of Islam). We hear this in the warnings that something drastic must now be done for PNG. "The alternative," Windybank and Manning warn us, "is the prospect of a Solomon Islands style collapse, but on a much larger scale."²⁷ To this Helen Hughes agrees, saying PNG has been left behind in this globalising world, devolving into yet one more anarchic third world state. Windybank, Manning and Hughes position Australia firmly in the Western camp, safely outside the arc of terror and within the embrace of a global policy that seems to have forgotten guarantees of state sovereignty or the Treaty of Westphalia. Hughes even argues that the enhanced Australian aid package with its phalanx of advisors may not go far enough.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p.9.

²⁵ *Op cit*, pp.23-24.

²⁶ *Ibid* p.23.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp.24.

And yet she explains that “is not a step toward re-colonisation, but an attempt to fill a gap that should not have been left 30 years ago.”²⁸

Australian Foreign Minister Downer similarly calls the Solomon Islands as a *failing* state and warns of its reversion into "a kind of post-modern badlands, ruled by criminals and governed by violence"²⁹ Apparently most of Melanesia could be the set of a Mad Max movie, whether this is a reversion to or a misstep into chaos. Hughes tells us:

The risk that Islamic terrorists may use PNG as a haven cannot be dismissed in light of last year’s Bali bombing. PNG’s strategic backwater status and institutional instability could provide new opportunities to exploit the weakest link. Terrorists could pay PNG’s criminal gangs to assist them with preparations for attacks on Australian soil or against Australian civilians and assets in PNG. A cash-strapped PNG government could resort to selling passports and visas to the highest bidder, or terrorists may use PNG as a flag of convenience to register ships that transport operatives and equipment³⁰

The Western world’s new anti-terror stance has made the ‘failed state’ criteria crucial to the security of this Pacific ‘patch.’ And clearly some take cold comfort from the idea of PNG as a buffer zone between Canberra and the Jamaah Islamiah. But all this talk about intervention and regional security actually rests on poorly defined criteria for failure. It also implies, as Sinclair Dinnen notes (this volume), that PNG had been running along well, “like a mini Australia,” and has just now broken down-- when in truth, it may never have been built properly in the first place.

Meanwhile, two regional seats in global fora have recently been filled by propitious choices. An Australian, Greg Urwin, has taken over from W. Noel Levi, one of the contributors to this volume, as Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, a position normally reserved for a Pacific Islander. But Urwin is hardly an interventionist. “Leave aside the fact of whether or not I would accept the description [by some commentators of Melanesian countries] of an arc of instability,” he has been quoted as saying. “I just think that’s the kind of superficial description which hides more than it reveals.”³¹ This is not to say Irwin is oblivious to security issues. Elsewhere, he has responded to relativist arguments that suggest the Pacific is under no terrorist threat:

(S)ecurity has, at its core, a set of irreducible propositions related to proper law enforcement, and the crucial role its practitioners have in the maintenance of peaceful, productive and sustainable societies. They are at the bedrock, and it is the manner in which they do their jobs which ensures that every day, members of the communities that you represent, live their lives in freedom, in peace, and the

²⁸ *Op cit*, p.2. Also note Kagan, R. 2004. *Of Paradise and Power*, New York: Vintage Books, on the new American interventionism.

²⁹ Cited by Dinnen, this volume.

³⁰ *Op cit* fn.25, p.11. .

³¹ *Islands Business* May 2004, p23.

sure knowledge that their societies are sustained by the equitable application of the rule of law. There is nothing value-free or relative about any of that.³²

The other seat has been filled by PNG's John Kaputin, as Secretary-General of the African Caribbean Pacific Group (ACP) for trade. This very significant economic posting has ruffled feathers of some of the Africans members, but means everything for the PICs. Laisa Taga, in *Islands Business*, comments:

Apart from the money, this is an important position for the Pacific ACP region. This is because during the tenure of office of the new secretary-general phase two of the EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) negotiations with the European Union (EU) will be completed. And given the many constraints that our Pacific economies face, having someone from the region in that position gives the Pacific the advantage to influence high level policy processes and decisions in Brussels that directly impact the lives of people in our region.³³

Could these postings augur a new Pacific community? Given the many trade and security alliances that already exist for the Pacific (like MSG, PACER, PICTA, APEC, AOSIS and PIF commissions such as CREIT, FFA, PIDP, FRSC and SPARTECA),³⁴ can there ever be a community that integrates the island states in the global economy in such a way as to protect them from a tidal wave of 'free' trade? If so, where does Australia fall in this new 'kin-country' syndrome to foreign affairs?³⁵ In light of the fact that regional affiliations have come to look like tribalism from the marbled foyers of the IFIs and the WTO, it's hard to imagine Australia expressing *communitas* with either PNG and the Solomons. Scholar Fouad Ajami, for example, replies to Huntington's discussion of the global culture wars with a useful parable:

The lesson bequeathed us by Thucydides in his celebrated dialogue between the Melians and the Athenians remains. The Melians, it will be recalled, were a colony of the Lacedaemonians. Beseiged by Athens, they held out and were sure that the Lacedaemonians were 'bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred.' The Melians never wavered in their confidence in the 'civilizational' allies: 'Our common blood insures our fidelity.' We know what became of the Melians. Their allies did not turn up, their island was sacked, their world laid to waste.³⁶

³² Urwin, G., Keynote Address by Mr Greg Urwin, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for 33rd South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 30 August 2004 Press Statement 59-05 of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

³³ May 2004, Vol 30, No 05, p5.

³⁴ Melanesian Spearhead Group, Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations, Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Alliance of Small Island States, Committee on Regional Economic Issues and Trade, Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Island Development Commission, Forum Regional Security Committee, and South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement.

³⁵ See Greenway, H.D.S. *Boston Globe*, 3 December 1992, p. 19.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp34-5.

Sir Rabbie Namaliu's keynote address to the symposium opens this collection with a description of PNG's foreign policy options at present. Isolationism, he warns us, simply cannot be one of them. He argues that PNG must take a stronger lead amongst Pacific Island nations in the face of global terrorism, and more importantly, must support them as they increasingly face the effects of global warming. In fact, he even suggests that, where rising sea levels causes some islands to relocate, PNG might even offer them land. This is an interesting suggestion, as it strikes a dramatic contrast with the more shrill soundings from Australia. That is, if the small island states face these very real security risks, their bigger cousins would rather donate land than (what are the options?) invade, subsume or restructure them. Of course it's hard to imagine 'propping up' a sunken island state, but the difference in risk is also a difference in degree of familiarity. It's harder to imagine PNG calling for the occupation of the Solomon Islands.

Shifting focus, Alan Brocard's contribution follows Sir Rabbie's with an explanation of why the Republic of France keeps an embassy in Port Moresby in this post-nuclear post-colonial era. Among other reasons, he explains, is a perceptible change in regional affairs. Australia and New Zealand, having long lobbied for independence for the French Territories, now seem to have moved away from this stance "after realizing that newly independent countries can easily become bankrupt, failed or corrupt states." France, to, he suggest, now subscribes to a less isolationist view of the Pacific.

As Greg Fry explains here, Australia's current regional policy represents more than a mere ratcheting up of public fears. It is a linking of regional anxieties to the new international campaign against terror. A new interventionism-- prompted by the Solomon Islands, and the perceived vulnerability of failed states to the intrusion of terrorists--signals a more robust and avuncular attitude toward the PICs, a step up from the posture taken just after the Bali crisis. What is different now, Fry tells us, is that the Pacific Islands have become included in the world's 'arc of crises.'

In his contribution here, Sinclair Dinnen writes that the Enhanced Cooperation Package (ECP) between PNG and Australia represents a shift of the foreign policy paradigm for Australia, to a closer more interventionist hand in the region. "The mistaken, and misleading, view that it is essentially a RAMSI Mark II [referring to the The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands ³⁷] aimed at rescuing PNG's 'failing state' has contributed to recent tensions between Port Moresby and Canberra," he says. In fact, what is new is the placing of Australians in positions of government authority for periods longer than any short-term consultant. "There is a thin line," he explains, "between RAMSI's dominant position in post-conflict Solomon Islands and a perception that it is actually the 'real' government and actively controls political and economic decision-making." Clearly the same line is being fudged, which may please Hughes, Windybank and Manning, but it does raise questions of sovereignty and whether the free and loose use of expressions like 'arc of instability' (the Pacific's 'WMD') are not smokescreens

³⁷ Comprised of personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa. Vanuatu and Nauru.

for empire-building. As weapons inspector Hans Blix put it, commenting on the Blair dossier, 'They put exclamation marks where there were question marks.'³⁸

W. Noel Levi, former Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat, writes here about regional responsibilities, and also asks whether or not there is a new Pacific community. More to the point, why does there need to be? There is a need for greater integration, Levi notes, and protection from the larger nations, to be sure. But PICs must not lose sight of their own priorities, and their resistance to great global bullies can only come from within these regional organizations. Big nations may be stronger, he reminds us, but not necessarily more effective. And yet it is smaller countries that are most vulnerable to bad management, i.e. poor governance, practices. "Though the aim of governments, whether developed or developing, is to do the right thing," he says,

many actually end up doing the wrong things right. For example, if governments were not reducing poverty or reducing infant mortality rates, they would continue to spend scarce resources in perfecting what they were doing wrong.

Lucien Kii gives us the Solomon Islands case, and explains how compromised the country has become by its characterization as a 'weak' state. He goes on to explain the kinds of economic choices the SI is forced to make in bilateral relations, sometimes against the grain of other PICs, or the region at large, because of its dire need of economic assistance from nations like Japan. Kii's points illustrate the argument Steve Ratuva makes in the following chapter. He discusses of the consequences of terms like 'arc of instability' and 'weak' or 'failed' for small Pacific Island countries, noting the sense of inadequacy these nations already feel in a hemisphere compelled always to 'look north.' Like Levi, he insists on some cultural relativism. In light of the assessment that PICs are all weak—in governance, production and civil society, there may in fact be a Pacific Island version of good governance.

Kii agree that free trade is never really free for PICs, as even on a regional level it can do more harm than good. There is so little manufacturing in these countries, free trade between them could well be disastrous to their mutual development. Instead, he suggests that agreements on the free movement of labour be written into those of free trade. An improbable idea it might be, it is reminiscent of migrations actually imposed by free markets, beginning as early as the 19th Century when American wheat sent to the Balkins forced Balkins farmers to famished migration to the States. But it is worth considering the nightmares trade-for-labour might induce in PNG's avuncular neighbours who can see badlanders and would-be terrorists arriving in false-flag vessels by the thousands.

³⁸ Foreign policy metaphors always have the ring of le Carre novels, with phrases like Operation Imminent Thunder and Just Cause, [see Gregory C. Sieminiski 1995, *The Art of Naming Operations*, *Parameters*, Autumn 1995, pp 81-98]), not to mention Rausim Kwik and RAMSI. Alexander Downer seems to be watching Solomon Islanders in a Max Max film; while there are gentler, even romantic visions for SI's Alfred Sasako, who mixes L. Frank Baum with Paul Scott when he says: "Canberra regards RAMSI as the jewel in the crown in Australia's foreign policy posturing. This goes to show that some times you don't have to go to the far-flung reaches of the universe to find the jewel in your crown. It is right there in your own backyard." *Islands Business* May 2004, p.29.

PNG, meanwhile, has a slightly different view of itself than outside commentators do. This is not to say that all Papua New Guineans would disagree with Windybank, Manning and Hughes, but such dire predictions could only be made from the outside, and with a certain zeal for intervention that almost whiffs of fear. Placing PNG within the 'arc of instability' and stepping up the rhetoric is one way to safeguard a shaky investment and the northern border. In the meantime, PNG is beginning to see itself as a leader within the regional Pacific community. It may not be another Asian miracle, but there are constitutive differences between its problems and those of the Solomon Islands. The overarching cultural determinism of PNG, and other PICs, both proves and disproves Huntington's theory of cultural rifts. The Pacific community is no more realistically tribal than the Western nations are democratically global. There are cultural chasms between the West and the Rest, but this needs to be divorced from the hubris of power in the northern hemisphere, and the assumption that all states march together in one great politico-economic evolution. It is true that despite economic gains, poverty still reigns in many areas of the world, and these include regions most susceptible to terrorism of one kind or another. One does not, therefore have to be a foe of globalization to reassess the trade not aid agenda.³⁹ If the Western world engages foreign terrorists, without also concerning itself with the economic injustices of the countries in which they are born, the effort to bring terrorism under control will never succeed.

2

Finance Minister Bart Philomen writes here about the export-driven policies of the current national government, reporting that "the Somare-Maladina Government's aim is to take a long-term view and focus on the role of foreign investment. Our approach is to develop a supportive and credible strategy for generating foreign investor confidence and interest." As Minister for Treasury and Finance, he is the foremost authority the country's relationship with lending institutions and the WTO. He notes that the IMF recently commended PNG for its belt-tightening, but is careful to add that, "(p)oor governance in public finance management, particularly in relation to institutional and systemic weaknesses in budget management continues to exist." In sum, he recommends strategies to control inflation, considered by some the hallmark of IMF policies⁴⁰, and concludes that "(t)ightening controls on government spending is important to ease upward pressures on the inflation and interest rates, and downward pressure on the exchange rate."

Elsewhere, however, Christopher Hnanguie⁴¹ says that despite strict reforms introduced by the Morauta Government, foreign investment in PNG remains chary. "Nor has PNG benefited substantially from the dramatic expansion of trade generated by trade liberalization, most recently under the aegis of the World Trade Organization."⁴² Yet aid money must continue. While much international aid may have proven ineffectual, and/or

³⁹ Worldwide, the share of the population in developing countries living on less than \$1 per day fell from 28 to 24 percent from 1987 to 1998. However, due to population increases, the total number of people living at this level of poverty grew from 1.18 to 1.19 billion. *Op cit* Carl 2001, p.23, Table 1.1.

⁴⁰ See Stiglitz *Op cit*.

⁴¹ Hnanguie, C.T. 2003. The Future of Foreign Aid in Papua New Guinea After 25 Years of Successes or Failures, In Kavanamur, D., C. Yala, Q. Clements, eds., *Building a Nation in Papua New Guinea: Views of the Post-Independence generation*, Canberra: Pandanus Books, RSPAS, ANU, pp. 133-147.

⁴² *Ibid*, p.137.

its achievements unsustainable, there have been very real success stories with it in the health, transportation, infrastructure, fisheries, and agriculture sectors of the economy. The most dramatic effects of international aid can always be seen in disaster relief, as for example, with the Aitape tsunami. Hnanguie may criticize trade liberalization, but he supports the adjustment reforms as the means of achieving the macroeconomic stability that will guarantee continued foreign investment.

Some scholars have argued that there is increasing interpenetration of state and society in PNG; others would say the state exists *within* society, meaning that state actors are, of course, also private citizens.⁴³ This is particularly true in PNG, where individuals have so many stacked identities and where politicians most obviously perform as clansmen before they do public servants.

Scholar Peter Larmour reminds us that governance scholars tend to see the state as acting *through* non-state actors to achieve social order.⁴⁴ This, too, rings true for Papua New Guinea if we recollect reports of national politicians who keep criminal gangs in their back pockets. But these models of the interpenetration of state and society also imply active civil society organizations (CSOs) assisting the state in various forms of law and order or social control, and this is also the case in PNG. Indeed church groups, the press, village courts and other CSOs are often the last line of defense against lawlessness where government services are absent.⁴⁵ Political scientist Joel Migdal⁴⁶ defines state strength in terms of the ability of state elites to impose their preferences on the rest of society. This can be gauged by popular compliance with legislation, and with state institutions, and the general legitimacy accorded the state by the public. The strength of *society*, on the other hand, is measured by “the resistance posed by chiefs, landlords, bosses, rich peasants, clan leaders, za’im, effendis, aghas, caciques, and kulaks (for convenience

⁴³ Standish, B. 1997. Paradoxes in Papua New Guinea, in S. Dinnen, R. May and A.J. Regan, eds., *Challenging the State: the Sandline Affair in Papua New Guinea*, Pacific Policy paper 30, Canberra, National Centre for Development Studies, RSPAS, The Australian National University, p.78, citing J. Migdal 1994, *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See also Dinnen, S. 2001, *Law and Order In a Weak State*, Pacific Islands Monograph Series 17, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp188-9.

⁴⁴ Larmour, P.: 1998 State and Society in Papua New Guinea, In Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, ed., *Modern Papua New Guinea*. Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, pp21-30.

⁴⁵ Cf. Luker, V. 2004. Civil society, social capital and the churches: HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea. *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project Working Paper 2004/1*, p.6--where she notes ‘civil society’ and ‘social capital’ are terms commonly used in discussion of the HIV/AIDs crises. She prefers to see civil society as:

an intermediary zone of voluntary association between relations of kin and formal government... The crude thesis is that civil society improves governance and, in poorer countries, assists development. Some types of civil society organizations (CSOs) are believed to benefit government through lobbying, dialogue and criticism; by developing in their members vision, knowledge skills that can aid political process; and by bringing people together who might otherwise be divided.

⁴⁶ Migdal, J. 1988. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, pp26-7.

‘strongmen’) through their various social organizations.”⁴⁷ But this dialectic between state and non-state elites simply does not exist in PNG, where traditional leadership has morphed into modern leadership and government authority so often rests on the support of local bigmen.

This conflation of traditional and modern authority has contributed to what some have called PNG’s *state* weakness.⁴⁸ Professor Ron May would even call the state ‘disorderly.’ Beyond the country’s problems delivering services, he tells us

its political institutions seem to be becoming increasingly vulnerable to nondemocratic pressures, from long adjournments of parliament and increasingly disorderly national elections to persistent unrest within the defence force. In a region which has given rise to such terms as ‘guided democracy’ (Sukarno’s Indonesia), ‘elite democracy’ (Post-Marcos Philippines), and ‘disciplined democracy’ (Burma after Ne Win), Papua New Guinea might perhaps be described as a ‘disorderly democracy’.⁴⁹

Indeed, this weakness effects all levels of governance. May’s assessment might be endorsed by Alfred Reu, Assistant Police Commissioner in Mount Hagen, who was recently reported as saying,⁵⁰ “We don’t have the capacity to deal with armed crime. It is impossible to disarm armed criminals-- we’re outnumbered and outgunned.”

Economists would say the best measure of state strength is the ability not simply to impose law and order, but first, to impose statutory law over customary land tenure⁵¹. Ninety-seven percent of the land in Papua New Guinea is held under customary tenure, which must make it a very weak state. And yet customary land tenure is protected by the state in PNG. This has prompted one scholar to call PNG ‘incompletely stateful.’⁵² Helen Hughes also sees land tenure reform and individual property rights as principal determinants of state strength, saying, “Communal ownership has not permitted any country to develop. In Papua New Guinea where 90% of people live on the land it is the principal cause of poverty.”⁵³ It is the absence, she says, of individual property rights which has held back the emergence of a banking and credit, including agricultural loans, for Papua New Guineans. She further presses for the government strength of will to effect widespread public sector job cuts and so bring expenditures under control. The state is, in effect, weakened by the 10% of public service employee ‘ghosts’ who receive salaries but do not come to work, and another 10% who remain unproductive. The IMF has provided

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.33.

⁴⁸ See Standish 1997 *Op cit*; Dinnen, S. 1998, Law, Order, and State, In Zimmer-Tamakoshi, ed. 1998, *Op cit*, pp. 333-350; Dinnen, S. 2004. Lending a fist? Australia’s new Interventionism in the Southwest Pacific, SSGM Discussion paper 2004/5, Canberra: ANU RSPAS; and May, R.2003 Disorderly Democracy: Political turbulence and institutional reform in Papua New Guinea, SSGM Discussion Paper 2003/3, Canberra: ANU RSPAS. .

⁴⁹ May, R. *Ibid*, p1.

⁵⁰ Dodd, M. Problems Persist in Paradise, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 11, 2004.

⁵¹ Migdal *Op cit*; see also H.de Soto, 2003, *The Mystery of Capital* NY: Basic Books.

⁵² See Larmour, P. 1998. State and Society in Papua New Guinea, In Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, ed., 1998, *Op cit*, pp21-30; p29.

⁵³ Hughes *Op cit*, p7 ff.

the computer assets (of more than US\$13 million, Hughes tells us), and the World Bank has pitched in to help identify dead weight. All that is needed, she says, is the political will.⁵⁴ Perhaps the test of 'political will' is as good a measure of state strength as any--insofar as the inability to fire employees, to effect changes without social, if not political, reprisals, is the sign of real power.

What, then, is a *failed* state? Jerry Singirok asks the question in this volume. He examines definitions of the term against the particulars of PNG's current malaise and concludes that PNG is not 'failed.' Critics have rushed to judgment, he argues, while the state still performs basic functions and props its institutions against collapse. Even the kind of law and order problems PNG faces are not comparable to those of a 'failed' state, where a power vacuum at the top is typically filled by banditry and chaos. (One could even say Major General Singirok's own career has been testimony to this.)

It is now commonplace to say that PNG's body politic has no ideological voice; that between the local-level loyalties and the national party system there is no real connection, making it hard, if not impossible, for parties to garner broad-based support. Local and national politics are dislocated gears, the bigger and more moneyed one spinning far away in the capital.⁵⁵ Only on the eve of elections do villagers expect to see any services met, and then this often takes the form of 4x4's laden with lamps, gen-sets, school desks, and mossy nets plying the feeder roads of an incumbent candidate's electorate.

Bernard Narokobi's chapter here focuses on what he calls PNG's weak Parliamentary system. He talks about parties that flower and die in a season, and candidates who are rarely held accountable for their promises. In a passage that recollects Huey Long, he describes one candidate who "promised the electorate that upon his victory, he would impose a 1% head tax on all wage earners and pay the money to the province for infrastructural developments including building bridges, connecting the mainland to the islands, constructing websites, and connecting the internet to all villages." (Surely the greatest weakness in this election had been the electoral awareness campaign.) But one of Narokobi's most interesting points is made about the proposed Constitutional Amendment that would grant a 5 year term for the Prime Minister. It may be assumed that this would provide some freedom from electioneering and allow longer-term vision to be built into national decision-making. The Opposition merely argues that, in the case of a *bad* Prime Minister, it could be too great a risk. But Narokobi is more wary of the legal implications, and would prefer it go to the Constitutional Development Commission for a decision. Despite the advantages of the longer-term proposal, he warns that amending the supreme document of the land can only weaken it in the long run.

In a March 1998 edition of the *Post-Courier*, Sir Anthony Siaguru writes, "We don't have a 'normal' parliamentary democracy. Our system is probably 'abnormal.' It is probably sick. Sick not only in the sense of being unwell, but also in its clear disregard

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ See Standish, B. 1999, Papua New Guinea 1999: crisis of governance, *Research Paper 4 1999-2000*, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, Canberra, pp78-79.

for the nation's well-being."⁵⁶ Corruption of a certain order is indeed the norm, even the objective of running for office in PNG, where a tight web of kin and clan filiations virtually requires that public officials subsume public office to private gain in servicing these loyalties. Hence, what one commentator calls the 'Pajero culture'⁵⁷ of Port Moresby represents the realization of campaign supporters' objectives. There is remarkably little difference between this phenomenon and the campaigning of traditional highlands bigmen, who persuade followers to invest in their individual ambitions.

Just how much *noncorruption* is there? To read the 2002 Report on the Inquiry into the National Provident Fund, you would think *noncorrupt* management was a novelty in PNG. It's revelations of systematic, wide-spread and flagrant criminal conspiracy, breaches of the Leadership Code, fraud, tax evasion, bribery on offer and acceptance, among other things, speak of longstanding and collaborative efforts to subvert the system. The savings institution's former chairman was charged with misappropriating 2.7 million kina from the now-infamous retirement fund. Historian Hank Nelson compares this situation with twenty years ago and says, "This is a long way from what once appeared to be the flamboyant acts of particular scoundrels amid the inefficiencies of institutions run by people new to public office."⁵⁸

But if corruption seems to have been radically recalibrated, it has also taken on a Pacific Islands defense. Apparently giving and accepting gifts for favors is perfectly consonant with Melanesian culture, for one.⁵⁹ Larmour recounts an article in *Pacific Islands Monthly* where, he says, one "PNG Prime minister excused himself from criticism over payments made to prevent a minister's defecting to the opposition by arguing that 'gift giving' is part of the Melanesian political tradition."⁶⁰ But we know from prosecution of cases involving graft, fraud and/or bribery in PNG, that this particular tradition is not observed equally, or consistently, across Melanesia. Larmour goes on to describe a Kiribati government minister who made gifts of tobacco during his election campaign, for which he was found guilty of electoral malpractices and dismissed from office. His wife replaced him as member, and she made similar gifts, only to be prosecuted and dismissed as well. "Yet a presidential candidate who gave gifts of tobacco to elders within *maneabas* (meetinghouses) a few years later was found by the High Court not to have acted corruptly."⁶¹ Increasingly, tax concessions, stock floats and other affirmative action policies in the Pacific that favor indigenes, he adds, "come uncomfortably close to

⁵⁶ Siaguru, A. 2001. *In-House*, Canberra: Asia-Pacific Press, p.100.

⁵⁷ Payani, H. 2003, Bureaucratic Corruption in Papua New Guinea: Causes, Consequences and Remedies, In Kavanamur, D., C. Yala, Q. Clements, eds., *Op cit*, p. 96.

⁵⁸ Nelson, H. 2003. Papua New Guinea: When the extravagant exception is no longer the exception. State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project Working Paper 2003/2, Canberra: ANU RSPAS, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Findlay, M. 2003. The Pacific Overview, *Transparency International's Global Corruption Report 2003*. Washington, D.C.: Transparency International, pp.115-127. Indeed, 'gift-giving' has become a convenient defense for Pacific Island statesmen in, for examples, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. See T. Koaie, 1993, 'Corrupt and Illegal Practices', In *Atoll Politics: The Republic of Kiribati*. Ed H. Van Trease, pp 105-111. Canterbury: MacMillan Brown Center for Pacific Studies; and Suva: Institute for Pacific Studies. Also see A.B. van Fossen, 2003, Money Laundering, Global Financial Instability, and Tax Havens in the Pacific Islands. *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol 15, No 2: 237-276.

⁶⁰ Larmour 1997, *Op cit* p.3.

⁶¹ *Ibid* p5.

the use of public office for private gain.”⁶² Today, throughout the Pacific islands, privatization, international aid, tokens of sovereignty (from the sale of stamps, coins, ships’ licenses, and even citizenship), and even grander schemes (such as fraudulent letters of guarantee, money laundering, and trading in asylum seekers), are all increasingly the norm.⁶³

Prior to the NPF Report, its author, Tos Barnett, had been the first to lift the veil on corrupt practices in the PNG timber industry⁶⁴, giving that sector the peculiar distinction of being the most vilified by anti-corruption campaigners in PNG. What prompted the Morauta government to issue a moratorium on all logging were assessments in the Report like the following:

It would be fair to say of some companies that they are now roaming the countryside with the self-assurance of robber barons, bribing politicians and leaders, creating social disharmony and ignoring laws in order to gain access to, rip out and export the last remnants of the provinces’ valuable timber.⁶⁵

In a country where all the money is concentrated in capital budgets, and where pressures to repay campaign supporters are compounded by the demands of wantoks, there’s little wonder why politicians view public office as their private piggybank.⁶⁶ But there is an encroaching element of greed in the matter. Sean Dorney found that Pacific Islanders owned 580 blocks of property in Queensland; and in 1995 Papua New Guineans invested \$20 million in Queensland properties.⁶⁷ There is furthermore a point where corruption fosters enough cynicism to openly pitting the public against its government, and we may be fast approaching it. Corruption that drives foreign investment from the private sector then becomes the ‘moral’ basis for tax evasion, too.⁶⁸

Because monetary stability is contingent upon foreign investment, the diversion of monies from government to private aggrandizement is absolutely a threat to the PICs’ survival. The World Bank’s Governance Promotion Adjustment Loan provides balance of payments assistance to PNG in return for support of its management and anti-corruption reforms. And on a regional scale, seventeen Asian and Pacific governments

⁶² *Ibid* p6.

⁶³ See also Findlay, M. *Op cit* on this topic, where he adds, p.116: On the other hand, some of the more powerful nations of the region have this year preyed on the weak, with the tacit consent of some development agencies and the international community. Australia, in particular, has failed to uphold internationally recognised principles of open government, electioneering and public or private service.

⁶⁴ Barnett, T.E. 1989. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Aspects of the Forest Industry: Final Report* (2 volumes). Unpublished report to the Government of PNG.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, Interim Report no. 4, vol. 1, p. 85.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Douglas, B. 2000. *Weak States and other Nationalisms: Emerging Melanesian Paradigms? State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 00/3*, Canberra: ANU RSPAS; Clark, J. 1997. *Imagining the State, or Tribalism and the Arts of Memory in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea*. In *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific*, ed. T. Otto and N. Thomas., Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers pp. 65-90, (pp.74, 81-2, 86-8); Stewart, P.J. and Strathern, A. 1998. *Money, Politics, and Persons in Papua New Guinea. Social Analysis* 42 (2):132-49 (p.134).

⁶⁷ As cited in Larmour 1997, *Op cit*, p4.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Hernando de Soto's description of the informal sector in Peru in *The Other Path*, New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

adopted the Anticorruption Action Plan for Asia Pacific, including the Cook Islands, Fiji, PNG, Samoa and Vanuatu, (although neither Australia nor New Zealand have signed). And it is not one-sided. The objective for anti-corruption groups is to foster an 'integrity infrastructure' in an otherwise-weakened state.⁶⁹ But aid donors have also sought good governance assurances within their programmes, largely in response to the growing awareness of corruption opportunities inherent in the aid system.

What is missing in PNG, in the view of one Pacific scholar Bill Standish⁷⁰, is a 'civil society': the link between arbitrary, self-serving national politics and the grassroots body politic. Civil society encourages the NGO's, private watchdog organizations, unions, landowner associations and church groups to exist in a perpetual dialectic with the state. Without this, the price of dissent is too high-- recall that the 1990 Barnett Commission of Inquiry Report nearly cost its author his life.⁷¹

A difficult relationship between the media and politics is one of the hallmarks of democratic society. To that extent, a tendency to manipulate news and shape the agenda of public debate exists in all societies.⁷² And yet the PNG case is interesting. Only months after the NPF Report, the PNG Media Council, concerned by the low level of convictions following the Report, urged the public prosecutor's office to step up their efforts and consolidated a campaign against corruption in PNG. More than 20 public and private groups pledged support, including Transparency International PNG, the Ombudsman Commission of PNG, youth and women's groups, the Business Council of PNG, and the Institute of National Affairs. The campaign then moved on to the 2002 elections and the practice of 'ghost voting', which Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta had identified as a major threat to free and fair elections.⁷³ This massive response from civil society tells us the body politic is healthy, in the same way that the presence of antibodies can be seen as a good sign in a patient's blood.

This is not to say problems with media freedom do not exist, or that politicians don't work to influence the press.⁷⁴ But the greatest resistance to a widespread civil society is, ironically, the vitality of the country's subsistence economy. The strength of PNG's agricultural sector allows so many villagers to subsist in a relative autonomy from the cash economy, and to thereby remain impervious to economic, social and political integration with the nation. This autonomy acts as a barrier to the distribution of a popular media and its cultivation of an imaginary national community.

⁶⁹ *Op cit* Findlay, pp.117 ff.

⁷⁰ Standish, 1999 *Op cit*.

⁷¹ Barnett, T. 1990. *The Barnett Report: A Summary of the Commission of Inquiry into Aspects of the Timber Industry in Papua New Guinea*. Hobart: Asia Pacific Action Group.

⁷² Peters, Bettina 2003. The media's role: covering or covering up corruption? *Transparency International's Global Corruption Report 2003*, Washington D.C.: Transparency International, pp.44-56;p.44.

⁷³ Keaekae, R. 2003. Papua New Guinea media declare war on corruption, in *Transparency International's Global Corruption Report 2003*, Washington D.C.: Transparency International, p.120.

⁷⁴ See Kanekane, J.R. 2003. Challenges in Reporting Corruption in Newspapers, In Kavanamur, Yala, Clements, eds., *Op cit*, pp 107-113.

A body of scholarship already exists on the debilitated state of PNG nationalism, as with that of other Pacific Island countries.⁷⁵ These are states both emboldened and enervated by the strength of local cultures and the agricultural wealth that allows them to remain semi-traditional. “If decentralization were unknown anywhere else in the world, Papua New Guinea would have had to invent it,” writes Joseph Peasah⁷⁶. Whether this is a function of weak nationalism or a more general dislocation of ‘state’ and ‘nation’ in PNG, regional groups are growing ever more distant from the national core. As Bromwen Douglas says, writing about Melanesia as a whole,

It seems clear, as local communities away from major centres are less and less engaged in state affairs, and as rival centres for ‘national’ commitment grow in confidence and legitimacy – islands like Bougainville and Guadalcanal, provinces like the Solomon’s Western Province, ethnic groups like ‘the Min’ in the Papua New Guinea Highlands, and ‘the Fijians’.⁷⁷

One of the unintended results has been the lack of definition between the three levels of government, as between the lower levels of government and more sectional politics. Government institutions are collapsing into forums for wholly local competitions. Sinclair Dinnen observes that,

The postcolonial state of Papua New Guinea...appears to have become subject to a process of bottom-up transformation. Consequently the boundaries between state and society have become progressively blurred, and the state itself has become less coherent. State institutions have become the objects of struggles to gain access to resources for local distribution. They have also emerged as new and enlarged arenas for the waging of essentially local power struggles.⁷⁸

Many in PNG argue that the first-past-the-post voting system, introduced at Independence, only encourages disassociation in the political process by promoting electoral fraud. Windybank and Manning tells us the system has effectively turned elections into “a zero-sum competition between rival clans.”⁷⁹ In only a single round of voting, the person with the most ballots is declared winner, even if they pull barely 7% of the vote. The effect, then, is to encourage public representatives with extremely localized loyalties, and discourage the need to campaign widely. Discussions of electoral reform began in the eighties, but only recently have the calls for limited preferential voting (LPV) been heard. Considered a remedy for pork-barrel politics, LPV was adopted by the Morauta government in 2001, to be used in the by-elections after the 2002 national elections.

Alphonse Gelu, in his chapter here, writes, “LPV, it is hoped, will lead to more collaborative and less divisive campaigning as candidates seek to widen their secondary bases and gain preferences.” His account here of the 2002 elections in Abau (Central

⁷⁵ See Foster, R.J., Ed., 1995. *Nation Making: Emergent identities in Postcolonial Melanesia*. An Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

⁷⁶ Peasah, J.A., 1994. *Local-Level Government in Papua New Guinea: A Study in Change and Continuity in the Development of Liberal-Democratic Self-Determination at the Local Level*. Boroko: National Research Institute, p1.

⁷⁷ *Op cit* Douglas 2000, p8.

⁷⁸ Dinnen, S. 2001. *Op cit*, p.188.

⁷⁹ Windybank and Manning. *Op cit*, p.6.

Province) provides a strong argument for the LPV system, although not without serious cautions.⁸⁰ His initial objections to preferential voting, based on its complexity, were cast aside as the reports from the Abau case came in, and the Observer Team affirmed that only 3% of the total could be considered ‘informal.’ It appears, however, that some of the campaigning politicians understood the system even less than their electorate, and were caught trying to help ‘simplify’ the process by trying to fix whole blocks of voter preferences.⁸¹

So, is LPV a magic bullet? Will it be the switch that reverses the trend from the fractionalization of political loyalties to the steady expansion of loyalties and alliances, to greater ‘imagined communities’ of accountability—the switch from micropolitical to macropolitical evolution? Surely such a trend can only gain momentum if some of the infrastructure is also reshaped accordingly. All discussions of provincial government reform in PNG make note of the push-pull between centralizing and decentralizing forces here, as if between centripetal and centrifugal forces of tradition and modernity. There is the overwhelming tendency toward decentralization in a state governing 850-plus language-culture groups; and against that there is the streamlined administrative system bequeathed by the Australian government. In 1976, on the eve of the Organic Law on provincial Governments and in light of the 1976 Kilage Report⁸², Diana Conyers was forced to conclude that “although the decision to establish provincial governments has finally been made, the conflict will undoubtedly continue in Papua New Guinea for many years to come.”⁸³

And yet local level governments have not lived up to expectations. Their importance has never been in doubt, but despite the integrity of local representatives, the weight of the government purse is disproportionately centralized, leaving local level government weakened to inefficacy.⁸⁴ Certainly a strong central government does not preclude a degree of self-determination at the local level.⁸⁵ But it is one thing to be self-determined, and another to be developed. The development principle throughout the Pacific is that decentralization leads to better distribution of services. Penelope Schoeffel and Mark Turner write that, “In arguing for decentralisation, mainstream development theory draws

⁸⁰ With Preferential Voting (PV) voters list candidates by order of preference. If no winner takes more than 50% of the vote, then the candidate on the bottom of the list is knocked off and his/her votes redistributed according to voters’ marked preferences—and this continues until someone has more than 50% of the vote.

⁸¹ Cf. 2004/1 Philip Gibbs, Nicole Haley & Abby McLeod, Politicking and Voting in the Highlands: The 2002 Papua New Guinea National Elections, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 04/1, Canberra: ANU RSPAS.

⁸² The 1976 Kilage Report advocated substantial redistribution of political and administrative powers to the provincial governments.

⁸³ Conyers, D. 1976, *The Provincial Government Debate*, Port Moresby: IASER Monograph 2, p74.

⁸⁴ See Ghai, Y.P. and A.J. Regan 1993; *The Law, Politics and Administration of Decentralisation in Papua New Guinea* Boroko: National Research Institute; Peasah *Op cit*; May, R.J. and A.J. Regan, ed., 1997. *Political Decentralisation in a New State: The Experience of Provincial Government in Papua New Guinea*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing ; May, R.J., 1999. ‘Decentralization in Papua New Guinea: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back.’ In M. Turner, ed., *Central-Local Relations in Asia-Pacific: Convergence or Divergence?* London: Macmillan, 123-148.

⁸⁵ Conyers *Op cit*, p310.

a contrast between responsive local governments and a remote, uncaring, self-serving central government.”⁸⁶

Across PNG communities local elected officials continue to build school rooms and teacher’s houses, rig water supply and drainage systems, conduct village court and road clearance projects without sufficient LLG support. This is *not* a sign of home-grown or better governance, but rather of fatalism bred from neglect and what has, in some areas, festered into anti-government resentment. More to the point, it is this sort of neglect that renders remote communities most vulnerable to foreign developers who can provide the health, education and infrastructural services their Councilors cannot. And this vulnerability furthermore threatens the growth of civil society organizations like the local chapters of international conservation and media watchdog groups. Confined as they are to working within the system, that is to say legally, groups with broader or longer-term vision are all too often overwhelmed by the competition of logging and mining contractors who provide *quid pro quo* services in the vacuum left by LLGs.

For this reason, some, like Colin Filer, have begun to examine the potential of Special Purpose Authorities within the new Organic Law of 1995 for their ability to manage delivery of government services while remaining, by law, ‘at arms length’ from the local level governments.⁸⁷ The *Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments 1995* established a more consistent set of relationships between the three levels of government in PNG, while transferring greater legislative power to the local level governments. It also continues to permit the establishment of Special Purpose Authorities as corporate bodies, which are actually a legacy of the Australian Administration, on the recommendation of the Minister for Inter-Governmental Affairs. These entities, more commonly known as Development Authorities, have been particularly important in delivering benefits to landowners in oil, gas and mineral projects.⁸⁸ The challenge would be in trying to close the loopholes around these SPAs, themselves a colonial legacy, and hereby thwart the possibilities of their being used as fronts for the misappropriation of government funds.⁸⁹

Filer refers to the Kutubu SPA controversy, which involves the possible misappropriation of K1 million, which, he says,

brings into question its capacity to prevent the abuse of such institutional arrangements. Of course, the search for a hole-proof institution in PNG is a task best left to a knight in shining armour. However, if problems are still appearing when the Minister for Inter-Governmental Affairs is a man widely respected for his personal integrity and dedication to the principles of good governance, one wonders

⁸⁶ Schoeffel, P. and Turner, M. 2003. Local-level governance in the Pacific. SSGM Discussion Paper 2003/7. Canberra: ANU RSPAS.

⁸⁷ Filer, C. 2004. Horses for Courses. Special Purpose Authorities and Local-level Governance in PNG, SSGM Discussion Paper 2004/6, Canberra: ANU RSPAS.

⁸⁸ Filer *Ibid* ,p.4., lists as examples: Porgera-Paiela LLG SPA (Porgera Development Authority), Anga LLG SPA (Anga Development Authority), Nimamar LLG SPA (Nimamar Development Authority), Koiari LLG SPA (Koiari Development Authority), Western Regional Training Authority, Kokoda Track LLG SPA, Kikori SPA, (Kokoda Track Authority), Kutubu LLG SPA (Kutubu Development Authority), and the Hides LLG SPA.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.11 ff..

what might happen if he were to be succeeded by a minister without these qualities.
90

The contribution here from Sir Peter Barter, Minister for Inter-Government Relations, addresses closely related issues in a discussion of the possible abolition of provincial governments. This would not only strengthen local level governance, but would also save money and simplify the apportioning of funds to LLGs. “{W}ithout social and economic development at the local level,” he reminds us, “there can only be limited national development.” In place of Governor, he recommends a Provincial Commissioner, who would then become the linchpin of decentralization. “In making these recommendations,” he says, “I have an image of Provincial Commissioners who, through expertise, personal presence and charisma, can inspire, excite, and motivate District Administrations and Governments.”

The consensus seems to be for the abolition of provincial governments and the introduction of Limited Preferential Voting. At the national level, there remains an unfortunate compatibility between foreign interests and traditional Melanesian gift-giving, pulling national politicians away from their roots like pilings to a magnet—even as they feign to espouse a form of neo-traditionalism. ‘We communal people,’ we are ‘gift-givers’: we flatter you by accepting your benevolence. Would that these high rollers actually lived these customary principles and redistributed all the pajeros and Queensland palazzos throughout their electorates. The problem lies not only in a question of loyalties—of national politicians with affiliations to clan and self only, and not necessarily in that order. But it also lies in the time frame, the terrible scramble toward reelection beginning just after all the campaign opulence dies down. The competition and high finance of national campaigning forces politicians to see their time in office as a brief junket in which to recover their losses, rather than serve as a conduit to their constituencies’ needs. The same problems plague politics at the local level, albeit at a different scale. And yet if we can structure greater participation at the local level, and ensure the consistent funding of LLGs, the role that civil society organizations have successfully played in cases of national corruption might also be fostered at the local level. Strong religious and social groups can be effective watchdogs if and when there is the political will to convict corrupt local leaders, and there may just be more political will at the local than the regional or national level.

3

The third part of this collection is about social development: or, as the case may be, underdevelopment. What kind of social changes present challenges to governance today? The new PNG politician, as we have seen, looks much like the unfettered bigman of before. “A big man has personally created his power,” Paula Brown explains in a classic account of bigmanship⁹¹, “and does not accumulate wealth or ritual power to be inherited by a successor. In this sense alone the big man is egalitarian.” He is the *uber* entrepreneur. Some dominate by physical strength, some by force of character. In

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.15.

⁹¹ Brown, P. 1990. Big Men, Past and Present: Model, Person, Hero, Legend. *Ethnology* Vol 29, No2, April: 97-115, p97.

Kenneth Read's classic phrase big-men are 'supremely autonomous.'⁹² The enduring model is of a charismatic individual drawing from and redistributing wealth to a network of clansmen, exchange partners, and in recent times, political supporters. In extreme cases, big men are despotic, even tyrannical; they are aggressive and yet generous in exchanges; in sum, excellent directors. Traditional *moka* and *tee* systems made these men pre-adapted to capitalism. As Brown says, "Exchange activities are *par excellence* arenas for big man entrepreneurs and the development of inequality."⁹³

The real key to a successful bigman of yore was the ability to subsume everyone else's ambitions within your own, to inspire them to invest in your cause as their own. There's a fine line in these days, however, between this kind of persuasion and a grifter's con. The same can be said of charming entrepreneurial leaders who reach out to NGO's and government opportunities in the name of their community. Sometimes their ambitions converge with their public's, sometimes they do not. Exonerated by their success, they can also be scoundrels. And yet as Brown recounts the story of one Simbu bigman, she says he was described as a '*kein tyrann*.' Self confident, quick-tempered and dangerous in a rage, he killed many enemies and also two wives." And yet, Brown concludes, "There is nothing to suggest that he ruled the people despotically."⁹⁴

The *kein tyrann* is really the father of a generation of ambitious, innovative Simbu leaders at the eve of Independence who dovetailed village and parliamentary politics into what has become the model of a modern highlands politician. Through Kondom, Iambakey Okuk, Ignatius Kilage and others, "Simbu has carried the big man concept into the contemporary political arena by making a colonial leader a hero," says Brown, "and combining competition for office with a notion of succession in the stabilized election machinery of Papua New Guinea."⁹⁵

But it is no easy job. To borrow one quote from Bill Standish (also cited by Sinclair Dinnen elsewhere), Iambakey Okuk, apparently complained that his constituents were draining him of funds with their constant requests for contributions toward death payments, bride wealth and so on, a traditional aspect of the bigman's role. In all this, he was creating obligations that must, by custom, be repaid; but he did so amongst those who were unable to reciprocate in kind, which creates a sense of unease amongst Melanesians. At once obligated and grateful, they were thus drawn into his camp, and many eventually became active members of his faction.⁹⁶

⁹² Read, K. 1959. *The High Valley*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁹³ *Op cit*, p.101.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.110.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

⁹⁶ Standish, B. 1983, "They Want to Be the Highest Always": The Elections in Simbu. In *Electoral Politics in Papua New Guinea: Studies on the 1977 National Elections*, Hegarty, D., ed., Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea Press, pp. 75-122; p.88. See also Dinnen 2001, *Op cit*, p.175.

Much less common in PNG are accounts of 'big women'.⁹⁷ But they're not entirely absent. The literature on nontraditional forms of banking and exchange, such as women's banking schemes in Simbu, suggests that *bisnis* has become part of a wide range of social actions, including those conducted by women. And if *bisnis* does promote social stratification, then it is interesting how often it crosses the gender bias unnoticed. And yet as women climb the economic ladder in PNG, they continue to have a guarded relationship with political power.

Martha Macintyre's 1998 analysis of gender inequality in PNG⁹⁸ talks about the sentimental image held by many elite men in Port Moresby of the women back home. Good women, traditional women, they complete the image of an agrarian utopia of the village for these men. In the meantime, women are not simply the breadbasket of the country, but they're running small businesses like trade stores, trucking, handicrafts, secondhand clothes and all kinds of market sales.⁹⁹ They contribute to school fees, brideprice, compensation payments, and household necessities every day.

Bromwen Douglas also reminds us that Melanesian women take pride in their physical strength.

Well-meaning efforts to ameliorate the evident drudgery of rural women in much of Melanesia should not lose sight of the value they place on hard work and fine gardens. Alice Aruheeta Pollard from Malaita, then head of the Womens Development Division in Solomon islands, warned...: {W}e see women's role or the load that women are carrying, we see them as overburdened, or too much load. But again, when you look very closely at their attitudes to their role and their behavior, actually it is their pride, it is their status, it is for their survival, and also it is ownership."¹⁰⁰

It is also important to note, Douglas adds, that Melanesian women tend to prefer a more gradualist feminism than their Western counterparts, seeking cooperation from their menfolk and shunning more threatening tactics.¹⁰¹

Wok meri are networks of small women's groups that save and invest money earned from cash crop coffee and market produce sales by the women. Begun in the eighties, mainly

⁹⁷ But see, e.g., Lederman, R. 1986. *What Gifts Engender: Social relations and Politics in Mendi, Highland Papua New Guinea*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Sexton, L. 1986. *Mothers of money, daughters of coffee: the Wok Meri movement*. Studies in cultural anthropology no.10. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press.

⁹⁸ Macintyre, M. 1998. The Persistence of Inequality. In Zimmer-Tamakoshi, ed., 1998, *Op cit*, pp. 211-230.

⁹⁹ See, e.g., Barlow, K. 1985. The Role of Women in Intertribal Trade among the Murik of Papua New Guinea. *Research in Economic Anthropology* 7:95-122; Errington, F. and D. Gewertz, 1987. *Cultural Alternatives and a Feminist Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Gewertz, D. 1977. From Sago Suppliers to Entrepreneurs: Marketing and Migration in the Middle Sepik. *Oceania* 48:126-140; Josephides, L. 1985. *The Production of Inequality: Gender and Exchange among the Kewa*. London: Tavistock; Lindenbaum, S. The Mystification of Female Labors. In *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis*, J.F. Collier and S.J. Yanagisako, eds., Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.221-243.

¹⁰⁰ Douglas, B. 2000. Women and governance from the grassroots in Melanesia State, *Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 00/2*, Canberra: ANU RSPAS, pp.6-7.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

in Simbu Province, such groups (Kafaina is another from Simbu) were formed as a way of women taking the controls over their families' wealth, and not the least, insuring they have enough money for school fees. The women are largely in-married wives recruited from different lineages in a village. Much of the business protocol has been adapted from the strategies of traditional bigmen, such as the election of one or more 'big women' to control the finances. Other routines are modeled on brideprice rituals, and like traditional exchange systems, these savings and loan societies are part of an area-wide network. In some cases, *wok meri* groups have invested in their own trade stores or PMVs.

The most significant effect of these groups has not really been on gender equity, but on the redistribution of wealth. These women do not demand political equity, nor do they want to abandon their traditional roles. Significantly there appears to be a rise in domestic violence everywhere such banking schemes have been introduced.¹⁰² These banking schemes are based on the principle of an equitable distribution of resources and hark back to a time when bigmen were not garishly rich, but instead paternal, more like benevolent despots and *kein tyrann*. One would hardly expect these women to amass fortunes, run for office, and promptly move to Port Moresby. So many of the features of traditional bigmanship that distinguished it from western entrepreneurship (the way status was always achieved and not inherited, for one) have been systematically vetted by the cash economy; it has taken highlands women to stand up and reclaim some of this democracy to wealth creation in the village.¹⁰³

Sarah Garap's contribution here describes a related, but different phenomenon in Simbu, in the establishment of a women's political group called *Meri I Kirap Sapotim*. There were twenty-six women candidates in Simbu for local government seats in the 2002 elections, she tells us. Only a couple won their seats, however. They were simply overwhelmed by the kind and caliber of electioneering by the bigmen, who threw around money and effectively bought their votes in a competition for status more than a yield to public duty. "Violence, intimidation, bribery were widely practiced, and furthermore, accepted by the general populace. This situation made it virtually impossible for women candidates to be competitive" Garap even goes so far as to call these newly elected officials *warlords* of their clans alone. She is echoed by Michael Jacobsen¹⁰⁴ elsewhere, who has said the apparatus of state in Simbu Province is so poorly integrated that it has largely been subsumed by local leaders to serve their own ends.

Garap cites Namaliu, Siaguru and Narokobi as writers who have all called for equal representation in Parliament, and points to Namaliu's suggestion (which Narokobi also reiterates in his chapter here) that Provincial Governorships be abolished in favour of 19

¹⁰² *Op cit* Sexton 1986.

¹⁰³ See also, as an example of highlands women in political action, Rumsey, Alan, 2000, *Women as Peacemakers--a case from the Nebilyer Valley, Western Highlands, Papua New Guinea*, and Jolly, Margaret, 2000, *Epilogue: further reflections on violence in Melanesia*, both from *Reflections on Violence in Melanesia*, eds. Sinclair Dinnen and Allison Ley, Hawkins Press and Asia/Pacific Press, pp. 139-155, 305-324.

¹⁰⁴ Jacobsen, M. 1995, *Vanishing Nations and the Infiltration of Nationalism: The Case of Papua New Guinea*, in Foster, R.J., ed., *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p.242. See also Dinnen's discussion of the same in 2001, *Op cit*, pp188-9.

seats reserved for women. Although the Papua New Guinea Constitution grants equality of status to women, there remains pervasive informal discrimination against women in education and employment. In the thirty years since Independence there have been only three female members of National Parliament and very few women in high-status government jobs. Anthropologist Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi has written extensively on women and social change in PNG.¹⁰⁵ The difference in contemporary politics, she reminds us, is that national politicians make decisions effecting more than their local community, they effect the entire nation. “A case in point is the lack of ‘grassroots’ sympathy for elite sexual politics and elite women’s efforts to be elected to prominent positions in the Papua New Guinea government....”¹⁰⁶ Affirmative action, Garap argues here, is the only solution. In effect *Meri I Kirap Sapotim*, *Wok meri*, and other women’s groups across the highlands are the best evidence of a healthy civil society. Their members have become lonely watchdogs for fair and equitable campaign practices, and for the wider modern culture that all too often fritters away the family budget.

James Topo also writes (this volume) about women in politics in PNG, noting the rapid decline since Independence in female candidates for office. But he agrees that the kinds of gender disparities we see now in PNG public life are inherited not so much from traditional culture as from the patriarchal values of the colonial overlay. But the absence of women in decision-making positions has hampered PNG development, he argues, and aggravated the inequalities that run along geographic, educational and other social lines.

Social inequity is also the subject of Dick Rooney’s chapter. He describes six trends that he says the VSO have identified as developmental shortcomings in PNG, areas of future commitment. Amongst them are the lack of government accountability, fairness and institutional support for popular participation in government. (The other trends include poor health, vulnerability to disasters, and the cross-cutting pandemic of HIV/AIDs.) Rooney’s argument is that education as it currently exists in PNG does not address these problems, and actually wears away at the nation’s social and economic fabric. He tells us that unequal access to education, economically and geographically, combined with poor management of the education system itself, have crippled the system in PNG. Just as governance in the political sphere must be addressed, governance of such important institutions as the Department of Education must also be examined.

Rooney’s chapter is followed by a contribution from Pam Norman, on the introduction of a subject called ‘Making a Living’ into the upper primary curriculum. Considered more appropriate than other courses for being directly applicable to graduates’ lives, the subject provides the tools for students to initiate various formal and informal sector business projects. This is not macroeconomics, it is about selling ice blocks and running a

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g. Zimmer-Tamakoshi, L. 1993. Bachelors, spinsters and *pamuk meris*, in Marksbury, R., ed., *The Business of Marriage: Transformations in Oceanic Matrimony*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp84-104; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, L. 1998. Women in town, in Zimmer-Tamakoshi, ed., 1998 *Op cit*, pp195-210; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1996, the women at Kobum Spice Company: tensions in a local age stratification system and the undermining of development, in Dickerson-Putman, ed., *Women, Age and Power*, Special Issue of *Pacific Studies* 19(4), pp71-98.

¹⁰⁶ Zimmer-Tamakoshi, L.1998. The State and National Identity. In Zimmer-Tamakoshi, ed., 1998, *Op cit*, pp. 17-19; p17.

trade store—the kinds of businesses that are ubiquitous in PNG, but which nowhere have their lessons collected and taught. Educators might also argue that this kind of reform must go hand-in-hand with structural reforms to the economy, because if we do not provide more employment opportunities, formal or informal, and we do not create an economic environment that encourages *ethical* entrepreneurship, then we are only cultivating more dissatisfaction. The immediate applicability of Making a Living should not blind us to the need for some link between this programme and even greater economic opportunity. Nevertheless, its success is a lesson in sustainable and appropriate technology.

Can the success of individual projects in sustainable development also be foreign policy parables? Is it not the finite triumphs that fuel the grander ones? If PNG is sufficiently able to stand by its cultural self-determinism in a regional forum, it should have a strong imprint on Asian-Pacific affairs. Undeniably, the big players follow their own rules, and the U.S. is last in line to comply with U.N. decisions; those who create the New World Order apparently make their own rules. But the threat of terror has placed the entire world in stomach-clenching anxiety, wondering who is ‘us’ and who may be ‘them.’ Huntington even pushes his model of the world to include a ‘Confucian-Islamic connection.’¹⁰⁷ And in this model, not to mention the estimation of observers like Windybank, Manning and Hughes, the Pacific Island states fall very near, if not within, the arc of instability. Papua New Guinea actually represents a double threat by its shared border with Indonesia. (Islam has ‘bloody borders’ Huntington enjoins.) But Islam is no monolith and in fact includes Palestinians, Iraqis, Bosnians and Azeris in the same lumpy ‘zone of peril.’ We should also not forget, as Mahbubani reminds us, that in all Muslim conflicts with the West, it is Islam which is losing. “With so much disunity,” he says, “the Islamic world is not about to coalesce into a single force.”¹⁰⁸

The wittiest *bon mot* to be coined in the wake of Huntington’s essay comes from scientist Gerard Piel, who says, “We must be in terror of the civilizations conjured by Samuel P. Huntington for the same reasons that [subatomic physicist] Nils Bohr admonished us to fear ghosts: We see them, and we know they are not there!”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Huntington, S.P. 1996, The Clash of Civilizations? In Huntington, S.P. et al, *The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate*, Foreign Affairs, New York and London: W.W. Norton, pp.1-25; p.21ff.

¹⁰⁸ Mahbubani, K. 1996. The Dangers of Decadence. In *Ibid*, pp.36-40; p.37.

¹⁰⁹ Piel, G. 1996. The West is Best. In *Ibid*, p.55.

It is irresistible to look at corruption at a national level and see its parallels in the global government picture: massively concentrated in the hands of a few, it is dedicated less to the reduction of poverty than to the alleviation of suffering by a select club of billionaires. Extreme concentrations of wealth and power are the death knells of democracy. No republic in history has ever survived a let-them-eat-cake period; why the global community should be able to is anyone's guess. Some in the developed world are beginning to suspect they have been fogged with fear (*fear*, the greatest political strategy ever: the ominous silence, distant sirens, and so many whispered warnings to keep the public uneasy and silence the opposition.) In a time of vague fear, it is always possible to appoint bullies to the critical commissions, and to eviscerate poverty-reduction and 'fair' trade policies, so as to continue lavishing the same gorgeous benefits on a few.

In the midst of this, the consolidation of 'kin-country' power must be seen as first and foremost defensive. While the wild swine crowd the international trough, the proliferation of regional alliances for trade and security is one way to stem the enormous transfers of wealth from the lesser to the greater states. Under the new spectre of global terror, the proliferation of regional fora such as MSG, PACER, PICTA, APEC, AOSIS, and SPARTECA, suggests that governance at this level is becoming all the more important. This is also where PNG stands tall amongst its fellow Island states, virtually the bigman of the lot when Australia steps back—or moves closer to the U.S. for *cultural* reasons. PICs are especially adept at maneuvering from front to back seat, as statesmen move from public to private citizenship. This is part of the forever-grassroots ideal. Whether this regionalism be tribal, defensive, or simply self-determined, this level of governance offers protection from the force-fields of global free trade and foreign affairs. It also legitimizes the shared security concerns of kin-country states, which are not necessarily focused on Al Qaeda, and, in the case of global warming, may be considerably more life-threatening.

What is not foolproof about this theorem is the inclusion of Australia. Indeed, Australia may even be a greater risk to PNG, inching as it is toward the Washington Consensus, than the visions of a failed state on its northern border is to Australia. The risk always exists of Australia lumping all PICs together as failed states to be painted red on a global map. And yet today's arcs of crises are not the same territory as all failed states undeserving of foreign investment. Only in a fundamentalist capital sense would the two be equally in need of 'intervention.' But it is easy to imagine how economic enhancement packages may become security enhancement packages with long-term advisors posted to every province in PNG.

It has always been a tricky project in PNG to turn local individuals into provincial and national representatives. It requires an imaginative shift, *sensu* Benedict Anderson, from those irreducible ancestral identities of clan and place, to the greater consciousness of being part of a district, a province, a region, and a nation. We cannot ask a Ward Councilor to be more visionary than a National Member, to forsake Rural Development Sectional Funds for the larger economy; but we can ask that entirely parochial loyalties

slowly give way to these more inclusive ones. This is a shape-shifting act, shuttling between two identities; but not wholly unfamiliar to Melanesian leaders, as we have seen. In the same way that PNG can be a leader in the Pacific community while it remains 'less developed' on the global scale, so, too, can public servants model themselves on wider leadership roles, rather than continually panting at the public trough for a few furtive scraps to bring home. Surely that is what Sir Peter Barter means when he speaks of future Provincial Commissioners who may have the necessary charisma and personal presence to lead—really lead---because it will take more than a civil servant to manage the balance of loyalties.

We must isolate the best qualities of those old *kein tyrann* and reshape them to fit leaders at this problematic intermediate level. It no doubt takes a tyrannical charm like Huey Long's. But more: it will require the kind of innovation and self-determination that the women of Simbu now exemplify, those who stand for election against the greatest odds. We can only hope that some of these candidates will persist and one day even represent PNG in regional political fora. Get those *Meri I Kirap Sapotim* to assert PNG's sovereignty in the Asian-Pacific region. Surely they have the tenacity to establish a better New World Order.