

Pacific Islands Monograph Series 17

*Law and Order
in a Weak State*

Crime and Politics
in Papua New Guinea

SINCLAIR DINNEN

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LAW AND ORDER IN A WEAK STATE

CRIME AND POLITICS IN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SINCLAIR DINNEN

CENTER FOR PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES

School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies

University of Hawai'i

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I PRESS • Honolulu

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Printed in the United States of America

06 05 04 03 02 01 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dinnen, Sinclair.

Law and order in a weak state : crime and politics in Papua New Guinea /
Sinclair Dinnen.

p. cm. — (Pacific islands monograph series ; 17)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8248-2280-3 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Crime prevention—Papua New Guinea. 2. Crime—Papua New Guinea.
3. Surety of the peace—Papua New Guinea. 4. Papua New Guinea—Politics and
government—1975— I. Title: Crime and politics in Papua New Guinea. II. Title.
III. Pacific islands monograph series ; no. 17.

HV9960.P26D56 2001

364.9953—dc21

00-059938

CIP

Endsheet maps by Manoa Mapworks, Inc.; maps 1, 2, and 3 redrawn by
Manoa Mapworks from originals by Ian Heyward.

University of Hawai'i Press books are printed on acid-free paper and
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Library Resources.

Book design by Kenneth Miyamoto

Printed by The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group

In memory of my Mother
Muriel Craig Dinnen

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Editor's Note

Twenty-five years after securing independence, the government of Papua New Guinea struggles to make a nation out of the many diverse communities within its borders. This predicament mirrors the dilemma facing many postcolonial governments where the creation of the state has preceded the development of any real national consciousness. Securing a diverse population's allegiance to a national ideology is compounded in Papua New Guinea by a host of interrelated social and economic problems, not the least of which are a stagnant economy, a young, expanding, and increasingly frustrated population, and crime. The illegal, sectarian, and violence-promoting activities of some politicians further strain the credibility, even viability, of Papua New Guinea's government. The totality, complexity, and richness of the country certainly cannot be reduced to the issue of public order. Nonetheless, lawlessness has become a measure for the performance and future prospects of the government.

History is also at issue as the precolonial and colonial pasts continue to show themselves in Papua New Guinea's postcolonial present. Indeed, the crisis over public order in Papua New Guinea has deep colonial roots that involve Australia's nearly century-old administration and exploitation of the area. There are too the regional, more contemporary ramifications of instability in a Papua New Guinea that shares an island with the larger, more turbulent state of Indonesia. Problems with law and order matter most, however, to the citizens of Papua New Guinea, for whom threats to individual safety and personal property can be a daily issue.

Sinclair Dinnen invites readers to move beyond the apocalyptic descriptions and doomsday forecasts that have characterized much of the popular, even academic, writing on crime in contemporary Papua New Guinea. His work focuses on three case studies involving urban gangs, mining security, and election-related violence. In each of these case studies, Dinnen sees the complex interplay of Melanesian social practices

with the uneven, disruptive forces of modernization. The dynamics of these engagements are examined through an enriched, analytical framework that employs materialist, culturalist, and institutionalist perspectives. The activities of politicians, as well as leaders in other modern occupations, evidence older patterns of Melanesian competitive leadership that the word *corruption* does not fully encompass or explain. Similarly, the shifting relationships among local Highlands communities, government leaders, police, mining and petroleum industry officials, Australian aid experts, and representatives of an international security firm reveal a situation in which the flow of international capital into the weak, postcolonial state of Papua New Guinea cannot be characterized simply as foreign exploitation.

Dinnen is interested in charting not only the problems and complexities of crime, but the possibilities for constructive, pragmatic solutions. His findings challenge the orthodoxy advanced by much of the extant literature on law and order in Papua New Guinea. In an effort to legitimate its presence, the mining industry, for example, has employed consultative strategies that seek the engagement of local communities. The result of this more democratic approach has been the blunting or deflection of the Papua New Guinea state's more violent, repressive, and self-serving policies in areas such as the Highlands. Transnational mining companies thus become inadvertent contributors to the constitution of a more civil society. Likewise, in the mass surrender technique employed by urban gang members or *raskols*, Dinnen detects a more culturally appropriate strategy for controlling civil disorder in Papua New Guinea, a strategy reflecting established Melanesian patterns of restorative justice that condemn the crime but pardon the criminal, and that promote a humane solution to the problem of urban crime.

Law and Order in a Weak State: Crime and Politics in Papua New Guinea is a bold, insightful, ambitious book that goes beyond the limited, more community-focused studies of earlier scholarship. Dinnen has undertaken a comprehensive examination of law and order in greater Papua New Guinea, while remaining acutely sensitive to the diversity of peoples, practices, and beliefs found within the country. Fieldwork, archival research, and current theoretical perspectives are the cornerstones on which his scholarship rests. Dinnen's residence in Papua New Guinea between 1991 and 1994, and his position there as senior researcher in the Crime Division of the National Research Institute add to the persuasiveness of his analysis. The book's attention to postcolonial governance and its employment of the weak-state thesis will be of interest to readers in the larger Pacific and beyond.

As the seventeenth volume published in the Pacific Islands Monograph Series, *Law and Order in a Weak State* continues a commitment to timely, relevant, and interdisciplinary scholarship on the region and its

people. Professor Robert C Kiste, the founder and previous editor of the series, has made a remarkable contribution to study of the Pacific; moreover, he has done so through the promotion of an ongoing conversation that has included the writings of Islanders as well as outlanders. Bob has left some very large sandals to fill. I am honored, humbled, and even a little intimidated by the opportunity to follow him as editor. I pledge myself to the high standards he has established and very much look forward to working with Ms Linley Chapman, the manuscript editor for the series, and the eight distinguished scholars who currently serve on the PIMS editorial board.

David Hanlon

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Acknowledgments

My first encounter with Papua New Guinea took place in 1984, when I arrived from England to teach at the Law Faculty of the University of Papua New Guinea. Most of my many preconceptions about “law” and “order,” and “law and order,” were to be thoroughly challenged during my four years at the university. Teaching, researching, and traveling to different parts of the country was an important part of my continuing education in the complexities of social ordering in Papua New Guinea. In 1989 I went to Canberra and later enrolled to do my doctoral studies at the Australian National University. I returned to Papua New Guinea in 1991 to do eight months’ fieldwork. While there, I was offered employment at the newly established Crime Studies Division of the National Research Institute. Three and a half years were spent researching various aspects of “law and order” before I returned to Canberra. I am grateful to both the National Research Institute and the University of Papua New Guinea for the facilities and opportunities provided. This book is based on that research and will, I hope, make a modest contribution to the understanding of issues of great concern to Papua New Guineans and of fundamental importance to the future prospects of their young nation.

Among the many people who contributed to my research in Papua New Guinea, Wari Iamo, Ila Temu, Joe Masa, John Nonggorr, the late Robert Nonggorr, Lily Tiki, Sinaka Goava, Ludger Mond, Nicholas Balagaize, Tony Fofoe, Joe Ketan, Powes Parkop, Brian Brunton, Michael Goddard, Anou Borrey, Colin Filer, Ken Egan, Denis Samin, Bruce Harris, Siba Das, Jim Glynn, Greg Anderson, David Cannings, and Jenny Xomerang deserve special thanks. For their equally significant contribution, a big thanks to those informants whose names are best not given here.

This book is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation, undertaken in the Law Program of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. A major intellectual debt is owed to John

Braithwaite, who has been a constant source of encouragement, advice, and insight. The revisions were done while I was working as a Research Fellow on the State, Society, and Governance in Melanesia Project of the Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies at the Australian National University. Donald Denoon and Hank Nelson have dutifully ploughed through each rewritten chapter, providing prompt and valuable feedback. Eugene Ogan, Terence Wesley-Smith, Robert Kiste, Ben Kerkvliet, Eva Lindstrom, and two anonymous readers have provided helpful suggestions on particular chapters. I have also benefited from discussions with a number of colleagues in Canberra, including Anthony Regan, Bronwen Douglas, Margaret Jolly, Klaus Neumann, Mark Turner, Peter Larmour, Peter Sack, Greg Fry, Bill Standish, Ron May, and David Hegarty. Ian Heyward of the Cartography Unit of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, drew the original maps. The photographs were selected from the archives of the *Post-Courier*, Word Publishing Limited, and the *National* newspaper in Port Moresby, and are reproduced with the permission of those organizations. Thanks to Oseah Philemon at the *Post-Courier*, Anna Solomon and Joe Kanekane at Word Publishing, and the library staff at the *National*. Finally, a special thanks to Linley Chapman in Honolulu for her invaluable editorial assistance and to Robin Ward in Canberra for her help with the index.

Law and Order in a Weak State

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Australian territory of Papua New Guinea became the independent state of Papua New Guinea on 16 September 1975. As elsewhere in Melanesia, the state had external origins. Papua New Guinea's territorial borders derived from partitioning by European powers in the late nineteenth century, a process that had taken little account of existing social and political groupings. When Australia finally relinquished control, these borders contained a widely dispersed population of two and a half million people, speaking over eight hundred languages. A relatively short and uneven experience of central administration, and the absence of any unifying anticolonial struggle, meant that little sense of common identity existed among the citizens of the new state. The primary allegiances and identities of most Papua New Guineans remained firmly implanted in local communities.

Building the institutional framework of modern statehood, including the system of representative government, had commenced in earnest during a concentrated bout of institutional modernization in the years preceding independence. Despite the great variety of local societies, cultures, languages, and political structures, decolonization resulted in a single political format—that of the Western territorial state. The poor fit between Papua New Guinea's territorial sovereignty and indigenous political communities has had important consequences for public order. Unlike the prototype European states, this new state was established in the absence of any significant sense of nation or national identity. The state was created before the nation, hence the central role of the post-colonial state in the process of nation making in Papua New Guinea (Jacobsen 1997). For the first generation of state leaders, and their successors over the years, the task of binding the country's disparate communities into an effective political and ideological unit has proved the most formidable of challenges.

Twenty-five years on, the report card is decidedly mixed. Contrary to

the most dire predictions, Papua New Guinea has not collapsed. There have also been some significant achievements. A free and vigorous press exists. Elections are held regularly, and governments come and go. As yet, Papua New Guinea does not suffer the levels of acute poverty and massive environmental degradation found in some developing and former-Soviet countries. Even the widely publicized problems of lawlessness pale when compared to those in many other parts of the world.

While it is important to maintain perspective, it is equally clear that all is not well in Papua New Guinea. The authority of the state has faced serious challenges on a number of fronts, most obviously in the case of the protracted secessionist war on Bougainville. State controls appear to be losing the struggle to contain escalating lawlessness in many parts of the country. While a sense of nation and nationalism may exist in elite circles, localism continues to constrain and motivate most people, including many of those acting in the name of the state. Social indicators reveal a serious reversal of early advances, particularly in the areas of health and education. The disadvantaged status of women remains a major concern. Despite the substantial revenues generated by the exploitation of Papua New Guinea's rich natural resources, funding for infrastructure and basic government functions is declining. Government services appear to be in a state of semicollapse in many rural areas, where the bulk of the people live. Material prospects for a young and growing population, now over four and a half million, look bleak in light of a stagnant national economy, falling international commodity prices, and the regional financial crisis. Growing levels of government corruption and political instability further threaten the institutional integrity and fragile legitimacy of the postcolonial state.

Against this background, "law and order" problems have become central in debates about Papua New Guinea's performance and future prospects as a nation-state. For the most pessimistic observers, the deterioration in public order is symptomatic of more profound processes of disintegration at work. Some policy and academic analysts have cast Papua New Guinea as the closest to the "doomsday scenario" seen as confronting, in varying degrees, all Pacific Island countries. This view is critical of the postindependence performance of Pacific Island governments and economies, questioning their long-term viability in an increasingly competitive global environment. In its more alarmist guise, the "new doomsday . . . asserts that the Pacific Island countries are on a path to a future nightmare of overcrowding, poverty, mass unemployment, serious environmental degradation, and a decline in health standards" (Fry 1997, 306).

The larger significance of events in Papua New Guinea relates to its location at a critical point in the world's political geography. It shares an island with the populous and turbulent nation of Indonesia. It lies at

the meeting of Southeast Asia, Australia, and Oceania. A collapse of the structure of government, an inability of the state to provide basic security for its citizens, or to meet international obligations, may not have immediate impact on the rest of the world were it to happen in, say, New Zealand, Tasmania, or Fiji. It matters, however, in Papua New Guinea.

Australia invested much, materially and otherwise, during its custodianship of Papua New Guinea. As they left in 1975, Australians wanted to believe they had achieved much. One way to measure how well they did is to examine the performance of the state left for Papua New Guineans. Looking at law and order in Papua New Guinea today implicitly involves making judgments on what Australians did over nearly a century of an expanding administrative frontier. While law and order is an immediate problem for Papua New Guineans, it is also a reflection on a major—perhaps the major—Australian undertaking overseas.

For the citizens and residents of Papua New Guinea, problems of order provide practical challenges to be negotiated on a daily basis. These are commonly experienced as threats to personal security and property. Concerns with personal safety are most apparent in the towns and are reflected in the elaborate security surrounding homes and commercial premises, as well as the reluctance to visit certain areas and to venture out after dark. Criminal gangs, known locally as *raskols*, are believed to be responsible for most violent crime and have become the source of acute personal insecurity, particularly among women.

As a result, *raskols* have become a major focus of policing operations, as well as an important factor behind the rapid expansion of the private security industry. Violence and crime, however, are by no means confined to *raskols* or to the towns. Other manifestations include so-called tribal fighting in parts of the Highlands, conflicts around large-scale resource development, election-related conflict, and high levels of domestic violence. The issue of corruption among politicians and state officials is another growing preoccupation among both townfolk and villagers.

While it is relatively easy to catalogue the main types of lawlessness, they remain much harder to quantify. Available criminal justice data are notoriously unreliable, show a marked urban bias, and contain numerous errors of commission and omission (Walker 1985). Most crimes, including acts of violence, take place beyond the purview of the state and never appear in official statistics. Much of the information fueling insecurity comes from media reports, personal anecdotes, and vibrant networks of rumor and gossip. There is an intriguing, if unknowable, relationship between the mass media and social change in Papua New Guinea. While growing numbers of people are able to view videos and international television, the disjunction between the physical and mental worlds of viewers and those viewed is enormous. Some viewers are illit-

erate, or nearly so, and in any case have little access to printed materials; with the advent and spread of visual media they shift from pre- to postliterate worlds. Just what impact the turbulent real and fictional scenes in the visual media have on Papua New Guineans can only be speculated.

Whatever their deficiencies, existing criminal justice data support popular perceptions of a growing problem and one that is proportionately greater than in many neighboring countries. Levantis, for example, cited an annual rate for violent crime (including robberies, rapes, and murders) of 2,000 incidents per 100,000 population, which is ten times that of Australia and six times that of Fiji, which is socially and economically closer to Papua New Guinea (1997a).

The economic impact of crime has caused great concern to political and business leaders worried about the costs to individual businesses and to the national economy as a whole. These include the expense of public security provision (the criminal justice system). There are additional operating costs for businesses vulnerable to crime—insurance premiums, staff turnover, loss of productivity, and the expense of private security. Most significant of all are the corrosive impact on Papua New Guinea's international reputation and, in particular, the implications for foreign investment and tourism.

As they bemoan the damaging effects of violent crime, many politicians are themselves implicated in flouting state law, breaching the leadership code, evading procedural regulations relating to government contracts, and misappropriating public funds. Numerous allegations have been made against leaders, sometimes resulting in official inquiries, leadership tribunals, and, occasionally, criminal prosecutions. The perception of widespread abuses by holders of public office lies behind growing levels of popular cynicism and disaffection with politicians and senior bureaucrats.

Understandably, the practical impacts of escalating lawlessness have been at the forefront of public debates. The broader context of Papua New Guinea's law and order situation also raises important theoretical issues, many of which have a pertinence beyond its shores. These include questions about the nature of the postcolonial state and its relations with domestic and international constituencies, the challenges of state formation and nation making in a divided society, and the exigencies of capitalist penetration and integration into the global economy (Foster 1997; Otto and Thomas 1997).

The proliferation of problems of order in recent years suggests that they are closely linked to processes of modernization. Economic change, in particular, appears to be centrally implicated, as reflected in the acquisitive crimes of *raskols*, conflicts around resource exploitation, and generally in the concentration of problems in the most developed areas

—the towns, highways, and mines. Political change, associated with the establishment and entrenchment of government institutions, is also implicated in the growing turbulence of electoral competition, political instability, corruption, and vertical tensions between national, provincial, and local levels of society. Even more than post-Tito Yugoslavia or post-Soviet Russia, Papua New Guinea is the world laboratory of competing and interdependent minorities. The fundamental tension between communal loyalties and nation–state is a critical dimension of current problems of order.

While issues of change, “modernization,” and “development” frame much law-and-order debate, it is equally clear that the legacies of small-scale “stateless” societies, as adapted to change, continue to exert a major influence in all areas of contemporary social, economic, and political life. In short, the precolonial and colonial pasts remain deeply embedded in the postcolonial present. Many aspects of today’s problems relate to the resilience of older social traditions and the manner in which these have blended with institutions of more recent origin, notably the state.

The post–cold war collapse of ostensibly strong states and the precarious condition of others have renewed scholarly interest in the character and capabilities of modern states. Many new states have experienced considerable difficulties in carrying out the most basic tasks of statehood, including the maintenance of public order, preserving political stability and social cohesion within their national borders, providing basic services, and managing the national economy. The term *weak state* is found increasingly in policy and development debates with reference to states that find it hard to fulfill these basic tasks. As used in this context, the “weakness” of states is usually expressed in terms of a serious lack of administrative or institutional capacity. This deficiency is likely to include a mixture of a lack of organizational cohesion; inadequate coordination, management, and planning; and a shortage of skilled personnel and financial resources. The solution is seen to lie in capacity-building programs designed to remedy these particular deficits.

For many observers, Papua New Guinea is a classic example of a weak state in this sense. Its institutional shortcomings are manifested in its limited capacity to maintain public order, to deliver government services, to implement policy decisions, to manage the national economy, and, in general, to command the allegiance of its subjects. As a result, numerous capacity-building projects have been initiated in the principal sectors of government in recent years, largely funded by Australian aid and loans from multilateral agencies. The law and justice sector, for example, has been the site of extensive initiatives along these lines, targeted at the police force, the court system, and the corrective institutions.

While processes of state formation and state–society relations have

long been of interest to political scientists, the widely differing capacities of modern states in the post-cold war era have revived scholarly and increased applied interest in these issues. An important contributor to this debate has been the comparative political scientist Joel Migdal (1988, 1994). He defined state capabilities as including the capacity to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways. Strong states are those with high capabilities to complete these tasks, whereas those with low capabilities are weak states (1988, 4–5).

While few would disagree with the poor performance of the state of Papua New Guinea in these respects, the difficulties facing it cannot simply be reduced to lack of institutional capacity, involving, for example, a shortage of trained personnel and resources. Such a diagnosis views state weakness as essentially a technical problem to be remedied by strategic adjustments and institutional strengthening. It also posits an implicit separation between the state and its encompassing society. The state, however, does not operate in a social vacuum, nor is it an organic, undifferentiated entity. States comprise many different components, which, in practice, may often work at cross-purposes. Likewise, while some elements of the state may be weak in institutional or other senses, others can be simultaneously strong. States and their actions must be evaluated in terms of their relationship with a range of domestic and international actors. In particular, an understanding of the challenges of order facing the postcolonial state, and its responses, requires a concerted focus on its linkages with the surrounding society. In what ways has the postcolonial state been shaped by the societies it operates among, and, conversely, how have these been affected by the state? The focus on state–society relations adopted in this book is a case of what Migdal (1988) referred to as a state-in-society approach, one that views state action as an outcome of a continuous struggle for domination between elements of state and a range of nonstate constituencies. States and their societies are, in other words, necessarily connected, and one cannot be viewed in isolation from the other.

Relations between states and societies are also processual, not static, and exist in “constant flux, each continually altered by the structure and actions of the other” (Dauvergne 1998, 2). For example, what is deemed legitimate under the rubric of state law, on the one hand, and in the eyes of local populations, on the other, can differ substantially and will change over time. By examining the implications of making particular actions or relations illegal, one may also consider how power relations connect to other moral and conceptual orders (Heyman and Smart 1999). If morality is not exclusively embodied in state law, then what are the competing sources of mores motivating actors engaged in illegal practices?

As well as important areas of continuity, there have been significant changes in state–society relations during the transition from colonial to postcolonial statehood in Papua New Guinea. This transition has had important consequences for the generation of problems of order and the manner of state responses. The core argument in this book is about how the state of Papua New Guinea has been progressively permeated and transformed through its interactions with local social forces in particular. This process has had seriously debilitating consequences for both state and society in postcolonial Papua New Guinea and, in combination with the impacts of externally induced change, underlies many aspects of today’s problems. While there is evidence that aspects of the state are strong, its weaknesses may be understood in terms of the domestication of the state by indigenous social forces, rather than being viewed narrowly and in isolation as a technical issue of institutional capacity. On a more positive note, the same process provides important clues to how state–society interactions can also be conducive to constructive and sustainable outcomes. A detailed empirical examination of contemporary problems of order allows an investigation of the broader dynamics of the crisis of the postcolonial state in Papua New Guinea.

The state is clearly central in the study of illegal practices, including crime. Criminal networks, communal violence, official corruption, and so on, do not exist apart from the state, nor the state from them. State law and the evasion of state law are defined in relation to each other and must be examined together. Moreover, states or parts of states have often been implicated in the toleration and even encouragement of activities that are officially illegal. Another important line of inquiry is the extent to which the relationship between the state and illegal practices is a symbiotic one and what this means for the generation and control of social conflict.

Although much has been written on Papua New Guinea’s problems of order in journal articles, book chapters, and official reports, there has been no comprehensive treatment of this topic. Previous studies have been bound by time or place, or have concentrated on particular types of crime or forms of violence. The focus of research has also varied according to the disciplinary perspective adopted. Reluctance to address the bigger picture stems, in part, from the country’s unusual degree of social diversity and an understandable reluctance to generalize in such a fragmented environment. This reluctance is reflected and reinforced in the strong tradition of ethnographic work in Melanesian scholarship, one that tends to focus on the micro-context of the village and other localized associations. While these studies have provided a richness of empirical data and theoretical insights, they have often done so at the expense of more encompassing structures and processes. The focus on diversity at local levels has also reduced opportunities for com-

parisons with social ordering in other parts of the world. Conversely, much research in a legal or criminological tradition has either confined itself to single-factor analysis or to formal institutional processes of criminalization, neglecting the existence of order beyond (and before) the state and the role of nonstate entities.

While there is no single way to research public order, it is clear that an understanding of its many facets benefits from a combination of approaches. As Warren remarked, “one cannot understand current crises without studying longer term patterns of socio-cultural, political and economic change” (1993, 1). What is needed is a historically informed analysis capable of addressing each of these crucial and interconnected dimensions and one that combines the strengths of detailed fieldwork with archival and broader theoretical research.

This book sets out to fill a gap in the literature and provide a comprehensive examination of challenges of order in Papua New Guinea. The empirical core of the study comprises three detailed case studies that look at conflicts, and the responses these engender, occurring in diverse socioeconomic contexts and geographic locations. A country-wide focus is adopted in a deliberate attempt to move beyond the micro-focus of past studies. An important methodological objective is to select forms of micro-data that have good prospects of macro-linkages. In each case, the empirical data are examined through a common analytical framework that focuses on the broad dimensions of aggregate change. Three different cases are examined through a number of theoretical prisms, linkages between them are identified, and in the process a larger picture of the postcolonial social order is constructed.

The historical overview in chapter 2 provides essential background and identifies concepts and processes that are central to the analysis of the case studies. These include aspects of Melanesian social organization, including patterns of competitive leadership and the gift economy, that continue to manifest themselves in numerous, often unexpected, ways in the modern setting. This chapter also sketches the institutional, economic, and political transformations of recent years, and their implications for state–society relations and public order.

The analytical framework consists of three sets of perspectives—materialist, culturalist, and institutionalist. They provide a flexible set of conceptual tools for examining the empirical data in the case studies. Each perspective, as explained in chapter 3, draws attention to particular dimensions of aggregate change. The materialist perspectives focus on economic change at both the micro-level of the reasoning individual and, more broadly, on the impacts of macro-level processes of capital formation, development, and globalization. Culturalist perspectives highlight the social foundations of individual and group behavior, providing an important means for charting social continuities across pre-

colonial, colonial, and postcolonial settings. Institutional perspectives provide a lens for viewing the actions of state agencies and other institutional actors in relation to social control and the management of change. Used in combination, these diverse viewpoints enable a cross-disciplinary and shifting analysis of the empirical material, with the movement from micro to macro levels delineated for each case in a material, a cultural, and an institutional way.

The three case studies examine the phenomena of urban *raskolism*, mining security, and election-related violence. The studies are strategic for developing a theoretically grounded understanding of Papua New Guinea's challenges of order. Each one comprises an empirical section followed by theoretical analyses. The first case study relates to the most visible manifestation of today's problems and the principal target of state controls. The rise of *raskolism* is documented against a background of urbanization and growing social and economic marginalization. *Raskol* groups are shown to be fluid, indeterminate entities that are usually well integrated into their residential communities. Ways of leaving crime are examined through the vehicle of the criminal group surrender, a relatively common occurrence in Papua New Guinea. Combining the insights of cultural and institutional viewpoints illustrates how militarized policing and other punitive state responses have not only failed to contain *raskolism* but have actively contributed to its constitution. More positively, they also show how the incipient institution of mass surrender has potential for the development of more productive and culturally appropriate crime control strategies. These different ways of viewing points of entry to, and exit from, *raskolism* provide a methodologically rich approach for illuminating larger patterns of social ordering in Papua New Guinea.

The case study on mining security tells the story of two government initiatives aimed at improving security at mining and petroleum projects in the Highlands. Large-scale projects located in undeveloped rural areas generate conflicts over issues of ownership, political control, social and environmental impacts, and matters relating to compensation and the distribution of resource rents. Given the significance of mining revenue to the national economy, avoiding disruption has been a strategic concern for successive governments. The potential for conflict and the limited capacity of state policing are also of major concern to project developers, which in Papua New Guinea include some of the world's largest transnational corporations. The case study traces a process of shifting alliances and power relations between politicians, the mining and petroleum industry, the police, an international security firm, and a major Australian aid project. Moving between these perspectives permits insights into relations between international capital and the weak postcolonial state, insights that, in many respects, challenge con-

ventional accounts. The actions of the various government ministers in pursuit of parochial electoral and personal agendas also illustrate the reinforcing nexus between political patronage and the institutional weakness of the postcolonial state.

The third case study examines reported incidents of violence during the 1992 national elections. Here one can see the complexity of social ordering in Papua New Guinea and the ways in which customary and liberal-democratic rationalities, and their associated technologies, intersect. The centrality of politics in this process is made explicit. Papua New Guinea's intense and often volatile style of politics is simultaneously a consequence and a source of the weakness of the postcolonial state and has contributed directly to marginalization, conflict, and social fragmentation. A focus on material factors highlights the primacy of politics as a major path to material advancement in the weak economy. Viewed through cultural lenses, social continuities are identified that link the actions of modern political leaders to older patterns of Melanesian leadership, as well as to those of leaders in new occupational categories, including crime and business. Attention is drawn to the continuing tolerance of violence as a strategy for resolving conflict and asserting dominance in many parts of the country. Institutionalist perspectives show how state institutions are incapable of containing escalating violence and how they themselves have become implicated in the spread of illegal practices.

The concluding chapter draws together the insights from the case studies around a set of overlapping themes—of the weak state, leadership and gifting, international capital, marginalization and crime, and the criminal surrender. A broad synthesis is thereby provided of the dynamics of order in postcolonial Papua New Guinea. Ways are then suggested in which the problems examined here might be effectively overcome by breaking the mutually reinforcing cycles that sustain them.

Chapter 2

Order in Papua New Guinea: A Historical Overview

This chapter outlines the ways in which challenges of order have been viewed during the transformations of recent PNG history, showing how issues of law and order are integrally bound up with wider processes of social, economic, and political change. This inevitably selective review provides essential background for readers unfamiliar with Papua New Guinea and introduces a number of key themes relevant to the case studies that follow.

The first section discusses the social and political systems of “stateless” Melanesian societies, identifying certain features that have proven remarkably resilient in the face of rapid change. The second deals with colonial intervention, both in terms of the prevailing ideas and agencies of colonial law and order, and their varied reception at local levels. The third outlines the process of institutional modernization that began in the late 1950s and set out to replace the old system of colonial administration with a centralized and differentiated system of government, including the Western criminal justice system. The fourth and fifth sections deal with the period of decolonization and the practical demands of political independence after 1975. The major challenges of order facing the postcolonial state today are then outlined.

Stateless Societies

Melanesia is an imprecise and contested term and is used here as a loose geographic and cultural classification. Its physical bounds are usually taken to include the region “extending eastwards from the western end of New Guinea up to, and including, the Western half of the Fiji group, and from the Equator in the north to a line running from Cape York to the south of New Caledonia” (Hogbin 1972, 758). The territory making up modern Papua New Guinea consists of the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, the world’s second largest island, with a total land area

of approximately 465,000 square kilometers. To the east of the mainland lie smaller islands, the largest of which are Bougainville, New Britain, and New Ireland. Papua New Guinea's topography is extraordinarily varied, including the imposing mountains and high valleys of the central Highlands, vast tracts of lowland swamps, and numerous low-lying islands and scattered atolls.

Such a diverse and challenging physical environment has influenced the organization of Melanesian societies and their relations with each other, as well as the timing and manner of their encounters with the outside world. Despite the enormous variations among these societies, it is possible to identify broad areas of cultural homogeneity that serve to distinguish Melanesian societies from their counterparts in neighboring Polynesia and Micronesia.

Precontact Melanesian societies were typically small and parochial. Political units were the largest groups within which organized warfare would not normally occur. In most of the lowlands and coastal areas, these groups consisted of a few hundred people, although this figure rose to over a thousand in parts of the Sepik area. In the more densely populated Highlands such groups were generally about a thousand in number, rising to several thousand in places. Political units seldom coincided with cultural-linguistic units, which were often larger and loosely bounded. Differences in size related principally to ecology and the variable and often harsh terrain, and to the need for efficient divisions of labor in horticultural and other tasks.

The density and permanence of patterns of residence were equally varied. People lived in scattered homesteads, solitary garden houses, small hamlets, and large nucleated villages. These variations reflected the changing needs and preferences of particular communities with respect to agriculture, fishing, and defense. Differences also existed in kinship systems and patterns of land ownership. Most communities were self-sufficient in food. Subsistence horticulture and pig rearing were common, supplemented by hunting and gathering, and fishing in coastal and island areas.

Social relations within these small-scale societies were essentially kinship relations. The rights and obligations of each individual, and relations between them, flowed directly from membership of the extended family. Patterns of inheritance for land, special knowledge, and personal property could be patrilineal or, as in many coastal and island societies, matrilineal. Reciprocal obligations between individuals and groups constituted a central feature of Melanesian morality. Reciprocity was commonly manifested in the ritualized exchange of food and gifts. Such practices sometimes evolved into complex trading partnerships with other groups over considerable distances, as, for example, in the elaborate interisland "*kula* ring" famously documented by Bronislaw Mali-

nowski (1972). Gift exchange was significant as a way of maintaining social control, as a vehicle for trade, and as a means of demonstrating leadership and consolidating alliances with other groups.

While links developed between groups as a result of trading partnerships, shifting defense alliances, or kinship ties through marriage, most societies remained relatively insular. This insularity was reinforced by high levels of suspicion, intergroup conflict, and fear of sorcery. Reconstructions of precontact history suggest that, subject to the usual variations, warfare was endemic in many areas (Berndt 1962). Paul Sillitoe's general assessment was that "warfare was a commonplace feature of life throughout Melanesia, and . . . occurred regularly in a large number of different societies and in a bewildering variety of cultural guises and social contexts" (1978, 252). Reciprocity was also the governing principle for redressing grievances with other groups "through reciprocal 'pay-back,' perhaps in warfare, or in seizure of property, or its destruction, individual reciprocal killings and the like, according to relative power and other circumstances" (Rowley 1965, 36).

Melanesian societies were "stateless" in the sense that they lacked any centralized political or administrative organization equivalent to a government that could weld together those sharing a common language and culture. Legitimacy was widely dispersed in practice, rather than delegated from a central institution or person. In this setting, "fundamental responsibility for the maintenance of society is much more widely dispersed throughout its varied institutions and the whole population, at least, usually, all its adult males" (Southall 1968, 167).

Relations between individuals were highly personalized, with members dependent on one another's actions. Social networks were reliant on personal contacts. Contrary to idealized representations of egalitarian and cohesive small-scale societies, social divisions did exist, not least in terms of gender and leadership. Such societies were often intensely competitive and individuals, families, and clans were continuously shifting upward or downward in a rank order known to all within the relevant system. "Intense factionalism" was commonplace (May and Tupouniua 1980, 423).

Political units were typically led by a man, or several men. Men were politically dominant, even in matrilineal societies. While some critics claim that the subordination of women in traditional society has been exaggerated by outsiders (Narokobi 1983, 37–38; Mandie 1985), gender constituted an important division in most societies. In general, women provided the everyday workforce, notably in food production, while men took charge of politics and warfare (Lipset 1989, 411; Linnekin 1997, 105–113).

The early anthropological literature makes much of the Melanesian "big-man" whose status was achieved and contrasts it with the pat-

tern of hereditary leadership found in other Pacific islands, notably the Polynesian chiefly system (Sahlins 1963). An aspiring Melanesian leader competed with others to build his reputation and cultivate a personal following through the manipulation of material resources and social relationships. Marie De Lepervanche summarized these dynamics in the *Encyclopaedia of Papua and New Guinea*: “Through his own initiatives and in competition with his peers a man becomes ‘big’ and during his lifetime may achieve prominence as a warrior or garden magician or ritual leader, or he may become successful in economic exchanges with others. Whatever the basis of a ‘big man’s’ prestige, he must also develop a reputation for generosity by helping others and sponsoring feasts. By doing so he accumulates debtors and dependants and a certain amount of political power” (1972, 1065).

The authority of the successful Melanesian big-man rarely extended beyond his own small group and was contingent on his fulfilling the expectations of followers, as well as outmaneuvering competitors. Where leaders lost the allegiance of their followers they would be swiftly displaced by eager rivals. Traditional polities were thus inherently fluid and prone to schism (Lipset 1989, 412).

The archetypal model of the Melanesian big-man has become increasingly contentious as scholars expose the wide range of leadership patterns and styles in different parts of what is now Papua New Guinea. The weight of this evidence suggests that the distinction between achieved and ascribed leadership is less clear-cut than was implied in earlier scholarship. In many parts of the country, for example, the sons of big-men appear to have had a definite edge over their competitors in the leadership stakes (Chowning 1977; Standish 1978). Evidence of different leadership styles, including despotic behavior on the part of many traditional leaders, also brings into question the notion of consensual leadership implicit in the classical big-man formulations.¹ While revisionist critiques render the concept of the Melanesian big-man more problematic, they do not justify its total abandonment.

[I]t is probably still true that, compared to other largely “tribal” societies, including those of neighbouring Polynesia, traditional leadership in Papua New Guinea can be generally characterized as largely dependent on personal qualities (and as a corollary only partially susceptible to inheritance), and substantially constrained by competition, by specialization of leadership roles, by the prevalence of communal modes of decision making, and by communal demands on leaders and resentment of leaders who attempt to raise themselves too far above other members of the society. (May 1997, 5)

The personalist exercise of power exemplified in the social dynamics of big-manship is an important strand of continuity running through Melanesian politics, linking the postcolonial present to the colonial and precolonial past.

What were the means used to maintain order in the absence of a centralized and coercive state? Each society developed ways of settling disputes between its members, and these usually varied according to the status of the parties concerned and the social relations between them (Epstein 1972, 632). Given the likelihood that the parties to a dispute would be well known to each other, if not directly related, and would have to continue to live in proximity and interdependence, the emphasis in intragroup conflict resolution was on the restoration of relations between the parties. The payment of compensation or exchange of gifts provided an important vehicle of restorative justice. Such an orientation contrasts with the narrow and impersonal focus on the punishment of offenders characteristic of the Western criminal justice system implanted in colonial Papua New Guinea.

Michael Taylor identified four broad means of social control typical of “stateless” societies (1982, 80–90). The first is the threat of retaliation or, as it is more commonly known in Papua New Guinea, “payback.” This is a form of “self-help” justice carried out against the offender, or a close relative of the offender, by the victim, or the victim assisted by kin, or by kin alone where the victim is dead or incapacitated. Retaliation is most likely in a situation where there is no morally binding relationship between the parties, as between strangers or members of rival groups. The second entails the threat to withdraw the reciprocity that binds members of such communities. Ostracism, exclusion from rituals and—very rarely—outright expulsion from the community are examples of the sanctions that could be applied under this heading.

A third means of social control involves sanctions of approval and disapproval. Offers and threats to withhold approval, esteem, respect, and so on, were more likely to be effective in small-scale communities where the individual was well known, a permanent resident, and, to a large extent, reliant on others for economic cooperation. In addition to casual gossip and criticism, Melanesian societies have a great variety of institutionalized practices designed to criticize, shame, or ridicule deviants. Michael Young’s description of the elaborate system of competitive food exchange on Goodenough Island is an example of institutionalized public shaming (1971).

Sorcery provides a fourth means of social control. An individual suffering some misfortune might accuse another member of the community of practicing sorcery. Those who stand out through wealth or prominence might also find themselves subject to threats of sorcery.

These forms of social control were found in various forms and combinations in the Melanesian societies that have been incorporated into the Papua New Guinea nation-state. Their effectiveness ultimately depended on the small size of such communities, the closeness of social relations between individuals, and their shared system of beliefs and values.

Pacification, the Civilizing Mission, and Colonial Justice

The first recorded European sightings of the island of New Guinea were made by Portuguese and Spanish navigators in the sixteenth century. Although formal colonial intervention did not occur until the late nineteenth century, an assortment of seafarers, missionaries, traders, gold prospectors, and foreign adventurers had begun visiting coastal and island areas from the 1830s. From the 1860s the so-called blackbirding trade developed to meet the expanding labor needs of the Pacific plantation economies. This trade involved the recruitment, sometimes kidnapping, of Melanesians to work on European sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji. While the majority of recruits came from the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), recruiting also took place in Buka, Bougainville, and briefly in New Ireland and southeast Papua (Rowley 1965, 59; Corris 1968, 1973). The blackbirding trade was made illegal under the first colonial labor legislation enacted in both German and British New Guinea.

The Dutch, who had asserted a claim to the western half of New Guinea in the mid-nineteenth century (Dutch New Guinea), did not establish an administrative presence until 1898 (Turner 1990, 3). At the behest of commercial interests, the German imperial government annexed the northeastern portion of New Guinea in 1884 (German New Guinea). In the same year, the British declared a protectorate over the southeast of the island (British New Guinea). The British were responding to pressure from their Australian colonies, whose concerns were mainly strategic and directed against the growing presence of other European powers to the north. Constitutional uncertainty about the status of the protectorate led to British New Guinea being annexed as a full colony in 1888, prior to its transfer to Australia and renaming as Papua in 1906.

Between 1885 and 1899, the German New Guinea Company administered the German colony under a charter from the imperial government. The principal aim of company rule was to build a profitable plantation economy run by German settlers. This aim was never realized, due to far fewer settlers than anticipated, numerous deaths from disease, an uncooperative labor force, and indigenous resistance to land acquisition and foreign settlement in some areas (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth

1979, 34–39). Such resistance provoked violent retribution, sometimes involving the firepower of the imperial navy. After losing substantial amounts of money, the company persuaded the imperial government to assume direct control in 1899.

While the German government continued to pursue the goal of a thriving plantation economy, it sought to extend administrative control beyond company enclaves, establishing stations from which armed patrols led by district officials set out to pacify indigenous peoples. Local men were appointed *luluais* to represent the government in villages, and some were made interpreters or *tultuls*. The district officer, assisted by armed police, sought to pacify his district and stop intergroup fighting, thereby rendering the area safe and profitable for Europeans. District officials also supervised the construction of roads and recruited plantation labor. The assumption of government control represented a shift from the exclusive reliance on retaliatory strategies associated with company rule (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 40).

While settlers were concentrated around coastal and island areas, leaving most mainland inhabitants unaffected, the proportion of the colony under administrative control increased significantly under the German government. On the New Guinea islands, a network of roads and ports was established to service the commercial interests of the settlers and the administrative needs of the authorities. By 1913, around 180,000 hectares of land were in the possession of plantation owners, although only about 20 percent of it was cultivated (Turner 1990, 5). Europeans employed over 8,000 New Guineans, working mainly on plantations. After the outbreak of war in 1914, Australia occupied German New Guinea and formally took over its administration as a mandated territory of the League of Nations in 1921. Despite assertions to the contrary, Australia continued many of the German policies. In the absence of budgetary assistance from the commonwealth, the administration needed to be self-sufficient. Gold mining began in the Morobe area in the early 1920s and kept the economy afloat when copra prices collapsed during the Great Depression. The search for gold also lay behind the belated opening up to Europeans of the fertile and populous Highlands of New Guinea in the 1930s (Standish 1984, 25).

In the south, the expansion of European influence was less tied up with commercial interests. Apart from the gold prospectors scattered around the islands in the southeast and parts of the mainland, there were relatively few settlers and virtually no plantations. The administration was almost entirely dependent on a modest Australian subsidy, which severely restricted its operations. Sir William MacGregor—Lieutenant Governor of British New Guinea between 1888 and 1898—laid the foundations of a policy of “native administration” that, with some modifications, was followed by his successors until well after the Pacific

War. As in German New Guinea, control was gradually extended through a system of patrols radiating from new government stations. Patrol officers, known as resident magistrates, were assisted by an armed constabulary initially recruited from the Solomon Islands and Fiji (Dutton 1985, 63). The instrumentalities of law and order were an integral part of the pacification process in both territories. Many of the first village constables and members of the armed constabulary in Papua were recruited from prisons and had learned the ways of the administration while serving their sentences. MacGregor claimed that prisons were the “best educational establishment in the country” (quoted in Joyce 1971, 195). Crime control was a relatively minor aspect of early policing practice: “It is important to realise that Papua’s armed constabulary was not formed for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime. . . . [F]rom its earliest beginning [it] took on a major role as an instrument of native administration . . . by its direct use as a contact medium with the relatively remote tribes and its employment for consolidating government influence” (Downs 1947, 29). Policing traditions established during this period left a lasting legacy. MacGregor also established a system of village constables who, like the *luluais* in German New Guinea, were appointed to represent the administration at village levels.

The initial response by Melanesians to the arrival of foreigners varied enormously between areas and over time. The gradual and uneven spread of European influence meant that first encounters took place under very different circumstances. Coastal and island regions had a long history of engagement with the outside world that in many cases pre-dated formal colonial annexation. In parts of the New Guinea Highlands, on the other hand, face-to-face contact with Europeans did not take place until seventy years after annexation (some twenty-one years before independence in 1975). First contacts were prone to misunderstanding on both sides, as people with different values, technologies, and languages confronted each other for the first time.² While some groups actively resisted the newcomers, thereby incurring punitive responses, others cooperated for a variety of strategic reasons. Fear of the government’s superior firepower may have motivated some groups (Rodman 1979, 21). For others, cooperation with Europeans was seen as a way of securing powerful new allies in the fight against traditional enemies (Kituai 1988, 165; Waiko 1989) or as a means for developing trade opportunities or acquiring new forms of wealth and knowledge (Reed 1943).

Early encounters in both territories were often violent. The scholarly debate continues about which colonial regime was more brutal and authoritarian.³ Because of the commercial nature of their project, the Germans had more direct interaction with local groups. Attempts to acquire land or recruit labor often met with resistance, which in turn

led to retributive violence. German officials viewed indigenous acts of violence “from the political rather than the legal point of view,” as “acts of war” rather than “criminal offences” (Sack 1973, 112). Whereas in the German territory a New Guinean could be shot as an enemy in war, in the Australian territory a Papuan was entitled, in theory at any rate, to the protection of the law. In practice, Australian authorities did not hesitate to use force when individualized processes of law enforcement failed or where European prestige was at stake. Punitive expeditions against Melanesian resistance occurred in the early stages of colonial rule in both territories. At the end of his term in British New Guinea, MacGregor stated that “the administration has practically had to subdue by force almost every district now under control” (quoted in Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 15–16). Ultimately, the foundations of colonial rule were violent in both British and German New Guinea.

When the Australians assumed control of Papua in 1906, they declared their intention to develop the colony through plantations and mining (Turner 1990, 6–7). Papua, however, was less successful commercially than its New Guinea neighbor. By 1940, for example, the area of land under lease in Papua was less than it had been in 1911 (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 24). The area under crops in 1918 (24,000 hectares) stayed about the same for the next thirty years, and the size of the European population in 1939 had not increased significantly since 1913 (1,219). The transport system was rudimentary and remained largely a choice among foot, sea, river, and, in later years, air. For most Melanesians in both territories, the colonial order was personified by missionaries, planters, and traders, rather than government officials. In German New Guinea, in particular, working for a planter was a dominant experience.

For the long-serving Lieutenant Governor of Papua, Sir Hubert Murray (1908 to 1940), lack of commercial development was not entirely unwelcome. Much to the chagrin of European settlers, Murray saw his principal duty as the protection of the indigenous people from corrupting Western influences and their gradual induction into a state of “civilization.” The “civilizing mission” was to be accomplished through a benign and paternalistic system of “native administration.” Murray’s antipathy toward the exploitation of indigenous labor was made clear in a paper he presented in London. “There are many dangers in [their] path, and the greatest danger of all may come from what I may call a benevolent capitalism—a capitalism which will use the native solely as a means towards the development of the country in the interests of non-resident capitalists, to the absolute disregard of the future of the native race as a whole and of its eventual advancement to a higher grade of civilization” (1923, 15).

Lack of Australian interest and Murray’s long tenure allowed him

considerable autonomy in shaping the ideals and framework of the colonial administration. While his protective policies generated resentment among European settlers, the absence of a powerful plantation sector helped his cause. Building on the foundations established by MacGregor, Murray devoted himself to the pioneering task of extending government control through patrolling. He stressed the need to limit the use of force in pacification, dismissing punitive expeditions as “swift injustice” (Murray 1925, 60) and issuing officers with detailed instructions on when they could use their weapons. Villagers were to be transformed not so much through the discipline of wage labor or the coercive power of the gun as through the persuasive influence of a paternalistic system of “native administration.”

A lawyer by training, Murray had great faith in the transformative effects of Western law. Unlike many African colonies, Papua New Guinea saw no deliberate effort to harness indigenous law to the colonial project. Instead Melanesian societies were understood primarily in terms of their cultural “primitiveness” and vulnerability, hence the need for protective and paternalistic intervention. Europeans at the time believed that local societies lacked legal institutions capable of cooption into the colonial system of control. As one colonial judge remarked in Papua in 1929, “There being no semblance of a legal system to serve as a foundation, Government was not faced with the problem of choice, and the only hope for posterity was of the establishment of the legal system of civilization to the exclusion of all else” (Gore 1929, 20).

English common law and selected Australian legislation, including the Criminal Code of Queensland, were introduced into Papua and, after 1921, into New Guinea along with a formal court system.⁴ The civil jurisdiction of these courts was taken up with the regulation of the commercial activities of the settler community. Serious criminal cases involving indigenous defendants were heard by a single judge in either the District or Supreme Courts. The main form of introduced law affecting local people was a body of “Native Regulations” administered in ad hoc courts held by European district officials. The regulations, a key instrument of the “civilizing mission,” were an intrusive body of restrictions that applied only to indigenes and could be made in respect of any matter having a “bearing or affecting the good government and well being of natives.” Detailed restrictions were placed over the movement of villagers, ostensibly to conserve the integrity of village life while preserving the towns as European enclaves.

Murray, who was also the chief judicial officer, viewed the administration of justice as an important instrument of education and one that, through its assumption of individual responsibility, would eventually lead to the end of intergroup fighting, communal retaliation, and, in particular, the practice of “payback.” The subordination of judicial administration to the objectives of the colonial enterprise and the racial

basis of colonial justice are illustrated in the philosophy of punishment espoused by Murray and his senior legal officers. "The problems of punishment in a European community are to a great extent confined to the immediate effect on the community, but in the consideration of punishment as affecting native races, future results are of far greater importance than consequences which may have the effect of instant prevention but which would be deleterious to the race as a whole" (Gore 1929, 20). Accordingly, an important factor in determining the penalty for indigenous offenders was their length of exposure to the "civilizing" ways of the European and the perceived role of customary law in influencing their behavior. The most severe penalties were reserved for those assumed to be familiar with the white man's law, while lesser penalties were imposed on those from areas with relatively little contact with Europeans and where the offending behavior was deemed consistent with customary beliefs (Murray 1925, 85–86; Gore 1965).⁵

For colonial officials, then, indigenous criminality was construed primarily in cultural terms, as a reflection of a "primitivism" that would gradually disappear with the spread of "civilization." The ethnocentric and racist ideology of the "civilizing mission" underpinned colonial perceptions of indigenous crime and responses to it. The subordination of criminal justice practice to the broader objectives of the colonial project was most evident in the role of the European patrol officer or *kiap*. This officer, operating at district level, dealt with approximately 75 percent of all official court cases, returning guilty verdicts in over 90 percent of trials (Downs 1980, 148–149). Holding court was part of the pacification process and an important means of extending government authority at local levels. Throughout most of the colonial period there was no discrete system of criminal justice as such. Instead, policing, courts, and imprisonment constituted integral parts of "native administration." The undifferentiated character of colonial justice was personified in the *kiap*, who acted simultaneously as government agent, police officer, prosecutor, magistrate, and jailer.

Papua and New Guinea continued to be administered separately until the Pacific War. From 1942 the Australian military administration jointly administered areas not under the control of the Japanese. The United Nations, which succeeded the League of Nations, agreed to joint administration, and this was formalized in the Papua and New Guinea Act of 1949. Although differences in emphasis did exist, they were outweighed by similarities in the administration of both territories. Government control continued to be extended by patrols led by *kiaps* and their armed native police. By 1940 approximately two-thirds of the inhabitants of the two territories were governed by patrol (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 61), including most of the previously neglected Highlands by the late 1940s (Standish 1984, 26).

In practice, government by patrol often meant little more than a

couple of visits a year for villages close to administrative centers, a single visit every one or two years for more distant villages, and even rarer visits in less accessible areas. The *kiap* would inspect the village, collect taxes, complete the census book, and hear cases. Government-appointed village constables in Papua, and *luluais* and *tultuls* in New Guinea, would assist the *kiap* during his visit and help maintain peace locally by holding informal courts. This system did little to generate national political integration and “regional districts remained weak, being responsible to the capital, while local policy was quite individualistic” (Lipset 1989, 386).

Retrospective accounts have emphasized the importance of district level administration and, in particular, the pivotal role of the *kiap* in suppressing intergroup warfare and extending government authority. Whether appreciative or critical of what one critic dismissed as Australia’s “benevolent type of police rule,”⁶ different writers have often assumed that colonial peace was successfully imposed on bellicose indigenous populations. Such an assumption overstates the impact of what were, in effect, extremely tenuous controls. The colonial state was in most respects weak, with meager resources quite inadequate for the suppression of indigenous resistance on any significant scale. Isolated district officials were in no position to sustain their authority by force alone.

The incremental spread of a weak colonial presence provided little immediate threat to most Melanesian social institutions and ensured that adaptation occurred largely on Melanesian terms. The missions, rather than the colonial state, provided the catalyst for change in the daily lives of villagers in many places. Until late in its life, the colonial state evinced only a desultory interest in “development,” placing more value on stability and the creation of a semblance of order.

Colonial history written from “above” also neglects the active participation of indigenous leaders and groups in the reception and mediation of colonial rule. For most Melanesians the elaborate self-justifications expressed by colonial policymakers like Sir Hubert Murray were simply not available. Even if they had been, they would have made little sense, bearing scant resemblance to their own experience of encounters with the foreigners. For these actors, colonial power was a more immediate, erratic, and personal experience.

Pax Australiana—which lasted less than thirty years in most parts of the Highlands—was not achieved through the wholesale displacement or neutralizing of indigenous forms of social regulation. Neither were local actors merely passive subjects acted on in a top-down process of colonial imposition. Colonial peace could not have been achieved, even in the gradual and piecemeal fashion that it was, without the acquiescence and even open enthusiasm of many local leaders and groups. The colonial peace in Papua New Guinea, as elsewhere, was a negoti-

ated one and ultimately contingent on the benefits it brought to those it most directly affected.

Insofar as new forms of conflict were generated by colonial change, they were as often as not manifested as conflicts between Melanesians as they were between Melanesians and the colonial administration. Indigenous relations with the administration varied between places and over time, and were by no means exclusively antagonistic. "In the mosaic of small communities that constituted colonial Melanesia, conflict more often erupted among Melanesians than between them and colonial governments. Relations between . . . societies and governments were more often characterised by alliances, accommodations and co-operation than by confrontation and protest" (Firth 1997, 256).

The successful ending of intergroup warfare, which was the principal objective of pacification and its most lauded achievement, forced together many groups that had previously existed in a state of mutual suspicion. In doing so, it generated new social and economic opportunities for leaders by dramatically expanding existing horizons. Local leaders were not slow to recognize this potential and exploit its possibilities. "[T]hese new conditions could enable the ambitious 'manager' in the indigenous economics of the gift exchange to establish prestige and obligations over a wider range of people within the kinship system, thus drawing them into larger social units for ceremonial and economic activities, and also into bigger residential units" (Rowley 1965, 33). The new opportunities that colonial peace brought to indigenous leaders helped consolidate big-men institutions in some areas, creating a greater degree of consistency than before. As Ron May has recently suggested, the general pattern of leadership and communalistic social organization was "probably reinforced by the colonial experience" (1997, 6).

Insofar as the *kiap* system was successful, it was in large part because of its limited ability to displace local power structures and dominate local politics. It was not present in most villages on most days. When it was, it was also susceptible to capture by local actors. The *kiap* courts, to take one example, did not replace existing mechanisms of dispute resolution at local levels. "[C]ustomary law held sway and only when it failed was the *kiap* involved. Papua New Guineans accepted this odd system with its ritual and irrelevant sanctions only as long as they had to" (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 112).

In this environment, *kiap* courts provided additional fora that could be incorporated into local political strategies. Litigants could graft these courts onto existing unofficial (officially illegal) mechanisms and engage in imaginative bouts of "forum shopping." Decisions by unofficial courts, where most local disputes were decided, could now be confirmed or contested in the new fora provided by the colonial state (Oliver 1955, 326). In this way interactions between indigenous and colonial systems

of law often served to strengthen, rather than undermine, each other. “Unofficial courts served to make kiap’s ‘law’ ‘strong’ because of the nature of cooperation which existed between kiaps and unofficial ‘magistrates’” (Gordon 1983, 211).

Working for the colonial administration as village constables, *luluais*, policemen, and so on, provided new opportunities for adventure, travel, and the building of individual prestige and leadership status. Reconstructions of colonial history focusing on the experiences of the colonized, as opposed to the colonizers, confirm the critical role of Melanesians at junior levels of the administration in shaping the colonial order (Kituai 1998). The cumulative effect of recent studies of colonial policing, for example, is to portray “colonialism,” particularly in the Highlands frontier, as the work of individual Melanesian policemen, placed in large population centers, imposing their will by playing local politics and forming tactical marriage alliances (Kituai 1988, 1998; Gammage 1996, 1998). European officers were dependent on their indigenous subordinates for local knowledge and were open to manipulation by them. “The colonial officers were not aware of the complexities of the relationships between clans and clans and tribes and tribes; nor did they realise that in the early period of contact it was often the police who determined whether relations between groups were to be hostile or peaceful” (Waiko 1989, 97).

From a bottom-up perspective, Melanesian policemen were “aggressive and enthusiastic agents of change” (Kituai 1988, 157), rather than merely the courageous and dutiful colonial servants depicted in the more romanticized accounts of the time (Hides 1938). The manner in which individual Melanesians interacted with the colonial state at this level, in ways that were largely invisible to their colonial masters, provided an important portent of their future engagement with the post-colonial state.

“A Time For Building”: Modernization and Institutional Reform

During the Pacific War years, Papua and New Guinea were subject to a military administration. Heavy fighting between Japanese, Australian, and American troops and the strategic significance of Papua and New Guinea for Australia’s defense gave the territories and their peoples a higher profile in Australia than at any time during the previous sixty years. For those Papuans and New Guineans exposed to the trauma of modern warfare, and to large numbers of foreigners of various backgrounds, this was a profound experience that raised expectations of a more participatory role in the postwar colonial order. In the light of Australia’s “debt of gratitude” to those who had so valiantly assisted in defeating the Japanese, the postwar Labor government committed

itself to increased funding for the development of the territories and the welfare of their indigenous inhabitants (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 102).

In practice, the task of postwar reconstruction was slow and expensive, with elements of the settler community stubbornly resistant to any change in the status quo. Before the war there had been no substantial departments of health or education, while the few agricultural officers confined their services to the expatriate-owned plantations (Turner 1990, 11). The pace of social and economic change began to accelerate in the 1960s under mounting international pressure. While health services had expanded considerably by 1960, less than a quarter of school-age children attended schools (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 126). As late as 1965 a World Bank report noted that there was only a “small money economy” and that the indigenous population was still “for the most part, primitive” (World Bank 1965). The same report recommended a strategy of rapid growth to enhance Papua New Guinea’s potential for economic independence (Standish 1984, 27).

Paul Hasluck served as Australia’s minister for external territories between 1951 and 1963 and played a key role in transforming the framework of the administration in Papua and New Guinea, including that of criminal justice.⁷ Hasluck advocated a gradual and uniform process of social development, rejecting the promotion of an indigenous elite as politically dangerous. From the outset he identified the administration of justice as an important area for reform. This was part of his broader project of institutional and political modernization that would lead to the eventual replacement of the old system of native administration with a modern system of centralized government, which in turn would provide the institutional foundations for eventual nationhood. Hasluck’s approach fell squarely within the tenets of the modernization paradigm that prevailed in development thought at the time. It also marked the beginning of the centralization of administration, first in Canberra and then Port Moresby, that provided one of the most significant institutional legacies bequeathed Papua New Guinea at independence.

An early priority was to establish a separation of powers between the judicial, administrative, and executive arms of government. This meant supplanting the administrative model of colonial control with an independent, institutionally differentiated, and professionally staffed system of judicial administration. Related to this was Hasluck’s desire to abolish the dualistic system of law and courts that discriminated between indigenes and non-indigenes, and replace it with a unitary court system administering a single body of law.

What I was mainly concerned about in the short term . . . was to familiarize the people with the idea of justice as a principle to be

applied without discrimination in all situations, the idea of law as a code that applied evenly and justly to all citizens, and the idea of courts of justice as institutions that were independent, not subject to, the direction of those in authority, not to be used as one of the agencies of governmental administration, and equally accessible on the same terms to all persons. (Hasluck 1976, 348)

Hasluck rejected a proposal to establish “native village courts” as provided for under the 1949 Papua and New Guinea Act. Advocates of these courts envisaged a system of “indirect rule” using aspects of customary law as in some British East African colonies (Fenbury 1978). Hasluck’s push to disaggregate the old colonial system began with the prisons. The first stage was completed in 1957 with the establishment of a separate prisons branch under the Corrective Institutions Ordinance. He also set about the more difficult task of separating the police from the Department of Native Affairs and the control of the *kiap*.⁸ To assist in his reforms, Hasluck appointed an Australian jurist, David Derham, to conduct a comprehensive review of the administration of justice.⁹ Derham’s report was submitted to the minister in 1960, providing the blueprint for the modernization of law enforcement and judicial administration that began in the 1960s.

Derham advocated the dismantling of the framework of colonial control—“the Murray system”—and its progressive replacement with a unitary and centralized system of judicial administration based on a clear institutional division of labor (1960). As one former *kiap* summarized it,

Derham believed that in principle, police work ought to be performed by professional policemen, and magisterial work by qualified, full-time magistrates. In remote areas of first contact, it would still be necessary, for strictly practical reasons, for Native Affairs officers to undertake all functions of government, but eventually we would cease to exercise police and magisterial powers. He believed that there should be a single system of courts of summary jurisdiction; there was no place for customary native courts outside the system, although there would be a need for a time for courts especially concerned with native matters, with simplified procedures and applying the ordinary law of the Territory, but with the discretion to decide certain classes of matters in the light of native custom. (Sinclair 1984, 212)

Hasluck duly claimed the report as justification for immediate and comprehensive reform. In 1961 the police force was separated from the Department of Native Affairs and in 1966 it was removed from the control of the Public Service Commission in order to ensure its “neutrality.”

The Derham reforms resulted in a police force that was initially divided between an urban constabulary under the command of full-time police officers, and a rural constabulary under the command of the *kiaps*. The number of police stations increased during the decade before independence. Between 1967 and 1973, for example, twenty-three urban police stations and thirty-three rural police stations were opened, the latter mainly in the Highlands (Gordon and Meggitt 1985, 84). With the expansion of the size and operational scope of the urban police, tensions developed between the two branches. *Kiaps* complained that regular constabulary sent to rural areas “rarely [left] the town in which they [were] stationed” and were commanded by “European officers with little knowledge of the country” (Oram 1973, 12).

Serious concerns were also expressed, not only by *kiaps*, about the adequacy of police training, and matters of discipline and morale (Tufman 1974, 88). A policy of rapid localization throughout the public service created further institutional challenges for the police (Oram 1973, 12–13). The regular police were also accused of reluctance to intervene in the intergroup fighting that began to reappear in parts of the Highlands as independence approached, as well as of incompetence when they did. Police mobile squads had been formed after the police reorganization in 1966 and were used for this purpose. These problems were part of the difficult transition from being an integral part of the colonial administration to becoming a neutral and professional force.

The system of courts, which had remained virtually unchanged from early colonial times, underwent significant change from the mid-1960s, with a shift from the relatively informal *kiap* courts to more formal court procedures (Oram 1973, 13). Local and district courts were established in 1963 and connected through appeal to the superior courts. The local court was intended to replace the old *kiap* courts of native affairs and native matters. Local courts, in turn, would eventually be replaced by district courts staffed by professional magistrates. Most of the old native regulations were repealed in 1968, and the new inferior courts were made responsible for enforcing summary offenses codified in modern criminal statutes. The new court system and the laws it administered applied to everyone, whether indigenous or foreign. Provision was made for training Papua New Guinean magistrates at the Administrative College established in Port Moresby in 1964.

Local councils had been established under the Native Village Councils Ordinance 1949 and, among other things, were given some responsibility for maintaining public order. Although the manner in which these powers were exercised varied considerably between different areas, they were abolished under the 1963 Local Government Ordinance, which was designed to encourage indigenous political participation. The

removal of these powers at local level as local government councils were established marked the beginning of the end of the old system of village constables, *luluais*, and *tultuls* (Sinclair 1984, 213).

These changes did not improve social control at local levels, and did not constitute a move toward the increasingly rational, impersonal, and differentiated evolution of the colonial state envisaged by Hasluck and his fellow modernizers. Their effects can be best understood through their impact on those factors that had contributed to the relative success of the colonial *kiap* system. In practice, the juridical powers of the *kiap* could be supplemented regularly by powers issuing from his various agency functions (Gordon 1983, 220). These included options for rewarding, as well as for punishing, individuals and groups. The *kiap* thus had a wide choice of sanctions, as well as discretion in the exercise of this choice under different circumstances. Sanctions could, moreover, be applied immediately, with minimal formality or delay.

By contrast, the discretion of the professional magistrate, who displaced the *kiap* as official adjudicator of local-level conflicts, was constrained by the provisions of substantive, evidential, and procedural rules. Professional, as opposed to *kiap* justice, took longer and entailed a cumbersome, formalistic process guaranteed to bewilder the uninitiated. As well as weakening the local standing of the *kiap* by depriving him of his most potent role, these changes contributed to dissatisfaction among indigenous litigants. Official concern with due process, a narrow focus on individual culpability, and the emphasis on punishment rather than restitution, offended local perceptions of how disputes should be resolved. Compared to *kiap* justice, professional justice was viewed by many as confusing, unpredictable, and often profoundly unjust (M Strathern 1972, 1976). Speaking of the Western Highlands, Marilyn Strathern noted,

The Kiap's handling of trouble cases in the past combined both a concern for public order and a capacity to deal with minor offences. In fact, these derived from different aspects of his roles (administrator and magistrate), but it meant that he "settled disputes" roughly along lines familiar to Hageners. The paradox is that although the modern official courts are ostensibly concerned with law and order, they fail in Hageners' eyes to take cognisance of matters directly related to both of these elements. (1972, 143)

The authority of the police was also eroded by this separation of powers, with these formerly powerful and prestigious agents of pacification now subject to regular and humiliating "defeats" in court, often on obscure technical grounds. "The extent to which the authority of the police is regarded as legitimate varies from area to area. In some areas it is still

accepted without question. But in others, such as the Gazelle Peninsula, Bougainville, parts of the Highlands, and major towns, it is increasingly rejected" (Oram 1973, 13).

The rapid localization commenced during this period also had a weakening effect on state controls at the local level, not only because of the short-term effects of replacing experienced officers with less proficient personnel, but also the effects of state officials becoming closer to their indigenous clientele as a result of localization. Although individual Melanesian policemen operating at the most junior levels of the colonial state engaged directly with local power structures, *kiaps*, magistrates, and other expatriate officials exercised considerable autonomy in dealing with indigenes precisely because of their foreignness. Their apparent lack of interest in competing with Melanesians by engaging in local politics and their immunity to the pressures of *wantokism*,¹⁰ contributed to their appearance of being "independent" and "impartial." The basis of these local perceptions was fundamentally challenged once Melanesians began occupying the positions. Irrespective of their abilities, integrity, and performance, indigenous officials were immediately vulnerable to accusations of *wantokism* and to suspicions that they would become rivals in local political competition.

Commenting on the intimidation experienced by local criminal justice officials in Enga, Robert Gordon stated,

For various reasons nationals are more vulnerable to such threats because they have wantoks serving in the Province, for whom they feel a certain moral responsibility. While white *kiaps* and magistrates were apparently able to "settle" people because they were believed to be friends with no one, national officers are alleged to make friends with local people and are thus subject to the pressures of *wantokism*. This factor, I suspect, is one of the major factors in the courts' and Government's loss of legitimacy. (1983, 215)

These changing perceptions were exacerbated by the role fragmentation resulting from the institutional reforms. They were also reinforced by clear signs that many among the small Papua New Guinean elite working in the public service, universities, and churches were preparing to move into politics.

The replacement of the old administrative controls with a centralized system of criminal justice was not the smooth transition that Hasluck had in mind. New specialists required training before they could replace old generalists, and colonial neglect of education limited the pool of Papua New Guinean candidates eligible to replace expatriates. As late as 1977, over a third of the thirty *kiaps* in Enga province were still expatriates (Gordon and Meggitt 1985, 55).

The cumulative effect of these reforms was to weaken both the capacity and the legitimacy of state controls, drawing attention to the weaknesses of the state rather than bolstering the myth of its strength. This process, in turn, has deepened since independence.

Decolonization and Independence

Indigenous participation in wider political processes began in the early 1960s. A 1962 United Nations mission had been highly critical of the lack of political development, proposing a number of measures to increase indigenous involvement. These included the establishment of a House of Assembly elected by all adults and the development of higher education facilities to train Papua New Guineans for senior positions in the bureaucracy. Despite the anxieties of many residents, indigenous and foreign, the pace of change began to quicken from the mid-1960s, against a background of rapid decolonization in other parts of the world.

The first Papua New Guineans elected in a general election took the majority of seats in 1964 in a House of Assembly that was nonetheless effectively dominated by official European members. The contribution to policy debate made by this first group of indigenous politicians was limited by their lack of familiarity and interest in “national” issues, and their restricted command of English. Their election, nevertheless, marked the beginning of the opening up of the state to local participation at the highest levels. It also heralded the emergence of Papua New Guinean politicians as a significant category of power brokers, connecting indigenous power structures to the more encompassing arenas of the state. They would play an important role in decolonization and in shaping the postcolonial order. Although party politics have never taken root in Papua New Guinea, the first indigenous party was established in 1967 in time for the second election in 1968. This was the Pangu Pati, formed by a small group of Papua New Guinean politicians and public servants and two Australian members of the House. Pangu members began to criticize colonial paternalism, articulate a nascent nationalism, and demand “home rule.”

Just as they had determined the timing and form of colonial intervention in Papua in the late nineteenth century, Australian politicians determined the timing of Australian withdrawal. In 1969 the Australian opposition leader, Gough Whitlam, committed his party to granting early independence to Papua New Guinea. However, the choice of 1973 as the date for self-government was made during the final phase of the McMahan-led conservative government, with Andrew Peacock as minister for external territories. Labor was elected at the end of 1972 and followed its predecessors’ timetable. In the following year, nine years after the first House of Assembly elections, Australia granted Papua

New Guinea internal self-government, followed by full independence on 16 September 1975. In the lead-up to independence, Papua New Guinean public servants were promoted. Staged transfers of power occurred between Canberra and Port Moresby. The overwhelming majority of those elected to the third House of Assembly in 1972 were Papua New Guineans and were, for the most part, younger and better educated than their predecessors. Michael Somare, a cofounder of the Pangu Pati, became chief minister in a coalition government that skillfully steered the country to independence.

Decolonization in Papua New Guinea, as elsewhere, was accompanied by great optimism and high levels of expectation on the part of many Papua New Guineans. It was an essentially peaceful transition, as in most other Pacific island countries, achieved without a unifying nationalist struggle. Independence was more a consequence of the actions of the colonizers, acting in response to growing domestic and international pressures, than the culmination of a broad-based and unifying anticolonial movement on the part of the colonized. As a result, the expression of nationalist sentiment and the promotion of national symbols were initially confined to a small indigenous elite comprising politicians, bureaucrats, and professionals. It was a top-down form of nationalism, whose principal architects were to be found among intellectuals and state officials rather than among the “grassroots” in the village. “[N]ationalism in postcolonial Melanesia largely takes shape as state functionaries try to nationalize state structures rather than as collections of ‘peoples’ try to create or seize state structures as their own” (Foster 1997, 1). In subsequent years, these early images and ideals of nationhood were to be joined and contested vigorously by a range of other individual and corporate actors, each with their own constructions of collective and personal identities.

The legal passage from colonial dependency to independent statehood was accomplished through the framework of a “homegrown” independence constitution. The constitution placed great emphasis on “integral human development” and the pursuit of development through the use of “Papua New Guinean forms of social and political development.” Political rhetoric at the time, and substantive provisions in the constitution, promised a national regulatory framework in which Melanesian custom would play a prominent role. As with other decolonizing constitutions, it was an idealistic document committed to making a clean break with the colonial past and forging a new and harmonious relationship between state and society in the postcolonial period.

Within the discourse of nationalism, the celebration of custom and tradition—the Melanesian Way—served as an important ideological focus (Narokobi 1983). Looking back to precontact times provided the means for constituting a new national identity. Likewise, the demoniza-

tion of Australian rule by certain leaders as singularly harsh, oppressive, and exploitative, assisted in the symbolic severance of ties with the colonial past. Beyond the rhetoric, however, the framework of state remained largely that established in the final, modernizing phase of the Australian administration. Although the autochthonous constitution became the object of national pride and popular anticipation, institutional reform proved more elusive. With the notable exceptions of the village courts and the Ombudsman Commission, the principal agencies and system of judicial administration remained largely unchanged.

Popular aspirations—fueled by the rhetoric of decolonization—revolved around the anticipated development opportunities that independence would provide for ordinary Papua New Guineans. Despite the broad interpretation of the Constitutional Planning Committee,¹¹ “development” was popularly perceived in material terms, as economic growth and infrastructural provisions that would enhance the quality of life for all citizens. High expectations were held of the independent state as an instrument for facilitating an equitable and orderly process of economic and social advancement. Not everyone, of course, shared in such unbounded optimism. Many Highlanders, with a much shorter experience of colonial rule, considered independence premature and were concerned that their better prepared lowlands compatriots would have an unfair advantage in the development stakes.

The idealistic phase of decolonization was quick in passing as more pressing problems emerged. These related to the need to secure the resources necessary for national development, on the one hand, and for effective responses to emergent law-and-order problems, on the other. On the first issue, Papua New Guinea’s major source of finance at independence was an annual grant from Australia, accounting for over 40 percent of public expenditure (Turner 1990, 36). Following an Eight Point Plan for national development, the constitution set economic self-reliance as one of the national goals. In the long term, this meant reducing reliance on Australian budgetary support by developing alternative sources of revenue. As well as expanding existing agricultural exports, such as coffee, cocoa, and copra, this meant exploring opportunities for mineral exploitation.

On the second issue, that of law and order, decolonization was accompanied by the emergence of social conflict that, in varying degrees, challenged the authority of the new state. The problems were already growing under the colonial administration and did not come about because of Australia’s departure. Once independence was granted, however, the “fundamental opposition between indigenous people and colonial powers was displaced by a far messier array of local divisions” (Otto and Thomas 1997, 4). Some of these related to the revival of precolonial antagonisms, while others centered around divisions of more recent

origin. The most serious were the micronationalist movements in some of the more developed regions, notably Bougainville, the Gazelle Peninsula, and parts of Papua; the rise of street crime in the urban centers; and the reappearance of intergroup warfare in parts of the Highlands.

The most critical threat occurred on Bougainville. Secessionist tensions on the island dated back at least to 1962 and had their origins in a long history of government neglect, made worse by Bougainville's geographical isolation from Port Moresby and other parts of Papua New Guinea. The immediate catalyst for conflict and secessionism was the start of construction at the Panguna copper mine in 1969. Officials in Canberra and Port Moresby were well aware of the economic significance of the mine for postindependence national development. The construction phase had been preceded by negotiations between the colonial administration and the mining company, Conzinc Riotinto Australia, which took little account of the strident objections of local landowners. The fragility of the new state was vividly demonstrated when Bougainville leaders proclaimed a unilateral declaration of independence a mere fortnight before Papua New Guinea's national independence in September 1975. Lack of international recognition and some adept maneuvering by the Somare government led to the defusing of the crisis in 1976 and the signing of the Bougainville Agreement. Part of this agreement was the reinstatement of the provincial government that had been granted Bougainville in 1974 but rescinded in 1975 (Standish 1984, 35).¹²

Secessionist tensions were also evident on the fertile Gazelle Peninsula in East New Britain, where the Mataungan Association was set up in the late 1960s in response to the administration's decision to establish multiracial local government councils. Local grievances stemmed from extensive land alienation and the desire to be "free of foreign domination at all levels of decision-making" (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 154). Heavy-handed tactics by the Australian administration aggravated the conflict. Once again, the adroit intervention of the Somare government helped defuse the situation. The specter of secession was also raised by Papuan leaders apprehensive about the impact of large-scale migration from other parts of the country, in particular from the Highlands (Oram 1976, 144).

Urban crime rates had begun to increase in the late 1960s. Juvenile gangs appeared against a background of urban growth. The earlier abolition of colonial restrictions over indigenous movement had opened up the towns, formerly the preserve of the European elite, to migration from rural areas. The vocal expatriate community, apprehensive about independence, raised concerns with both the Port Moresby administration and the Canberra government. Their concerns included the alleged leniency of the courts and ineffectiveness of the police, contrasting the

“breakdown in law and order” with the “good order” attributed to the old system of district administration.¹³ Officials sought to deflate the more alarmist claims, while stressing the government’s commitment to improving the capacity of the police. A Peace and Good Order Committee set up to investigate rising crime rates reported to Chief Minister Somare in 1974 with proposals to improve the processing of juvenile offenders (PNG 1974).

The revival of intergroup fighting in parts of the Highlands on the eve of independence provided another serious challenge to the authority of the new state. For many observers, the reappearance of this kind of conflict, effectively suppressed during the colonial era, illustrated the folly of replacing the old system of district administration with a remote system of centralized government. This change was viewed by many as having led to an effective withdrawal of the state from local levels (Oram 1973, 11). A committee established to investigate so-called tribal fighting in the early 1970s commented that it had “heard many complaints of a lack of judicial and police presence at village level and considers this lack as one of the prime causes of increased lawlessness in the Highlands. Government influence in these fields is stopping at Sub-District level while at the village level an administrative vacuum is developing” (PNG 1973, 7). Among other things, this form of conflict represented a reversion to older “self-help” strategies for dealing with local intergroup conflicts, largely in response to the absence of the state and the “weakness” of the solutions it offered.

Postindependence

While the political rhetoric of successive governments has been couched in terms of the National Goals and Directive Principles—with their commitment to rural development, self-reliance, and equity—practical emphasis has been on expanding the small revenue base inherited at independence and on reducing reliance on Australian aid. Given the weakness of local markets, national development policies have been reliant on attracting foreign investment. In particular, the lack of alternative sources of revenue and the discovery of sizeable new reserves have led to a growing dependence on the mineral and petroleum sector.

In the decade after independence, approximately one quarter of internally generated revenue came from the Panguna mine on Bougainville. By 1989, this single mine accounted for nearly 10 percent of the country’s gross domestic product. The repercussions for the national economy of its closure in the same year in the face of armed rebellion by local landowners were massive. Among the adjustment measures adopted by the government were a net reduction of around K75 million

from a budget of K1,000 million; tight monetary policies, including lower lending targets and higher interest rates; wage restraint; and a 10 percent devaluation of the national currency, the kina (Elek 1992). The Bougainville war brought home Papua New Guinea's singular reliance on the mining sector as a source of national revenue, as well as the vulnerability of large-scale extractive projects to serious disruption. It also highlighted the artificial and contested nature of nationhood in postcolonial Papua New Guinea and the reality of fragmentation and division that lay beneath the nationalist rhetoric. The protracted and tragic struggle on Bougainville also illustrates the weakness of state processes of conflict resolution. Numerous allegations of human rights abuses by security forces on Bougainville (Amnesty International 1990, 1993; USDS 1998) and the manner in which these have fueled secessionist sentiment also demonstrate the counterproductive effects of coercive state responses.

Insofar as it is possible to see a broad ideology shared by postindependence governments, this would be "developmentalism." Crime and social disorder have been viewed primarily in material terms, representing a shift away from the cultural paradigm that framed official views during the early colonial period. Over the last thirty years, law-and-order discourse has been articulated in development terms, with problems of order being simultaneously viewed as a consequence of development and an obstacle in its way. Government sensitivity to media and other representations of these problems is largely a result of concerns about their negative impact on foreign investment. This sensitivity is also seen in the ways in which successive governments have been more responsive to the security concerns of the investment community than those of less powerful domestic constituencies.

The postindependence period provides the setting for the detailed case studies in this book. Most observers agree that this has been a time of deterioration in law and order, with an escalation in lawlessness and a parallel decline in the effectiveness of state controls. Although difficult to quantify, evidence suggests a great deal of variation in the form and incidence of crime in different parts of the country. Intergroup fighting continues to be a major problem in parts of the Highlands, causing disruption to commercial activities and government services, as well as resulting in deaths and injuries. Growing fatalities have also been attributed to the changing technology of this kind of conflict, notably the use of modern firearms (Burton 1990). The Inter-Group Fighting Act 1977 provided for the declaration of "fighting zones" and a reversal of the onus of proof in certain criminal proceedings.¹⁴ The Act met with some initial success, but the incidence of fighting has subsequently intensified in many areas. In 1979 the national government declared a state of emergency in all five Highlands provinces in an attempt to con-

trol this behavior. The standard state response has been special policing operations and, according to some observers, these reactive tactics have served to prolong fighting in practice (Mapusia 1986, 108). In recent years some positive local initiatives have centered around negotiation and reconciliation between the parties to the conflict (Lacey 1998).

The most visible form of crime has been the rise and spread of *raskolism*. At one level, the growth of *raskolism* is indicative of the increasing marginalization of large numbers of youngsters for whom there are few legitimate openings in the formal economy, and who show little interest in pursuing a livelihood in the village-based subsistence economy. The violent crimes of *raskol* groups have fueled a sense of personal insecurity in many parts of the country, particularly in the urban centers. For governments desperate to attract foreign investment, the threat of *raskolism* has been a major source of frustration and a persistent target of law-and-order efforts. The inexorable rise of *raskolism* also draws attention to the limited effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Numerous policy reviews of the law-and-order sector have been undertaken, and countless reports published. However, neither the level of concern nor the level of crime has noticeably diminished. The two most comprehensive reports since independence are the 1983 Morgan Report (PNGDPA 1983) and the 1984 Clifford Report (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984). The former provided a broad-ranging investigation of the factors underlying crime, concluding, "The reasons why Papua New Guinea has a crime problem are complex. They are founded in a mixture of the country's chronic under-development, the nature of its history, the colonial legacy, and in a host of pressures resulting from the modernization process" (PNG 1983b, 4). The Clifford Report focused on the inadequacies of the criminal justice system. The thrust of its conclusions was the need to deinstitutionalize criminal justice and strengthen informal controls at local levels, thus allowing the development of a more socially appropriate and potentially more effective system of crime prevention and control.

In practice, substantive criminal justice reform has proved elusive. State responses have been ad hoc and reactive. Periodic crises lead to elaborate law-and-order packages containing a long list of policing and legislative measures—only some of which are ever implemented. The most serious outbreaks of crime have prompted emergency measures aimed at bolstering an increasingly overwhelmed criminal justice system. These measures have included states of emergency, curfews, and special policing operations to restore public order in designated areas. A state of emergency restricts constitutional freedoms, notably freedom of movement, and extends police powers. Prior to 1987, a curfew could only be imposed under the auspices of a state of emergency. The Cur-

few Act of 1987, however, provided for the declaration of a curfew independently of a state of emergency. The police have often been assisted in these operations by members of the defense force and correctional service (May 1993, 35–46). In addition to their regular use in the major towns, these militaristic responses have been used to counter crime, execute outstanding arrest warrants, and recapture prison escapees in rural areas.

Ironically, many of these measures recall the strategies of pacification and control associated with early colonial rule.¹⁵ Unlike their colonial predecessors, however, they appear to have had little, if any, success in securing the peace. In practice, it has often been difficult to distinguish between the retributive actions of police in certain areas and those of the so-called criminals. This blurring of the boundaries between legality and illegality is echoed in popular perceptions of the constabulary in many communities, particularly in the rural Highlands. Ngen Isana and Dorke Gedare noted that many Engans refer to the police as “rascal police” (1992, 38). Commenting on police abuses in Simbu province, Standish has also pointed out that “it is perhaps not inappropriate that some Highlanders pronounce ‘riot squad’ as ‘*raskol*’” (1994, 65).

Human rights groups have been vocal critics of these developments, seeing them as reinforcing Papua New Guinea’s problems of order. Nongovernment organization critics in particular have complained of an increasing “militarisation of society” (*PC*, 7 Aug 1992). State responses, according to this view, have led to the “normalisation of extreme emergency measures in the form of the Curfew Act”; the “increasing use of military and CIS [prison] personnel in police duties”; the “increasing use of police mobile or riot squads in ordinary crime situations”; and “growing numbers of reported terror and torture raids by police squads.” Police operations regularly give rise to allegations of human rights abuses, including indiscriminate destruction of property. Such allegations are often followed by civil actions against the state for large amounts of compensation. In this context, Filer has wryly remarked that the “‘strong arm of the law,’ which once forced people to make peace with each other, now merely provokes a further round of claims against the state itself” (1997, 171).

While the depredations of *raskolism* continue to dominate the media headlines, other forms of violence have contributed to popular concerns. From the mid-1980s the PNG Law Reform Commission published a series of reports documenting the high level of violence against women occurring within marriage.¹⁶ Violence against women—inside and outside marriage—has emerged as a major issue as a result of the vigorous campaigning of women’s groups, churches, and nongovernment organizations. Despite its prominence, authorities continue to treat it as an essentially “domestic” and “private” matter. The following chapters touch

on such issues in terms of the masculinity both of *raskolism* and the state responses it provokes. The colonial state was a macho affair, and the police and big-men who mediated colonial authority were without exception men. The masculinity of the postcolonial state and its responses to social disorder provide an important area of continuity. A fuller examination of the gender of violence in Papua New Guinea lies beyond the scope of this book.¹⁷

Rising levels of violence have also marked postindependence elections. This phenomenon may be understood against the growing primacy of state politics. In the absence of other alternatives, securing political office has become the principal way of acquiring resources for diversion to local levels and personal use. As a result, electoral competition has become progressively more frenzied and belligerent in many parts of the country. Corruption has emerged as another significant law-and-order issue. As with gender-related violence, this issue raises many problems of definition and perception that again lie beyond the scope of this book. There have been numerous allegations of misappropriation and abuse of office on the part of senior public figures. In 1991, Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu revealed that the Ombudsman Commission was investigating allegations against 90 of the 109 members of the national parliament (*Australian*, 12 Feb 1991). Popular distrust of politicians has grown, in line with the allegations and mounting evidence of serious financial mismanagement at senior levels of the state. Concern with corruption played a significant role in the recent military-led revolt against the decision of Sir Julius Chan's government to use foreign mercenaries to crush Bougainville rebels in 1997 (Dinnen, May, and Regan 1997).

Conclusion

The various historical phases outlined here bring out concepts and themes with explanatory power in different parts of this book. The account of precontact social and political organization indicates the significance of indigenous models of leadership. The pacification period marked the imposition of state in a formerly "stateless" environment. Under Murray in particular, the "civilizing" project was an institution-building project. Modernization of the state was characterized by the separation of previously undifferentiated institutions and the replacement of the imperatives of colonial frontier order by those of Western law. Decolonization heralded the economic dominance of international mining capital. The postindependence era sees the failure of institutional separation, authoritative calls for deinstitutionalization, and a revival of the power of the big-man, as well as a return to the use of the type of state force associated with pacification.

These ideas become important in the chapters that follow. The power of individual leaders in a number of different contexts is viewed through culturalist perspectives. The failure of institutional separation and the return to pacification strategies in the postindependence period are highlighted by institutionalist perspectives. The primacy of mining capital in the national economy is, in turn, seen through materialist perspectives.

The differentiation of state power associated with Hasluck's modernizing mission can also be juxtaposed with the undifferentiated personal power of the traditional leader and the undifferentiated state power of Murray's pacification strategies. Decolonization and independence signal a further differentiation of power with the introduction of international capital.

In this history of the struggle for order can be seen the centrality of contests over the nature of state institutions (pacification versus civilization; institutionalization versus deinstitutionalization); the central significance of cultural forms in the way disorder is played out (notably, crime); and the overwhelming fiscal imperatives of mining investment.

Chapter 3

Perspectives on Crime and Disorder

The three broad perspectives—materialist, culturalist, and institutionalist—that make up the analytical framework used for the case studies have been proposed in various ways by both observers of Papua New Guinea and PNG citizens themselves. Although those perspectives inevitably draw on wider intellectual traditions, their immediate source lies in the growing volume of official documentation, academic writing, and popular representations of law-and-order issues, including what key participants themselves have to say. Between them, they represent reasonably well the range of views applied to these issues. Each perspective will be used to illuminate particular aspects of the object of study. Given that an exclusive focus on one aspect leads to the neglect of another, it is important that these conceptual tools be used in combination. Ultimately the best prospect for gaining new insights lies in the creative interplay between these theoretical prisms.

Materialist perspectives are useful to focus on the economic contexts of individual and group behavior. They are subdivided into “rational choice” and “political economy” versions. Rational choice views crime as the outcome of individual choice, whereas political economy sees it as a consequence of particular processes of material change or “development.” The focus of rational choice is on the individual, whereas political economy is more concerned with the economic environment in which crime occurs.

Culturalist perspectives may be used to emphasize the social foundations of human behavior. In Papua New Guinea, they have been used to investigate the influence of pre-state and precapitalist social forms in a variety of “modern” settings. Aspects of contemporary political, business, and criminal behavior have been linked in this way to more enduring Melanesian models of leadership and relations of exchange. The focus here is on social continuities that are evident in the overall context of social, political, and economic change.

Institutionalist perspectives are helpful when examining the main institutions of state and civil society and their roles in relation to crime and disorder. An important focus here is on the institutional capacity of law-and-order agencies. As well as highlighting the difficulties experienced by the postcolonial state in securing compliance with its writ, these perspectives can also be used to look at how the state itself is implicated in problems of order.

Materialist Perspectives

Rational Choice

The view that criminal behavior is the outcome of deliberate choice has a powerful commonsense appeal in Western thought. In recent years, ideas of deterrence and the economics of crime and law enforcement have been the focus of renewed interest. Once viewed as the domain of conservative social and economic theory, rational choice has acquired a wider appeal among scholars, including those associated with critical and Marxist traditions (Carling 1991). Rational choice perspectives appear in a variety of guises in empirical and theoretical research, public debate, and policy prescriptions.

The notion that individual behavior is governed by rational choice has its intellectual roots in the classical economic thought expounded in eighteenth-century Europe. Conceived against the background of the Enlightenment, this view helped shape the first serious scholarly treatment of crime and punishment, in what became known as the classical school of criminology (J Young 1981, 253–266).

Classical reformers campaigned vigorously against the arbitrary, brutal, and inefficient workings of European judicial systems. In their place, they advocated the establishment of a bureaucratic system of legal administration based on clearly formulated principles to be administered in a systematic and predictable way. An underlying assumption was that people obeyed laws because they feared the consequences of disobedience. The rationale for legal punishment was deterrence. Rational choice theory, as applied to crime, provided the intellectual impetus for the transformation of European criminal justice systems in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The model of criminal justice that emerged at this time continues to serve as the basis for most Western systems, including those implanted in non-Western societies as a result of colonial rule.

Economists have tried to develop rational choice into an elaborate economic theory of crime and law enforcement.¹ Models have been formulated to analyze criminal choices using the analogy of the “supply and demand” framework of labor economics. Some writers have even

postulated a “market” for crime in which criminals “supply” a certain amount of crime, while other citizens “demand” protection against crime from state-provided criminal justice and private security services (Buchanan and Hartley 1992, xi).

Rational choice theory draws attention to the positive attractions of crime, namely its promise of monetary and other rewards. Like rational actors in other areas of human endeavor, criminals are essentially motivated by self-interest. This perspective provides a useful corrective to sensationalist depictions of crime and criminals as pathological or “senseless.” Bruce Harris made this point in his study of Port Moresby gangs, arguing that they “have gone through a rational process of evolution since their appearance in the 1960s. The emphasis is upon *rational*. We will get nowhere by assuming that rascal gangs are groups of sick, crazed young men who senselessly inflict damage and suffering on society” (1988, 1). The key policy implication from this viewpoint is that crime can be reduced by ensuring that its “costs” are higher than its “rewards,” a policy that can be achieved, in theory, by increasing penalties and maximizing the likelihood of apprehension and conviction.

Concern about the low “costs” of committing crime extends to all aspects of the operations of Papua New Guinea’s criminal justice system (Dinnen 1992). In practice, the chances of offenders being apprehended are extremely low, many prosecutions fail on technical grounds or through lack of evidence, and mass prison escapes occur regularly. The result is a marked lack of deterrence and an environment where the rewards of crime generally outweigh the costs. In the mid 1980s, Harris claimed that only 5 percent of stolen property was recovered, while just 7 percent of stolen vehicles and 3 percent of breaking and entering resulted in arrests (1988, 25). A recent estimate claims that the probability of being arrested for larceny remains at just over 3 percent (Levantis 1997a). In rational choice terms, this situation amounts to “an open invitation to commit crimes with virtually no fear of apprehension” (Harris 1988, 3).

Many observers have noted the success of illegal strategies in Papua New Guinea. Andrew Strathern has commented to this effect in respect of landowners’ violence in pursuit of compensation claims. “They appear to know that violent actions can be effective in changing governmental attitudes towards them, whereas more peaceful methods tend to prove futile. From their perspective, then, their behaviour is highly rational, while at the same time it is deeply damaging to the fabric of state legitimacy” (1993a, 54).

Policies that are not directly concerned with crime control can also have an important influence on the amount of crime committed. A recurring theme in rational choice analysis is the association drawn between unemployment and crime. Crime is viewed as an alternative source

of income in an environment where legitimate opportunities for income generation are restricted. As a result the factor of unemployment, particularly among youth, has acquired an authoritative explanatory status in law-and-order debate in Papua New Guinea.

Theodore Levantis has provided the clearest application of a rational choice perspective to crime in Papua New Guinea.² He argued that crime is prevalent in the towns because of the lack of opportunities in the formal and informal sectors of the urban economy. In his view, “*raskol* activities constitute an employment category of their own” (1997b, 83). The weakness of state controls adds to the attractions of crime in this situation. From this viewpoint, crime has to be tackled on two broad fronts. One entails the expansion of legitimate income-generating opportunities, thereby reducing the appeal of criminal options. The other requires a significant improvement in the effectiveness of the crime-control system, thereby increasing the costs of crime.

Political Economy

MODERNIZATION

Despite the demise of universal theories of development and their criminological derivatives, law-and-order debate in Papua New Guinea continues to resonate with models of global change that were current in the 1960s and 1970s (Dinnen 1993e). The literature on crime that emerged from development theory was “sparse and poor” (Cohen 1982, 85), but its value lay in the questions it asked about the relationship between structural change and crime.

Addressing a seminar on crime prevention in Port Moresby in 1975, the year of Papua New Guinea’s independence, the distinguished American criminologist Marshall Clinard claimed that as “the less developed nations attempt to bring about transformation in one or two generations that have culminated from several centuries of more gradual development in most industrialised nations, severe social repercussions become apparent. The rapid increase in crime, particularly property crime, [is] a concomitant to the development process” (1976, 48). This statement contains the basic tenets of the modernization paradigm applied to crime. Crime is viewed in the aggregate, rather than in terms of individual choice or official decisions to criminalize particular actions.

In the 1960s, “modernization” was used to describe the process of transformation from pre-industrial to industrial society, which was assumed to be an “inevitable international historical and unidimensional process which all societies undergo at different times” (Menzel 1990, 45). One leading proponent of this view envisaged development occurring through a series of incremental stages, from traditional society at one end to consumer society at the other (Rostow 1960, 1963). Modern-

ization could be artificially induced in developing nations through a transfusion of capital, skills, and values from their developed counterparts. Such a transfusion, if successful, would lead to the replacement of the outdated values and institutions of “tradition” with those of “modernity” and “progress” (Hardiman and Midgley 1982, 52).

Rising crime rates in developing nations were viewed as a consequence of the profound stresses induced by the early stages of capitalist growth. Developing countries had to undergo a period of turbulent social and economic upheaval analogous to that experienced in Europe during the industrial revolution. Major changes included the expansion of the market economy, institutional reform, new social and political ideals, population growth, and urbanization. This view has a strong appeal in new states where dramatic transformations have taken place over relatively short periods. As Sean Dorney remarked in the PNG context,

The difficulty with maintaining law has much to do with the astonishing rate at which more than seven hundred separate and tiny independent society States, each with its own language, customs and traditional practices, have been compressed into a modern nation State. For almost the whole of PNG it is less than a hundred years since first permanent contact with forces outside the village group, and for many areas it is a period of half or a quarter of that. Perhaps the surprising thing about PNG is not that law and order is a perplexing problem but that things are not a great deal worse. (1990, 288)

The most visible manifestation of modernization is urbanization, the move of people away from their rural roots into a mass urban society. The cumulative effect of this movement is to generate an overall social pathology, in which neither the norms of the emergent social order nor those of the traditional order are dominant. Crime patterns are characterized by growing rates of property crime in the urban centers, involving juvenile offenders operating from the most socially disadvantaged areas, typically the settlements and shanty towns accommodating the most recent migrants.

The growth of crime is viewed as an unfortunate by-product of the inexorable march of economic progress, a view echoed in a 1991 report prepared by Papua New Guinea’s provincial Peace and Good Order Committees:³

As the pace of change quickens in Papua New Guinea, the traditional social values and old mechanisms of control are unable to work. Along with this is the declining respect for elders and the authority of the family. This is a clear indication of social breakdown brought about by rapid change. Again this is not to argue

that changes should not take place. Rather it is a warning that in a period of social change we must expect problems but we should also plan to minimise their negative impacts. (FLOJ 1991, 3)

In a well-known international text, Marshall Clinard and Daniel Abbott identified a number of factors conducive to crime growth associated with rapid socioeconomic change. Among them are the economic imbalance between urban and rural areas, population expansion unmatched by economic growth, a shortage of skilled labor, a widening generation gap, and rising material expectations among younger people (1973, 10–11). These factors appear regularly in accounts of Papua New Guinea's current problems.⁴

As with rational choice, scholars who worry about modernization see the lack of legitimate economic opportunities as a major factor in the growth of crime. However, whereas rational choice focuses on individual choice, modernization is seen as creating the enabling conditions that propel entire social groups into criminal activity.

The connection made between youth unemployment and crime in Papua New Guinea has ensured a steady flow of remedial proposals directed at youth mobilization and job creation. Proposals have been aimed at absorbing unemployed youth, instilling personal discipline, and teaching vocational skills. Juvenile crime has also been linked to the perceived inappropriateness of the education system and, in particular, the unrealistic expectations it raises among school leavers.

The policy challenge from a modernization perspective is how to control lawlessness without hindering desirable processes of economic growth. Emphasis is placed on both the economic causes and the impacts of crime. Remedial measures include schemes to control urban migration, the reorientation of education policies, youth schemes, and community-based crime-prevention programs.

NEO-MARXISM

The modernization view of crime has been disputed by those espousing a less benign view of global development. One of the better-known neo-Marxist theories of development, and one that aroused considerable interest in academic and activist circles during the 1960s and early 1970s, was dependency theory (Dos Santos 1970). The dependency perspective sought to explain the lack, or distorted character, of development in the third world in terms of the exploitative relationship between peripheral and core nations (Wallerstein 1974). This relationship caused underdevelopment in the third world. Peripheral nations were dependent on the capitalist core economies, which exploited their raw materials and cheap labor. The dominant role of foreign investment in developing countries ensured their continuing subservience to the developed world

and generated massive internal inequalities. Local ruling classes fulfilled a comprador role, as intermediaries for exploitative foreign investors and, in particular, for powerful transnational corporations.

Whereas modernization locates the roots of social and economic problems, including crime, in the “backwardness” and “traditional” character of developing nations, the neo-Marxists attribute them to external factors. These consist of the relations of exploitation and dependency established during colonial times and perpetuated in neocolonial guise after independence. Accounts of crime sought to combine the insights of dependency theory with those of radical Western criminology (Taylor, Walton, and Young 1973, 1975).⁵ High crime rates, urban squalor, cultural conflict, and the breakdown of traditional controls were seen as symptomatic of deepening inequalities in both domestic and international contexts.

The colonial state and legal system were depicted as singularly repressive and efficient instruments of control, designed to facilitate the economic objectives of the colonial enterprise, principally through the control and direction of labor and the alienation of land. In doing so, colonial law supported a system based on political, racial, and economic injustice. Echoes of this perspective are found in nationalist and neo-Marxist critiques of colonial law.⁶ According to Papua New Guinea’s first minister of justice, John Kaputin, “The truth is that law has been used throughout the ages as an instrument of domination and oppression by the ruling classes. . . . In this country, the law was an instrument of colonialism and a means whereby the economic dominance of the white man was established over us. . . . It not only deprived us of our land, but forced us to work for expatriate plantation owners to whom the law gave our lands” (1975, 1).

The injustices of colonial rule are seen to continue after independence, when political control was transferred from the colonial masters to a local ruling elite. Coercive techniques and apparatus inherited from the colonial period provide the postcolonial elite with powerful instruments for sustaining their domestic dominance and protecting foreign investment (S Cohen, 1982, 101; Sumner 1982).

High spending on internal security allows the use of state power to suppress popular dissent and resistance. The targets of criminalization in postcolonial society are the economically marginal groups, with “class” replacing “race” as the major source of division. These views are echoed by radicals in Papua New Guinea who argue that the “increasing brutality and militarization of the police force is the new officially sanctioned ‘solution’ to discontent over these growing inequalities” (Cox 1993, 10).

Similar arguments have been directed at foreign aid projects, particularly capacity-building work with the police and the military. Critics

claim that this assistance is aimed at protecting the interests of foreign investors. “[I]ncreased funds for policing are geared to creating a suitable climate for investment in major economic projects” (Maclellan 1989, 37). “Australian aid has been channelled through the State to maintain State structures so that it can service or maintain the conditions necessary to enable Australian investment to enter Papua New Guinea, and to protect it when threatened” (Parkop 1993, 56).⁷ Government sensitivity to the security needs of foreign investors is taken as further evidence of the partisan character of criminal justice.

The factor of social disadvantage becomes central in explanations of crime from a dependency perspective. Criminals tend to be portrayed as either the hapless victims of structural inequalities or as nascent rebels against social injustice. Herb Thompson and Scott MacWilliam applied a classical Marxist perspective to crime in Papua New Guinea, arguing that “young people without jobs are being rapidly transformed into an extremely discontented *lumpenproletariat*, euphemistically identified as ‘rascals’. The trickle-down effect from mining has never existed for the ‘rascals’ because they have no place on the land and wage-labour does not exist. Their alternative for survival is to establish armed *lumpenproletariat* gangs which roam the urban areas and the Highlands Highway robbing, looting, ransacking and killing” (1992, 172).

Other commentators have emphasized the political dimension of criminal behavior, representing it as an inchoate form of resistance or social protest.⁸ Marie Reay has remarked on the “Robin Hood” quality of gang crime in parts of the Western Highlands.

The leaders choose as their targets stores and houses belonging to persons they judge to be rich. They aim to close the gap between the rich and the poor by robbing the rich and giving to the poor. Gang members recycle the spoils of their robberies among those they think are in need. The grand leader himself provides a model of this Robin Hoodism. When he sleeps in somebody’s house for the night he gives K60 or K70 in tariff. To anyone he meets on the road who seems thirsty or hungry he gives food and drink or money. (1982, 625–626)

Much of the discussion of *raskol* crime moves between its essentially passive depiction as a symptom of deepening inequalities, and its significance as a form of political dissent.

Nand Hart Nibbrig has argued that *raskols* are driven by a sense of moral indignation (1992), which is directed at inequalities originating in the colonial experience that have been further institutionalized in the postcolonial period. Many *raskols* do try to legitimate their activities by reference to government failure to deliver essential services, lack of economic opportunities, social injustice, and growing levels of corruption

among the national elite. These views also underlie the ambivalence in popular perceptions of *raskolism* in many parts of the country.

From a neo-Marxist perspective crime is symptomatic of more profound social and economic divisions. Whereas modernizers view crime as an unintended consequence of change that in itself is desirable, neo-Marxists see the institutions that force inequalities as deliberately created to advance the interests of one small group over those of the majority (Boehringer 1978).

Culturalist Perspectives

Contrary to the universalist claims of materialist views, culturalist perspectives are used to identify that which is distinctive about social organization and behavior and how this manifests itself in crime and disorder. How, for example, is theft linked to the ethos of sharing in clan and tribal groups in Melanesian society? How does Papua New Guinea's diverse social environment affect the operations of a uniform and centralized criminal justice system?

For most Papua New Guineans, primary allegiances reside in highly localized organizations based on kinship and language, rather than in abstracted notions of state and nation. Precolonial isolation and a relatively short experience of central administration have ensured the continuing significance of many aspects of "traditional" social organization. These relate, in particular, to the personalized social relations characteristic of small-scale societies (May and Tupouniua 1980). This resilience stands in contrast to the pessimistic projections of the grand theories of development already discussed, and to earlier theories of the fatal impact of colonialism (Moorehead 1966).

Some observers attribute the particular "style" of postindependence politics in Papua New Guinea to the influence of older patterns of social relations. This kind of culturalist analysis looks for evidence of continuities linking the behavior of leaders in both "modern" and "traditional" contexts, as well as across different occupational categories. May, for example, wrote of a loose-knit political culture deriving from key features of Melanesian societies, including their smallness of scale, communal character, extended kinship ties, and competitive big-man models of leadership. He argued that the personalized and group character of modern politics reflects the manner in which this older political culture has been reproduced in the new institutional arenas of state (1982b, 640–644).

Analogies have been drawn between today's political leaders and the archetypal Melanesian big-man. The alleged continuities revolve around the manipulation of resources and social relations by aspiring leaders in both settings. William Standish's study of politics in Simbu Province

documents the playing out of a hybrid form of politics involving the “utilization of Simbu values within the new arenas created by the state and the use of new political resources deriving from the state within Simbu political arenas, competitions and conflicts” (1992, 250).

The persistence of older strategies of prestige building and patterns of competitive leadership remain an important focus of ethnographic inquiry. Each individual’s social standing in Papua New Guinea still appears to be largely derived from the willingness to engage in semitradi-tional social relations with kin and *wantoks*.

[This behavior] invokes a familiar complex of interaction, based on kin and exchange ties, that has been an analytic preoccupation of anthropologists since Malinowski’s *kula* observations and his attempt to typologize relationships of obligation. It prevails in the face of “westernization” and transcends ethnographic distinctions between highland and lowland or chiefly and nonchiefly societies. Recent comparative studies have demonstrated its variations rather than its relative absence or presence. In Port Moresby, where people from a huge diversity of micro-ethnic groups are thrown together, the competition for jobs, promotion, accommodation, and other needs is fraught with accusations (often well founded) of “wantokism”—the favouring of near and distant kin. (Goddard 1995, 65)

Similar dynamics have been noted in a variety of other contemporary settings. As well as politics, these include entrepreneurship and business development (Finney 1973, 1987; Levine and Levine 1979, 129).⁹

Social continuities are also discernible in the organization and pattern of contemporary criminality, although these have attracted less comment. This relative neglect reflects a prevailing view of crime, particularly of *raskolism*, as an essentially modern and urban phenomenon. Visiting “crime experts” have emphasized the “modernity” and global character of Papua New Guinea’s urban crime, downplaying any continuities with older Melanesian social forms. “[U]rban crime being experienced in Port Moresby has more of the characteristics of urban crime elsewhere than it has of the aggression and volatility traditionally associated with the Papua New Guinea region. It would appear to reflect more the effects of the world spread of an urban culture which the opening up of Port Moresby to an outside world has necessarily occasioned, than to be an urban reflection of the rural problems in Papua New Guinea” (Clifford 1976, 4).

The analytical emphasis on the “modern” dimensions of crime was reinforced in the nationalistic rhetoric of the 1970s. Emergent social problems, including crime, were depicted as the outcome of a weakening of Melanesian traditions under the cumulative weight of external

(ie, Western) changes. The language of cultural nationalism continues to be linked to law-and-order issues through claims about the damaging impact of “foreign” influences (Narakobi 1988, 39). The celebration of Melanesian “custom,” set against the corrosive effects of “Western values” has thus reinforced the association between crime and modernity.

With some notable exceptions, anthropologists have preferred to work in the more “traditional” environment of small-scale rural societies. As a result, relatively little ethnographic research has been conducted into the organization of criminal groups. One observer has remarked that “[i]f one read only anthropological works about Papua New Guinea, one could very easily miss the fact that rascalism is one of the most salient and talked about topics in the country” (Kulick 1993, 9).

Insofar as cultural factors were raised in debates over urban crime in the 1960s and 1970s, it was largely in terms of the loss of cultural identity entailed in the move from the village to the socially heterogeneous and Westernized urban setting (Rowley 1965, 211). Similar arguments are heard today concerning the Western orientation of the education system and its perceived impact on youngsters. “Children have been alienated by an education system which does not value traditional life and culture and which does not prepare them to utilise locally available development opportunities. This alienation began under the colonial education system when it was seen to be desirable for young children to be taken away from their parents at an early age” (PNG 1991a, 8).

Culturalist perspectives underlie many popular stereotypes in law-and-order debate. As elsewhere, these stereotypes attribute negative qualities to particular social groups assumed to share a common cultural or ethnic identity. Ironically, these identities are often the product of administrative classifications initially formulated by colonial authorities and missionaries. Oram related how “Keremas” (people from what was then the Gulf District) living in Port Moresby had a reputation for aggression until the early 1960s (1976, 145). By the mid-1970s this notoriety had been transferred to the “Goilalas” and “Chimbus” (or “Simbus”). From the mid-1930s, the term “Chimbus” was generally applied to all Highlanders. Writing in 1973, Standish noted the prevalence of “simplistic stereotypes of a Highlands personality” (1973, 4). Oram claimed that such stereotypes fueled police harassment and cited a Goilala member of the House of Assembly complaining that police treated the Goilala “like dogs” (1976, 228).

Popular stereotypes continue to impute innate qualities of aggression and volatility to people from certain areas or “ethnic” groups. These views are expressed in everyday conversations, media depictions, and “off-the-record” remarks by officials. Groups that are singled out for stereotyping complain of discrimination by employers, officials, and members of other groups.

Cultural issues also arise in debates about the effectiveness of Papua New Guinea's system of criminal justice. The shortcomings of the state system are attributed, in part, to its perceived inappropriateness in the PNG social environment. The critique in the 1984 Clifford Report centered around the social distance seen as separating the formal state system and the informal mechanisms of social regulation operating at local levels. The report concluded that improving criminal justice performance required a closer articulation between formal and informal levels (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 111).

Recent research on criminal behavior in Papua New Guinea has focused attention on the way in which the ostensibly modern entity of the criminal gang exhibits important continuities with older forms of organization. The Clifford Report had earlier hinted at the combination of traditions evident in *rasholism*. According to the report, "gangs in Papua New Guinea have a culture all their own—not traditional, not western but with elements of each" (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 176). Reay also identified the significance of extended kinship obligations in the context of rural gangs (1982). Harris's study of the evolution of Port Moresby gangs drew attention to similarities between the gang leader and the Melanesian big-man (1988, 26–27). Goddard used the same analogy to characterize relations between criminal leaders and their followers (1992, 27).

The syncretism between different social traditions has also been noted in the crimes of the elite. Discussions of corruption often raise questions about the effects of kinship obligation in modern institutional contexts. The "prevalent concern with official and political 'corruption' . . . is partly about the conflict between the obligations of kinship and public service" (Larmour 1992, 102).

Culturalist perspectives draw attention to the continuing influence of older Melanesian social forms and how these manifest themselves in contemporary settings. Whereas materialist viewpoints concentrate on ruptures and the dislocative effects of change, culturalist factors emphasize social continuities. Such approaches provide another important conceptual lens for the analytical framework used here.

Institutionalist Perspectives

These perspectives are useful in addressing the institutional context of individual, group, and corporate actions. For governments, investors, and aid donors, they have provided the principal lens for viewing the inadequacies of state responses to crime and disorder in recent years. Although there have been more expansive formulations, as in the more fundamental critiques of criminal justice outlined later, this viewpoint has tended to focus narrowly on issues of institutional capacity. State

weakness has thus been defined primarily as one of institutional incapacity, and remedial measures have been formulated accordingly.

The role of institutions of civil society in the field of crime may also be seen from this perspective. The most important of these institutions are the churches and missions, which, as implied earlier, have had a more significant impact on the lives of most Papua New Guineans than the institutions of state. Religious narratives have been pervasive in the area of law and order, as elsewhere in public debate in this nominally Christian country. Popular perceptions of criminal rehabilitation, for example, often view it as synonymous with spiritual rebirth.¹⁰ Church and government representatives regularly advocate religious conversion as an individual solution to crime.¹¹

The churches in Papua New Guinea have a long tradition of practical involvement with offenders in state prisons, and run a number of institutions for juveniles, including Boystown in Wewak. Evangelical crusades appeal directly to socially marginal youth, offering hope and salvation to those struggling in the interstices between traditional and Western worlds. Evangelist leaders have played a key role in attempts to initiate dialogue between criminal groups and state officials. These occasions, exemplified in “gang retreats,” bring criminal and political leaders together for informal discussions about law-and-order matters, particularly issues pertaining to youth (Houghton 1985).

Critiques of criminal justice in Papua New Guinea can be broadly divided into those that accept the existing institutional framework and focus on specific technical, resource, and operational shortcomings, and more fundamental critiques that question the social foundations of this system. The revisionist critiques explain the low impact of criminal justice in terms of inadequate resources, training, and coordination. Particular problems such as prison breakouts, bail absconding (PNG 1988a, 5–6), and recidivism, together with low levels of detection of crime, apprehension of suspects, and successful prosecutions (PNG 1983a, 8–9), can be remedied by a combination of institutional-capacity building and increased resources.

The more fundamental critiques identify the principal failing of the existing system as its inappropriateness in the PNG social environment. Such institutionalist critiques are usually expressed in cultural terms. This is the perspective underlying the Clifford Report’s espousal of informal (non-state) regulatory mechanisms discussed earlier. In advocating greater recognition of informal strategies of social control, the report commented that “the possibility that existing services may be defective or inefficient—not because they are starved of resources but because they are either irrelevant to the situation in Papua New Guinea or refusing to work with communities does not seem to have detained people long” (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 125).

Lack of police success in curbing escalating lawlessness has become a staple of law-and-order debate. For many officers, the limited effectiveness of policing is largely a result of inadequate resources (Samin 1993). The bulk of spending on the police in the annual budget goes to salaries and wages, which, according to some accounts, consume 80 percent of the police budget (Taku 1990, 1). Another report claimed that budgetary restrictions have meant that "there is a demonstrable lack of infrastructure support and basic facilities to enable police to perform effectively" (PNG-ADCP 1993, 23). Deteriorating morale has been blamed on the shortage and inferior quality of police accommodation, as well as appalling working conditions. As one might expect, the problem of inadequate resources is most acute in the rural areas.

At independence, police coverage extended to only 10 percent of the total land area and 40 percent of the population (Dorney 1990, 296). A modest increase in the size of the force in the years since has failed to match the demands of a growing population and escalating lawlessness. In 1975, when crime rates were relatively low, the national population was slightly more than 2 million. With a police force of 4,100, this translated into a police-to-population ratio of 1:476. By 1996, however, with crime a major concern, the population had more than doubled to over 4 million, while the number of police remained at approximately 5,000 uniformed staff and 300 civilian support staff (Nenta 1996). The police-to-population ratio now stands at 1:800. By contrast, the Australian state of New South Wales, with a similar population to Papua New Guinea, boasts approximately 13,000 police. These aggregate figures obscure significant variations in police coverage, as well as in the incidence of crime. Police figures for 1992, for example, revealed that whereas the relatively tranquil New Guinea Islands region had a police-to-population ratio of 1:815, the figure for the more volatile Highlands was 1:1,225. This situation has exacerbated problems of order in the Highlands. So too has the deployment of mainland mobile squads to the troubled island of Bougainville.

Poor performance in basic preventative, investigative, and prosecutorial functions has also been attributed to the shortage of specialist and experienced officers. Insufficient training and supervision have been blamed for high levels of indiscipline.¹² A historically informed account of the difficulties experienced by the police would also acknowledge their colonial origins as an institution whose primary role was the extension of government control and only secondarily the control of crime. Although it has become increasingly common to respond to localized outbreaks of crime with emergency measures, these demonstrations of state strength belie the actual weakness of law enforcement agencies.

Institutional strengthening provides the basis for the major Australian-funded Police Development Project. The first phase of this project, from

1987 to 1992, involved expenditure of K29.7 million and was aimed at improving the administrative, management, operational, and technical capacities of the constabulary. The second phase, commencing in 1993, was initially costed at approximately A\$62.1 million and employs over 50 full-time Australian police advisers attached to six regional centers—the National Capital District, Lae, Goroka, Rabaul, Mount Hagen, and Madang (Engel 1994, 159). A third five-year phase commenced in 2000.

As well as being the target of Australian aid, the institutional shortcomings of the police force have made it susceptible to intervention by other external actors. While constitutionally the police remain a national responsibility, several provincial governments have given financial and other assistance. Local businesses have likewise provided support. Such actions are justified in terms of the failure of national authorities to provide sufficient resources, although they sometimes attract criticism as improper attempts to influence the police.

The inadequacies of state policing have also contributed to the massive growth in private policing. Although no reliable figures exist to gauge the size of the industry, security companies now operate in many parts of the country. A recent estimate claims that approximately 200 registered and unregistered security companies are in business, employing about 10,000 staff or over twice the number of state police (*Independent*, 18 April 1997). This largely unregulated industry is concentrated in urban centers and offers a wide range of protective services.

From an institutionalist perspective the main challenge is to improve the operations of law enforcement agencies and, in particular, the police. A concerted effort is needed to enhance the institutional capacity of law enforcement agencies, provide adequate resources, and build professional skills. In a more radical version, a major reorientation in the working ideology and practice of criminal justice is required, involving a closer and more harmonious linkage between state and informal systems of social regulation.

Chapter 4

Rot Bilong Raskol: *Passing through Crime*

[H]undreds of rascal gangs around the country are seemingly out of control, responsible for the vast majority of crimes that have turned modern PNG into a law and order nightmare. In the space of two decades, the capital Port Moresby has gone from a sleepy Australian colonial town to a violent Melanesian city. These days it isn't just expatriates who live in barbed wire compounds but anyone who can afford to. This underlies the sense of siege that pervades the city which, with its graffiti-splashed compounds, is in parts beginning to resemble a South Pacific version of South Central Los Angeles.

BEN BOHANE, *The New Bushrangers*

The concept of the “gang” has become central in law-and-order discourse in Papua New Guinea, where the problem of criminal violence is often reduced to one of *raskol* gangs. The concept itself tends to be taken for granted and is rarely subject to critical scrutiny. The phenomenon of urban *raskolism*,¹ its development in recent years, the impact of state controls, and the organization of criminal groups are examined in this chapter. A detailed description of a particular gang surrender is followed by discussion of the material, cultural, and institutional dimensions of criminality in Papua New Guinea.

The Rise of Raskolism

Despite its current notoriety, *raskolism* has a relatively short history. Apart from periodic moral panics about “native” criminality during the early colonial period (Inglis 1974), crime only emerged on a large scale during the last decade of colonial rule. As late as 1959 the Australian administration claimed that “the incidence of crime continues to be low” (Papua 1960, 80), and in 1960 there was still “no evidence that urbanisation is producing delinquency.”²

The term *raskols* appears to have first been applied to juvenile

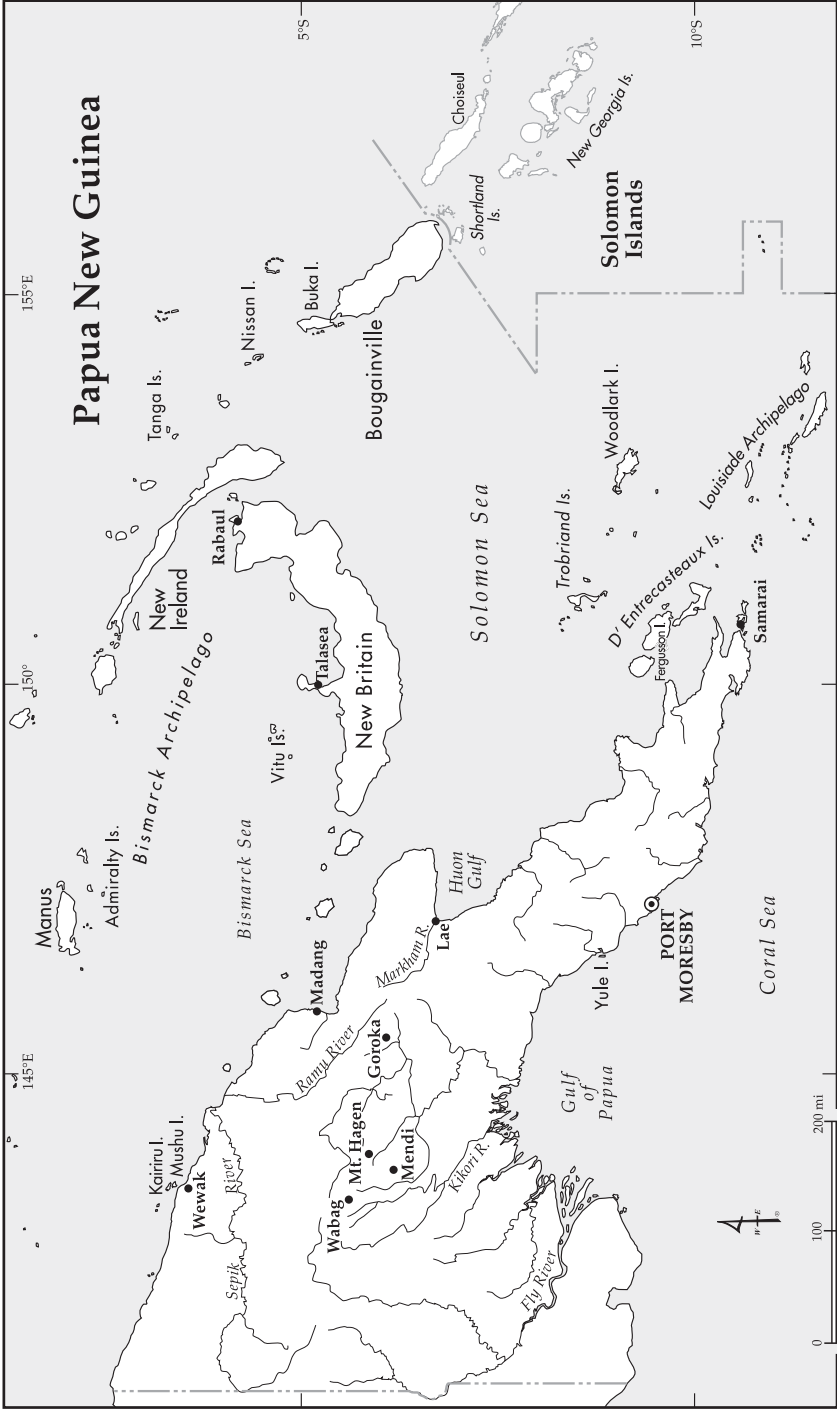
offenders in the mid-1960s. Prior to that time, criminal gangs were unknown in Port Moresby. Juvenile crime emerged against a background of urban growth and rapid change in the lead-up to independence. Between 1966 and 1977 Port Moresby experienced a 12.2 percent annual population growth rate, and rising crime rates were widely attributed to the influence of particular migrant groups. Criminal statistics from Port Moresby indicated a disproportionate involvement of single male migrants from the Highlands and from the Goilala subdistrict (Oram 1973, 5). While initial concerns with crime centered on Port Moresby, similar issues were being raised in the smaller towns, including Lae, Madang, Goroka, and Mount Hagen (map 1).³ By 1975, the police were claiming that juvenile crime had reached “alarming proportions” in the main urban areas (*Urban Growth* 1975).

Recorded crimes consisted mainly of offenses against the person, with many involving alcohol abuse. During most of the colonial period alcohol consumption by Papua New Guineans had been prohibited. The removal of legal restrictions in 1962–63 had been followed by a marked increase in drink-related offenses (Oram 1976, 152). A 1971 Commission of Inquiry into the effects of alcohol found that while the population had increased by one-fifth over the previous seven years, the incidence of crime had increased ninefold. Offenses involving intoxication had increased as a proportion of all offenses from 13 percent to 28.5 percent (PNG 1971, 1).

The legalization of alcohol constituted “the spark which ignited the flame” of urban gang growth from the mid-1960s (Harris 1988, 8). The cultural significance of alcohol consumption by men in Papua New Guinea and other parts of the Pacific has been noted by observers. Mac Marshall has shown how beer drinking was assimilated into traditional exchange systems, becoming “a rite of passage” whereby young men demonstrated that they were “officially modernized” (1982, 5). Ostentatious drinking bouts among young male migrants were as much symbolic—a demonstration of modernity and urban sophistication—as they were a means of escape from the uncertainties of urban existence. The growing taste for beer also had a more direct impact on crime, lowering inhibitions against stealing, and beer itself became a major object of theft (Harris 1988, 10).

Specific concerns with “gangs” began to be aired in Port Moresby during the late 1960s. Forty young men were arrested over Easter 1970, suspected of being the leaders of gangs responsible for an earlier spate of breaking and entering (Parry 1972, 30). Conflicting estimates were made of the number of gangs. The president of the Police Association claimed that there were 50 in Port Moresby in 1971.⁴ F D Young said there were 20 active gangs in 1976 (1976, 5), and Harris later suggested that there were 6 in 1963, rising to 20 by the late 1970s (1988, 43).

These early gangs gave important support to young migrants strug-



Map 1

gling to establish themselves in the unfamiliar urban environment. They also provided an effective means for acquiring commodities that were otherwise difficult to obtain, such as processed food, cash, and, of course, beer. During this initial phase, gang activities were confined to petty crime and a variety of relatively harmless pursuits. The groups involved tended to be ethnically homogeneous, catering for the social and material needs of young men from the same area of origin.

From the outset the *raskol* gang was a distinctly male phenomenon, with the small number of female participants providing the exception to the rule. The gender of *raskolism* is confirmed in research conducted in the 1970s and in crime statistics. The *Report of the Peace and Good Order Committee* (PNG 1974) claimed that male offenders outnumbered female offenders twenty to one (Clifford 1976, 7). According to Young there were “few instances of girls being involved with the gangs” (1976, 6). Richard Sundeen noted that only 2.2 percent of his sample of juvenile offenders were female, attributing this disparity to the “restricted roles and lower status of women” (1981, 7).

Their predominantly male membership, macho subculture, and antagonism toward women, suggests that *raskol* entities became an important vehicle for constituting male identity among socially insecure adolescents and young men. Gangs emerged, in part, as a means for transmitting masculine values in an environment where more “traditional” forms of initiation into manhood were absent and where the weakness of the formal economy restricted access to “modern” alternatives. The phrase “urban warriors” has been used to convey this transplanted dimension of juvenile machismo in the urban setting (Wanek 1982; Schiltz 1985).

For many observers, the appearance of gangs against Port Moresby’s rapid expansion was indicative of their essentially “modern” character, implying in turn that they shared much with the delinquent youth subcultures of the industrialized world. The director of the Australian Institute of Criminology even suggested that Port Moresby gangs were reminiscent of the “mods and rockers,” the “bikies,” and other “hooligan” groups that developed in postwar Europe and Australia (Clifford 1976, 16).

Others drew attention to the role of cultural and psychological factors and, in particular, the “culture shock” experienced by the first generation of urban migrants. Oram, for example, pointed out that many migrants came from areas, such as the Highlands, where the colonial experience had been shortest (1976, 149). These individuals brought the values and outlooks of their villages of origin to the socially heterogeneous and stratified urban setting.

Settlements is the generic term given to unplanned residential areas occupied predominantly by recent migrants. There are enormous vari-

ations in the size and permanence of urban settlements, the relationship between “settlers” and the traditional or state owners of the land, and in the quality of housing and infrastructure. The growth of settlements is largely a consequence of high levels of urban migration, lack of affordable accommodation, and the inadequacy of urban planning. Settlements are widely viewed as a source of many urban problems, including crime. *Suburbs* refers to planned residential communities, along Australian lines, consisting of defined allotments with access to services such as water, electricity, sewerage, and roads. The distinction between settlements and suburbs has become increasingly blurred as some of the settlements are provided with the amenities, including water and roads, associated with suburbs.

Acquisitive crime resulted, in part, from the conflict between the relatively egalitarian (in material terms) principles of village life and the glaring inequalities of the towns. Whereas in the village wealth brought obligations to share with others, the conspicuous wealth and consumption patterns of the urban elite appeared to carry no such obligations, and fueled a growing sense of grievance among those excluded (Harris 1988, 6).

The absence or weakening of social controls that inhibited deviant behavior in the village was another contributing factor, particularly among the young.

These children are not subjected to the normal tribal restrictions which would control their behaviour. They are residing in a cosmopolitan society, and whilst their parents may attempt to control them, there is no common demand by the society to back up the parents' efforts. There are no day-to-day activities which would, in a village environment, make a strong demand upon the time of such children. The community is unable to provide sufficient activities to occupy the available time that these children have. (Urban Growth 1975)

Other commentators emphasized the rational character of acquisitive crime in an environment where legitimate economic opportunities and subsistence options were limited. Malcolm Mackellar suggested that most *raskol* theft was directed at acquiring the basic necessities of urban survival. “About 90 *per cent* of all housebreaking offences so far examined, involve the selective theft of food, drink and small household items. The average Melanesian, when in his village, can grow all he can eat. But if he is a migrant to Port Moresby without land rights and without work, he must either be kept by someone else, beg food, borrow it or steal food in order to survive. Until something is done about the unemployed, stealing and housebreaking will continue” (1976, 120–121).

Arrest figures from the mid-1970s indicated that the range of

juvenile crime was becoming more diverse, including a rise in violent offenses. In 1970–71, 74.4 percent of juvenile arrests were for offenses against property and 25.6 percent for “other offenses,” including violence. By 1974–75, however, 47.3 percent were for offenses against property, and 52.7 percent for “other offenses” (*Urban Growth* 1975). Between 1968 and 1975, *raskol* activities spread from Port Moresby’s settlements to middle-class residential areas (Harris 1988, 11). The arrival of *raskolism* in the “respectable” suburbs led to growing pressure for effective crime control. In response, the police began the reactive operations that have since become a standard response to law-and-order problems.

The extension of criminal activities and increasing police (and media) attention led to important changes in the organization of urban gangs. The successful planning and execution of breaking and entering operations in the suburbs demanded a more disciplined and specialized organization. Some groups established “striking forces” as specialist units for more complex criminal activities (Harris 1988, 12).

Despite the persistence of stereotypes of gang members as illiterate school dropouts from the most disadvantaged urban communities, these changes also reflected the growing influence of better-educated criminals. These youngsters were familiar with the better-off residential areas and played an important role in planning and conducting breaking-and-entering operations in these neighborhoods. In the mid-1970s, one gang was reputedly led by a university student and consisted of high school students (Clifford 1976, 17). The wider social networks known to these individuals helped with the dispersal and sale of stolen property, beginning a “process of vertical integration of gangs into larger criminal networks” (Harris 1988, 13).

Changing organization, in combination with the growing profitability of criminal enterprise, marked an important turning point in the history of Port Moresby gangs. From their origins as supportive associations of young male migrants, these groups were being transformed into efficient instruments of crime. In the process, they became an increasingly important mechanism for social mobility for ambitious individuals (Harris 1988, 13–14). Hart Nibbrig referred to the progressive “commercialism” of *raskolism* during this period. “The *raison d’être* of Rascal formation—ethnic and male bonding—and mutual benefit were joined to and then superseded by the impulse to commercialism. Commercialism, *bisnis*, appears to be driving and transforming virtually all structures of Rascal organization, including the social backgrounds of members” (1992, 119).

Another significant factor in the growth of Papua New Guinea’s gangs has been the limited impact of the official crime control system. Available statistics provided little insight into either the increase in *raskol* activ-

ities or the effects of police responses. In addition to the large number of unreported offenses, procedural deficiencies ensured a serious under-recording of crime and an exaggerated level of police clear-up (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 30). In 1978 a senior police officer claimed that when adjustments were made for such problems, the clear-up rate for reported breaking and entering offenses was as low as 8.5 percent.⁵ By the late 1980s, this figure had dropped to 3 percent (Harris 1988). With few external impediments to growth, crime provided an attractive option for many urban youth, offering material rewards, excitement, and a means for building individual prestige.

A period of consolidation occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as the larger groups competed to assert their dominance in particular localities. This process sometimes led to violent confrontations between opposing groups. A series of takeovers and amalgamations took place, with the larger entities extending their influence to other areas through the establishment of subgroups. New gangs continued to emerge in the settlements that sprang up in the outlying parts of town. As larger criminal associations were formed from the mergers and takeovers, their overall membership became more ethnically heterogeneous (Harris 1988, 27). The rising incidence of “payback” rapes and other assaults in the context of intergang conflicts heralded a particularly violent phase in urban *raskolism* (Dorney 1990, 304–305). These developments gave rise to increasing levels of personal insecurity among the wider urban population, reflected in the siegelike architecture that has become a defining feature of Papua New Guinea’s urban landscape.

The growth of Port Moresby as the center of government and commerce generated many new criminal opportunities. Whereas the staple of the early gangs had been the breaking and entering of private residences, later groups extended the criminal repertoire to include armed robbery, breaking into commercial premises, and stealing cars. Car theft became a first step in the commission of other crimes. The stolen car could be used as a getaway car in robberies and later abandoned. Evidence of a burgeoning network of outlets for the disposal of stolen car parts emerged in the second half of the 1970s. These outlets were run by dishonest business contacts, *ex-raskols* who had established fencing operations, and sometimes by larger criminal associations that ran their own outlets. Far from matching the growing sophistication of criminals, law enforcement agencies underwent a parallel decline during the same period.

Criminal groups are now well established in most urban centers and in many rural parts of Papua New Guinea. Levels of criminal commitment and operational techniques vary, from episodic and relatively unsophisticated social banditry along the major highways, to highly professional and specialized criminal groups in the larger towns. While difficult

to quantify, the frequency and gravity of criminal violence appears to have increased. Police data confirm the concentration of the most lucrative criminal opportunities in the areas of greatest development. In 1990, for example, 42.4 percent of all reported robberies occurred in the National Capital District alone (RPNGC 1990). A growing trade in marijuana, cultivated mainly in the Highlands, provides another new market for criminal entrepreneurs.

The availability of firearms has added greatly to the menace of *raskolism*. Weapons range from high-powered automatic rifles to assorted homemade guns. There have even been reports of criminals armed with grenades (*PC*, 22 Aug 1996). During recent curfew operations in the National Capital District, the police recovered more than 45 pistols, shotguns, automatic assault weapons, and fragmentation grenades (*National*, 22 Jan 1997). The increasingly brazen character of criminal activities is another feature, with robberies taking place in busy shopping centers in the middle of the day. Shoot-outs between criminals and police are regularly reported. Although *raskols* are by no means the sole, or even the main, perpetrators of violence against women, they have become closely associated with the practice of pack rape (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997). Women and girls encountered in the course of a housebreaking, robbery, or hold-up are routinely subject to sexual



Photo 1 Police at the Bereina police station, Central province, display homemade guns handed over during the surrender of a local criminal group. *Word Publishing*

assault, almost as an incidental to the “main” crime. In turn, the growing threat posed by criminal violence has led many members of the public to acquire firearms for self-defense, thereby adding to the pool of deadly weapons in circulation and increasing the likelihood of violent confrontation. In one case in 1995, a diner at a Port Moresby restaurant shot four criminals dead during an armed robbery (*Bulletin*, 21 Nov 1995).

Calls are regularly made to curb urban drift and repatriate settlers as a strategy of crime reduction in the towns. A growing proportion of urban growth, however, springs from high urban birthrates rather than migration (Connell 1997, 190). Many of today’s urban young are second or third generation urbanites, often retaining only tenuous links with rural villages. They are what Morauta termed “permanent urban dwellers” and returning to the village is seldom a practical option (1980).

The youthful profile of the PNG population provides another aspect of *raskol* growth. Approximately 43 percent of the national population are under the age of 15 (Dalglish and Connolly 1992). According to the last national census in 1990, 50 percent of the Port Moresby population were under 20 years of age, while 62 percent were under 25 (NSO 1993)—the age most involved in criminal activities. The small formal economy is only able to absorb about 10,000 of over 50,000 youngsters who enter the labor market each year. Against this background, crime has become an increasingly important part of the informal urban economy.

Responses to Crime

As crime, and fear of crime, spread across all sections of the urban population, vociferous demands were heard for police action. In practice, the police were—and continue to be—impeded by a serious lack of resources. In particular, a noticeable shortage of investigative capacity and an inability, or unwillingness, to develop preventative strategies, in combination with political pressure for quick results, led to a growing reliance on reactive responses—“fire-brigade” policing. The belligerent character of such encounters between police and criminals (and communities suspected of harboring them), has been another important influence on the development of *raskolism*.

In the early 1980s, a specialist anti-*raskol* police unit, “21 squad,” was set up in Port Moresby and quickly acquired a reputation for summary enforcement. According to the officer in charge, “One of our major tactics was to go out every night. Any youth we found on the streets after ten, although he might not be doing anything wrong, was picked up. My attitude was: given the opportunity, he was capable of breaking the law” (Dorney 1990, 301).

Reorganized as “Force 10” in 1985, the unit was given the task of “rounding up people on police records most wanted for murder, rape, robbery, car theft and break and entering and stealing” (*PC*, 19 Aug 1985). A favored police strategy was to raid and “sweep” settlements in search of suspects and stolen goods. The popular association between crime and urban settlements has made them a regular target for such operations. During a 1991 curfew, a total of forty-six raids were carried out in the National Capital District and surrounding Central Province by police and defense force personnel (PNG 1991b). Raids are often conducted in the early hours of the morning and result in the seizure of any items of value that cannot be accounted for by written receipts. Complaints of harassment, criminal damage, and assault invariably follow. In addition to police actions, several provincial governments have resorted to “administrative” measures, including the forcible repatriation of migrants and the demolition of illegal settlements. According to one provincial premier, settlements are targeted because they are “homes for liquor black markets, distribution of dangerous drugs, promotion of prostitution and home for criminals” (*PC*, 30 May 1991).

The concentration of repressive actions against settlements has worsened the alienation of the most disadvantaged urban groups. In 1991 residents in the Situm and Gobari settlements, outside Lae, refused to cooperate with officials conducting a mini-census after their areas were



Photo 2 Authorities check property confiscated during a combined police–defense force raid of a settlement in Port Moresby in 1985. *Word Publishing*

branded crime spots (*PC*, 19 June 1991). Such actions foster a powerful sense of grievance, furthering the integration of criminal and noncriminal residents in these communities.

The police claim considerable success from raids and related strong-arm tactics, but other observers have noted how these responses serve to disguise the underlying weakness of more routine law enforcement processes. In 1985, the chief justice complained that “policemen are experienced in the heavy handed approach to crime, of raids on settlements or villages, but are not sufficiently on their feet and using their heads to solve crimes. There appears to be too much reliance on eliciting confessions to ‘solve’ crimes and not enough detective investigation” (*Times*, 8 Sept 1985).

Concern over levels of violent crime boiled over in 1984 following a series of brutal sexual assaults attributed to Port Moresby gangs. In particular, the pack rape of a New Zealand woman and her daughter caused local outrage and received extensive coverage in the regional media. In October 1984, an angry public demonstration demanding government action attracted twenty-five thousand people (about one in five of the entire National Capital District population). The government announced a law-and-order package of forty-nine crime control measures distilled from the Morgan and Clifford Reports (PNGDPA 1983; Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984). Implementation of these measures was overshadowed by a further spate of criminal violence and public outrage. Declaring a state of emergency in the National Capital District, Prime Minister Somare said that the police were incapable of controlling the situation using their normal powers.⁶

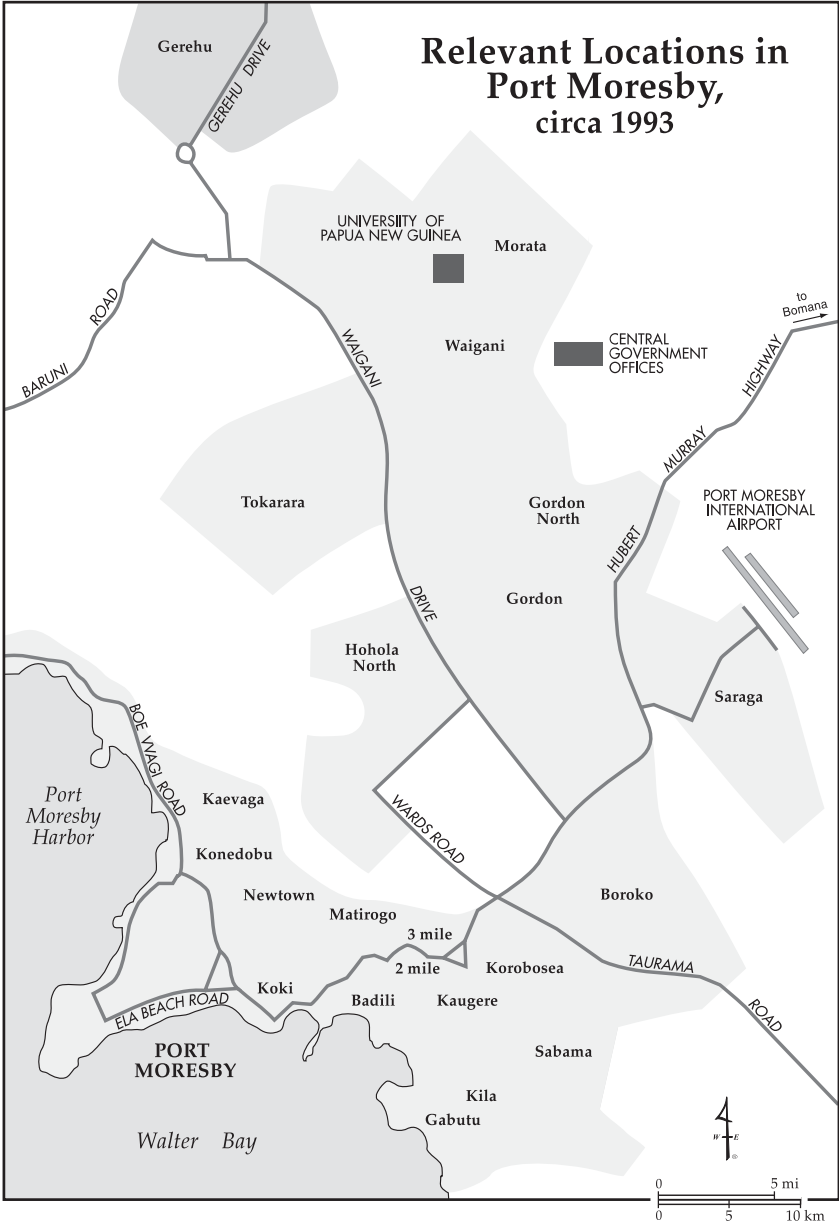
A state of emergency had previously been used in response to intergroup conflict in the Highlands in 1979–80. This was the first and only time it has been used against urban crime, reflecting the level of public concern over criminal violence and the shortcomings of the police. The 1985 provisions allowed the government to deploy the defense force in a civil capacity, increase police powers, prohibit demonstrations, and impose a nightly curfew.

For most urban residents, the emergency brought a welcome, if temporary, respite from predatory crime and the fear it induced. Despite a reported cost of K2.9 million (*PC*, 2 Oct 1985), it also provided the beleaguered national government with an unequivocal expression of its commitment to countering lawlessness. Restrictions on movement and the presence of large numbers of police and soldiers ensured a significant reduction in reported crime. By October 1985, the prime minister was claiming that serious crimes in the National Capital District had dropped by approximately 80 percent since the emergency commenced (*NN*, 2 Oct 1985). Police and defense force raids led to numerous arrests, the seizure of suspected stolen property, and recapture of approx-



Photo 3 A woman demonstrates against rape, Port Moresby 1984.
Post-Courier

imately 160 prison escapees. In one raid alone, several hundred police and soldiers were deployed in the Morata settlement (map 2), resulting in one hundred arrests and the recovery of over K40,000 worth of store goods, six car engines, several shotguns, and a large quantity of radios, watches, and other electrical goods (*PC*, 19 July 1985). Shortly before



Map 2

the emergency expired, the chair of the Parliamentary Emergency Committee announced optimistically that it had “inflicted lasting damage to the rascal gang organisations and other groups which aid and abet criminal activities in the National Capital District.”⁷

The 1985 emergency set in motion a pattern of crisis management that has been repeated in subsequent crime waves. A sequence of dramatic crimes of violence attracting headlines in the local newspapers leads to mounting pressure for government action. Official responses include the announcement of a package of draconian measures (few of which get implemented), special policing operations, and, in the most serious situations, the imposition of a curfew. Public order and confidence are temporarily restored until the next buildup, when similar responses are demanded, and so on.

In 1987, combined police and defense force operations were conducted in Morobe, Madang, and the Eastern Highlands (Operation Coolex); then a Highlands-wide operation took place in 1988 (Operation Lo-MET, an abbreviation for murderers, escapees, and tribal fighting). In 1991, the government announced a series of measures that included



Photo 4 Youths apprehended after police raids of Port Moresby settlements during the 1985 state of emergency. They are sitting in front of the defense force operation base tent at the Boroko police station. *Post-Courier*



Photo 5 A police roadblock at Koki, Port Moresby, during the 1985 state of emergency. *Post-Courier*



Photo 6 Reminders of curfew operations in Lae, 1989. *Post-Courier*



Photo 7 A demonstration against violence, Port Moresby, 1994. *Post-Courier*

capital punishment for murder, rape, and drug offenses; the tattooing of convicted offenders; more maximum security prisons; identity cards; vagrancy laws; and the forced repatriation of “unemployed people and troublemakers” (*PC*, 15 Mar 1991). The only measure implemented was the reintroduction of capital punishment for willful murder. Curfews were also imposed in the National Capital District, and Western Highlands, Oro, Morobe, Madang, and the Sepik Provinces. In an address to the nation, Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu stated, “Criminal gangs today threaten your personal safety, they make life miserable for all. You and your fellow citizens live and sleep in real fear. Our businesses are being hit hard by robberies and our transport, banking, commercial and rural sectors are all being undermined by crime” (INA 1991, 31).

Another crisis took place in 1993, leading the government of Paias Wingti to announce the anticipated law and order package and enact a series of tough legislative reforms, including the controversial Internal Security Act. A senior government minister called for a nationwide state of emergency (*PC*, 20 April 1993), while women’s groups demanded a curfew in the National Capital District (*PC*, 22 April 1993). Similar calls were again made toward the end of 1994, after an outbreak of violent crime in Lae and Port Moresby. Following several widely publicized mur-

ders and armed robberies in Port Moresby in October 1996, Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan announced measures designed to strengthen police “firepower” and enable them to target “hard-core criminals” (*National*, 6 Nov 1996). A nationwide curfew began in November 1996 and was subsequently extended in the National Capital District for a record period of nine months (*National*, 11 Aug 1997).

The Melanesian “Gang”

The short history of urban criminal groups in Papua New Guinea has been depicted as one of progressive organizational complexity, from the quasi-welfare associations of early migrant groups in the 1960s to today’s highly sophisticated gangs. This approach, alongside media stereotypes, has tended to promote an overdetermined view of criminal organization. Gangs in Papua New Guinea, as elsewhere, are represented as discrete, self-contained entities occupying a distinct social and moral universe, existing apart from that of the society they prey on. My own observations, on the other hand, suggest that the structure of criminal groups is inherently fluid and, moreover, that criminals are usually extremely well integrated into their surrounding communities. As a result, the distinction between criminals and noncriminals is much less clear-cut in practice than is usually implied.

The problems entailed in viewing the gang as a bounded entity are apparent in the various attempts that have been made to categorize membership and entry requirements. Tau Po’o, a former gang member, claimed there were four categories of membership (1975, 34). These consisted of older youth in employment who adopted leadership roles, youth from the village with little education, school dropouts, and those still attending school. F D Young distinguished between hard-core and peripheral members (1976, 2). Hard-core members underwent initiation through planning and carrying out a break-and-enter, acquiring a conviction, serving time in prison, or escaping from police or prison.

Young nevertheless acknowledged that gang membership was “neither rigid or final, there seems to be no hard feelings against a member who leaves the gang to join another.” He also accepted the difficulty of estimating the membership of Port Moresby gangs given that larger gangs comprised a number of smaller affiliated groups (F D Young 1976, 6, 5). Individual “members” often identified with both the main group and the subgroup. Utulurea, another self-professed former member, spoke of four categories of membership similar to those mentioned by Po’o. Gangs were highly organized and had their own secret codes. The larger groups were led by “kings.” Members took a vow of obedience to these leaders, as well as a general vow of secrecy (Utulurea 1981, 112, 113).

Harris provided the fullest account of organizational change among Port Moresby's criminal groups. In his view, urban gangs were being led by powerful "kings," assisted by "lieutenants," by the mid-1980s (1988, 26). A growing division of labor and evolving leadership hierarchy lay behind their changing structure. These, in turn, were responses to the more demanding criminal activities being undertaken and the greater risks these entailed. Initiation rites included a vow of obedience to the "king" and a vow of secrecy not to disclose details to nonmembers. Harris identified a core membership, secondary members, and a group of loosely defined supporters. Core members consisted of the "king," his "lieutenants," and a small group of full-time members involved in most criminal operations. Secondary members had been initiated as full members but were less regularly involved in operations. Supporters identified with the gang but had not been initiated into full membership (Harris 1988, 28–29).

My own research in the early 1990s indicated the existence of four major criminal conglomerates active in the Port Moresby area. The names of these entities and the localities they identified with were "Bomai" (Boroko and Four Mile), "Koboni" (Kaugere), "Mafia" (Hohola)⁸ and "585" (Morata and Gerehu; see map 2). While each was territorially demarcated, territory was not an obvious source of conflict between these associations, appearing to denote the place of origin and identity of each conglomerate rather than an area of exclusive operational rights. Relations between those in different groups were generally free of hostility. Informants spoke of their common struggle to survive in the hostile urban environment. More tangibly, there was evidence of cooperation between groups on particular operations, sharing information and technical expertise. Informal social contacts and shared prison experience extended across group lines. While criminal notoriety transcended group and ethnic divisions, ethnic ties also served to bind individuals associated with different groups. Fighting along group lines appeared to be confined to Port Moresby's Bomana prison, although these conflicts occasionally spilled over to the outside.

Raskol groups in Port Moresby have a segmentary structure. Each of the four main conglomerates comprises numerous subgroups scattered across the city. These subgroups have their own names and leaders and exercise a high degree of operational autonomy. Koboni informants claimed to have between fifteen and twenty active subgroups. Subgroups operating in the home territory (Kaugere and vicinity) included Twenty-one Sons, BMX, Hornets (*Nanigo* in Hiri Motu), Mungais, Skinheads, Red Devils, Goilalas Ten, and Daisies. Those operating in other neighborhoods included Desert Rats, Sugar Hill Reds, Helltex, and Horsecamp Ten. Uncertainty about the exact number of subgroups confirmed the essential fluidity of criminal organization.



Photo 8 Gang graffiti in Port Moresby, 1985. *Post-Courier*

Each conglomerate also has affiliated groups in other towns. Koboni, for example, claims affiliates in Lae, Mount Hagen, Goroka, Rabaul, Daru, Kavieng, and Wewak. Among other things, these networks allow “wanted” criminals to escape to other centers during curfews, special policing operations, and other vulnerable times. The origins of the larger associations can be traced to smaller and more ethnically homogeneous groups, but their present size and segmentary structure ensure that each embodies the social diversity of the overall urban population. Smaller subgroups, on the other hand, can retain a more homogeneous character. Criminal networks ultimately rely on the human capacity for reciprocity, trust, and exchange in relationships for their survival and growth.

Entry to criminal groups appears to be a relatively casual affair. There was no evidence of the kind of formal initiation rites described by Harris (1988) and others (see Trompf 1994a, 348). A prospective “member” might be invited to participate in a particular operation, and his performance informally assessed by colleagues. More usually, an individual will drift into crime at an early age, and his association with a particular group will develop over years of escalating involvement. Exit from crime can also occur for a variety of reasons. Acquiring family responsibilities, group surrender, employment or other legitimate economic activity, disillusionment with crime, religious conversion, or simply growing older, are among the many factors that can induce individuals to abandon crime. Leaving crime does not necessarily mean the termination of long-

standing associations. Younger criminals continue to defer to “retired” or former leaders, blurring further the distinction between active and nonactive members. Likewise a “retired” criminal might return to crime at a later stage or call on former gang colleagues when he needs something done. Matza’s notion of “delinquent drift” (1964)—drifting in and out of crime—captured the essentially transient character of criminal commitment in Papua New Guinea, as in many other places (see also Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 175).

Loyalty to the group appears to be the only firm rule of membership common to all criminal groups. As one might expect, betrayal of group confidence to the police constitutes a serious threat, and one that is likely to attract violent, sometimes deadly, reprisals. I was told of one criminal leader who had escaped from Bomana in 1985 and was sheltering at a friend’s house in a Port Moresby suburb. There he was spotted by another individual associated with his group. That person was alleged to have told the police, and the escapee was recaptured in a police raid. The suspected informer was later arrested by police for another matter and detained at Bomana. He was set upon by other prisoners, forced to eat a noxious “soup” containing chillies, excreta, and the like, and assaulted so severely that he later died in hospital.

The absence of any clear criterion of membership undermines the usefulness of the concept of the “gang” with its implicit delineation of members and nonmembers. Although there are many definitions of *gang* in the international literature, agreement is largely confined to its essence as a collectivity (Cohen 1990, 17). This is of little assistance in the Melanesian environment, where collective organization is the norm. From this perspective, most crime in Papua New Guinea can be viewed as “gang” crime, whether it be so-called tribal fighting, *raskolism*, violent compensation demands by customary landowners, or election-related conflict. As a way of distinguishing between group and individual crime, the concept of “gang” does little to advance an understanding of crime in Papua New Guinea.

An alternative to Western-inspired models of criminal organization is to examine how criminal associations in Papua New Guinea relate to other forms of Melanesian organization. In her study of lawlessness in the Mid-Wahgi area of the Western Highlands, Reay identified a loose segmentary structure under a hierarchy of criminal leaders, who consisted of the “grand leader” of all criminal groups in the area, “major leaders” in charge of regional clusters of criminal groups, and “minor leaders” controlling smaller groups. In her view, the organization of rural crime resembled that of the clan-tribe—the main difference being that the criminal group transcended clan-tribe affiliations by recruiting members from all over the Mid-Wahgi (Reay 1982, 624).

The Clifford Report also drew parallels with older forms of social

organization. The changing configuration of criminal groups was reminiscent of “the shifting alliances typical of rural life in earlier times in Papua New Guinea” (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 174). Although the town provides a very different social environment, there are obvious resemblances to the segmentary structure and heterogeneous membership of urban criminal groups, and to their changing alliances. Garry Trompf argued along similar lines when he claimed that gangs “serve as a replacement for clan or tribal units (the tribe being suppressed in towns or suburbs and often undermined by modernisation elsewhere)” (1994b, 33).

The role of leadership is clearly critical to an understanding of criminal associations in Papua New Guinea. Several observers have made the connection between modern criminal leaders and the archetypal Melanesian big-man. Schiltz, for example, noted the “many striking similarities” between gang leaders and traditional big-men (1985, 158). Kulick linked villagers’ perceptions of *raskol* leaders to traditional “great-men” with reputations as “belligerent and audacious warriors” (1993, 10). According to Harris, the “king” of the Port Moresby gang “partook of attributes of both a modern crime leader and a traditional big man in Melanesian society” (1988, 26). Goddard suggested that the organization of the *raskol* group is best understood in terms of the “relationships of support and reciprocation” between criminal leaders and their followers (1992, 25).

The analogy between criminal leaders and traditional leaders has a number of strands—the obvious reference to the accomplished warrior, the physically tough individual who has distinguished himself over the course of many violent encounters; the caring leader who protects and promotes the interests of his loyal followers; and also the social dynamics underlying a form of leadership built on relations of support and reciprocity, a leadership achieved through the skillful manipulation of resources and social relations.

At the head of each of Port Moresby’s main conglomerates is the overall leader or “father,” a term “indicative of the highly personalised bond of loyalty and dependence” linking leaders and followers (Schiltz 1985, 145). The “father” of my informants’ group—I shall call him Ben—had built his standing over a long career as a successful criminal. He was considerably older than most of his followers, being in his mid-to-late thirties at the time of my research. Ben’s standing extended well beyond his immediate criminal following. Ketan and others made a similar observation of criminal leaders in Lae, claiming that their influence was “concentrated around the group but spread marginally throughout the Lae community (as figures of awe) including law enforcement and business houses” (1988, 3). Ben’s leadership status was ultimately based on his criminal notoriety, yet he also had a reputation

for generosity and was regularly approached by noncriminal members of the community for assistance and advice. Informants mentioned his contributions to school fees, bail bonds, medical and funeral expenses, fares, and his help for the relatives of those killed, injured, or imprisoned.

Ben's standing had not only survived but been positively enhanced by the ten years he served in prison for armed robbery. While in Bomana prison he continued to wield his leadership powers. On his release in 1991, a large gathering was held in his honor in the settlement. This attracted several hundred youths from throughout the city and a scattering of local dignitaries. Visitors brought cartons of beer that were dispensed by the bottle after lengthy and passionate speeches. The gathering reaffirmed Ben's standing as "father" after his lengthy absence in Bomana.

Beneath Ben in the hierarchy were a number of lesser leaders, referred to in the Hiri Motu language as *kakana* (elder brother).⁹ Many were, or had been, leaders of subgroups. Like the "father," they were often older than their immediate followers. Their status was similarly based on criminal reputation and other more benign qualities. Below them were younger aspiring leaders cultivating their own small followings. Rank-and-file criminals or followers were generally referred to in Hiri Motu as *tadinas* (younger brothers).

Contrary to the stereotypes of *raskols* existing apart from society, urban criminals appear to be remarkably well integrated into their residential communities, a factor that repeatedly frustrates attempts to break them up. Observers, including Western criminologists, tend to view criminal groups as subcultures holding values that are defined in opposition to mainstream norms or values. The notion of "deviance," for example, views criminals as normatively distinct from the law-abiding majority. Viewing criminal "culture" in this way precludes the possibility of more widely shared and constructive motives at work. In practice, there is much about the boisterous and antisocial behavior associated with *raskolism* that is shared by many adolescent males, whether criminal or not. Mention has already been made of crime being, in part, a disorganized form of initiation among young men deprived of more formal initiation rites and legitimate modern alternatives. Leavitt has recently argued this point in his study of disruptive or *bikhet* (literally, "big-head" in *Tok Pisin*) behavior among adolescent males of the Bumpita people in an East Sepik village (1998). This kind of (mis)behavior—including, theft, vandalism, sexual harassment, fighting—is seen by many adults in the community as symptomatic of the spread of the larger problem of *raskolism* besetting Papua New Guinea. Rather than being an unambiguously negative thing, however, Leavitt shows how aspects of *bikhet* behavior have long had a role in the passage from ado-

lescence to manhood in Bumpita society. While partly reflecting the tumultuous changes that have taken place in recent years, *bikhet* behavior among young males is also about the transition to adulthood. Some of the behavior and attitudes that are today glossed as antisocial or criminal conform with attributes that were once considered appropriate for powerful male leaders. In this sense, when adolescents engage in this behavior, they may be conforming to older ideals of leadership rather than rebelling against society. Conformity may be as important a factor as rebellion in the motivation of *raskol* behavior, particularly in environments where personal aggression and combativeness have long been a normal part of masculine socialization.

The integration between urban criminals and their residential communities is also, in part, a strategy of survival. Criminals are unlikely to jeopardize relations with those on whom they depend for safe haven. Engaging in serious criminal activities at “home” is generally discouraged. Criminal groups may even adopt an informal policing role to ensure that neither insiders nor outsiders threaten the security of their neighborhood. Unlike the police, the resident group has the presence, local acceptance, and knowledge to respond quickly and effectively in such cases. Criminals in Ben’s settlement stopped local youths from harassing residents at the bus stop and women returning from town markets. Thus, as well as posing a potential threat to community stability, the criminal group can provide a measure of internal security, something that is unlikely to be supplied by external authorities.

Urban communities are usually reluctant to inform on resident *raskols*. Long-standing antipathy toward the police, particularly in the settlements, is a major disincentive to collaboration. As well as inviting criminal retaliation, collaborators risk police actions that might incur extensive collateral damage. A raid in Ben’s settlement in early 1991 (in response to the destruction of an unmarked police car and assault of its driver) was followed by numerous complaints about the indiscriminate use of tear gas, police assaults, and sexual harassment. Avoiding police action whenever possible is viewed as being in the interests of all members of the community. Bonds of kinship and association are also likely to outweigh externally imposed criminal labels. Those involved in crime have many other sources of identity and affiliation operating simultaneously with their imputed criminality. These noncriminal identities are likely to prevail in the wider settlement community and serve as a disincentive to seeking police intervention. Whereas residents may express disapproval of *raskolism* in abstract terms, there is a marked reluctance to condemn the actions of known local criminals.

Nevertheless, there are limits to community tolerance, and these will be understood and usually respected by resident criminals. John, a well-known local criminal, escaped from prison in early 1992 and sought

refuge in his home settlement. He had been serving an eleven-year sentence for armed robbery and was described in the newspapers as a “dangerous criminal.” Initially he kept a low profile, only emerging from his hideout after dark. During this time he was not a problem for the community, although many residents (including the local community police) were aware of his presence. The regular police, suspecting that John would be hiding in the settlement, conducted an unsuccessful raid. Things changed, however, once John started causing trouble locally—holding up residents with a gun, breaking into houses, and harassing women, among other activities. Members of the resident group sought to curb his activities and, failing that, to persuade him to move. Their attempts failed, and his disruptive behavior continued. He eventually threatened a well-respected local community policeman. By this stage the entire community, including criminals, had turned against John. He was eventually caught in a police raid carried out with the active connivance of local residents. His recapture was not viewed as a case of informing to the police. Rather, it was the only way of getting rid of someone who had overstepped the bounds of the community’s tolerance and presented a major threat to its stability.

The local community police were established in 1991, shortly after this settlement had been selected as a pilot project for a new policing initiative.¹⁰ A number of residents were appointed auxiliary policemen and given responsibility for maintaining order. Each auxiliary policeman was to be paid an allowance of K60 per fortnight and issued with a modified, and coveted, police uniform. An important objective behind the scheme was to breach “the wall of silence” that routinely confronted police inquiries. After police officials proclaimed initial results encouraging, the scheme was extended to other areas of Port Moresby and subsequently to other parts of the country. An important source of this early success lay in the close relations existing between the new “police” and the resident criminals. A number of the auxiliary policemen had criminal pasts themselves and retained close links with the resident group. Senior police were aware of their criminal backgrounds, acknowledging the advantages this afforded in terms of local knowledge. The function to celebrate Ben’s release from prison was held in the yard of one of the auxiliary policemen, who himself had served an eight-year sentence for the same offense. The new appointees initially concentrated on minor crime and community disputes while turning a blind eye to local escapees and the criminal activities that residents conducted in other parts of the city.

Problems emerged when the auxiliary police began abusing their powers, thereby jeopardizing the community acceptance on which their early success had been built. Abuses included harassing women and assaulting local youths. By 1994, many Port Moresby youths were dismiss-

ing the auxiliaries as “*two-kina cops*”—“*two-kina meri*” being the derogatory term applied to loose women or prostitutes who sell sex cheaply. Community police were now being mocked for selling their services to the regular constabulary.

Community acceptance of resident criminals is more directly manipulated through the strategic redistribution of the proceeds of crime. Schiltz viewed these acts of “generosity” as a straightforward attempt to buy community acquiescence (1985, 148). This might be one consideration underlying *raskol* largesse, but their redistributive activity is consistent with patterns of resource manipulation extending well beyond the criminal fraternity.

An important source of ideological integration lies in the powerful sense of grievance shared by *raskol* and non-*raskol* residents in many urban village and settlement communities. This notion springs from their position of relative disadvantage within the urban environment and their sense of exclusion from legitimate economic and development activities. Frustration and anger are regularly voiced about physical conditions in the more disadvantaged communities, government corruption, and the highly visible inequalities of urban society. Youth leaders, in particular, have become adept at articulating a rhetoric of disadvantage that connects with broader currents of popular discontent.

Raskol invective is most usually directed at governments, politicians, public servants, businesspeople, and others viewed as benefiting from an unjust social order. The privileged are condemned for their conspicuous consumption and unwillingness to share with the less fortunate. “The most prevalently enunciated rationale for ‘gang rascalism’, however, is the feeling of bitterness toward those who have too much and who give back too little to others in return, and towards those who apparently belong to a system, or side with a government, which offers nothing satisfying to disadvantaged adolescents” (Trompf 1994a, 349). Crime is thus legitimated both as a means of survival and as a way of punishing the “fat cats.”

Despite the antipolitician rhetoric, there appears to be a growing nexus between criminal elements and some political and business figures who employ criminal “muscle” for electoral, commercial, or security reasons. The most dramatic allegation of this “vertical integration” in recent years was the controversial screening in late 1997 of concealed video footage in which Prime Minister Bill Skate was heard boasting that he was the “godfather” of criminal gangs and had participated in the murder of an unnamed man (*PC*, 1 Dec 1997). Students who attempted to demonstrate against corruption following these revelations were themselves intimidated by groups of Skate’s supporters, many of whom were believed to be criminals. Serious allegations have also been made about close “business” links between certain officials in

the National Capital District Commission (Port Moresby city council) and criminal groups (*SMH*, 2 Feb 1998).

After his release from Bomana, Ben was visited by a number of political leaders bearing large quantities of beer and other gifts. One prominent Port Moresby politician, who had grown up in the settlement and maintained close ties with Ben, tried to use his connections to mobilize the local youth vote in the 1992 national elections. Given the ethnically heterogeneous and youthful profile of the urban population, and the small number of votes needed for electoral success, criminal networks provide an increasingly important mechanism for mobilizing urban votes. The same individual was alleged to have promised the local group a security company if elected. He was, but the security company never materialized. Subsequently Ben himself stood, unsuccessfully, as a candidate in the 1997 elections.

Leaving Crime through Group Surrender

The surrender of self-proclaimed groups of criminals dates back at least to the early 1980s (Giddings, 1986) and has become a regular occurrence in many parts of the country.¹¹ A review of local newspapers



Photo 9 A criminal group from Unggai, Eastern Highlands Province, marches toward surrender carrying their country's flag, 1982. *Word Publishing*

Table 1. Mass Surrenders by Province, 1991–1994

<i>Number of youths</i>	<i>Weapons</i>	<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Source</i>
<i>Southern Highlands</i> (3)				
100	yes		Mendi	<i>PC</i> , 14 Dec 1992
6		0.5 kg marijuana	Kagua	<i>PC</i> , 21 June 1993
45			Mendi	<i>PC</i> , 3 Oct 1994
<i>Simbu</i> (1)				
17	yes	marijuana	Sinasina district	<i>Times</i> , 16 Sep 1993
<i>Morobe</i> (1)				
20	yes, including Japanese-made automatic pistol; assorted homemade guns and ammunition		Lae	<i>PC</i> , 15 Feb 1993
<i>National Capital District</i> (1)				
70	yes, homemade		Badili	<i>PC</i> , 19 Oct 1992
<i>Oro</i> (2)				
400	yes, homemade guns		Kokoda district	<i>Times</i> , 3 Sep 1992
17	yes, firearms and ammunition		Popondetta	<i>PC</i> , 20 Sep 1993
<i>West New Britain</i> (1)				
35			Kimbe	<i>PC</i> , 8 Mar 1993
<i>East New Britain</i> (3)				
4	ammunition		Rabaul	<i>PC</i> , 4 Sep 1991
100	yes, homemade		Toma	<i>PC</i> , 24 Sep 1993
65	yes, firearms		Vunadidir	<i>PC</i> , 28 Oct 1993
<i>New Ireland</i> (1)				
34			South Lavongai	<i>PC</i> , 10 Dec 1993

between 1991 and 1994 gave some indication of the frequency, size, and geographical distribution of mass surrenders (table 1).

The cases reported covered 13 separate surrenders, involving a total of 913 youths, in 8 of Papua New Guinea's 19 provinces. The size of the groups ranged from 4 individuals in one case to more than 400 in another. These figures are an underestimate, as many more surrenders will have taken place beyond the notice of the urban-based media. The following case study tells the story of a surrender that occurred in Port Moresby in 1992. The narrative covers the period from the time of the surrender ceremony in October 1992 to the end of 1994. The names of all informants involved in the surrender have been changed.

From GGB-Mafia to Metropolitan Youth League

In October 1992, the *Post-Courier* newspaper announced the surrender of seventy members of the GGB-Mafia gang at a ceremony at Badili police station in Port Moresby. Gang members were reported to be tired of being hunted by the police and to have decided to abandon crime for "normal" lives. Many of their criminal associates had allegedly been shot dead by police over the previous two decades. A spokesperson announced the formation of a new youth group, to be called the Metropolitan Youth League (hereafter referred to as the League), that would be seeking formal recognition and funding assistance (*PC*, 19 Oct 1992).

The young men involved in this surrender were mainly of Goilala descent and lived in Rabia Gini, popularly known as Two-Mile Hill. This is a densely packed urban settlement clinging precariously to the slopes of Two-Mile Hill, under the shadow of one of Port Moresby's tallest landmarks and most luxurious residential blocks, the Pacific View Building. Two-Mile Hill has long been notorious as "a haven for blackmarket beer sales and criminals" (*PC*, 5 Oct 1990). The visual contrast between the towering apartment block and the settlement below is striking. Originally settled in the late 1950s by small groups of migrants from rural areas, Rabia Gini started growing significantly in the 1960s (Norwood 1984, 49). It remains one of the most neglected of the city's inner communities in terms of infrastructure and services. There are several water taps; however, raw sewage flows down streams cutting across the residential area, and at the time of my research no electricity supply had been established. The settlement comprises groups of clustered dwellings inhabited by people from the same district of origin. Just over 30 percent of the estimated three thousand inhabitants are from the mountainous and undeveloped Goilala region of the Central Province. Other residents come from Kerema (Gulf Province), Daru (Western Province), Finschhafen (Morobe Province), Simbu Province, and the Eastern and Southern Highlands Provinces (PNGDVS 1993). The ethnic composi-



Photo 10 Surrender of Goilala youth from a Port Moresby settlement. *Word Publishing*

tion of the larger community is reflected in the mainly Goilala, Kerema, and Simbu resident youth groups.

The initials GGB stand for the Goilala Gaire Boys, or Goi-Gai Boys as they are sometimes known. According to my informants, Goilala involvement dated back to the Goipex gang in the late 1960s, which changed its name to G105 in the mid-1970s before assuming its present title of GGB-Mafia in the 1980s.¹² Goipex and G105 were both Goilala groups. Operational alliances with criminal groups in the Gaire area, to the south of Port Moresby, lie behind the current nomenclature. The Mafia is one of the criminal conglomerates that emerged from an earlier consolidation of groups centered around the Port Moresby suburb of Hohola. By the late 1980s the Mafia had affiliated subgroups in many parts of the city, including the Badili area at the foot of Two-Mile Hill, as well as in other towns. After the October surrender, GGB leaders boasted that the GGB-Mafia had up to eight hundred members in Port Moresby alone, with more in other urban centers (*PC*, 11 Nov 1992).

Those involved in this particular surrender were young men in their mid-teens to early twenties who had been born in the city or spent most of their formative years there. Many parents had moved to Port Moresby from rural villages in search of work and a better life. Few of the youths interviewed stated any intention of returning to the village,



Photo 11 A masked criminal hands over a shotgun to police at a surrender in Kainantu, Eastern Highlands Province, 1986. *Post-Courier*

and most expressed a strong empathy with the settlement and the urban environment in general. Although ethnic identities remained strong,¹³ the experience of growing up in the same urban community had created strong social bonds across ethnic lines.

Individual profiles suggested a typical background of interrupted formal education, a drift into minor crime at an early age, occasional stints of unskilled employment, and an incremental involvement in group crime. Peter, a twenty-two-year-old man involved in the surrender and subsequent formation of the League, is representative. Born in Goilala, he came to Port Moresby with his parents at the age of four. His father got a job as a laborer with the Lands Department, and the family lived at Four-Mile. After being retrenched, the father invested his modest savings in a small plot at Two-Mile near relatives and *wantoks* from home. Peter had been back to his father's clan village for feasts and other ceremonial events but expressed no interest in returning permanently. He attended community school at Badili, dropping out in grade eight. By that time he was stealing from stores, snatching bags, and engaging in other acts of petty theft. His drift into crime took place in the company of older boys, and by his late teens he had graduated to more serious and organized activities, including housebreaking and car theft. Although never convicted by any court, he had spent several short periods

on remand in Bomana jail. Like many of his associates, Peter had held a number of unskilled positions, working in stores and as a security guard. These bouts of employment were invariably short-lived, with Peter being dismissed for poor timekeeping or simply leaving because of the monotonous and low-paid nature of the work. When employed, his small pay packet had been rapidly “eaten-up” by family and *wantoks* at Two-Mile, leaving little for himself.

Several other youths involved in the surrender boasted high criminal status. There was little evidence, however, to suggest that they were hard-core criminals. Jimmy, the group spokesperson, was a twenty-two-year-old Goilala youth. He had been born in Port Moresby after his parents left home in the Upper Kunimaipa area of Goilala in search of work. His father worked with the Housing Commission and initially lived at its compound in Badili. The family moved back to Goilala when Jimmy was about eight years old, and he attended a local mission school before going to high school to complete grades seven to ten. When he was about sixteen he returned to town and stayed with *wantoks* at the Administrative College. He then moved back to Two-Mile after his mother, four brothers, and two sisters returned. His father remained in the village.

Jimmy claimed to have spent a great deal of time looking for employment. He did get a job as a security guard but was laid off when the expatriate company owner left the country. Like many others, he alleged that discrimination against Goilalas was pervasive in employment and other fields. Jimmy became involved in crime, including housebreaking and robbery, and built up his own small personal following among Goilala youth at Two-Mile. Criminal activities, he claimed, were the only way to support his dependent mother and younger siblings. Media reports of the surrender echoed these sentiments, stating that crime “was the only means of surviving in a big town like Port Moresby” (*PC*, 23 Oct 1992).

Jimmy’s following consisted of younger Kunimaipa boys and some non-Goilala age-mates from Two-Mile. Although his group operated autonomously, he acknowledged the standing of more experienced criminal leaders from the same area. Most of these older youth were in prison at the time of the surrender. They included the principal leader or “father”¹⁴ of the GGB and several other senior leaders. The previous “father” had been shot dead by police at Badili in July 1991,¹⁵ a fate allegedly shared by his immediate predecessor in the mid-1980s. At the surrender in October, group representatives claimed that approximately thirty-two of their associates had been killed by the police in the twenty-odd years since the original group was formed. Fear of police violence was one of the main reasons reported for their decision to surrender. A number of the surrendering group alleged that the police had a hit list

of hard-core criminals who would be killed whenever the opportunity arose. These allegations were usually accompanied by verbal lists of criminal leaders said to have been killed by the police and occasionally by prison officials.

Before the surrender, Jimmy had been trying to secure funds to start a development project for his group. In the course of this endeavor he had met Arthur, a senior expatriate police officer. Arthur headed the Police Community Relations Directorate and was the driving force behind the development of the community policing scheme discussed earlier.

The prospect of a major criminal group surrender presented a timely opportunity for the directorate. Arthur encouraged Jimmy to surrender and then register his organization as a youth group with the city authority, the National Capital District Interim Commission (the Interim Commission). The registered group would be able to compete with other community organizations for cleaning contracts with the Interim Commission. It could also apply to government agencies and international donors for project assistance. Arthur and his officers played a key role in brokering this surrender. While Jimmy had been considering registration with the commission, he claimed not to have contemplated surrendering. The change in plan was, nevertheless, embraced as a promising way of securing funds. In Jimmy's view, this strategy would also benefit from the active support of a senior and influential expatriate police officer.



Photo 12 A surrender ceremony in Lae. *Post-Courier*

Rumors of the impending surrender began circulating well in advance of the actual surrender ceremony. Jimmy started receiving threatening notes from imprisoned GGB leaders opposing the proposal and angry at his lack of consultation. These leaders were also Goilalas, aged in their late twenties, with a long history of criminal involvement. Their opposition was subsequently explained in terms of their suspicion of the police and their past experience of official pledges of assistance. Anger was also directed at Jimmy's perceived attempt to represent himself as a leader of the GGB-Mafia. One of the imprisoned leaders, Stephen, dismissed Jimmy as "just a schoolkid" intent on building his name. Whereas Jimmy intended to mobilize only his immediate followers, media reports compounded the misunderstanding by identifying the surrendering group as the GGB-Mafia and naming Jimmy as one of its leaders.

Arthur and Jimmy visited the leaders in prison to clarify matters and argue the case for proceeding with the surrender. Although denied by Arthur, Stephen claimed that a number of "promises" were made. These included the setting up of a workshop for unemployed youth to be funded by Australian aid. This proposal immediately appealed to Stephen and Joe, another Goilala leader, who were both shortly due for release and hoped to use skills acquired in the prison joinery. Arthur was also alleged to have promised to purchase a dump truck with private-sector donations and help secure cleaning contracts with the city authorities. Like Jimmy, Stephen and his colleagues were most impressed with Arthur. Their decision was to approve the surrender of Jimmy's group and any others who wished to participate.

A Formal Understanding

Following this decision, Arthur drew up a formal Memorandum of Understanding.¹⁶ Under its terms, the police undertook to:

- (a) accept the surrender of the members of the gang, their weapons and ammunition, in a recognized form of ceremony;
- (b) inform gang members about the nature and type of any outstanding criminal charges, warrants, and offenses for which they might be classified as wanted persons;
- (c) arrange for outstanding charges to be heard before a magistrate and for the charge to be lawfully determined, with the fact of the individual's voluntary surrender being taken into account by the court;
- (d) in cases of a minor charge, the Police Department would recommend to the court that the accused, on conviction, should be sentenced to a fine, suspended sentence, or community work order;
- (e) in serious cases, the police would advise the court of the

- voluntary surrender of the accused, in order that the court could take this into account when passing sentence;
- (f) the Police Department would guarantee the safe conduct of all persons who voluntarily surrendered under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding for a further period of fourteen days; and
 - (g) the Police Department, through officers of its Community Relations Directorate, would maintain a close liaison with the group and provide guidance and support, in cooperation with other agencies, to assist with their rehabilitation, training, and the acquisition of skills necessary to effect their rehabilitation.

In return, the League agreed to:

- (a) deliver all arms, ammunition, and offensive weapons under their control to the Police Department, where they would be handed in at a recognized form of ceremony;
- (b) advise police of those members of their organization who might be classified as wanted persons, in order that their cases might be dealt with;
- (c) register with the National Capital District youth office under the name of Metropolitan Youth League and make its members available for work parties, and the like, as allocated by the NCDC Youth Office;
- (d) maintain liaison and contact with the Community Relations Directorate of the Department of Police, who would make an officer available for youth liaison purposes; and
- (e) work in liaison with the Community Relations Directorate of the Police Department to effect the surrender, rehabilitation, and fostering of understanding between youth gangs, police, and community, and make a positive contribution to the maintenance of peace, law, and order in Papua New Guinea.

While the media trumpeted the surrender of hard-core criminals, Arthur's check of criminal records revealed a much less dramatic picture. Only two of the seventy youths involved were wanted for outstanding charges. As these charges were trivial, Arthur arranged to have them struck out. No criminal charges were laid against any member of the surrendering group. Although police records are notoriously unreliable, the absence of serious charges is further confirmation of the relatively minor criminal status of Jimmy and his associates. At the time, it was suggested that the more active criminals of GGB-Mafia were biding their time to see what the surrender might bring.

The surrender ceremony took place on Friday, 16 October 1992 in the precinct of the Badili police station. A number of weapons were

surrendered, including homemade rifles, ammunition, knives, and bows and arrows. Arthur, who acted as master of ceremonies, arranged for the attendance of the media and a number of official guests, including three national government ministers. There was also a sizable contingent of curious onlookers from the Goilala community at Two-Mile. Speeches were delivered by Arthur, Jimmy, an acting deputy commissioner of police, and a well-known local evangelist. The Memorandum of Understanding was formally signed by the acting deputy commissioner on behalf of the police commissioner and by Jimmy as executive officer of the newly formed Metropolitan Youth League.

In his speech, Jimmy formally asked for forgiveness on the part of the surrendering gang and made a plea to government representatives for financial support for the League: "We need your assistance and we would like government bodies that are directly responsible for youth development to help us get a sub-contract with NCDC so that we can keep our members busy with useful activities and not turn back to crime" (*PC*, 19 Oct 1992).

The media ran a number of stories about the surrender. Under the headline, "Bad Boys Come Good," the story was recast in high moral tone, depicting the surrender as the outcome of profound personal transformations on the part of the former criminals. "[W]ith continuous police community relations in the settlement and tireless efforts by church leaders, some members of the GGB Mafia Gang came to realise that crime will eventually destroy them and that there was no purpose in the lives they were leading" (*PC*, 23 Oct 1992).

Problems of Establishment

Arthur issued each member of the League with special identity cards. These certified that the holder was a member of the Police and Citizens' Youth Employment and Assistance Program and were to be shown to potential employers and donors. In the weeks following the surrender Arthur and Jimmy sought out job placements and financial assistance. Within a short time, twenty-eight League members were working as security guards, shop assistants, and carpenters for a local company. A handful of others got similar work in other businesses, and there was a good prospect of securing a cleaning contract with the Interim Commission. Arthur helped prepare a lengthy proposal for K8,000 from Australian aid to help set up a poultry project. One private company agreed to donate chicken wire, and another promised K1,500.

In November 1992, Arthur arranged a press conference for three imprisoned GGB-Mafia leaders. The immediate purpose was to appeal to prison escapees to give themselves up. Ten reputedly hard-core prisoners had escaped from Bomana on 25 October 1992 (*PC*, 27 Oct 1992).

Of the ten, eight were from Goilala. Two other convicted murderers from Goilala had escaped from Bomana earlier in the same week. Jimmy was convinced that the escapees were looking for him because of the surrender and was duly given some police protection. One of the escapees did subsequently contact Jimmy at Two-Mile, but the purpose was to solicit money rather than wreak revenge.

At the press conference, the three prisoners stated that only a small number of the GGB-Mafia had participated in the October surrender and that most remained skeptical. They circulated a letter, received from one of the escapees, which spoke of the treachery of those who had surrendered and threatened to take revenge on them. When the leaders dutifully called on the escapees to give themselves up, they also took the opportunity to berate government authorities for neglecting unemployed youth and proposed a massive injection of government funds into youth projects. In the words of one, "We want to take part in the development of this country. If the government can give us the opportunity, we will prove that we do have something to offer this country" (*PC*, 11 Nov 1992). Arthur also appealed to business houses for support, stating that twenty-eight members of the League had already found employment and that thirty others were likely to secure jobs in the near future.

The surrender and accompanying publicity raised high expectations on the part of all involved. Jimmy's decision to proceed with the surrender was primarily a strategy to secure funds and employment opportunities. The media emphasized the fear of police violence as a major precipitating factor, but few of those who had surrendered had ever been objects of special police interest. Likewise, whereas churches have been important surrender brokers in many parts of Papua New Guinea, they played little role in this particular case.

For the police, and in particular the Community Relations Directorate, the surrender attracted much-needed positive publicity. Arthur and Jimmy also stood to gain personally, in terms of the kudos attaching to their respective contributions. Jimmy received warm receptions at the various business and government offices he visited. On a visit home to Goilala he was delighted to see that students at his old mission school had stuck his newspaper clippings to the noticeboard. However, whereas the job of the police came to an end when the surrender took place, the longer-term success of Jimmy's strategy required tangible results in the weeks and months ahead.

During the early part of 1993, Jimmy—by now president of the League—continued his energetic search for funds and jobs. Problems were, nevertheless, beginning to appear. Among them were the lack of basic literacy skills necessary to complete lengthy and technical fund-

ing documents. For many of the youngsters involved, the long delays awaiting the outcome of applications was another major source of confusion and frustration. The proposal for Australian assistance for the poultry project had been passed on to the relevant PNG office responsible for approving international project assistance.¹⁷ They sent the League an exacting request for the following documentation:

- a project file or feasibility study;
- a letter of proof from the Lands Department (this letter was required to ensure that the proposed land was not subject, or likely to be subject, to a lands dispute);
- projected cash flow;
- quotations from three suppliers on materials and equipment to be purchased;
- a sketch of the project site or any other designs for the intended project;
- confirmation from market outlets intending to take some of the future produce.

The League was dependent on individuals such as Arthur to navigate the bureaucratic channels. Arthur, however, was under mounting pressure from the expansion of the community policing scheme and other projects, and was spending more time away from Port Moresby. In the event, the necessary documentation was never completed, and the application stalled.

The Department of Home Affairs and Youth, the government agency responsible for promoting the interests and welfare of youth, proved particularly unhelpful, and assistance was sought from the voluntary sector. An initial approach was made to the American Peace Corps. While sympathetic, the Peace Corps, like many other overseas voluntary organizations, required that their volunteers be provided with secure accommodation by the project participants. Given the League's lack of resources, this requirement was impossible to meet. The newly formed National Volunteer Service was also approached and provided some counseling assistance.

Meanwhile, Jimmy was coming under mounting pressure from followers and detractors alike. He was receiving daily visits from those expecting jobs, projects, and cash. The initial interest expressed by business houses receded as time passed. A number of the youngsters were beginning to question the wisdom of the surrender strategy. Accusations were resurfacing that Jimmy had been "tricked" by the police. Jimmy also faced the continuing hostility of some of the formerly imprisoned leaders who had since been released. Stephen complained that Jimmy had reneged on a promise to hand him the leadership of the League on his

release. In addition, the relationship between Arthur and Jimmy was becoming strained, with Arthur complaining of Jimmy's endless demands, and Jimmy countering with complaints about Arthur's declining interest.

Problems also surfaced among those who had secured jobs immediately after the surrender. Accusations were made that contracts promised by employers had not materialized and that pay rates were lower than originally agreed. On the other side, there were complaints of petty theft and poor timekeeping. Of the twenty-eight youths employed as security guards, only five were still employed by May 1993. As the funding application for the proposed poultry project continued to languish in government offices, it became clear that the original site chosen at Badili, near the Two-Mile settlement, would have to be changed. Local health regulations prohibited the raising of livestock within city limits. The new plan was to use some land at Laloki, on the outskirts of the city. Even if the funding application proceeded—which it did not—the next challenge would have been how to transport the produce to city markets.

Several meetings were held in the middle of the year in an attempt to generate wider public interest on the issue of funding and supervision of youth projects. Jimmy appealed for assistance on talk-back radio, and a meeting was arranged with then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Sir Julius Chan (*PC*, 21 April 1993). Expressions of support were made, but nothing tangible materialized. By August, the League appeared to be falling apart. Several of Jimmy's original followers had abandoned him and switched allegiance to other leaders, or were simply hanging out in the settlement and gradually drifting back into petty crime. In September, Jimmy returned to Kunimaipa in Goulala with about twenty of his closest followers. Deposits of gold had recently been discovered, and a new and potentially lucrative opportunity presented itself. Attempts were simultaneously being made to secure funding to start a vegetable project in the village and then sell the produce in Port Moresby.

Jimmy came back to town in January 1994 and resumed his energetic rounds of visiting government offices, business contacts, and sympathetic individuals. Initially he was seeking funds to purchase a large freezer for storing vegetables prior to their transportation to town. Despite the failure to secure financial assistance, Jimmy's entrepreneurial drive showed no sign of faltering. By mid-1994 he had embarked on his most ambitious project to date, which involved incorporating the League as a company and tendering for a major contract to clean government offices. He had met a senior official in the Department of Trade and Industry who told him that the cleaning contract was up for renewal. This official helped Jimmy draft the "Memorandum and Arti-

cles of Association for the Metropolitan Youth Corporation Pty Ltd” and encouraged him to apply for a Small Business Scheme Loan from the Rural Development Bank.

Discussion

Materialist Perspectives

The prominence of acquisitive crime in the repertoire of *raskolism* is the most direct expression of the material dimension of crime. From bag-snatching to armed robbery, the immediate objective is to acquire material wealth by any means. The appeal of crime in this sense is increased by a number of factors having particular pertinence in the urban environment. First is the relative paucity of legitimate opportunities open to urban youth. Crime also offers the prospect of higher material returns than are generally available to unskilled school leavers in either the formal or informal sectors. Many individuals, like Peter, choose to relinquish low-paid employment for crime, and the towns provide extensive criminal opportunities. The risk of apprehension is relatively low. A rational-choice interpretation of rising levels of urban crime in Papua New Guinea would emphasize that its rewards generally exceed its costs.

The high incidence of crime also generates additional opportunity structures. Just as material considerations may underlie entry into crime, they can also motivate exit from crime. In recent years “youth groups” have devised imaginative strategies to gain access to resources. Many of these strategies are openly presented as ways of leaving crime and thus as initiatives to be supported in return for less crime. “Walkathons” have become a favored tactic in this regard. Groups of young men, often self-professed former criminals, walk considerable distances to get to Port Moresby or the nearest provincial capital. The aim is to attract maximum publicity, meet political and business leaders, and secure funds for a variety of “development” projects back home.

This approach met with considerable success in the past. Public interest waned, however, as the number of walkathons multiplied and the credibility of such ventures suffered. In one case in September 1993, sixteen youths arrived in Port Moresby after walking from Wau in Morobe Province. Weapons and marijuana carried all the way from their home province of Simbu were surrendered before government officials in the capital (*Times*, 16 Sept 1993). In recognition of their commitment to reform, they were presented with a check for K5,000 by a government minister (from Simbu) and flown back to Simbu on a chartered government flight. A second group arrived in Port Moresby a month later, by which time official receptiveness had cooled. Unlike their predecessors,



Photo 13 Walkathon: youths from Mount Hagen walk for peace, 1986. *Post-Courier*

they received no reception or government funds and were last reported seeking emergency relief and transport home from the National Disaster and Emergency Services (*PC*, 13 Oct 1993).

The mass surrender is another, more spectacular, way of negotiating exit from crime in return for material resources. This was clearly a major

factor behind the GGB-Mafia surrender. It was the prospect held out by Arthur to Jimmy, and the skeptical leaders in prison, in return for agreeing to surrender. The expectation of material returns was also realized in this case, initially at any rate, when jobs were secured for twenty-eight League members. An obvious irony shared by all these strategies is that they encourage participants to inflate, possibly even invent, criminal backgrounds in order to obtain access to “reform” resources.

Demands for material resources in return for leaving crime also provide the basis for negotiations between criminals and politicians at periodic gang retreats, as is illustrated by the contents of the letters presented by “criminal leaders” to government ministers during a 1991 retreat at Mirigeda outside Port Moresby.¹⁸ The requests fell into four main categories:

- (i) self-sustaining business ventures;
- (ii) human development education programs;
- (iii) access to job opportunities, particularly those created under the labor-intensive public works program;
- (iv) support for activities to help raise funds for local activities.

In most of the letters the connection between lack of resources and crime was made clear. Some examples follow:

We have turned to crime because there has been no job to keep us occupied. But now, we understand that you will find something for us to do. There are two activities or projects we wish to take part in: (1) Fishing Project (2) Clean-a-thon Project.¹⁹

Most of us have no job opportunity. Therefore we want you to do one favour that will completely put us off the crime and other related activities. All we want is for the Government to build a Rehabilitation Centre. We wish to set up a carpentry workshop, brick making if possible, we also want to do farming as well.²⁰

Most of my 300 youth members are unemployed and when we feel there is nothing to do, we turn into crime as something to keep us occupied. I wish to apologise for all that we have done. Right now we need your support to sponsor our walkathon. All benefits from this walkathon will be used for a poultry project to keep us occupied.²¹

While usually implicit, the threat of returning to crime if material demands are not fulfilled is occasionally explicit:

We want to run our project. If we don't get our offer, CRIME IS HARD TO STOP.²²

We are the members of the above mentioned gang living around Laloki which are involved in criminal activities in the city. In order

to stop us from carrying out more criminal activities, could you please assist us with K4,500 to start our poultry project which will enable us to gain profit to earn our living and stop criminal activities in that area.²³

In the surrender and the retreat, exit from crime is actively negotiated between criminals and representatives of the state. They are both a form of collective bargaining through crime, with criminal power replacing the labor power used in more familiar industrial negotiations. Criminals promise to cease crime in return for material assistance from the government. While authorities try and avoid the appearance of acquiescing to criminal threats, funds are made available for “reform” purposes on such occasions. In other words, these strategies are often successful. Following the Mirigeda retreat, the government provided a K100,000 “seedling grant” for self-help projects for Port Moresby “youth groups” (PC, 14 Aug 1991). Five of the proposals submitted by groups attending the retreat were subsequently selected for funding.

In the case of the surrender, this process of negotiation usually involves a broker acting as an intermediary between the surrendering group and government authorities. The GGB-Mafia surrender was



Photo 14 Youth clean graffiti off the walls in Port Moresby, 1990. Justice Minister Bernard Narokobi is on the ladder. *Post-Courier*

unusual in that the broker was a senior police officer. The role of broker is usually performed by individual clergymen or church groups. Several pastors have achieved national prominence as moral entrepreneurs in the field of criminal rehabilitation.²⁴ Evangelical crusades have proved to be a particularly popular catalyst for mass surrenders. In 1993, sixty former gang members were reported to have surrendered at one of Pastor Charles Lapa's *Tanim Bel* crusades in the Southern Highlands (*PC*, 26 Jan 1993). These events can open up new career opportunities for ex-criminals. Many crusades are led by born-again former criminals actively engaged in seeking out the "unwanted and lost" (LOM 1989, 1). This kind of church work attracts funds from a variety of government and private sources. In 1992, for example, Pastor Lapa was given K50,000 by the minister for Home Affairs and Youth for the expansion of his halfway-house activities (*PC*, 14 Dec 1992).

Another example of crime creating new opportunity structures is Papua New Guinea's booming private security industry. With the limited capacity of state controls and the escalation of lawlessness, demands for private security have grown exponentially. The relationship between the security industry and *raskolism* is essentially symbiotic. Even though private security feeds off high levels of crime and insecurity, criminals looking for legitimate openings have shown a consistent preference for employment in the security business. In one of the letters presented at Mirigeda, a request was made for funds to establish a "security service." The practical skills of *raskolism*, associated with masculine attributes of toughness and physical prowess, are seen as consistent with those required by security guards. These positions also require few formal qualifications. Security guards, like the auxiliary police, are usually issued with a much-coveted uniform, thereby adding to the attractions of the job. As mentioned, the employment secured for the first batch of League members was as security guards. The manner in which a criminal reputation is viewed as an opportunity for security industry employment recurred throughout my fieldwork. Informants from the settlement where Ben lived even claimed that their associated group in Lae operated a legitimate security company. Just as *raskols* may exit crime for security, so too may security guards exit employment for *raskolism*—as in Peter's case. *Raskolism* and security work are not mutually exclusive. The security employee can pass on valuable information gained through employment to criminals—the "inside job"—or actively plan and participate in a subsequent breaking and entering or robbery. The line between private security employees and *raskols* is thus often extremely thin.

The Auxiliary Policing Scheme provides further illustration of the same opportunity-structure paradox. As noted earlier, several of those appointed auxiliary police in Ben's community had been active members of his criminal group. Prior to his appointment, the unofficial leader of

the auxiliary police in that settlement had spent eight years in prison for the same offense as Ben. Stephen and Joe, the imprisoned GGB-Mafia leaders, were also both sworn in as auxiliary police on their release from prison. Ben's obvious talents had led to his success as a powerful criminal leader and made it likely that he would be given other opportunities. After his release, he was allegedly appointed to the personal staff of a prominent national politician with whom he had long-standing connections.

Within materialist accounts, unemployment has acquired prominent explanatory status in discussions of the rise and potential fall of *raskolism*. Lack of employment and other economic opportunities constitute important macro factors underlying the emergence and spread of acquisitive crime. However, they are not sufficient to explain the full range of *raskol* activities, notably crimes of violence, the masculinity of *raskolism*, or the cultural specificities of *raskol* organization. It is clear from the earlier narrative and other research that the relationship between *raskolism* and unemployment is by no means straightforward (Goddard 1992, 1995; Monsell-Davis 1993). For a start, the vast majority of the PNG population remains outside the formal wage sector and is technically "unemployed." The 1980 national census estimated that only 9.7 percent of the total population were counted in the employed sector (Mannur 1987, 27), and this figure is likely to have decreased in the intervening years because population expansion has exceeded growth in wage employment (McGavin 1991, 53). If unemployment were the sole cause of *raskolism*, one would expect *raskolism* to be much more prevalent than it is.

The rewards of wage labor in Papua New Guinea must be viewed in the context of extended Melanesian kinship networks and the social obligations these engender. Having a job brings with it demands and expectations on the part of relatives and *wantoks* that in some cases can effectively undermine the incentive to work. One observer described how the employed person in such a situation becomes "a channel for the flow of cash and commodities" (Goddard 1992, 22). Another remarked that in the urban context "too many demands being made on the income of young people in their first jobs becomes an intolerable burden" (Monsell-Davis 1993, 11). Peter's experience in the surrender story falls into this category. The decision to relinquish employment for crime may in certain cases be as much about escaping the demands of kin as it is a response to a small and restricted labor market. Whereas the waged worker can expect visits from *wantoks* on fortnightly pay days, the *raskol* has more control over his resources owing to the irregular and surreptitious nature of criminal work. The wages of crime are, literally, not so readily known as a regular wage packet.

Many of those involved in *raskol* activities have at one time or an-

other occupied waged positions. While some, like Jimmy, lose their jobs for reasons beyond their control, others, like Peter, voluntarily relinquish employment. A number of observers have commented on the low level of commitment to wage employment among many workers in Papua New Guinea and how this manifests itself in frequent job changes (Levine and Levine 1979, 86; M Strathern 1975). For many unskilled employees, the work experience is one of relentless monotony and low material returns, a fact related to the kind of menial work available to those with limited or no formal educational qualifications. The progress of the League members who secured employment in the immediate aftermath of the surrender is a case in point. There is no simple relationship between unemployment and *raskolism*, either as cause or solution. A significant number of criminals have drifted into crime at an early age and have never actively sought employment.

Raskols have sometimes been depicted—and often represent themselves—as Melanesian “Robin Hoods” with an “explicit philosophy of taking from the rich and giving to the poor” (Reay nd, 124). This image constitutes another recurring stereotype of *raskols*, this time as incipient rebels taking on an unjust social order by attacking the rich and assisting the poor. The image brings to mind Hobsbawm’s classic work on bandits and, in particular, his distinction between “simple criminals” and “social bandits,” who are “considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported” (1969, 13).²⁵ Evidence exists that *raskols* are popularly perceived as social bandits, particularly in some rural areas of Papua New Guinea. In the lower Sepik river area, “Villagers believe that rascals are fighting a kind of protracted guerilla war against corrupt politicians, greedy businessmen and obstructionist missionaries. Furthermore, talk about rascals seems to provide the villagers with a discourse which they can legitimately use to express their dissatisfaction with and even resistance to post-colonial, capitalist and Christian influences that are causing great disruption in their lives” (Kulick 1993, 10).

Such views are less common in Port Moresby and other urban areas where people’s own experience provides ample evidence to the contrary. Urban criminals themselves tend to reject this philanthropic interpretation. The selective targeting of prosperous urban households and commercial premises for crime is more usually an outcome of rational choice than of redistributive ideology. In practice, the poor are as likely to be the victims of crime as their more affluent counterparts—if not more so—particularly crimes of violence, including serious sexual assaults. Again the noble Robin Hood image is contradicted. Most crimes committed against villagers or settlement dwellers are unlikely to come to police or media attention. The vulnerability of the urban poor to crime

is accentuated by their inability to afford the services of the private security industry. In short, the majority of the victims of *raskol* crime are likely to come from similar socioeconomic groups as their criminal assailants. It is not so much a matter of the poor stealing from the rich, as the poor stealing from the poor.

Research for this chapter indicates that the main beneficiaries of acquisitive crime in Port Moresby are the criminals themselves. The proceeds of theft are primarily redistributed within the criminal group. Benefits that accrue to kin and others are largely at the discretion of individual criminals, and the recipients in turn will owe an obligation to their benefactors—the *raskols*. The poor as a “class” or “community” are not the ones who benefit, but rather those who share personal or kinship ties with individual criminals (Morauta 1986, 11).

Culturalist Perspectives

Cultural stereotypes that seek to explain *raskol* violence in terms of behavioral traits attributed to particular “ethnic” or regional groups have been used to explain the rise of urban *raskolism* and continue to pervade law-and-order discourse. In turn, discriminatory actions taken on the basis of such representations contribute to the grievances of the selected groups. The recurring claims of discrimination by Jimmy and his Goilala associates are illustrative. Ironically, empirical evidence suggests that the urban criminal group is one of the most successful multiethnic entities in modern Papua New Guinea.

The mutually reinforcing relationship between the material and cultural dimensions of crime in Papua New Guinea is best illuminated through the insights of economic anthropology. Gregory’s work on relations between resident and introduced socioeconomic forms is instructive (1982). Mauss had earlier distinguished between the system of production and exchange peculiar to clan-based societies—which he called the “gift economy”—and the “commodity economy” of capitalism (1967). According to Gregory, “[t]he gift economy . . . is a debt economy. The aim of a transactor in such an economy is to acquire as many gift-debtors as he possibly can and not to maximise profit, as it is in a commodity economy. What a gift transactor desires is the personal relationships that the exchange of gifts creates, and not the things themselves” (1982, 19).

In a clan-based society where nominally there is no private property, people do not have alienable rights over things. Gift exchange is an exchange of inalienable objects between persons who are thereby placed in a state of reciprocal dependence. A gift creates a debt that must be repaid. In this sense, gift exchange constitutes an important means by which relations of domination and control are sustained in a clan-based economy. According to Mauss, this form of exchange is most likely to flourish in societies with an unstable clan hierarchy where leadership is

subject to regular contestation, as in Papua New Guinea. In this respect, the gift appears to be a more typically Melanesian means of social control than the sanction. Conformity in Melanesia is the product not so much of compulsion as of inducement through the manipulation of wealth in exchange relationships that have to be constantly validated through material transactions or deeds (Pospisil 1979, 133).

Sahlins specifically addressed the relations between gift and commodity economies, suggesting that both constitute extremes on a continuum (1972). He argued that gift exchange is more likely to occur between people engaged in ongoing social relationships and connected through kinship, whereas commodity exchange is more likely to occur between strangers. Godelier went further, showing how a single object may exchange as a gift within a tribal community and as a commodity outside it (1973). In other words, he demonstrated how a single natural object can assume different social forms depending on the context. For Gregory, external economic intervention in Papua New Guinea has not meant the displacement of a “traditional” economy by a “modern” one, but rather has led to the evolution of an “ambiguous” economy. In his words, “[t]he essence of the PNG economy today is ambiguity. A thing is now a gift, now a commodity, depending on the social context of the transaction” (1982, 116–117).

Drawing on these insights, Goddard has suggested that “[t]he material exigencies which drive the activities of the crime gangs are those of a generalised gift economy, which transcend the differences between different types of kinship organization in Papua New Guinea. The evolution of the gangs can in fact be interpreted as the evolution of an urban gift economy fed by theft and burglary, involving social relations which are typical of pre-capitalist Melanesian societies in general” (1992, 30). The same gifting dynamics are evident in many post-*raskol* strategies, including surrenders, walkathons, and employment in the private security industry.

Individual success in both capitalist and precapitalist Melanesian worlds depends, in varying degrees, on the accumulation of wealth. The capitalist ethic promotes individual accumulation as an end in itself. Melanesian societies, on the other hand, view wealth for its instrumental value in the pursuit of more fundamental social objectives, notably prestige. Prestige goes together with power. Access to resources and the manner of their redistribution thus constitutes a crucial dynamic linking social relations in both modern and traditional settings. The significance of resources and their distribution to individual reputation in modern Papua New Guinea was clearly stated by Monsell-Davis: “Reputation, including moral and ethical superiority, is commonly based on access to, and command over, resources and their distribution. The expectation of reciprocity, and the idea of prestige associated with giving (along

with the concomitant fear of being perceived as repudiating proper social relationships if one rejects a request for help) are important elements of continuity in modern Melanesia” (1993, 6).

Observers of the urban environment have noted how an individual’s reputation continues to be primarily derived from that person’s willingness to engage in quasi-traditional social relations with kin and *wantoks* (Levine and Levine 1979, 129). Material wealth or high earning power does not in itself bring prestige. Rather, prestige attaches to the way in which wealth is deployed (M Strathern 1975, 306). Persons with resources are expected to share them with kin and others with whom they have close relations. Complaints by waged workers of incessant demands from cash-hungry *wantoks* attest to the vigor of such expectations. Willingness to accede to such demands indicates the continuing importance attached to these social obligations. In addition to fulfilling the demands of extended kinship, distributive activities provide an important way of generating new social credit and repaying old social debt. As well, they constitute a familiar means for building individual prestige and achieving leadership status in a variety of contexts.

Material wealth is an important prerequisite for the pursuit of other essentially social ends, rather than an end in itself. Insofar as employment provides opportunities for acquiring wealth, its absence, low rewards, or restricted access may lead to crime as an alternative route to essentially the same ends. In this sense criminals often refer to their activities as *wok*, meaning ritual or goal-oriented activity (Wanek 1982, 41–42; Goddard 1992, 28). The proceeds of theft might consist of a range of items, but the preferred object is invariably cash. Other items are converted into cash, often by reselling them to fences at prices significantly below market values. For the criminal, cash has the practical advantage of being difficult to link directly with specific crimes. For criminals and noncriminals alike, the appeal of cash lies in its inherent versatility as an item of transactable wealth that can be used in all contexts. Marilyn Strathern has argued that cash has become the principal “medium through which relationships are expressed, very much the coin of social commerce” (1975, 300). Borrey’s account of rural *raskols* in Simbu Province provides further illustration:

Cash is needed not merely for its purchasing power but for its power to build prestige in a traditional sense. The public servant who goes back to the village during the weekend with his car, several women and 10 cartons of beer is highly respected by other community members. With his money and beer he can buy favours from people who then hope that they eventually will benefit from his wealth. He will also be able to contribute generously to feasts and compensation ceremonies. This ideal shapes the world of gangs too. (1994, 244)

A distinguishing feature of *raskol* enterprise is its manifest failure to provide lasting material prosperity, even for its most successful practitioners. During the course of his long career, Ben would have processed substantial sums of money. Nevertheless, he did not appear to be a wealthy man. Living in a dilapidated house, he drove a barely road-worthy vehicle and appeared to maintain a standard of living similar to that of his settlement neighbors. He could no doubt have called on considerable resources if required, but the more general point is that *raskolism* is not primarily viewed as an avenue to lasting wealth. The proceeds of acquisitive crime are typically consumed in ostentatious celebrations—including massive drinking sprees—and acts of redistribution among criminal associates and kin. The entire yield of a major robbery can literally disappear within a matter of days. Such behavior raises difficulties with attempts to explain acquisitive crime as a straightforward response to poverty.

An attraction of both *raskol* and *post-raskol* strategies, and one that is less amenable to materialist analysis, is the opportunities they present for building individual prestige and leadership status. Social objectives often appear to take precedence over more “rational” considerations of profitability and sustainability in indigenous businesses in Papua New Guinea. Andrew Strathern noted a “remarkable mapping of Highlands systems of prestige gift-giving . . . on to an introduced capitalist system” (1982, 551). Ben Finney’s study of entrepreneurship in the Eastern Highlands drew attention to the significance of prestige as a motivational factor across a range of local business ventures (1973). Others have noted the tension between individual profit and community obligations evident in a variety of local commercial enterprises (Monsell-Davis 1981). Western-oriented economists and business leaders have consistently blamed “cultural” factors for impeding economic development.

For persons whose attitudes are shaped by traditional societies in Papua New Guinea, the goods and services generated by the modern economic order may be appreciated chiefly for the access to status that they afford. If profligate use of economic goods advances status, then profligacy will be unrestrained. Extravagant consumption will be the norm. . . . On the values of European culture, profligacy is scandalous; on the values of traditional cultures in Papua New Guinea, extravagant waste brings the exhilaration of the moment and confers status on the chief actor” (McGavin 1991, 23).

Similar dynamics are implicated in the fate of many *post-raskol* development projects. For those who leave crime and engage in small-scale development projects as registered youth groups, commercial sustainability is often secondary to the satisfaction of more immediate social objectives (Stephenson 1987). Familiar patterns of consumption and dis-

tribution lead to the rapid depletion of the modest resources set aside for reform and rehabilitation strategies. For many participants in such programs, “success” is measured in social, rather than economic, terms. Principal among their criteria are the promotion of the social standing of individual leaders and, by association, that of their followers.

Success for the modern leader in crime, as with his traditional counterpart, depends in large measure on his ability to engage in a process of skillful manipulation of resources. Whereas the Melanesian big-man built his power and prestige through the accumulation and ceremonial exchange of traditional items of wealth, the criminal leader constructs his power base around acquisitive crime and the strategic distribution of proceeds among followers and kin. An important object of distribution in both cases is to engender social credit, and, in the process, build individual reputation and power. “[D]istributing spoils from robberies . . . enhances one’s name. By giving generously one builds up social credit, and making people obligated is the most elementary form of creating bonds of domination/subordination. Port Moresby rascals know these age-old political strategies just as well as those village men who try to make a name for themselves by giving away pigs or shells” (Schiltz 1985, 147).

Like his traditional predecessor, the criminal leader requires energy and entrepreneurial ability to manage the continuous tasks of accumulation and distribution that are critical to the preservation of his leadership status. Failure to live up to expectations and obligations will jeopardize an individual’s standing in both contexts. In relation to traditional leadership, “[a] leader remains a leader only so long as he can successfully dominate others, either through his ability to help them or to maintain their respect. If he fails in an undertaking his followers are quick to shift their loyalties to others. There are always competitors for power and influence” (Langness 1973, 154).

Although the model of leadership in modern urban criminal groups looks like that of the traditional Highlands big-man, it would be naive to assume that a single culturally specific model has acquired universal acceptance throughout Papua New Guinea’s diverse social environment. Even so, many criminals conform to a model that has little to do with the system operating in the villages that they may only visit occasionally. In this respect, the *raskol* model of leadership may be an urban creation—legitimized by a belief or claim that it conforms to a traditional ideal of the good leader. It may also be, in part, a reflection of the influence of global culture and the ideal of leadership depicted in the action movies that have become popular throughout the country, particularly among young males.

The continuous flux in the size and configuration of criminal groups—often following the fortunes of individual leaders—attests to the

vigor of competitive leadership and suggests other parallels with Melanesian social organization. "At any time [in the Highlands] there may be a number of active rivals for prestige in a community. These may break apart, or reinforce one another; some segment leaders regularly support one of their number as community leader. The competition of rivals may affect any enterprise" (Brown 1978, 194).

Strategies for exiting crime, such as the surrender, provide ample opportunities for building prestige and engendering social credit. They represent alternative vehicles for pursuing essentially the same social objectives sought by active criminals. In other words, they are another "road" to "development." What may appear to outsiders—and is often depicted in the media—as a fundamental transformation in identity is actually a continuity in underlying social commitment. As many of his detractors pointed out, Jimmy's endeavor to secure jobs and resources for the League was as much about building his own name and personal standing as it was about procuring the material necessities for survival in the city. Whereas his previous criminal status appears to have been minor, the surrender provided Jimmy with an excellent opportunity for making a "name." His post-surrender entrepreneurship was about developing and consolidating his new standing. As such, it conformed to a familiar pattern of behavior that can be seen across a range of modern occupations, including *bisnis*, politics, and crime.

The surrender, like the walkathon and the gang retreat, provides an opportunity for initiating potentially rewarding exchange relations with those in positions of power and wealth. Many of those involved in these events share a highly personalized perception of "government," as the controller and distributor of vast and desirable resources. Within this belief system the state is often expected to conduct its relations with subjects in much the same way as any other powerful leader. Gordon and Meggitt wrote of an Engan view of the state as "a 'super line' [clan] to be exploited for commodities to enhance one's own prestige and that of the group" (1985, 157). Borrey used the analogy of the state as a big-man: "[F]or lots of people the State is a surrogate big man or leader who in the process of wealth accumulation (like mineral and logging projects) is expected to redistribute some of this wealth back to the people" (1994, 248). The same analogy was used by Clark in his work with the Huli people in the Southern Highlands Province. In his view, Huli see themselves as followers of the state rather than as citizens of it (1997, 81).

Where the state fails to live up to popular expectations, frustration and anger will follow. Much of the sense of grievance voiced by *raskols* and their immediate neighbors springs directly from a perception of failure or "trickery" on the part of politicians, bureaucrats, and other members of the national elite (A Strathern 1993a, 53). Anger is directed

not at the accumulation of wealth or political corruption as such, but at the failure to fulfill redistributive obligations according to local expectations. The highly personalized feelings of neglect and exclusion this concept induces are powerfully expressed in a letter presented at the 1991 Mirigeda gang retreat: “[J]ust for your information we must let you know that, we the neglected and rejected, with birth rights and nationalities, sons of this country out here on the streets will cause problems where ever we go. It is very clear that nobody cares for us. So that’s why we in return must make you turn back and look at us, that we are still there.”²⁶

When criminals commit themselves to exiting crime at mass surrenders or gang retreats, they are, in effect, “gifting” the state and expect it to reciprocate with gifts of projects, jobs, and other material opportunities. Failure to reciprocate in the expected way leads to threats and acts of retributive violence. The retributive dimension of *raskol* crime aims at punishing those who have failed in their obligations and, in the process, forcing them back into more appropriate exchange relations. “From the point of view of the gangs, . . . modern society represented by the state is an opponent who is unwilling to enter into exchange relations with them, and thus enable them to compete for, and participate on an equal basis in, the nation’s wealth and social processes. I shall call this the ‘equalising dimension’ of rascalism. It expresses itself in the violent confrontation of rival powers who exchange blows, rascal gangs versus the state” (Schiltz 1985, 149).

Institutionalist Perspectives

Another important dimension of the rise of *raskolism* has been the manifest failure of state controls. An acute shortage of resources is undoubtedly a major problem confronting Papua New Guinea’s law enforcement agencies, as with most other state institutions. This situation has been compounded by population growth and the escalation of lawlessness in recent years. In highlighting these issues, institutionalist perspectives also raise broader issues about the social appropriateness of the criminal justice system that go beyond questions of resource adequacy and institutional capacity.

There is much evidence to suggest that encounters between *raskols* and the state have not only failed to stem the growth of crime but have actually strengthened criminal commitment and identity. Policing remains the most visible point of contact between urban *raskols* and the criminal justice system, and imprisonment provides another significant nexus. Incarceration is a normal and expected part of the *raskol* lifestyle. Although they generally viewed their prison experience as something unpleasant,²⁷ criminal informants recounted it with much bravado. Tales of fighting, warden brutality, and daring escapes invariably take

precedence over more mundane accounts of bad food and boredom. Time served in prison provides an important way of acquiring criminal status.

Incarceration is highly valued as a source of prestige and standing in the *raskol* world. *Raskol* organization thrives in Port Moresby's Bomana jail. As seen in the cases of Ben, Stephen, and Joe, imprisoned leaders maintain their leadership status and are often released with their criminal reputations enhanced. The visit by Arthur and Jimmy to speak to the imprisoned GGB-Mafia leaders, and their subsequent press conference, is further evidence that criminal organization survives the constraints of incarceration. Imprisonment increases solidarity within particular groups, as well as nurturing cooperation and personal associations between them. The relatively open, "prison-farm" design of Papua New Guinea's jails provides a unique forum for the exchange of criminal experience and knowledge, as well as an ideal environment for drawing young offenders further into crime. Bomana is referred to colloquially as "the college," where inmates "graduate" with improved criminal skills and commitment. "The conditions in Papua New Guinea prisons are such that effective control over the hundreds in crowded compounds and over dormitories with 50 or more is exercised not by the correction staff but by the gang leaders who assert their authority and command respect. No young person can insulate himself from this line-up of gangs and, on release, he is already profoundly committed to the group he has been obliged to join in the prison" (Clifford, Morauta, and Stuart 1984, 231).

Violent encounters with the police provide another staple ingredient of *raskol* induction. Police violence in the course of arrest or during questioning is depicted as routine by informants. Beatings occurring in police stations and prisons are often referred to as visits to "the panel-beat shop" (where the damaged panels of cars are "beaten" back into shape) and are an expected part of dealings with police. Serious allegations of police violence were commonplace among my informants, and were a recurrent justification for criminal surrenders. Several informants attributed the demise of inter-gang conflict and increasing cooperation between such groups to the impact of such violence. Stories of violent encounters with police provide criminals with another way of building individual reputations within the group, as well as a means for eliciting sympathy in the wider community. One of the letters read out at the 1991 Mirigeda retreat appealed directly on the basis of alleged police brutality: "Mr Rabbie Namaliu are you in any way thinking of us or are you just sending out your men to pick us on the streets and start bashing us and manhandling us or shooting us down like wild animals? If that is so, like we have said above shooting us down like wild animals then we must be aware of the attitude too and be on guard or defend ourselves."²⁸

Harris claimed that the 1985 emergency increased the professionalism of the gangs by bringing home to *raskols* the counterproductive effects of high profile crimes of violence, particularly pack rape (1988, 34). Many criminals left the city for rural villages or other towns unaffected by the emergency provisions. By displacing serious criminals in this way, suppressive measures have inadvertently contributed to the dispersal of criminal networks to other parts of the country.

Lack of public cooperation with police is partly attributable to heavy-handed policing practices. Police–community relations in the more disadvantaged urban neighborhoods are often characterized by mutual antagonism. The stigmatization of such communities as centers of crime and the regular conduct of militaristic police raids add to distrust of police. They are also likely to contribute to community sympathy for those in conflict with state law, thereby strengthening the integration of criminals within their residential communities.

The broad rhetoric of social disadvantage shared by *raskols* and their neighbors depicts the police as the enforcement arm of an unjust social order that promotes the interests of the elite at the expense of the grassroots. In this rhetoric, state law and its enforcers are seen as patently partisan.²⁹ Thus, confronting criminal justice is legitimated by *raskols* as a way of challenging more profound injustices. Violence between police and criminals thereby develops its own powerful momentum and logic within *raskol* rhetoric. “[S]tate power is epitomised on the one hand by high income earners, members of the elite, and capitalist enterprises, and on the other by the police and other law enforcing agencies. The former are the habitual targets of rascals’ negative reciprocity, the latter are the agents of the state’s coercive power, those who reciprocate physical violence” (Schiltz 1985, 149).

The militaristic character of PNG policing is partly a historical legacy, but it is also an outcome of its current institutional deficiencies and inability to achieve “results” by more routine means. The police seek to exercise control primarily through the deterrent impact of reactive operations. The problem is not just a matter of lack of resources but is related to more fundamental issues about the form of policing appropriate in the modern PNG environment.

Conclusion

The insights of culturalist perspectives into the social foundations of *raskol* and post-*raskol* behavior provide a framework for understanding the counterproductive impact of modern institutionalized criminal justice in Papua New Guinea and of policing in particular. At the same time, they provide more positive clues to the broad direction that might be taken by more culturally appropriate control strategies. If building

leadership and prestige is an important part of what *raskolism* is about, an effective control strategy must come to grips with that particular foundation. The new strategy will have to provide an alternative, noncriminal avenue to acquiring this status.

The institutional response to the rise of *raskolism* has been a familiar Western institutional response entailing a strengthening of the police, increasing penalties, and expanding the prison system. These responses have not only failed, but they have become integral to the reproduction of *raskolism*. The institutions of state cement *raskol* solidarity through police brutality and exploitation, which in turn fuel resentment and retribution—vicious cycles of payback instead of virtuous cycles of gifts. The prison system is similarly integral to the constitution of criminal status. In practice, if not intent, building the capacity of law-and-order agencies can serve to strengthen an institutional-cultural interplay that reinforces *raskolism*. This vicious cycle of exploitation—violence by the state begetting violence among the urban underclass—is best illuminated through creative interplay between the culturalist and institutionalist perspectives.

On the other hand, combining the culturalist and materialist perspectives illuminates the possibility of a virtuous gift cycle. Surrenders, retreats, and walkathons have the potential for linking the marginalized to legitimate opportunity structures through training, development projects, and jobs, thereby diminishing their marginality. In return, these opportunities are made conditional on fully exiting crime. In their current form, these options are, of course, no panacea. Because they are, in part, vehicles for constituting someone's leadership status, they will unfold in uncertain ways that depend on how the leader's career unfolds. When the institutions of the state are weak or counterproductive and the opportunity structures of the legitimate economy are weak, any strategy for steering a firmly culturally rooted phenomenon like *raskolism* is likely to be hostage to the vicissitudes of the way those cultural forces play out.

Culturally sensitive catalysts of surrenders from civil society—such as churches and community organizations—constitute more hopeful agents of change than state institutions. Yet there is no escaping the fact that the state is in some important cultural senses expected to act like a big-man. The surrender narrative demonstrates the crucial role of brokers who enjoy some independence from both the state and the criminal group. They can help but, basically, patience is needed to await the offer of a credible gift from a credible *raskol* big-man for a redirection of gang behavior. A state that plays the PNG cultural game, rather than the Western criminal justice game, will be discerning about the signals it gives about what kind of gifts it will reciprocate. It will negotiate credible terms of *raskol* transformation, monitoring to ensure that the deal sticks,

and it will demonstrate that its institutions can be provoked to respond when the deal does not stick. But it will be willing to reciprocate gifts from *raskol* leaders with gifts of development opportunities.

Because Papua New Guinea is a gift economy with institutions of criminal justice that are often counterproductive, there is a case for shifting the emphasis on institution building away from “more of the same” counterproductivity to funding the reciprocation of such gifts. Further, there may be a case for shifting attention from state institutions to agents in civil society with the credibility and competence to broker exchanges of gifts between *raskols* and the state that are genuinely virtuous. For all the cynicism involved in the implications of a materialist interpretation of a phenomenon like gang surrender—the barefaced big-man aspirations, the potential often realized for corruption and double-dealing—the brokering of gang surrenders can be viewed as a process of learning. Papua New Guinea may learn by harnessing the power of leadership ambition for constructive rather than destructive purposes, by exchanging gifts of law abidingness for gifts of employment and development assistance, and by shifting state resources from coercion that is an expensive drag on the economy to crime-control gifts that directly contribute to development.

Materialist perspectives suggest an inevitable moral hazard in the learning (Marshall 1994). The state must learn how to deal with the creation of criminality as a road to securing gifts. It must cultivate ethical and discerning cadres of brokers from civil society who genuinely care about violence and development. Such cadres are most likely to be found in Papua New Guinea among the churches and the missions—many of which are already active in this field. In the process, civil society may be actively constituted. Critical research must be undertaken to evaluate when negotiated deals succeed and when they are counterproductive.

Moral hazard will always exist in this game. It exists in the status quo. *Raskolism* can be a path to a rare job opportunity in the Papua New Guinea security industry. Thus the shift of foreign aid and foreign capital from investment in development to investment in security creates new incentives to become a *raskol* as a career path to the security industry. Moral hazard is a matter of degree under any set of institutional arrangements.

Chapter 5

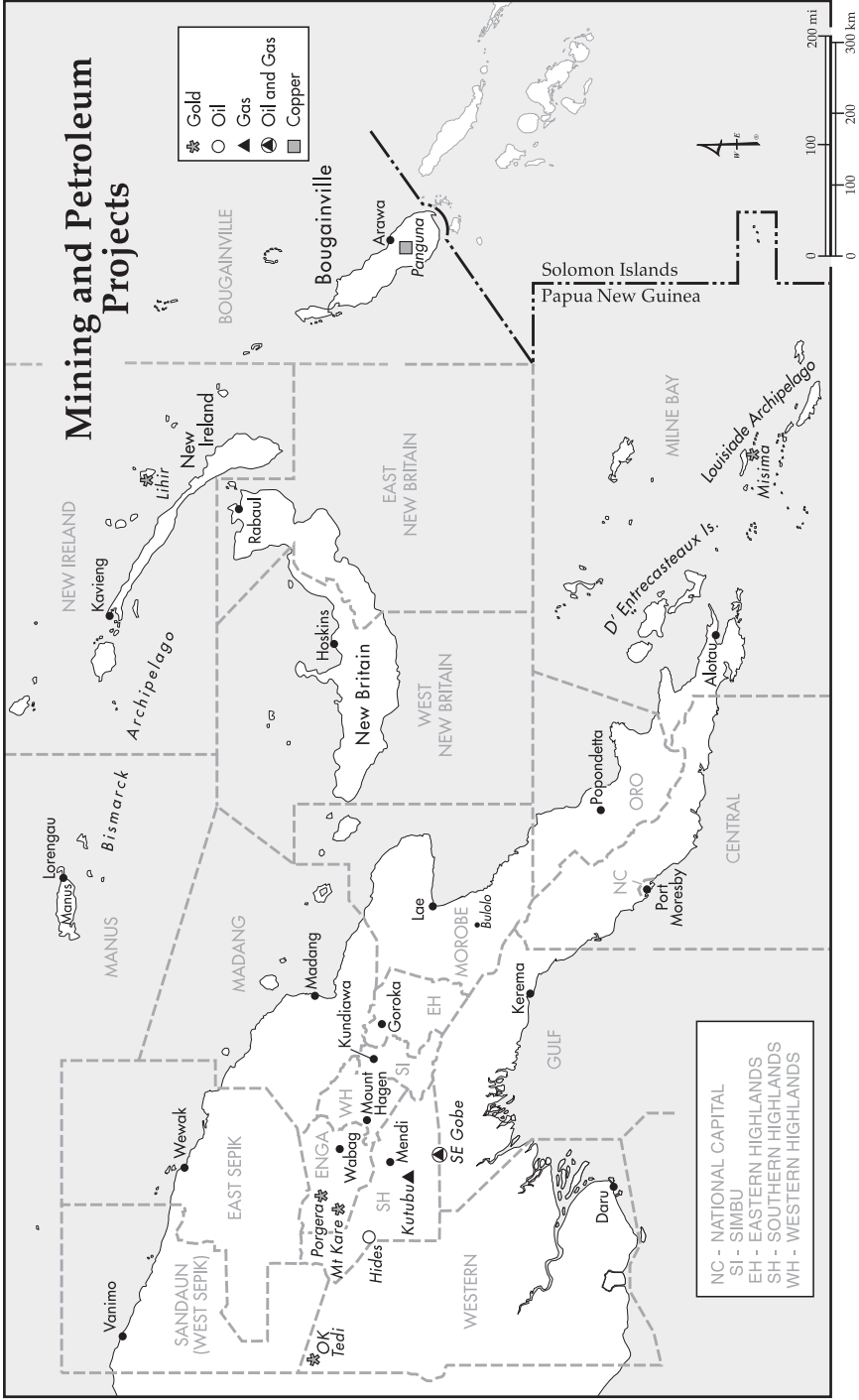
The Politics of Mining Security

The forcible closure of Bougainville's Panguna mine in 1989 vividly demonstrated the vulnerabilities of large-scale mining in Papua New Guinea. A number of initiatives have since been taken to improve security at mining and petroleum projects. Among them was the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Unit in 1992, a special police squad to protect project installations in the Highlands. This chapter charts the fluctuating fortunes of the Rapid Deployment Unit and its short-lived successor, the Police Tactical Force. The story of these measures provides important insights into the workings of the postcolonial state and its relations with private international capital.

Mining in Papua New Guinea

The start of production at the Panguna mine in 1972 marked the beginning of the latest phase in Papua New Guinea's mining history.¹ This phase has been dominated by large-scale projects, involving transnational corporations and international capital. The policy formulated by the colonial administration in relation to Panguna has been followed by successive postindependence governments. Mining has been viewed as a means to finance national development (Daniel and Sims 1987), by attracting foreign investment for exploration and extraction, and using mineral revenue for nationally defined development objectives. The instrumental character of this policy was made explicit by the Department of Finance in 1977: "Papua New Guinea's mineral policy is premised on the view that large mines are useful not for any direct benefits that they bring, but for the financial support they can provide for progress towards other national goals" (PNGDFP 1977, 2).

The absence of a significant manufacturing base, or comparable source of government revenue, has increased dependence on mining and petroleum. Mining investment has been viewed as a way of promot-



Map 3

ing fiscal self-reliance and reducing budget support from overseas aid, principally Australian. In the first decade after independence, about one quarter of internally generated revenue came from the Panguna copper mine (map 3), and its annual contribution to gross domestic product ranged from 12 to 17 percent (Banks 1990, 90). By the time it closed, Panguna had become the mainstay of the national economy, accounting for nearly 10 percent of gross domestic product, 36 percent of export earnings, and 18 percent of government revenue (Parsons and Vincent 1991, 19).

The early 1990s heralded Papua New Guinea's so-called minerals boom, a period of dramatic expansion in the number and size of projects and prospects, accompanied by buoyant forecasts and rising popular expectations. Economic growth was led by mining and petroleum, along with temporary spin-off activities, mainly in construction and transport, associated with the start of new projects. These projects more than made up for the loss of Panguna's export income. By 1991, annual copper production at the Ok Tedi mine in Western Province matched that of Panguna during its heyday (Callick and Tate 1993, 138). The medium-sized Misima gold mine in Milne Bay Province, scene of one of the nineteenth-century gold rushes, began production in 1989, developing into a highly profitable operation. The Porgera mine in Enga Province commenced production in 1990, becoming the largest gold mine in Papua New Guinea and producing 1.2 million ounces in 1991 (Connell 1997, 124). Commercial oil production began in mid-1992, with crude flowing along a 260-kilometer pipeline from Kutubu in the Southern Highlands to an offshore loading platform in the Gulf of Papua (Callick and Tait 1993, 139). By March 1995, the Kutubu Joint Venture had generated more than US\$400 million in income taxes and anticipated another US\$300 million over the project's life (Simpson 1995). Mining's share of gross domestic product increased from 10 percent in 1978 to 30 percent in 1993, with mineral and oil exports amounting to over 70 percent of total exports (AIDAB 1994, 100). By 1993, Papua New Guinea had become one of the world's top six gold producers (Callick and Tait 1993, 137). The world's largest undeveloped gold reserve (estimated at more than 25 million ounces) was discovered at Lihir in New Ireland Province in the early 1980s. Production began in 1997, with an estimated life of thirty-seven years.

High Expectations

A great deal of rhetoric has been used by Papua New Guinea's political leaders in depicting the country's mineral wealth as harbinger of national development. Having once called Papua New Guinea the "El Dorado of the South Pacific," former Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan



Photo 15 The opencast mine at Porgera, 1997. *Word Publishing*

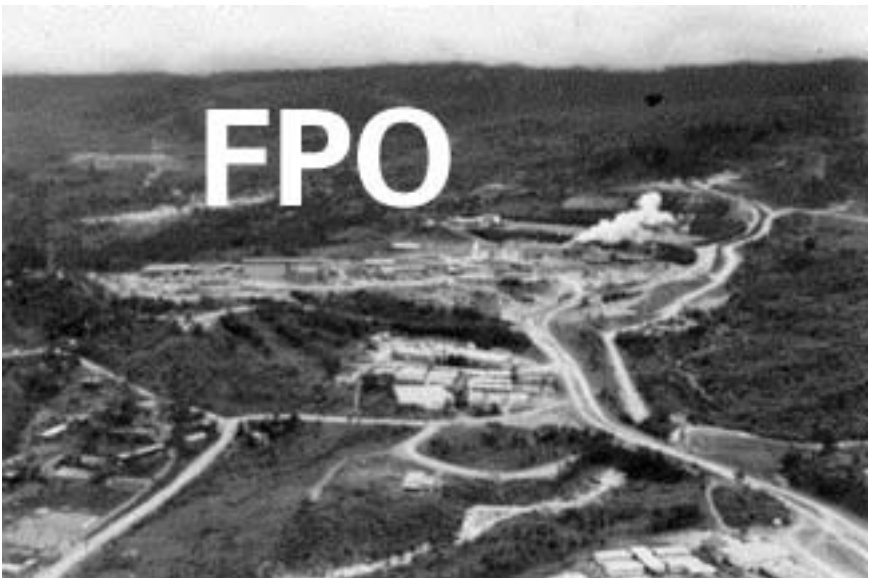


Photo 16 Porgera mine processing plant. *The National*

more recently referred to the mining and petroleum sector as “the spine” of the national economy (Chan 1995, 6). For many observers, the fortunes of the mining industry have become “virtually the single barometer of the country’s wellbeing” (Callick 1995, 2). In turn, popular expectations about the size and distribution of mineral revenues have been inflated.

Expectations are high throughout Papua New Guinea, and highest at local levels in the vicinity of the major projects. These projects tend to be located in remote and underdeveloped areas where basic infrastructure, government services, and economic opportunities are limited. With some justification, local people view a mine or an oilfield as their best prospect for advancement. However, their expectations have not been realized in practice. Little effort has been made to integrate mining into the local, regional, and national economies (Connell 1997, 121–166). Projects remain “enclave” in character and have done little to stimulate government or other development activities in surrounding areas. In the case of the Ok Tedi mine, “more than a short distance from the project facilities . . . improvement to roads, schools, health services and services to primary industry is not detectable. The chief provider of health services and primary and vocational education remains the two main Church missions with agency functions” (Burton 1998, 154).

As capital-intensive industries, mining and petroleum generate few employment opportunities. The mining sector employs less than 1 percent of the national workforce. Papua New Guinea’s low skills base has further reduced the openings for local workers. Royalties shared between customary landowners and provincial governments have been “the only clearly distributable component of revenue generated by the sector” and these have been relatively small compared to the sums going to the national government (UN 1994, 11). Total royalty revenues—shared between provincial governments and landowners—from mining over the period 1972–1993 amounted to approximately K124 million, whereas mining revenues accruing to the national government amounted to K275.9 million in 1993 alone. The principal domestic beneficiary of mining has been the national government and its large, urban-based bureaucracy. For others, access to mining revenue is largely dependent on decisions at state level. “[T]he only way that most Papua New Guineans can benefit from the exploitation of mineral resources is indirectly through the expenditure of state funds, or through arrangements with the mining company that are required or endorsed by the state” (Wesley-Smith 1990, 9).

Many reasons underlie the failure to translate this substantial state income into development and infrastructural activities. One is the relative ease with which politicians have been able to divert funds from formal processes of service delivery. Even where mining revenue evades

capture and diversion at the national level, it still has to be processed at provincial and local levels. Diversionary pressures may be at least as strong at these levels, and controls are likely to be even weaker than at the national level. Burton provided ample illustration in his study of the distribution of mining revenue in Western Province, home to the Ok Tedi mine (1998). Like other mining and petroleum provinces, Western Province has been eligible for a Special Support Grant from the national government since 1990, in addition to royalties from the mine. The large sums accruing to provincial coffers are regularly squandered in personal acts of diversion and redistribution by provincial politicians. Pressure to hand over funds for ill-defined and unsupervised village-level projects

is not resistible when the natural tendency of provincial members is to rubbish the public servants charged with running the province, to ignore and discourage any work in the area of policy formulation and planning, and to place no value on orderly administration in the conventional sense. The result is that funds for running provincial divisions and maintaining their programmes of extension are constantly beggared, while the coffers of “project” lines are constantly and profligately swelled. (Burton 1998, 161)

While the institutional weakness of government service agencies is often used to justify these practices, it is significantly enhanced by such behavior. Many of the essential services in rural areas, such as health and education, are provided (if at all) by churches and other nongovernment organizations.

Incompetence in the macro-management of mining revenue at senior levels of the government and bureaucracy has also contributed. Overly optimistic forecasts and weak financial monitoring and enforcement processes throughout the “minerals boom” have resulted in substantially more public expenditure than income generated. Such overspending contributed to the growing unplanned deficit that culminated in the financial crisis of 1994–1995. The Chan government was forced to respond with stringent fiscal and expenditure controls, including a 12 percent devaluation of the kina in mid-September 1994 followed by the floating of the kina in October. In turn, these measures contributed to the total collapse of government services in many rural areas in late 1994.

The failure of mining policy to achieve its development objectives has been compounded by the poor performance of those sectors of the economy that support the bulk of the population. In the 1980s, weak growth in the nonmining sector was associated with a gradual reduction in the relative importance of private nonmining investment. Investment in agriculture declined markedly, while manufacturing investment remained stagnant (AIDAB 1994, 37). Between 1982 and 1992, the relative position of services as a proportion of gross domestic product declined

from 44 to 38 percent, while that for other industries, excluding mining and agriculture, remained unchanged. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries' combined share of gross domestic product fell from 32 percent to 26 percent over the same period (AIDAB 1993, 4). Lack of development in the rural areas, where 85 percent of the population live, is also reflected in a range of alarming social indicators (UNDP 1994).

The unfulfilled promise of Papua New Guinea's mineral wealth provides the broad context for increasing frustration and resentment at local levels. The Bougainville crisis has provided the most dramatic, but by no means the only, example of these growing tensions. Concerns over the diversion of profits from Bougainville to Port Moresby fueled secessionist sentiment in the early 1970s (Connell 1991, 55). The closure of the Panguna mine in 1989 followed violent protests by local landowners demanding a larger share of mine profits and substantial compensation for environmental damage. Against this background project security has become a major law-and-order concern.

The Rise and Fall of the Rapid Deployment Unit

In August 1991, the police minister in the Namaliu government met with members of the Papua New Guinea Chamber of Mines and Petroleum (hereafter, the chamber), the industry lobby group. The minister, Mathias Ijape, expressed government fears about disruption at project sites during the forthcoming national elections. The government was intent on keeping the projects operational and requested industry assistance to accommodate additional police.² Minister Ijape also revealed his ambitious plan to construct additional police barracks in various provinces.³

While welcoming government concern on this matter, industry leaders were not prepared to support public expenditure programs with no direct relevance to their own security. The industry's main priority was to establish a permanent police presence at each project. A security subcommittee of the chamber confirmed the vulnerabilities of projects in the Highlands, namely at Kutubu, Hides, and Porgera. Dedicated policing was needed for the productive life of each project, and ought to be capable of dealing with all aspects of project security, as well as being sensitive to the particular needs of local communities. Strong reservations were expressed about extending the role of the unpopular police mobile squads:

The new police units should not become part of the mobile squad as the industry would like to see them adopt a different role from this organisation. We believe that the new units should not adopt an elitist image as we consider it important they be seen to be part

of the general police force. However, they will require special training to a very high standard as they must be able to act as a tactical response team as well as handle normal police duties, with particular emphasis on the issues generated by a major resource project.⁴

The chamber agreed to offer the police the use of company accommodation at selected project sites. Additional facilities would be built by individual developers, provided the police department obtained land and government approvals, and that the costs sustained were tax deductible.

Shortly after his initial approach, the minister proposed the construction of a large central base for the new units.⁵ The chamber expressed little interest in this, being more concerned with security at project sites. In its own brief, the chamber suggested two phases of implementation for the proposed scheme. During the first phase of twelve to eighteen months, mobile squads would be deployed at the three major Highlands sites (Porgera, Kutubu, and Hides) while the new units were recruited and trained. In the second phase, these units would be deployed on site and housed in company accommodation. It was suggested that consideration of the minister's base be deferred until the performance of the project-specific units could be evaluated.

In late 1991, the minister prepared a submission for the National Executive Council (the PNG cabinet) for the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Unit.⁶ The submission claimed the support of the chamber, although its substance indicated significant differences in priorities. These differences persisted throughout the life of the Rapid Deployment Unit and the proposal that succeeded it. Minister Ijape planned to establish the new police base in his own constituency of Goroka, a long way from the nearest project site. Construction was to start before the 1992 elections. The base would eventually accommodate 250 married and 56 single staff and would have offices, training buildings, an armory, weapons range, school, health center and recreational facilities. Extensive ancillary equipment was proposed, including weapons, ammunition, protective clothing, specialized motor vehicles (plus maintenance facilities), and aircraft (helicopter and fixed wing). Prior to its construction, an initial force of three squads of 48 police would serve at the project sites on a rotational basis. No mention was made of the kinds of security problems faced by particular projects, the type of policing response required, or the logistics involved in implementing the proposal.

Two versions of the minister's submission have been sighted, both dated 22 October 1991. The first—costed at K25 million—proposed that the government would offset industry expenditure against future mining revenue. The second and more costly proposal—K39 million—provided for the hiring of private security companies to train the new police unit.

There were also differences in the minister's implementation plan. In the chamber's brief, phase two consisted of deploying newly trained members of the Rapid Deployment Unit at on-site facilities provided by the companies. The minister's central base was only considered in phase three of the industry's brief and was contingent on a favorable evaluation of the unit's performance during phase two. In the minister's submission, however, phase two consisted of the construction of the base for 150 personnel, while phase three entailed an expansion of its facilities to accommodate a force of 300. Although operating costs were to be the subject of a later submission, the Ijape proposals assumed that initial funds would come from the industry and be offset against future government mining revenue.

The minister envisaged a "quasi-military" role for the new police unit, with emphasis on mobility and weapons training. The unit was to be part of the police Special Services Division, made up of the national security unit, the counterterrorist squad, and mobile squads. These squads were designed for "reactive" and "para-military" responses to "civil unrest and internal security" (RPNGC 1990, 16). No account was taken of the chamber's strongly expressed reservations about mobile squads or their preference for community-oriented policing.

Further differences surfaced in later correspondence. In contrast to the chamber's advocacy of project-dedicated security, the minister stated that the Rapid Deployment Unit would assist in police duties elsewhere.⁷ In a letter to the minister, the president of the chamber wrote that the industry was "not convinced that the huge expenditures required [were] justified at this stage." The chamber's offer of on-site accommodation during the phasing-in of the new unit "was the most viable alternative" at the "more realistic" sum of several million kina. Moreover, the industry believed that "by permanently placing police units in the vicinity of the projects they would become part of the community within the project area and would serve that community as well as providing security for individual projects."⁸

Clearly irritated, the minister replied, "I further do not agree with your views that 30 million Kina is not justified expenditure at this stage. The question paused [sic] to you is when would you justify the expenditure? At the time when the mine are up in flames or being disrupted? Unfortunately mine disruption and illegal activities are not timed like other good controlled lawful activities, a point you don't seem to comprehend or appreciate."⁹

The Mount Kare Attack

Minister Ijape's remarks proved prophetic in light of later events at the Mount Kare alluvial gold mine, 18 kilometers southwest of Porgera in Enga Province. On 10 January 1992, the mine operator, Conzinc Rio-

tinto Australia (CRA), issued a terse press statement: “A group of approximately 15 armed men attacked the Mt Kare Alluvial Mining operation last night. They stole cash and gold from the safe and ransacked and set fire to part of the camp and some mining equipment. Staff were threatened but no-one was hurt.”¹⁰

Operations ceased immediately, and employees were withdrawn. This was the third and most serious attack on the Mount Kare camp since it began operating in September 1990. From its inception, the venture had been plagued by bitter disputes over ownership. Disputants included a number of groups claiming to be landowners who were not recognized by the company. The company had also been opposed by several outspoken provincial and national political leaders. In its view, a number of foreign businessmen were inflaming the conflict for their own purposes. In August 1990, the landowner group acknowledged by the company, the Kare-Puga Development Corporation, had accused several Engan politicians of being “involved in attempts to break-up the KDC-CRA negotiations and tempt landowners with promises of a better deal with companies with which they have business dealings” (*PC*, 16 Aug 1990).

Shortly after the attack, Aruru Matiabe, a prominent national parliamentarian and longtime critic of the company told a newspaper that the attack was “good in that it made a point, taught the government a lesson, and stopped current mine ownership arrangements from continuing” (*PC*, 14 Jan 1992). He expressed his opposition to “foreign domination of the economy,” identifying himself as “a Papua New Guinean nationalist and a true representative of the people, trying to fight for the rights of the people and to advance their cause” (*PC*, 17 Jan 1992). The company, on the other hand, claimed that it had been subject to “a sustained campaign of litigation, political lobbying and unsubstantiated public accusations against CRA in an effort to gain control of the Mt Kare mining lease and Prospecting Authority, plus control of the landowner company” (CRA 1992, 1–2).

The gravity of the January attack and the lack of a government response heightened industry concerns. In a strongly worded press release, the chamber condemned the attack and warned of damage to Papua New Guinea’s investment climate. The chamber alleged that the attack was the result of “a well-planned and organised raid funded by persons who wish to control the project for their own benefit” rather than a “genuine landowner issue.” At a subsequent meeting with government officials, industry representatives were asked to provide a detailed breakdown of the policing requirements for each project.

The *Post-Courier* ran a report on Minister Ijape’s K38 million proposal. In it, the minister complained of lack of industry support and said that the Mount Kare attack confirmed his worst fears. He warned, “The signs of Mount Kare snowballing to Porgera are crystal clear. If

the Porgera mine goes it will cost the company K2 million a day" (*PC*, 16 Jan 1992).

The chamber collated the risk assessments prepared by individual developers.¹¹ With the notable exception of the Misima mine in Milne Bay Province, all developers admitted to serious security concerns and their need for more effective policing.¹² There was also considerable disquiet in industry circles over the slow progress of the Mount Kare investigation. No arrests had been made, despite the existence of eyewitness accounts implicating several well-known local figures. Charges were eventually laid against two of the principal suspects, a national parliamentarian and a member of the Enga provincial assembly, but were dropped in early 1993, ostensibly because there were no funds to transport prosecution witnesses to court (*PC*, 7 May 1993).

Minister Ijape's submission was approved by the cabinet on 22 January 1992. Phase one, misleadingly headed "the Chamber's proposal," involved the construction of accommodation for 150 single personnel at selected project sites, their training, and the procurement of specialized equipment prior to the issue of writs for the national election. Phases two and three covered the immediate construction and later expansion of the base, which, according to the decision, would be located at Tari in the Southern Highlands. Approval was also given for the appointment of a British security contractor, Defence Systems Limited, to provide training for members of the new unit.

In the absence of Prime Minister Namaliu, the cabinet decision was announced by Acting Prime Minister Jack Genia, who told the *Post-Courier*, "The sole task of the rapid deployment unit will be to provide around-the-clock security for mines and oil field and gas projects and to effectively deal with any disturbances around these projects rapidly on short notice" (*PC*, 29 Jan 1992). Confusion surrounded the location of the base. Although the record of the decision signed by the prime minister specified Tari, Genia said that it would be Goroka. Several Southern Highlands leaders expressed their dissatisfaction. One criticized the selection of Goroka, claiming that Mendi (the Southern Highlands capital) was more appropriate given its proximity to the major projects (*PC*, 3 Feb 1992). Another was more forthright, accusing Ijape of selecting Goroka for electoral reasons. He criticized the new police unit as "elitist" and designed to protect "foreign interests at great expense while [our] own citizens, especially women, [are] victims of indiscriminate rascal attacks."

Finding the Funds

On the advice of the chamber, the police conducted their own threat assessment. In late January 1992, a team of senior officers, including Police Commissioner Ila Geno, visited installations in Enga, Southern



Photo 17 Truck drivers protest against holdups along the Highlands Highway. *Word Publishing*

Highlands, and Gulf provinces. At Kutubu, the commissioner was told that the main risks involved threats of damage to the refinery, intimidation of workers, and stoppages caused by outside influences. At Poroma, base camp for construction of the Kutubu access road, risks included “random attacks on both machinery and personnel by local people, probably through drunkenness and unrealistic expectations of the cash benefits that the road construction will bring them, and also some more serious threats being issued by sub-contractors who bought machinery and transport on bad advice from some landowner groups, but have not been employed.”¹³

In implementing phase one, operating companies would be expected to provide police with accommodation, meals, and ground and air transport to and from the transit camp. These services would have to be provided free of charge owing to a shortage of government funds.

Until government funds materialized, the commissioner intended to deploy at project sites selected mobile squads and general-duties police drawn from all over the country.¹⁴ The police were to be paid a daily allowance of K5 by the Police Department, in addition to their salaries. Developers were free to supplement this sum, provided they all paid the same rate. The industry agreed to an allowance of K2.50 per day. Concerns were raised about the propriety of direct payments. One company stated that it was not “prepared to pay this directly to the police-

men concerned because we believe very strongly that no payments whatsoever should be made by developers directly to the police.”¹⁵

While the police and the industry concentrated on phase one, Minister Ijape devoted his energies to securing funds for the base envisaged in phases two and three. His appeals to the industry to provide the initial (tax deductible) funds met with no response (*PC*, 30 Jan 1991). He then requested Australian assistance for infrastructure and capacity building, asking for K100 million for a reconstruction that would include “policemen’s houses, police headquarters, training establishments, divisional headquarters, the provincial stations which includes cells and radio equipment, training of manpower, and rural police stations” (*PC*, 14 Feb 1992).¹⁶

The minister was insistent that the Rapid Deployment Unit become operational before the June elections, warning the industry that a new government might be less committed to project security.¹⁷ While the chamber favored Tari because it was nearer the projects, the minister stuck to his original choice of Goroka.¹⁸

Despite the cabinet’s decision, the lack of funds impeded progress. The police prepared a draft policy paper dealing with the funding of the proposed unit.¹⁹ Cabinet approval was sought for the release of K770,000 toward the implementation of phase one. According to the police, the redeployment of general-duties officers for phase one would “seriously denude the Constabulary’s normal and already weak frontline operational presence.”²⁰ The commissioner had earlier claimed that mobilizing the new unit without additional recruits would lead to the closure of four police stations in the National Capital District and four in Lae.²¹

By February 1992, the police and the industry had developed a close working relationship. Chief Superintendent Geoffrey Vaki, the coordinator of project security, conducted his own assessment of the Highlands projects.²² He listed security threats common to each site, including robberies and wilful damage to company property, compensation claims, high expectations of employment on the part of landowners and “squatters,” police absenteeism, and lack of weapons, vehicles, and other equipment.²³ These threats would increase as the construction phase neared completion and employment opportunities decreased.

Implementation continued to be delayed owing to a lack of government funds. The chamber wrote to Namaliu requesting the release of 1.5 million kina.²⁴ Adding to industry concerns was evidence of the deficiencies of the mobile squads that had been temporarily assigned to project sites. The squad at the Hides Gas project had departed before being relieved and was alleged to have unlawfully removed company property.²⁵ A similar incident occurred with the “relief” squad.²⁶ Attempts by the chamber to raise the funding issue in the media drew a sharp rebuke from the police commissioner.²⁷

In late April, it was announced that K100,000 had been allocated to phase one. According to the police, this sum would cover only the cost of training 75 officers—half of the personnel envisaged. No funds were available to transport police to the transit camp at Tipinini, and the industry would have to assist. The chamber noted that this would still “give us only 1 month of the RDU with no guarantee of funds for transporting and training the second 75 men (for rotation).”²⁸ The Department of Finance and Planning agreed to increase the K100,000 to K300,000, but this was to be the absolute ceiling of government expenditure.²⁹ The police set about trying to secure an additional K500,000 while the industry agreed to lobby the prime minister directly.³⁰

Minister Ijape continued to devote himself to phases two and three. In the absence of government monies, he switched his attention to alternative sources of funds. The “turnkey” package is a credit mechanism that has been widely used to finance government infrastructural projects. It involves the project contractor assuming full financial responsibility, to be reimbursed only when the project is completed and “the keys handed over.” The mechanism has been criticized by the Ombudsman Commission over its potential for abuse.³¹

Minister Ijape sought cabinet approval to negotiate a turnkey package to finance the Rapid Deployment Unit base at Goroka.³² He claimed that time constraints made it impractical to follow normal tendering procedures and recommended a proposal by Downer Construction (PNG).³³ He also requested that approval be given to the purchase by the Police Department of land for the Goroka base. The cabinet approved this submission on 6 May 1992,³⁴ despite the scheme having been earlier rejected by the Department of Finance and Planning on the ground that the terms and conditions set by Downer Construction were unacceptable.³⁵ The total cost of the package negotiated with Downer was K37,002,630, and this was also authorized by the cabinet on 24 June 1992 in the midst of the national elections.³⁶

By May, the Department of Finance and Planning had agreed to commit K330,000 to phase one and gave assurances that it would be financed at least until the end of 1992. The industry was prepared to provide up to K400,000 to match government funds,³⁷ having already spent a considerable sum on the Rapid Deployment Unit (table 2). Developers had pledged accommodation, messing, transport, and office facilities, as well as return road and air transport on a monthly rotational basis. The Porgera Joint Venture offered police the permanent use of its Tipinini facilities (constructed for approximately K1 million), and the Kutubu Joint Venture did likewise with their Poroma camp (approximately K250,000).

The first batch of 63 Rapid Deployment recruits graduated from a three-week training course at Bomana Police College, Port Moresby, on

Table 2. Estimated Industry Expenditure on Rapid Deployment Unit (thousands of kina)

	<i>Capital Costs*</i>	<i>Operating Costs</i>	<i>Total</i>
Porgera	K405	K170	K575
Kutubu	K125	K180	K305
			K880

*Accommodation, messing, and transport.

6 June 1992. They were then transported, at company expense, to Enga province, to be deployed literally days before the beginning of the June elections. The main body and field command was based at the Porgera Joint Venture facility at Tipinini, about fifteen minutes' drive from the Porgera site. Smaller sections were located at Mount Kare, Moro (Kutubu), Nogoli (Hides), and Kopi (Kutubu and Gobe). A second batch of 57 officers graduated in August 1992.³⁸

Change of Government

No serious disorder was reported at any of the major project sites during the 1992 elections. Paias Wingti replaced Rabbie Namaliu as prime minister on 17 July. Wingti led a Highlands-dominated five-party coalition, with Sir Julius Chan as his deputy and finance minister.³⁹ The new government announced an immediate freeze on the implementation of all turnkey projects. The police commissioner was notified of this decision and asked to furnish a brief on the background and implementation status of the Rapid Deployment project.⁴⁰

The incoming government faced a deteriorating law-and-order situation in several parts of the Highlands. Avusi Tanao, the new police minister, told parliament that his department was experiencing acute financial difficulties and could not sustain normal activities, let alone special operations (*PC*, 10 Aug 1992).⁴¹ In late August, two rural Highlands police stations were reported to have closed down owing to lack of funds, and further closures were expected (*PC*, 28 Aug 1992).⁴²

Minister Tanao remained interested in establishing a base for the Rapid Deployment Unit, initially suggesting his own constituency of Kainantu in the Eastern Highlands. He nevertheless dismissed the scale of Ijape's proposal as "unwarranted and exorbitant," suggesting a smaller complex catering for 200, as opposed to 300, police and costing K15 million, rather than K38 million.⁴³ Mendi was later agreed on as the most

appropriate location. The cabinet was requested to seek K15 million from the Papua New Guinea–Australia Security Cooperation Program. As with his predecessor, Minister Tanao showed little interest in phase one, concentrating instead on the base.

By October 1992, the industry claimed to have spent K325,000 on the Rapid Deployment Unit and was committed to spending a further K75,000.⁴⁴ The government's precarious financial situation, along with the continuing ministerial obsession with the base, meant that sustaining phase one depended entirely on industry support. Ila Geno was replaced by Henry Tokam as police commissioner in early October.

As the industry rallied around the Rapid Deployment Unit, serious allegations were being made about its activities. A Mount Kare landowner alleged that members of the unit and armed plainclothes officers had shot and killed several landowners (*PC*, 28 Sept 1992). The premier of Enga Province called for the withdrawal of the Porgera-based unit, alleging that it was out of control (*PC*, 30 Sept 1992). He accused it of having become the company's watchdog and of using "bullying tactics" against villagers: "The Rapid Deployment Unit is like a dog. If the owner tells the dog to bite, it bites. It's serving the interests of the company (Porgera Joint Venture). The company is like a government. Trained police are in their hands" (*PC*, 30 Oct 1992).

Other critics questioned the legality of what they saw as a separate force, calling for its reintegration into the "normal" police (*PC*, 1 Dec 1992).⁴⁵ These criticisms struck a popular chord, particularly among those already aggrieved by mining policy. Allegations of ill-discipline and use of excessive force,⁴⁶ exploited by opponents of particular projects, contributed to increasingly negative public perceptions.⁴⁷

Members of the Rapid Deployment Unit allegedly shot and killed a man in a confrontation with villagers near the Porgera site in October (*PC*, 16 Oct 1992). A provincial politician claimed that local people saw the unit as a company-sponsored police force, eating from their mess, and using company property and vehicles (*PC*, 30 Oct 1992). As he saw it, there were two police forces, one controlled by the Porgera Joint Venture and one by the government (*PC*, 1 Dec 1992).

A Southern Highlands leader complained, "We cannot have the Rapid Deployment Unit shooting and killing people for the sake of a mining company not getting its act together to work with local landowners. Strict controls must be placed on the unit otherwise they will simply create further problems" (*PC*, 28 Dec 1992). Allegations of "company policing" irritated the industry and embarrassed the police. Police excesses generated further conflict at project sites and undermined efforts to secure a dedicated police presence. With cases of blatant ill-discipline, the industry was quick to distance itself from operational policing matters. In response to the shooting incident at Porgera, the mine

manager emphasized that the police were a national responsibility and not subject to company control (*PC*, 30 Oct 1992). Similar remarks were made by a company representative in August 1994 (long after the demise of the Rapid Deployment Unit) following another alleged killing by police. "People must understand the fact that they [that is, the police] are not employees of the Porgera Joint Venture or that PJV becomes liable for any problem that arises between the police and the public" (*National*, 26 Aug 1994). The police themselves acknowledged that serious discipline problems existed and that several officers had been dismissed.⁴⁸ The unit had shrunk to 56 personnel as a result of resignations and dismissals.

Doubts were growing about the commitment to the project of the Wingti government and the new police commissioner. Commissioner Tokam was rumored to want the Rapid Deployment Unit absorbed back into the regular police. In response, the industry stepped up its lobbying, including concerted attempts to counter the unit's negative public image. In March 1993, the Porgera Joint Venture began promoting the "community relations" successes of the Porgera-based unit. "The Porgera Joint Venture is very pleased with the positive approach taken by this unit to promote an attitude of cooperation and goodwill within the Porgera Community. It is encouraging to see members of the Police Force communicating closely with residents of the community in an effort to resolve some of the difficult problems, that if not handled sensitively, could result in further unrest."⁴⁹

In a later review, the chamber claimed that the unit "has been successful and has lived up to expectations by providing a disciplined police group able to provide project security and general community law enforcement, which has been very much lacking in the past."⁵⁰ The Rapid Deployment Unit was held up as "an excellent example of what can be achieved through co-operation between the government and the private sector."⁵¹

A series of violent incidents in different parts of the country in early 1993 placed pressure on the Wingti government. These incidents included the burning down of the Enga provincial government buildings, the destruction of a popular Port Moresby social club by drunken soldiers, a resurgence in tribal fighting in parts of the Highlands, and an apparent outbreak of sexual assaults and ethnic violence in the national capital. The influential Asian Development Bank warned that Papua New Guinea's economic outlook would suffer unless "law and order" problems were checked (*PC*, 15 April 1993).

A "law-and-order package" was duly announced when parliament resumed in late April. The relevant cabinet submission argued against a separate mining police, claiming that it was not "an efficient utilization of police resources and furthermore rather implies special treat-

ment for one particular industry.”⁵² In its place, the submission proposed a permanent police presence at major project sites, made up of regular police and mobile squads.

The Rapid Deployment Unit was officially renounced in favor of increased police resources⁵³ and a range of law-and-order measures, which included the controversial Internal Security Act to “combat terrorism and terrorist activities” (Dinnen 1993c). This act vested the cabinet with a number of restrictive powers that could be directed against individuals, groups, or designated areas. Wingti later justified it as a measure to secure resource projects. “We have very important resources in this country, very important to the nation, and the Internal Security Act is designed to assist in the protection of those resources when people take the law into their own hands and engage in military-type operations” (quoted in *PIM*, July 1993, 22).

While the politicians formulated broad responses, the police and the chamber continued to collaborate on sustaining the existing Rapid Deployment sections. In early June 1993, the industry agreed to fund the changeover in police personnel at the projects.⁵⁴ Deputy Commissioner Nenta informed the chamber of plans to transform the unit into a 35-person mobile squad based at Laiagam (in Enga Province) and to station additional personnel at project sites where housing was available.⁵⁵ However, Commissioner Tokam stated that he had no plans to reduce existing unit sections.⁵⁶ Retaining these sections was, of course, dependent on continuing financial support from the industry.

The industry remained concerned about maintaining police coverage at project sites, irrespective of what might happen to the Rapid Deployment Unit.⁵⁷ Developers were by now fully aware of the strength of political opposition to the concept of a “mining police.” In the words of one executive, “Clearly the government does not like the idea of elite ‘industry’ police units. The concept is good, and with proper management is probably the best response to the problem, however it appears to be politically unacceptable. The problem appears to be one of maintaining the integrity of the Rapid Deployment Unit, while at the same time not giving the public impression of an exclusive force in the pay of the industry.”⁵⁸

Continuity and Change: The Police Tactical Force

As it turned away from the Rapid Deployment Unit, the Wingti government was considering another specialist police unit. The Police Tactical Force was based on a submission from a London-based security contractor, Defence Systems Limited. This company had extensive experience with governments, international agencies, and corporate clients, including mining and petroleum transnationals. It specialized in threat

analysis, military training, the supply of military personnel and equipment, and the provision of site security at commercial installations.

Defence Systems had been associated with an attempt by Minister Ijape to introduce an “elite tactical force” in 1991, before the Rapid Deployment initiative.⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier, the second version of Ijape’s cabinet submission of 22 October 1991 allowed for private security companies to train the new unit. The cabinet’s approval in January 1992 specifically recommended hiring Defence Systems Limited.⁶⁰ Shortly afterward, Ijape invited the chairman of the company to visit Papua New Guinea for discussions.⁶¹ The chairman, Alastair Morrison, came to Port Moresby in February 1992 and talked with government officials. He told them that the company was prepared to fund the initial training of the Rapid Deployment Unit during the construction of the base.⁶²

The involvement of Defence Systems was strongly opposed by advisers attached to the Australian-funded Police Development Project, as well as by many senior PNG police officers. A draft policy submission on financing the scheme was prepared by the police for Minister Ijape in February 1992, and asked that the cabinet reconsider its decision to engage the company. The submission drew attention to the shortage of government funds, duplication of the existing Australian training program, the military bias of Defence Systems, and the threat presented to the commissioner’s exclusive control over police operations and training.⁶³

Despite the lobbying efforts of Defence Systems, and Ministers Ijape and Tanao, lack of public funds effectively blocked the company’s involvement in the Rapid Deployment scheme. The election of the Wingti government, intent on formulating its own law-and-order policy, provided new opportunities to the company. In May 1993, it organized a ministerial and police delegation to special tactical units in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. On their return, police management prepared a proposal for a “Police Tactical Unit,” with a much broader role than its predecessor.⁶⁴ The new unit would:

- a. provide an armed police Quick Reaction Force to incidents involving dangerous and armed criminals;
- b. provide armed hostage rescue and assault operations in criminal hostage or barricade situations;
- c. conduct armed raids on known or suspected armed criminal locations;
- d. conduct surveillance operations to gain intelligence;
- e. provide close protection for VIPs; and
- f. as directed, enforce the Internal Security legislation.⁶⁵

Sections of the new unit were to be located in the National Capital District, Lae, Mount Hagen, and Rabaul, reporting directly to the police commissioner. Prime Minister Wingti agreed to proceed with the project

in July 1993. Defence Systems would be contracted for twenty-four months, divided into four training stages.⁶⁶ The total cost was estimated at K10,575,000.

Members of the Police Development Project observed these developments with concern. The company proposal appeared to offer nothing new. Counterterrorist and armed offender training was already provided by Australian advisers. Armed hostage situations in Papua New Guinea were rare, and “terrorism” (beyond Bougainville) was not an issue. Doubts were also expressed about the appropriateness of “SAS-trained elite squads” in Papua New Guinea’s challenging terrain.

These reservations were shared by many senior members of the constabulary. One, who had accompanied the overseas delegation in May, claimed that his initial support was a result of political pressure. “When I submitted my initial report on my return from Singapore, I did it because of pressures from our Minister and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. I simply wanted to stimulate discussion—although I did not believe in the idea.”⁶⁷ He complained about increasing political interference in police matters. Politicians approved costly new proposals without considering the financial implications. Implementing them, he went on, meant diverting funds from an already inadequate police budget. “[W]e should learn from past experiences and oppose such proposals unless Government approves the appropriate funds. We have been forced to implement similar Government decisions within our recurrent budget in such cases as the Rapid Deployment Unit. The current proposal is just another monster. The costs indicated in the proposal do not show detail breakdown, however from the outset it appears to be a very expensive exercise.”

In a letter to the minister, the police commissioner stated his “total opposition” to the Defence Systems scheme. Available government funds “should be directed towards my grossly under-funded recurrent expenditure requirements, so that the Constabulary can make good some of its current deficiencies, and improve its services to the people.”⁶⁸

He reminded the minister of overlap with training under the Police Development Project and pointed to significant gaps in the company proposal, including tribal fights, riots and disturbances in urban areas, highway hold-ups and robberies, and the increasing use of firearms in criminal activities. On project security, the commissioner said funds should go to the Rapid Deployment Unit and the police mobile squads. He also asked what would happen after the company departed. The secretary of the Department of Finance and Planning claimed that the proposal should have been dealt with on a government-to-government basis owing to the national interests involved. In his view, the police minister should withdraw the company submission and stop dealing with “questionable private agencies.”⁶⁹

In September 1993, Minister Tanao announced publicly that the government was considering establishing a Police Tactical Force with the assistance of Defence Systems (*PC*, 8 Sept 1993). He claimed that the Rapid Deployment Unit had been dropped in favor of a “better proposal,” an antiterrorist squad to enforce the Internal Security Act (*Times*, 16 Sept 1993). It was reported initially that the new squad would be based in the minister’s own constituency of Kainantu.

Defence Systems continued to lobby officials, arguing that the Rapid Deployment Unit had failed because of ill-discipline and ineffective leadership, which the company would remedy.⁷⁰ Masket Iangalio, minister for minerals and energy, suggested that police deployed at mines be retrained as a tactical force dedicated to resource projects. The new unit would now be based in Mount Hagen, although the minister assured the industry that there would be rotating sections at project sites. In light of the changed political climate, the chamber pragmatically switched allegiance to the new proposal.

On 4 November 1993, the cabinet approved the establishment of the Police Tactical Force. The Rapid Deployment Unit was to be retrained by Defence Systems’ instructors to form the nucleus of the new force.⁷¹ Funding was to come from internal savings in the police budget, as well as from any other initiatives by the police minister. At a Papua New Guinea–Australia Ministerial Forum in December 1993, Minister Tanao complained that the Australian assistance program was insensitive to the law-and-order priorities of the PNG government (*PC*, 7 Dec 1993). His comments led to uncertainty among the constabulary and some Australian advisers. Concern was expressed that he might try to divert Police Development Project funds for the Defence Systems scheme, or that he might request separate Australian assistance. However, project managers remained confident that Australian authorities would neither alter existing funding arrangements nor agree to any other form of support for the company’s proposal.⁷²

By the end of 1993, the industry claimed to have contributed K1 million of logistical support to the Rapid Deployment Unit since April 1992.⁷³ In its view, “had there been a strong political and financial commitment to the Rapid Deployment Unit the high standard demonstrated by the men in the early days would have been sustained.”⁷⁴

In January 1994, the police commissioner told the chamber that his senior management committee had agreed that two additional mobile squads would be created from existing Rapid Deployment members and other police personnel.⁷⁵ Policing in the resource areas would, in other words, revert to the pre-1992 situation, where mobile squads provided both public policing and project security. Industry assistance would still be needed for squads in project areas. Vehicles and other equipment purchased by the industry for the Rapid Deployment Unit would now

be available for use by the mobile squads.⁷⁶ The last personnel from the old unit vacated the Tipinini camp on 20 March 1994, handing responsibility over to a combined mobile squad.⁷⁷

Minister Tanao was moved to the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation in a cabinet reshuffle in early January (*PC*, 11 Jan 1994).⁷⁸ Despite the cabinet decision approving the establishment of the Police Tactical Force, the familiar problem of lack of funds prevented implementation. The new police minister, Stanley Pil, used his first press conference to call for an increase in money for the police (*PC*, 13 Jan 1994). Commissioner Tokam told reporters that while the force had been allocated K79.5 million for 1994, it needed K97.5 million to maintain its operational capacity.

Pil prepared another submission seeking cabinet approval for special financial support for the tactical force. He noted that there were no internal savings from the police budget and that the Australian authorities were unlikely to assist. The new force would be smaller than originally envisaged, 140 officers rather than 250. Even if former Rapid Deployment personnel were absorbed, new recruits would still be necessary. The cost of the project was now estimated at K22,333,779.⁷⁹

Development Project officials involved in the training of the constabulary's Special Services Division continued to worry about the impact of the Defence Systems proposal on their own program. Advisers believed that additional demands on training facilities and equipment at MacGregor Barracks would create serious logistical problems. Concerns were repeated about the military character of the company's training program. Training of mobile squads by both company trainers and the Australian team was likely to lead to duplication and confusion.

Papua New Guinean police officials who had prepared the funding submission for the tactical force doubted privately that it would succeed.⁸⁰ Whatever their personal reservations, senior officers had to maintain their outward show of deference to politicians. Regular purges by new ministers created acute insecurity in the higher echelons of government departments, including the police. Rumors abounded of the imminent removal of Commissioner Tokam and his deputies. Minister Pil was himself involved in a very public campaign to remove an outspoken deputy commissioner (*PC*, 1 Aug 1994).

Senior Development Project managers were also becoming increasingly skeptical about the prospects of finding funds for the Defence Systems proposal. In March 1994, a project official wrote, "Frankly, I do not believe that the project has too much to worry about as far as the Police Tactical Force presence is concerned. I can see some nervous project-Defence Systems Limited co-existence problems which will require considerable project tact. The project can meet the requirement. It is difficult to see funding in the horizon for Defence Systems Lim-

ited. I fully appreciate that the notion of a Police Tactical Force is an aberration in all respects—funding, a duplication of what the Constabulary has already, etc.”⁸¹

Defence Systems continued its lobbying. In early May, Acting Commissioner Nenta informed colleagues that the cabinet had approved the setting up of the Police Tactical Force and that it would probably be based at Goroka, like its predecessor.⁸² Later the same month, the secretary of the Department of Finance and Planning reminded the police commissioner that any additional funds would have to be processed through the budgetary project system.⁸³ The secretary also stated that the proposal “should really be a component of the Australian Technical Assistance project.” The commissioner meanwhile accompanied Pil on another tour of company-associated projects in Singapore, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom (*PC*, 10 May 1994; *National*, 19 July 1994).⁸⁴

On his return, Minister Pil again announced that Defence Systems’ project would go ahead (*PC*, 24 May 1994). The costs would be “minimal.” Unconvinced, the opposition leader claimed that the new proposal could only be funded at the expense of general policing. The indefatigable Mathias Ijape resurfaced to express his support for Minister Pil’s efforts (*PC*, 25 May 1994). In a telling slip, he told reporters that the “government must move now to approve the Rapid Deployment Unit so that it will at least guarantee security and give confidence to run business” (*PC*, 25 May 1994). Minister Pil had similar difficulties distinguishing between the two proposals (*PC*, 31 May 1994). Meanwhile, an exasperated Highlands divisional police commander, pleading for money, said that the regular police could provide effective project security if adequately resourced (*PC*, 1 June 1994).

Amid these machinations, the extent of Papua New Guinea’s fiscal crisis was becoming apparent. In early August, the finance minister had issued a dire warning of imminent bankruptcy if the national deficit was not reduced (*PC*, 12 Aug 1994). In many areas money was insufficient to buy fuel for police vehicles. An expensive new proposal was becoming increasingly untenable. The final blow to the Police Tactical Force was delivered in late August after the Supreme Court ruled that the reelection of the Wingti government in September 1993 was null and void. Wingti was replaced by Sir Julius Chan as head of a new coalition. One of the first acts of the new government was a 12 percent devaluation and a freeze on new government expenditure. The currency was floated a month later. In September, Commissioner Tokam announced a drastic austerity package, including the standing down of 1,000 reservists and the grounding of 200 police cars (*PC*, 14 Sept 1994). For the time being, at any rate, the Defence Systems proposal was stalled.

This was not, however, the last to be heard of grandiose security proposals, nor, indeed, of Mathias Ijape and Defence Systems. Ijape was

appointed defense minister in the new Chan administration. In June 1995, he considered reactivating the Rapid Deployment proposal following the sabotaging of the gas power supply for the Porgera mine. A year later he announced that the cabinet had approved a third infantry battalion to deal with internal security. The new battalion would be composed of former members of the Rapid Deployment Unit and existing defense force personnel. Its location was not specified.

Ijape was to have a major role, and Defence Systems a minor one, in an even more controversial security scheme—what became known as the Sandline Affair. It arose from a proposal by the Chan administration to use mercenaries to eliminate the Bougainville rebel leadership, restore PNG rule, and reopen the Panguna mine (Dinnen, May, and Regan 1997). Exposure of the plan by the Australian media in February 1997 precipitated the most serious political crisis in Papua New Guinea's postindependence history. A popularly backed military revolt, led by Defence Force Commander Brigadier General Jerry Singirok, resulted in the expulsion of the mainly South African mercenaries and led to the eventual fall of the Chan government. The company involved in the agreement was Sandline International, another London-based security contractor. Sandline, in turn, had subcontracted Executive Outcomes, a notorious South African supplier of military personnel and equipment, to carry out the Bougainville operation.

Popular support for Singirok's revolt centered on allegations of corruption by ministers and officials involved in the Sandline negotiations. A Commission of Inquiry was held shortly after these dramatic events. With limited time and capacity to track down the scattered documentation, it found no evidence of corruption by ministers, including Ijape. Suspicions remained, however, and Chan, Ijape, and several of their colleagues lost their seats in the July 1997 elections.

The role of Defence Systems was revealed by Sandline Director Tim Spicer at the Commission of Inquiry. In early 1996, Minister Ijape had been trying to purchase military equipment for the PNG Defence Force for its Bougainville operations. He had contacted his old acquaintance Alastair Morrison, chairman of Defence Systems. Perhaps reluctant to get involved after past experience, Morrison put Ijape in touch with another colleague, Sandline's Tim Spicer. This contact, in turn, marked the beginnings of the Sandline Affair.

Discussion

Materialist Perspectives

Government and industry interest in the Rapid Deployment initiative made good sense. For a government dependent on mining and petro-

leum revenue, there was an obvious need to ensure uninterrupted production. Events on Bougainville had shaken investor confidence, and the government needed to demonstrate its commitment to project security. This reading is supported by Ijape's claim that the new unit would "give confidence to run business." The possibility that projects might also be the target for disruption during the 1992 national elections added to these concerns. For operating companies, effective security was necessary to allow them to proceed with their expensive and complex operations. The attacks against the Mount Kare camp were an alarming reminder of the vulnerabilities of Highlands projects.

Throughout both proposals, the industry maintained an unwavering focus on a policy outcome that best met its security requirements, thus its insistence on a permanent and project-specific police presence. From the outset, little interest was shown in ministerial schemes with no direct bearing on site security, notably the elaborate bases advocated by Ijape and Tanao. The industry accommodated ministerial aspirations by agreeing to consider the base only after its own security needs had been satisfied.

The actions of Ministers Ijape and Tanao can also be given a rational-choice interpretation. Ijape sought to use his position as police minister to maximize his chances of being returned at the elections, through establishing a major development project in his own constituency. In addition to any economic spin-offs for his constituents—as employment or subcontracting work—a large base would have been tangible proof of his ability to bring "development" to Goroka. Tanao's enthusiasm for the Rapid Deployment base and his "own" Police Tactical Force proposal appear to have been similarly motivated, although he was not facing election.

Industry preference for community-oriented policing and reservations about the mobile squads can also be viewed as rational choice. To be effective, policing had to overcome the residual distrust and suspicion of local communities, attitudes that sprang from the militaristic actions of police, often involving the mobile squads. The chamber was well aware of the counterproductive outcomes of retributive policing: "One of the major problems that has developed over recent years is the communities' distrust of the police. . . . Much of this is due to a lack of discipline and efficiency in parts of the police force to the extent that the community has become more frightened of the police than they are of criminals. There are many reports of indiscriminate beatings and burnings indicating a general lack of control in the force" (PNGCMP 1991).

Operating companies appreciated the need for community support, which they believed provided the key to project security, rather than coercive police actions. Rational choice also informed the industry's eventual switch from the Rapid Deployment Unit to the Police Tactical

Force. Having accepted that the former was politically and financially dead, developers had little choice but to support the only form of state policing on offer, and to try to influence it in a way conducive to their most pressing needs.

However, security concerns were by no means confined to the mining and petroleum industry. With serious problems of order in many parts of the country, there were many competing claims for scarce security resources. The Rapid Deployment project was criticized for privileging corporate interests over those of ordinary Papua New Guineans. Many of the critics invoked the dependency thesis, accusing the mining companies of using their economic muscle to obtain special security provision from a compliant and weak state.

A dependency view was also used to connect the special police units and the Australian-funded Development Project, as examples of the subordination of state policing to the needs of foreign investors. There is a great deal of sensitivity to this issue in Papua New Guinea, as the narrative shows. Economic nationalists have been especially critical of the extent of external control in the mining and petroleum sectors. The angry tirade of one politician against “foreign domination of the economy” is a case in point. Nationalist sentiments have considerable popular appeal and provide one of the few discernible ideological strands running through postindependence political rhetoric. Similar views have been invoked to contest ownership at particular projects, as in the Mount Kare case.

The mining and petroleum industry is popularly assumed to have unlimited resources. According to the chamber, “[t]here is a common misconception in PNG that mining and petroleum companies, like the Government, have an endless supply of money” (PNGCMP 1991, 2). This perception is reinforced in political debates about mining policy and, in particular, about issues of state equity. Economic power is assumed to vest the industry with privileged access to policymakers and the ability to promote sectional interests in national and provincial arenas. In a critique of the country’s first oil-pipeline project, Brunton claimed that “those corporations that control the pipeline exercise economic and political power over competitors and over the nation-state” (1992, 1). Another local critic has called for a reexamination of “the partnership between the state and transnational corporations and the dominance and monopoly of the bureaucracy and corporate management in decision making and implementation” (Parkop 1993, 10).

These companies can, it is argued, shape the political agenda in weak third world countries that depend on their presence. The host state is viewed as either a complicit agent of international capital or the passive object of its manipulation. “The classic characterization of the TNC extractive investment in the third world is the foreign-owned enclave,

exporting its output, relying on the local environment only for unskilled labor and the mineral resources themselves and able to count on the passive acquiescence of a compradore state apparatus" (Evans 1987, 322). Two strands of the dependency thesis recurred in the criticism of the Rapid Deployment Unit. The first related to the mining industry's privileged access to policymakers and the political influence this was assumed to provide. The second concerned the extent of financial support given by the industry to the new unit and the control this allegedly gave them over the police—the issue of "company policing." Although data support the dependency case in both respects, there is also evidence that challenges it.

Successive governments in Papua New Guinea have viewed the mining and petroleum industry as a powerful and influential interest group. The industry had a well-organized and well-funded lobbying capacity. The chamber was able to gain access to the commanding heights of the state, including the prime minister, senior ministers, and high-ranking officials in the bureaucracy and police. Few domestic groups could match either the industry's resources or its organization. Defence Systems, another transnational, had similar access, and appears to have taken its lobbying efforts to the extent of providing overseas trips for key decision-makers. Political lobbying may be easier for industry and business groups, but the scale and informality of Papua New Guinea's corridors of power make access to leaders easier than in many other countries. Even *raskol* leaders can organize meetings with senior national figures at gang retreats. Dependency theorists argue that the lobbying capacity of powerful corporate interests is a critical means to secure policy outcomes, such as the Rapid Deployment Unit. However, the troubled progress of both the Rapid Deployment and Tactical Force proposals suggests that lobbying capacity in itself is no guarantee of success.

Financial and other forms of industry support were vital for getting the Rapid Deployment Unit started and for sustaining its faltering existence during 1992 and 1993. Despite rhetorical support from the government, public monies were insufficient to implement even the first phase. Industry assistance, on the other hand, was substantial, and included accommodation at project sites, meals, per diem payments, and ground and air transport. By December 1993, the industry claimed to have spent approximately one million kina on the project. The chamber also took an active role, working with the police in planning and logistical matters. Accusations of "company policing" thus contained a significant element of truth insofar as they inferred substantial material assistance from the industry and close cooperation between industry and police.

The level of industry support can also be explained from a rational-choice perspective. The limited resources available to the state meant

that it was incapable of implementing a proposal that had been agreed to by its own cabinet. The only way for the industry to get the decision implemented, thereby meeting its immediate security needs, was to provide the initial assistance themselves. In an ideal world this assistance would have been unnecessary, as well as undesirable. The industry was well aware of the sensitivities raised by their close association with the Rapid Deployment Unit. Operating companies knew that communities near the projects were likely to hold them responsible for any police excesses.⁸⁵

Industry sensitivity to charges of “company policing,” including attempts to distance themselves from police excesses, refute cruder dependency claims that the mining industry deliberately set out to capture the weak PNG state. Rather, this susceptibility to accusations of privilege and political manipulation provided an important constraint on industry actions.

The narrative reveals more than a dependency story. If the industry was really so powerful, why was it unable to sustain the Rapid Deployment Unit? By the end of 1993, the chamber was advising its members that the unit was effectively finished and was resigned to returning to reliance on the mobile squads, the very situation it had been so critical about. Some crumbs of comfort may have been taken from Minister Iangalio’s promise that the tactical force initiative would have a role in project security. However, industry faith in government pledges was by this stage understandably weak. Considerable energy and expenditure had gone into supporting the Rapid Deployment Unit but to little avail. The industry was clearly frustrated at the government’s failure to deliver on funding and the self-serving antics of successive police ministers.

Claims that the economic might of transnational corporations (which here included some of the world’s largest mining and petroleum companies) automatically leads to successful political outcomes in third world states are simply not borne out in this case. The industry’s energetic, expensive, and ultimately unproductive struggle demonstrates that its economic power was not a sufficient factor to guarantee success. Ironically, the dependency thesis was invoked by the Wingti government in its decision to finally abandon the Rapid Deployment Unit. Whereas foreign mining investment dominates the national economy in Papua New Guinea and ensures that investment security remains high on the political agenda, it cannot be said to dominate the implementation of that agenda.

Contrary to the classic image of an acquiescent third world state, the Rapid Deployment story illustrates the critical role of domestic political leaders in shaping the content and direction of the proposal. Individual ministers proved adept at appropriating the proposal for their personal agendas. This is not a tale of passive or dependent third world leaders

dancing to the tune of powerful agents of international capital. While the chamber (and the police) struggled desperately to sustain phase one, Minister Ijape played on industry fears, repeatedly turning them to his own advantage—ignoring suggestions when it suited him, liberally reinterpreting the industry’s phasing-in schedule, publicly berating it for not providing enough financial support, warning of further Mount Kare incidents, and so on. These are not the actions of an acquiescent or dominated actor.

The dependency perspective provides certain macro-level insights into the role of the transnational mining corporations in Papua New Guinea. The dependent character of the economy is not in doubt and, in this respect, shares features with mining economies elsewhere. However, this perspective tells little about the micro-level interactions between international capital and the local state and the way in which these play a critical role in mediating external engagement in domestic arenas. Focusing on such interactions reveals the remarkable capacity of local actors to thwart even the best-laid plans of powerful transnationals.

Culturalist Perspectives

Large-scale mining and petroleum developments generate many new possibilities for conflict, as well as providing new contexts for older disputes. The contrasts and adjustments entailed when technologically sophisticated mining operations are established in isolated rural areas have been well described:

When a large, foreign-owned and largely foreign-staffed company equipped with the most modern technology and backed by finance drawn from all parts of the world, goes into some of the remotest parts of a country where the apparatus of the state is weakly developed and commences to dig up land which has been held in communal tenure for as long as anyone can remember, and on a scale unimaginable to the area’s pre-existing residents, it should not be surprising that problems of adjustment arise for all parties involved. (Jackson 1992, 79)

In areas on the margins of state control, the most fundamental source of conflict relates to the ownership of resources and the locus of political power to determine issues of ownership and control. This conflict is embodied in the opposing claims of state law and customary landowners regarding the ownership of subsurface minerals. The primary area of contention is over who makes the rules and determines property rights. In asserting the predominance of “national” law, the state is inevitably drawn into confrontation with local organizations over who has the right to make and enforce these rules (Migdal 1988, 31). The sudden interest and proprietary rights proclaimed by a distant and hitherto dis-

interested state adds to tensions between local landowner communities and government authorities, as well as within and between local groups.

Considerable practical difficulties are involved in assessing rival claims to land ownership in Melanesia, where the basis of tenure lies in complex and imprecise social relations with significant areal and temporal variations. Determining ownership for purposes of compensation, royalties, and other resource rents is one of the most challenging and sensitive tasks associated with large-scale resource exploitation. Disputes over ownership and distribution of rents revolve around competing claims by groups of "traditional landowners." The precarious character of local political organization will be severely tested by the many impacts of mining. In Filer's view, mining accelerates a process of social disintegration already under way in rural communities. Disintegrative tendencies are reinforced by the distortion of customary land rights, arguments over the distribution of cash benefits, economic stratification among the landowning community, and the problem of sustaining or adapting rules for the inheritance of property and for an orderly succession to leadership in the community (Filer 1990, 116).

Large and potentially lucrative projects are also likely to attract opportunists, some of whom will be foreigners, as at Mount Kare, attempting to buy into, or instigate, disputes relating to ownership and control. Their claims may be legitimated in cultural or dependency terms, or a combination of both. Ownership of land is a feature of popular representations of Melanesian identity, with every Papua New Guinean being, nominally at any rate, a landowner. Invocation of the cultural mantle of "traditional ownership" strikes a popular and emotive chord, particularly where the other party is a foreign mining company or the PNG government cast in its dependency role as complicit agent of international capital. As Filer remarked in the Bougainville context, "Within the state of Papua New Guinea . . . 'the landowner' is virtually synonymous with the citizen, in whose name nearly all political activities are conducted. The Panguna militants initially gained widespread sympathy throughout the country because they seemed to be the champions of this national landowner in their battle with the fire-breathing foreign dragon" (1992, 124).

Violence can be more easily legitimated as a strategy of resistance when the interests at stake are presented as cultural ones shared by all Melanesians. In this sense the Mount Kare attack was welcomed by a number of local and national leaders, including the politician who claimed that it "taught the government a lesson" and "stopped current mine ownership arrangements." The long-term closure of the Panguna and Mount Kare mines attests to the effectiveness of violence in this situation. By contrast, the mining industry believed that local leaders and foreign business interests were "stirring things up" at Mount Kare to

turn the dispute to their own advantage. The success of competing claims in these circumstances appears to depend on the ability of protagonists to combine cultural power with either the political power of the state or the economic power of the mining transnationals. Political power, cultural power, or economic power on their own are generally insufficient for “winning” such conflicts.

The important role of patronage in Papua New Guinea’s modern political culture and its debilitating effects on policy implementation are clearly illustrated in the narrative. The story here is one of political actors attempting to appropriate national policies as vehicles for their own electoral and personal agendas. The origins of the Rapid Deployment Unit suggest a consensus on the need to improve project security, but subsequent events reveal a fundamental divergence in the objectives of the industry and the various police ministers. For the latter, the proposal was viewed instrumentally, as a means to enhance their individual powers of patronage, rather than as an end in itself. For incumbent politicians, reelection depends in large part on their ability to capitalize on public office and gain access to resources in order to consolidate their local support bases through strategic acts of patronage.

These electoral strategies connect with older styles of leadership, whereby individual prominence was constituted by the accumulation and redistribution of items of wealth. Government ministers are well placed to engage in related tactics, given their responsibility for formulating policy and control over resources. Existing policies can be adapted or new ones formulated to advance a leader’s interests. Establishing a high-profile development project, ideally in the politician’s own constituency, is a favored tactic. By claiming proprietary rights over the project, the patron generates electoral credit among local beneficiaries. Speaking of the Enga context, Gordon and Meggitt stated that the main concern of politicians “is not so much *what* development projects should be, but *where* they should be located” (1985, 158–159).

It is hardly surprising that political leaders show little interest in policies that cannot be turned to their individual advantage, and that so much ministerial time and energy is devoted to adapting public policies to private ends. Little could be gained from concentrating on the more immediate security concerns of the industry. Voters are also likely to evaluate sitting members in terms of their success in bringing “development.” Ijape’s preoccupation with locating the rapid deployment base in his own constituency before the June 1992 elections provides the clearest illustration of these dynamics. The construction and maintenance of the base would have brought considerable benefits to the local economy and would also have provided a tangible symbol of his success in bringing “development,” adding significantly to his electoral standing.

Combining rational-choice and culturalist analyses allows one to situate ministerial behavior within the broader political culture. The actions of Ijape and Tanao conform to leadership strategies spanning a range of contemporary occupations. The materialist perspectives show that transnationals do not dominate the state in an absolute sense, whereas the culturalist perspectives show how local leaders need the material resources of these companies in order to pursue their parochial electoral strategies. The political power of the minister is sustained by patronage, which enhances his cultural power at local levels, and, in this story, was financed by tapping into the economic power of the transnationals.

Institutionalist Perspectives

An institutionalist viewpoint illuminates the weak institutional capacity of the state and how this presented both challenges and opportunities to the various actors in the narrative. From this perspective, the association between the mining industry and the Rapid Deployment Unit is primarily an illustration of how the former accommodated to the weakness of the latter. The relative ease with which ministers could turn this proposal to their advantage can also be viewed as a consequence of (as well as a contributor to) the weakness of state policy processes. The narrative also provides ample evidence of the particular weaknesses of the constabulary and how they are reinforced.

The Rapid Deployment Unit originated as a response to inadequate policing around the Highlands-based mineral and petroleum projects. These inadequacies are, in turn, symptomatic of the overall weakness of state control. The pace of social change in project areas had been gradual prior to the arrival of the mining companies, with minimal state involvement. “Until the mining boom arrived, the geography of social change of Papua New Guinea was characterized by large expanses of the country undergoing relatively gradual changes to all aspects of living conditions as commercialization gradually permeated the rural areas; in general the changes were just manageable, even if troublesome, for local communities and did not require overt outside intervention” (Jackson 1992, 84).

The relative absence of state in these areas has had important consequences for operating companies. The lack of basic infrastructure requires the resource developer to undertake a massive construction program, which may include the building or upgrading of roads,⁸⁶ airfields, and power supplies. Even in the case of fly-in–fly-out operations, large projects require accommodation, offices, and other facilities that are unlikely to be matched in scale or quality elsewhere in the area. In addition to infrastructure of direct relevance, the larger developers may be drawn into the provision of schools, hospitals, and other social services, partly

because the government is unable to deliver these essential services. Larger developers may also encourage local communities to engage in small-scale commercial projects. This broader infrastructural role is formally recognized by the state and facilitated through the tax-credit scheme.⁸⁷ Money spent by the industry on infrastructural services can be reclaimed by way of tax concessions. While the state is likely to increase its presence in response to a large project, lack of funds and problems of institutional capacity continue to hamper its ability to implement policies and manage change. Against this background a company executive wrote to the police commissioner in October 1992 claiming that “the prime and most frequent contact with villagers is ‘company’ rather than government.”⁸⁸ The shared interest of state and developer in winning the support of local communities requires, in practice, that the better-resourced developer take the lead in providing services that would otherwise fall to the state.

Although the role of “good corporate citizen” is essential for survival and security in this environment, it is not without risks. The more an operating company behaves as a *de facto* agency of development, the more likely local groups will see it as a surrogate state. Grievances that in other circumstances would be directed at the state are addressed to the developer. Failure to distribute resources in accordance with ever-rising local expectations is likely to lead to frustration, resentment, and escalating strategies of confrontation—ranging from militant compensation claims to more direct acts of appropriation. Specific demands are likely to be backed by threats to disrupt operations or inflict violence against company personnel and property. Here the developer is likely to face the most serious security challenges, which in turn link the mining industry to criminal and judicial spheres.

The bigger projects are likely to have their own, often elaborate, private security arrangements. For example, the Porgera Joint Venture had 210 security staff in 1992, including a mobile reaction force and a dog squad.⁸⁹ However, the operations of company security officers are restricted by law to the protection of company property and personnel within the mining lease. Outside the company compound, mining operations remain extremely vulnerable to security threats, particularly in the case of scattered installations (such as petroleum and gas fields), smaller projects, and temporary exploration camps. The scarcity of general-duties police in the rural Highlands has meant that resource companies have often had no choice but to rely on police mobile squads in the event of serious crime or disorder. These squads have acquired a reputation for ill-discipline and use of excessive force.⁹⁰ In turn, the mining industry has been particularly sensitive to these heavy-handed tactics and has regularly had to deal with the fallout from mobile squad intervention. In addition to their efforts to overcome the short-



Photo 18 Riot squad officers and villagers in the Highlands, 1983. *Word Publishing*

age of state police in such areas, they have also had to deal with the backlash from militaristic policing.

The industry appears to have succeeded in increasing police presence, at least in the short-term, but it was less successful in transforming policing style. Minister Ijape's proposal envisaged a militaristic orientation. The Rapid Deployment Unit was to be part of the Special Services Division, with an emphasis on mobility and firepower. Industry objections to this style of policing were simply ignored. The kind of militaristic policing associated with both schemes retains a strong official appeal in Papua New Guinea, despite its obvious expense and often counterproductive impact, and is part of a wider tendency to favor demonstrations of "strongmanship" (Filer 1992, 135) and coercive solutions to law-and-order problems. These responses have sometimes been legitimated in cultural terms, particularly in the Highlands, where they have been depicted as socially appropriate. Security contractors such as Defence Systems appeal directly to this militaristic orientation. In its proposal for the tactical force, the company asserted, "The benefit of engaging DSL consultants in the formation and training of PTF type units is that the client is buying the United Kingdom Police/Army model—which is a proven, tried and regularly tested set of concepts and responses to violent crime and terrorism. DSL instructors bring with them opera-



Photo 19 A police riot squad on an exercise to stop “tribal fighting” in the Highlands. *Word Publishing*

tional experience that has been gained in counter-terrorist operations since 1972 in the UK and in all subsequent major incidents.”⁹¹ The decision of the Chan government to use South African mercenaries to defeat the Bougainville rebels in 1997 provides the most recent and dramatic illustration of this inclination.

In institutional terms, these strategies may be viewed as an attempt to compensate for the weakness of the state by drawing on the strength of its ostensibly strongest part, namely the armed forces, as was recognized by some senior police officials and their Australian advisers. An internal police memorandum commented that “no elite crack or SAS type Force can disguise the need for an effective substitute for solid basic round-the-clock protective policing. It is when routine and basic policing break down or are allowed to become weakened especially through lack of resources, that the tendency grows to fill the void or gap with tactical mobile type ‘crush’ responses.”⁹² Militaristic responses may also be viewed as a consequence of the absence of positive state inducements—such as the provision of services—capable of mobilizing local populations. The inability of the state to establish an efficient and equitable system of material incentives to influence behavior has led to an increasing



Photo 20 Police conduct a liquor raid. *Word Publishing*

reliance on sanctions, rather than rewards, in the exercise of state power. In other words, in the absence of “state carrots,” the state has recourse only to “large sticks.”

Industry support for the Rapid Deployment Unit may be seen as a way of adjusting to the shortcomings of the state, just as the actions of the politicians can be attributed to the weakness of the state. In practice, ministers exercise significant autonomy and have little difficulty evading



Photo 21 Residents of Amaiufu village, upper Asaro (Eastern Highlands Province) indicate property destroyed in a police raid, 1991. *Word Publishing*

administrative controls in policy formulation and implementation. The turnkey mechanism adopted by Minister Ijape provides extensive scope for abuse, as documented in several investigations by the Ombudsman Commission.⁹³ One former chief ombudsman has claimed that “procedures for awarding government contracts are continually and flagrantly ignored” (Maino 1994, 9).

Evading weak controls is even easier in the frenetic context of national elections, as when the cabinet approved Ijape’s turnkey package. Serious allegations of procedural irregularities were raised by senior police managers and the Department of Finance and Planning during the lifetime of both proposals⁹⁴—and were largely ignored. The manner in which political leaders capture policy initiatives and divert public and private resources is itself a major contributor to the weakness of the state.⁹⁵ Combining culturalist and institutional perspectives illuminates the reinforcing nexus between political patronage and the subversion of policy processes. State weakness facilitates the diversionary strategies of individual politicians, and these in turn further undermine state capacity.

The narrative provides ample evidence of the institutional deficiencies of the constabulary. Apart from an acute shortage of resources, there are many illustrations of operational failings, which include the failure to perform stated duties, as well as militaristic policing. A notable

example was the slowness of the police response to the Mount Kare attack, the failure to arrest known suspects, and the collapse of the prosecution. Other examples include the unauthorized departure of two mobile squads from the Hides project in April 1992, as well as the regular allegations of ill-discipline and brutality by the Rapid Deployment Unit. Despite industry attempts to minimize the damage caused by such actions, opponents of particular projects were able to capitalize on the accusations.

The militaristic “strength” of the constabulary in the operational arena does not translate into institutional strength in the political arena. The autocratic style of successive police ministers in dealings with senior police managers provides another example, as well as another source, of the institutional weakness of the force. Both proposals were thrust on the police without prior consultation or consideration of how they would affect existing training programs. Frequent and often inconsistent ministerial directives generated resentment and frustration among senior officers, whose objections were routinely ignored. Overt resistance within the institution was effectively suppressed as a result of ministerial control over senior appointments. The constabulary, as with most other government departments, has to live with the constant threat of losing its own leaders as victims of more powerful political leaders. These strategies sustain the predominance of ministerial actors within state institutions by removing their best-informed critics and intimidating others into acquiescence. In the process they contribute to policy paralysis and debilitating levels of insecurity. Such maneuvers also disturb the coupling between police and particular representatives of capital, as is evident in the jettisoning of the collaboration between the Rapid Deployment Unit and the mining industry in favor of that between Defence Systems and the Police Tactical Force.

The story of these special units refutes a public administration view of ministers acting as advocates for the interests of their department. On the contrary, the police portfolio was treated as a personal fiefdom to advance ministerial ambitions. The institutional interests of the constabulary received ministerial attention only insofar as they coincided with, or could be used to further, the minister’s own. Where their interests conflicted, those of the minister prevailed. The privileging of highly personalized ministerial schemes almost invariably damaged those of the force. Examples include the depletion of general-duties police in order to staff the Rapid Deployment Unit, the diversion of funds to support new ministerial schemes, and a wasteful duplication of police services. Similar points were raised in the later Sandline Affair, where education, health, police, and defense force appropriations were raided by ministers intent on financing the mercenary plan (Dinnen 1997, 123).

Concerns about the shortage of government funds in these circumstances can obscure the more fundamental problem of how these funds are distributed. As one Highlands developer remarked, “Our observation in the Enga Province is that resources are available at a national level. It is the deployment and distribution of these resources which poses the main problem” (PNGCMP 1991, 3). The narrative also illustrates how ministerial initiatives were less about reforming the constabulary, and more about creating new schemes and institutions. In this way ministerial actors could claim “ownership” of new projects and extract maximum advantage from the opportunities for patronage they created. The duplication and wastage entailed in such strategies contributes to further state incapacity and can also create confusion at local levels among the consumers of state services. Bonnell pointed out that when the Rapid Deployment Unit was in operation, local Porgera communities had three groups of police to contend with—the regular police detachment, the mobile squad, and the Rapid Deployment Unit. The number would have been four if the Porgera Joint Venture’s security division were included. Local perceptions of each group differed significantly (Bonnell 1994, 83). Confusion over the role of state policing is hardly surprising in these circumstances.

The weak policy action of the constabulary and its inability to define and protect its own corporate interests recurs throughout this story. It is most apparent in the relationship between the police and the industry during the rapid deployment scheme, as well as in its treatment by successive ministers. The weakness of the police has made them especially susceptible to colonization by external actors in furtherance of a variety of capacity-building programs, which include both the substantial Australian-funded Police Development Project and the proposed involvement of Defence Systems. In this situation, the police become a “football” to be kicked around by a number of players, as was most obvious in the case of the tactical force proposal, where the police were caught in the middle between the development project and Defence Systems. In the process, they became little more than bystanders to struggles over their institutional control. This case is an institutionally specific illustration of the reinforcing dynamic between political patronage and weak state referred to earlier. Political patronage accentuates institutional incapacity, which invites external intervention, with further opportunities for patronage, and so on.

The relationship between senior police managers and their ministers also confirms the need to disaggregate the state into its various elements. Contrary to the view of the state as a unitary actor, the narrative illustrates the capacity of some elements to dominate others in defiance of formal lines of authority. Much of the earlier political economy literature dealing with the developing world—including dependency theory

—depicted the third world state in largely undifferentiated terms, as a unitary actor pulling in one direction. However, different “bits of state” (Filer 1992) often pull in opposite directions, thereby creating a large policy vacuum into which institutions like the police can easily fall.

Conclusion

Materialist analysis draws attention to the strategic significance of mining to Papua New Guinea’s national economy. Without mining, the state would be bankrupt. This dependence was particularly marked at the time of this study, in light of the forced closure of the Panguna mine on Bougainville. Security was a major concern of the mining industry, and their support of the Rapid Deployment Unit was a response to this concern and one that accommodated the weakness of the state. Dependency charges leveled against the industry were well placed, insofar as they raised issues of company policing and privileged security provision for the industry.

At the same time, the failure to sustain the rapid deployment initiative, despite substantial industry support, indicates that there are limits to industry dominance. The industry might have succeeded in giving project security a dominant place on the political agenda, but it did not dominate policy outcomes. Successive political actors sought to appropriate security initiatives to their own ends. The weakness of state institutions created opportunities for the occupants of high office. However, transnational corporations have to negotiate with the state and in the process they encounter the fragmented, personalized, and changing interests that can subvert their most carefully planned strategies. The fragmentation of the state is perhaps a mirror image of the fragmentation of PNG society and the attendant problems of generating a national consciousness at other than rhetorical levels.

A powerful reinforcing nexus has developed between political patronage and the debilitation of policy processes. Even the militaristic strength of the constabulary cannot be translated into institutional strength. Political big-men ultimately dominate the police’s own leaders, a dominance that gives rise to high levels of insecurity and policy paralysis within the police. In turn, police vulnerability to external intervention is increased in the name of capacity building. At the same time, and contrary to the claims of the dependency thesis, this situation also serves to subvert any prolonged coupling between the police and particular representatives of capital.

Chapter 6

Fighting and Votes: Violence, Security, and the 1992 National Elections

According to official assessments, the 1992 national election was largely trouble free. Deputy Police Commissioner Bob Nenta, commander of the security operation, said that it had been “most successful”¹ with few incidents of serious violence.² Commissioner Geno agreed that it had been “the most peaceful we ever had in Papua New Guinea.” Echoing the sentiments of his police colleagues, the electoral commissioner stated that “the 1992 National Election has indeed brought the desired results; that of one of the most peaceful and orderly elections in our history” (PNGEC 1993). The election was more peaceful than anticipated, but violence did play a role in 1992 as in other recent elections.

Positive evaluations were no doubt tinged with relief that the level of disorder was less than had been feared. Concern was certainly high in the months preceding polling in June 1992 and provided the basis for an elaborate nationwide security operation. Acts of interpersonal violence (ranging from verbal threats to fatalities) and extensive damage to property were reported at various times and places before, during, and after polling. As expected, most reported incidents occurred in the Highland provinces and most took place after polling. Reports of election-related conflict continued for many months after the formal electoral process ended.

This chapter examines what many people see as a growing problem of order in Papua New Guinea, the phenomenon of election-related violence. The 1992 national election provides the setting and is representative of recent trends in electoral politics. The data on violence come from newspaper reports, documents from government agencies, and interviews conducted in the National Capital District, Southern Highlands, and Enga.³ Although the accuracy of media reports may be questioned, these sources influence public opinion and shape official policy. The data presented here are neither comprehensive nor incontrovertible but do provide useful descriptive information.

Election-related violence provides insights into the growing primacy of politics in Papua New Guinea. It also sheds light on why elected leaders behave as they do, despite the often inequitable outcome of their decisions and their debilitating impact on the administrative capacity and legitimacy of the postcolonial state.

Electoral Competition and the 1992 Results

Some scene setting is necessary. A discussion of the results of the elections will identify some of the main characteristics of elections in Papua New Guinea. Until 1977, when the first-past-the-post system was adopted, PNG elections worked on an optional preferential system.⁴

Currently, 109 members sit in the national parliament: 89 represent open constituencies, and 20 represent each of the nineteen provinces and the National Capital District. The growing intensity of competition for office is reflected in the high number of candidates contesting each seat, with increasing numbers at every successive election. In Papua New Guinea's first-past-the-post system, the greater the number of candidates, the easier it becomes to win a seat with a small number of votes. The chances of unseating incumbents are also high, with over 50 percent of parliamentarians losing their seats at each election since independence.

A number of changes were made to the electoral laws in 1991 in anticipation of the 1992 elections. Among other things, these were aimed at minimizing conflict. The nomination fee was increased from K100 to K1,000. According to the electoral commissioner, "This change was necessary so that intending candidates will think seriously about contesting and also that they will not be used to split the vote" (PNGEC 1993, para 2.2a). Another change stipulated that the first meeting of parliament was to be called no later than seven days after the day fixed for the return of writs, a change designed to reduce the frenzied period of postelection bargaining that precedes the formation of new governments. Sectional voting was also abolished. Before 1991, those whose name did not appear on the roll were permitted to vote, provided they satisfied legal age and residential requirements.⁵ This practice was abandoned owing to widespread abuse. In the view of the electoral commissioner, "Sectional voting has been grossly abused in the past by both candidates and their supporters. People used either the name of a deceased person; or voted under their real name appearing on the electoral roll and returned assuming a different name which was not on the roll" (PNGEC 1993, para 2.2a/f).

These reforms appear to have made little difference to the administration of the election or the behavior of candidates and voters. The 1992 election conformed to a familiar pattern, with a large number of candidates, small winning margins, a high proportion of independents,

Table 3. Number of Candidates in National Elections, 1977–1992

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Average per electorate</i>
1977	879	8.1
1982	1,125	10.3
1987	1,513	13.9
1992	1,655	15.2

Source: Figures taken from Saffu (1996, 8) and calculated from data supplied by the PNG Electoral Commission.

the ephemeral quality of party allegiances, the dominance of local issues, and the frequency of disputed returns.

Political parties have little impact on voter behavior in Papua New Guinea. Party organization remains weak, with parties being closely identified with the personalities and fortunes of individual leaders rather than with any coherent ideology or set of policies. Votes are cast according to evaluation of a candidate's personal attributes, including their kinship and ethnic affiliations, and their prospect of being able to deliver "development" to local areas. National and regional issues are rarely significant. Members aligned to particular parties exhibit little loyalty, switching allegiances regularly to advance their personal interests. Despite the increased nomination fee, the 1992 election was contested by 1,654 candidates—139 more than in 1987, and 529 more than in 1982 (table 3).⁶

In the absence of a developed party system, it is usually unclear who will form a government, even after the votes are in. Since 1972, every government has been a coalition. By standing as independents, successful candidates increase their bargaining power in the immediate post-election period, when factional leaders scramble to put together a winning coalition. The reduction in this period has given rise to imaginative new strategies for securing the numbers. In 1992, Opposition Leader Paias Wingti adopted the controversial, but ultimately successful, tactic of quarantining his supporters on a remote island in Milne Bay. After keeping them secluded, he delivered them as a bloc to parliament for the final vote on who should form the new government.

Although the abolition of sectional voting may have reduced the extent of electoral abuses, continuing deficiencies with electoral rolls facilitated electoral fraud. As well, allegations of more direct forms of intimidation against voters and polling officials were widespread. Evidence suggests that sectional voting did occur in some parts of the country. For instance, before being corrected by the Electoral Commis-

Table 4. Parties in the 1992 Elections

	<i>Number of Candidates</i>	<i>Number of Seats</i>
Independents	1,226	39
Pangu	94	20
Peoples Democratic Movement	52	15
Melanesian Alliance	45	7
Peoples Progress Party	47	8
Peoples Action Party	43	12
League for National Advancement	40	4
National	13	2
Country	24	0
United	1	0
Peoples Solidarity Party*	28	0
Liberals*	37	1
Black Action Party*	9	9
Labour*	1	0

Source: Saffu 1996, 30.

*Party did not exist during 1987 elections.

sion, the Sandaun (West Sepik) provincial returning officer instructed his polling officials to allow voters whose names were not on the common roll to vote on supplementary rolls.

Consistent with past experience, a large number of candidates won their seats with small proportions of the overall vote. Only 7 of the 109-member parliament won over 50 percent of the vote in their electorates. Another 47 won with less than 20 percent, and 8 won with less than 10 percent. Independent candidates outnumbered party-sponsored candidates by three to one, winning almost two thirds of the votes cast and reflecting the indifference of voters to parties (Saffu 1996, 29). One-third of successful candidates were elected as independents. Of the 13 parties that fielded candidates in the 1992 elections, 4 had not existed during the 1987 elections (table 4). In addition, 6 parties that stood in 1987 did not field any candidates in 1992.

A record number of results were officially contested. By December 1992, 61 election petitions disputing returns had been filed with the National Court. Of these, 33 were either withdrawn or dismissed, leaving an outstanding total of 28. The 61 petitions covered 52 of the 109 electorates, 48 percent of all electorates, compared to the 47 petitions filed in 1987.⁷

Another feature of postindependence politics was confirmed in the proportion of sitting members who lost their seats—57 percent of all members, including a number of senior ministers and opposition mem-



Photo 22 Voting at an election booth. *Word Publishing*



Photo 23 Counting votes for the National Capital District Regional and Moresby North-East seats at the Gordons police barracks gymnasium, Port Moresby, 1992. *Word Publishing*



Photo 24 The central tally room at the Sir Hubert Murray Stadium, Port Moresby. National Elections 1987. *Word Publishing*

bers.⁸ The composition of the new governing coalition remained uncertain right up to the day parliament resumed. Many observers believed that Namaliu would retain power, but defections to the secluded Wingti camp weakened his power base. On 17 July Paias Wingti was elected by one vote—55 to 54. The opportunistic character of coalition politics

was demonstrated when the ranks of government numbers swelled to more than 60 members over the following weeks (Wesley-Smith 1993, 413).⁹ The campaign rhetoric of the Wingti-led opposition had made much of the need to weed out corruption, but three former members who had earlier resigned to escape conviction for corruption were re-elected. Rhetoric aside, the electoral strategies of successful candidates entailed “mobilizing parochial interests and kinship ties rather than party loyalties or policy concerns” (Standish 1993, 212).

Security Arrangements

In May 1992, the police commissioner publicly announced that the police and defense forces would mount a major security operation for the duration of the election. It would be the largest joint exercise since independence, surpassing that provided for the 1991 South Pacific Games and earlier security operations on Bougainville. Operation Natel 92, as it was code-named, was to be concentrated in the Highlands provinces, which were viewed as the most likely trouble spots.

Planning for the security operation began many months before polling (13–27 June). To minimize the risk of disruption, it was decided to hold one-day polling in all Highlands provinces (except Eastern Highlands), the Lae metropolitan area, and the National Capital District. Implementation required careful planning and close coordination between electoral officials and security personnel. It also demanded a high level of mobility on the part of the personnel involved, an expensive and complex logistical task in the country’s difficult terrain. Planning meetings between the police and electoral officials began in Port Moresby in 1991. Defense force officers then visited Western Highlands, Enga, and Southern Highlands and were briefed by provincial officials on preparations and potential problem areas. Regional police commanders, defense personnel, and electoral officials met regularly to discuss preparations. A police intelligence unit was established to gather and collate information on individuals, including candidates, expected to cause trouble. Plans for the operation were finalized in Mount Hagen in May 1992, shortly before the commissioner’s announcement.

A major source of concern for security planners was the prevalence of illegal firearms. Rumors abounded about their likely use in the elections. Foreign Affairs Minister Sir Michael Somare claimed that high-powered guns were going to be used to intimidate voters in the Highlands.¹⁰ Rumor played a significant role in this as in other elections, fueled by the poor quality of official communications and the lack of reliable information. In Simbu, it was widely believed that a particular sitting member intended to use his cache of powerful weapons against those who did not vote for him.¹¹ Another rumor circulating in



Photo 25 Police search a truck in the Highlands for weapons or smuggled alcohol. *Word Publishing*

the Western Highlands alleged that certain politicians were supplying guns in return for votes (A Strathern 1993a, 47). Planners were also concerned about the aggravating effects of alcohol abuse on election disputes (see Iamo and Ketan 1992).

Security actions included preemptive police operations to confiscate illegal weapons, the closure of black-market liquor outlets, and the imposition of liquor bans. In the National Capital District, police raided settlements, seizing weapons and suspected stolen property. Some Highlands police commanders, as in Enga, authorized raids against “suspect” villages. Others resorted to roadblocks. In the Southern Highlands, police confiscated ten factory-made firearms and a large quantity of homemade guns and ammunition.¹² Police in the Western Highlands took three pistols from two intending candidates, and in Enga police raids netted seven factory-made guns, many homemade firearms, and a large quantity of ammunition. Police in Kundiawa, the Simbu provincial capital, complained that they had only two shotguns (Standish 1994, 70). The Simbu premier, himself an intending candidate, presented them with twenty-four pump-action shotguns and four .22-caliber pistols, worth a total of K7,000, to assist during the election.

Electoral Commissioner Reuben Kaiulo expressed his concerns to provincial authorities.

A liquor ban is essential in order to minimise any possible violence or other disturbances *during the National Election period*. The increase in the number of home-made and factory-made firearms, some of which are high powered automatics, as well as the fact that the Constabulary's police strength will be taxed to the limit, should be seriously considered. Police have to maintain their normal day-to-day vigilance in the townships during the National Election, in addition to which they have to assign whatever men they can spare to my polling Teams.¹³

While some Highlands provinces, including Enga and Simbu, already had liquor bans, others introduced bans or restrictions for the duration of the election. Restrictions were also imposed in other regions, including Morobe, Central, Gulf, and the National Capital District. Fears were raised that the election would serve to revive tribal conflicts in parts of the Highlands. Simbu was declared a fighting zone "in anticipation of any election-related violence" (Simbu provincial secretary, *PC*, 10 June 1992).

Bans were placed on political rallies and other forms of campaigning within the boundaries of Kundiawa town (Standish, personal communication). Similar measures were introduced elsewhere in the Highlands, with or without legal authority. The Southern Highlands provincial police commander spoke of a "self-imposed" curfew in Mendi during polling. Police told people to stay off the streets between 6 PM and 6 AM (Baki 1995). An unofficial curfew was also imposed in Kundiawa (Standish, personal communication). As well as restrictions on movement, police and defense force personnel staged public displays of strength. More than thirteen hundred policemen paraded at the Pope John Paul Oval in Mount Hagen on Saturday, 13 June, joined by fifty soldiers from Kimi-ninga police barracks.

Displays of militaristic strength took place against a background of scarce police resources. Concerns had been raised by many officials, including the Highlands divisional commander, about the number of police available for the elections, in addition to the specific concerns voiced about security at the Highlands-based resource projects.

Operation Natel 92 was to involve over 2,500 personnel from the police and the defense force. Phase one applied to the polling period from 13 to 27 June, and phase two covered the counting between 27 June and 4 July. Of the 2,000-strong police contingent, 1,500 were to be deployed in the Highlands. Later reports indicated that the number of police actually deployed was between 1,300 and 1,400. Members of the new Rapid Deployment Unit were already stationed at resource projects at Yagifu, South East Gobe, Porgera, Mount Kare, and the Hides gas



Photo 26 Policeman standing guard outside the Electoral Commission Headquarters in Port Moresby during the 1997 national elections. *Word Publishing*

fields. Commissioner Geno estimated the total cost of police involvement as K2 million. The objective of the operation was to ensure “a smooth and trouble free election.” Specific duties included the “(a) guarding of polling stations; (b) security of ballot boxes; (c) security of polling officials; (d) controlling of traffic; (e) assisting polling teams; (f)



Photo 27 Members of the defense force provide security during polling in the Eastern Highlands, 1992. *Word Publishing*

prevention and detection of election offences; and (g) general maintenance of law and order” (Nenta 1992).

The participation of the defense force was authorized under section 204 of the constitution and section 23 of the Defence Act. The first provision allows the call-out of the defense force “in aid to the civil power,” and the second enables the force to assist in “service to the public” in the following circumstances: “If the Minister thinks that it is in the public interest to do so, he may authorize any part of the Defence Force to perform any public service within or outside the country that is capable of being performed by the Defence Force on such conditions (including conditions as to payment) as he determines.” Front-line security was to be provided by the police, while the defense force would “(a) assist police in enforcing curfews; (b) provide backup for police in maintaining control points such as road blocks; (c) show a presence by conducting highway patrols and moving around different districts; (d) provide radio communication for polling teams in remote areas.”

According to the defense force commander, only forty soldiers would be deployed in each of the four Highlands provinces. A further two hundred would be on standby at Taurama barracks in Port Moresby. Although straightforward in theory, this division of labor between the

forces worked less smoothly in practice. Provincial authorities in Simbu claimed that the soldiers would be kept in their barracks as a deterrent backup force. However, well before polling troops were reported moving around with police in joint patrols, all wearing green camouflage face-paint, as well as appearing at large rallies in formal units rather than joint patrols (Standish, personal communication). In his final report on the security operation, Deputy Commissioner Nenta complained that the military had “operated in isolation” and recommended against future joint operations (1992, 12).

Pre-polling Violence

Few incidents were reported before polling began. The simultaneous nomination of three different candidates at election rallies in Mendi, Southern Highlands Province, led to skirmishing as rival supporters clashed. Differing accounts of this “incident” illustrate the speculative quality of much of the newspaper coverage. Whereas the *Post-Courier* reported a “riot” involving fifteen thousand supporters, the *Times of Papua New Guinea* estimated the crowd at nine thousand. The *Post-Courier* reported that nine people were hospitalized for injuries, while the *Times* claimed one casualty and said that damage to property was limited to a shop owned by one of the candidates. Whatever its dimensions, this event was triggered by abusive verbal exchanges between the candidates, a not uncommon feature of political rallies in the Highlands. At the time, only twelve police were on duty in the adjoining Mendi police station. Highlands Commander Bunu Katusele also reported fighting in Kundiawa, Simbu Province. Another observer noted campaign-related violence in Kundiawa in late May and the stoning of a candidate’s vehicle in a nearby village (Standish, personal communication).

Ketan referred to several incidents of pre-polling violence in the Dei open electorate in the Western Highlands Province (1996, 259). In the most serious of these, an intending candidate was kidnapped by traditional tribal enemies who were supporting a rival candidate. The unfortunate candidate found them in his territory and came off worse in the ensuing confrontation. His release was eventually negotiated by another candidate. In another incident, a fight broke out between different supporters after one group set up a roadblock to prevent rival groups from “poaching” votes in their territory. In turn, this clash led to retaliation.

A month before polling, supporters of the former member for Kavieng open in New Ireland, Gerard Sigulogo, threatened disruption if their candidate was not allowed to contest the June elections. Sigulogo had been found guilty of misconduct in office by a Leadership Tribunal in 1990, dismissed from his parliamentary seat, and barred from holding office for three years expiring in March 1993. Despite this adjudication, he was nominated for the 1992 elections in April. The chief jus-

tice issued a statement making clear that a person barred from public office was ineligible to seek public office during the period of the ban. Sigulogo's name was then removed from the list of candidates by the Electoral Commission, a decision that aroused the wrath of his supporters. A beleaguered New Ireland official wrote to the electoral commissioner, "Our [electoral] officials are being targeted as well as being implicated as having conspired with the sitting Member and other intending candidates resulting in Mr. Sigulogo's termination from contesting. Both the provincial returning officer and the returning officer for Kavieng Open are in fear for their safety as they have been told in no uncertain terms that if Sigulogo is not allowed to contest the supporters will attack the officials" (*PC*, 5 May 1992).

A few days before polling, clashes were reported between rival supporters in another part of New Ireland. Nineteen people were arrested in a fight between supporters of the People's Progress Party and the Pangu Pati. A later clash in another village left several people injured, with police reinforcements being brought in from Kavieng. Another fight was reported on the Duke of York Islands in East New Britain.

Polling Violence

The first media report of violence during polling occurred in the Western Highlands, when a candidate for the Tambul-Nebilyer seat and some of his scrutineers allegedly smashed open four ballot boxes, scattering the enclosed ballot papers. The candidate and two others were later charged with unlawfully opening and destroying ballot boxes. Three candidates in Simbu were charged with threatening behavior and assault, and a sitting member was investigated for links with illegal firearms. Two police officers operating a roadblock in Kundiawa were allegedly assaulted by a driver and his passengers. Police in Enga claimed that an armed gang held up security guards at Kandep and made off with more than eight thousand unmarked ballot papers. According to the Highlands regional commander, the gang had been hired by candidates. Claims that some candidates were employing criminals were made by several officials, including the Southern Highlands provincial police commander.¹⁴ In East New Britain, a polling team had to abandon a polling booth in the Uvol subdistrict of Melkoi after "criminals" tried to prevent villagers from voting.

Eighteen ballot boxes containing votes from the Lumusa area in Western Highlands were burnt by villagers. Those responsible were protesting over failure to comply with their demands for an electoral boundary change. In Enga, ballot boxes had just arrived at Wapenamanda when a truck of disgruntled supporters of one candidate turned up and smashed open three of them, emptying their contents in front of the government station. The member for Kompiam-Ambum, also in Enga,

was arrested for allegedly breaking open four ballot boxes from his own electorate. A policeman accompanying polling officials was assaulted at Buna village in West Sepik Province, and fighting between supporters was reported at a polling booth in the Kubalia area of East Sepik. According to local police, who made fourteen arrests, the Buna villagers were incensed over the arrest of a fellow villager for another election-related incident. In Kubalia, a further eleven people were arrested and charged with fighting.

The first reported fatality occurred during the counting period after a man was shot in a confrontation between supporters and police at the Walium government station in Madang Province. Other supporters were injured. According to a later police report, the incident started when scrutineers claimed that the seal on one of the uncounted ballot boxes had been tampered with. Anger grew when the Electoral Commission refused to suspend counting. The fatal confrontation ensued, between police reinforcements and supporters armed with sticks and iron bars. Commissioner Geno said that the police “were forced to use tear gas and gunfire to control the situation and to protect themselves, officials and property.”

The most spectacular incident was the hijacking of ballot boxes containing votes cast for the Komo-Margarima seat in the Southern Highlands. According to reports, twenty-eight boxes were being transported under police escort from Tari to Mendi when intercepted by an armed gang near Nipa. Twenty-one boxes were totally destroyed, and seven were returned after having been opened. The Komo-Margarima returning officer claimed that the incident was “politically motivated” and leveled allegations against the security forces. According to local electoral officials, it had been arranged to airlift the boxes from Tari to Mendi. Instead they were transported by road “in absolute defiance of explicit instructions from both the District Co-ordinator . . . and acting police station commander [Tari].” The officials alleged that the police escort broke into the Plant and Transport Board yard in Tari and removed the truck with the boxes to drive it to Mendi. Local suspicions centered on the fact that the reelected regional member was a former police officer, as was the candidate who came second in the Nipa-Kutubu seat. According to one official, the police were trying to ensure the election of their “own people.”¹⁵ Questions about police involvement were also raised by an acting assistant secretary of the Department of the Southern Highlands Province, who commented that it was “unbelievable when you see people removing 28 ballot boxes in front of 16 policemen.”¹⁶

A great deal of confusion was caused by inaccuracies in the electoral roll and changes to polling. The abolition of sectional voting without significant improvements in the accuracy of the electoral roll was bound to create problems. The deficiencies of particular rolls are documented

Table 5. Supply of Ballot Papers in Western Highlands Compared to Eligible Voters per Nominal Rolls

<i>Electorate</i>	<i>Principal Roll</i>	<i>Supplementary Roll</i>	<i>Eligible Voters</i>	<i>Papers Supplied</i>	<i>Shortfall</i>
Hagen open	34,663	8,163	42,826	40,000	-2,286
Mul-Baiyer	28,030	3,520	31,550	30,000	-1,550
Tambul-Nebilyer	38,733	3,575	42,308	42,000	-766
Dei open	26,285	8,168	34,453	29,000	-5,453
Aglimp-South Wahgi	45,835	12,232	56,067	50,000	-6,067
North Wahgi	28,184	5,532	33,716	35,000	+1,284
Jimi open	19,887	2,168	22,055	25,000	+2,945

Source: Nenta 1992, 10.

in detail in the report of the Electoral Commission.¹⁷ These included errors, omissions, double entries, and the inclusion of people who had died or, being absentees, were no longer qualified to vote. Complaints were voiced throughout the country. Sir Michael Somare and Bernard Narokobi were among the leaders who drew attention to these deficiencies. Narokobi complained that eligible voters were being denied their constitutional rights because they had not been listed on the common roll.

Serious allegations of electoral malpractice were also made. Double, triple, and even quadruple voting was reported in Enga, as well as acts of physical intimidation. Polling officials were harassed in many areas. Some candidates were said to have forced polling officials to fill out any extra ballot papers in their name. In Kagua Erave in the Southern Highlands, officials claimed that the returning officer had been threatened at gunpoint (Sam 1992). Other officials were forced to abandon their posts in the face of serious threats. The Southern Highlands provincial returning officer had to sleep at police headquarters for his own safety. The house of the Enga deputy provincial returning officer in Wabag was ransacked and he was forced to flee the province (Willie 1992). Small numbers of unarmed polling officials and police could do little when confronted by angry candidates and supporters armed with axes and bush knives.¹⁸ Often there was no security presence whatsoever to deter intimidation and other forms of malpractice.¹⁹

Votes cast in many areas bore no correspondence to the number of registered voters. One village in Enga with 300 voters listed in the common roll recorded a total of 2,300 votes. In Kombal village in Upper Mendi in the Southern Highlands, 1,200–1,300 votes were cast; according to the common roll, however, Kombal had only 400 to 500 registered

voters.²⁰ The Enga police claimed that while there were 600–800 eligible voters in Iralia village, outside Wabag, more than 3,000 votes were recorded (Willie 1992).

In many parts of the country there was a shortage of ballot papers. Its dimensions are illustrated in table 5. Deferral of polling in Finschhafen because of a lack of ballot papers led to reports of physical abuse of polling officials by frustrated candidates and their supporters. The Western Highlands returning officer was assaulted by supporters of one candidate after polling was extended for one day because of insufficient ballot papers. The official concerned blamed the Electoral Commission and was reluctant to lay charges against his assailants (Ketan 1996, 262 n14). Polling was suspended in several electorates in the Southern Highlands for the same reason. Candidates forced the Southern Highlands provincial electoral officer to fly to Port Moresby to pick up more papers.²¹ Delays in polling disrupted the security operation which had been strictly scheduled around one-day polling in four Highlands provinces.

Post-polling Violence

Fighting broke out between supporters of rival candidates at the Koban plantation on the border of the Dei and North Wahgi open electorates in the Western Highlands shortly after polling. According to Banz police, a group of youngsters from the Dei area had gone to Koban and assaulted anyone they suspected of having voted for other candidates. Part of a village outside Kundiawa in Simbu Province was set on fire in an election-related incident. A government official in Kundiawa said that the arson was the work of supporters of a number of candidates for the Sinasina-Yonggamugl electorate who were angry that villagers had supported another candidate. In the Southern Highlands, supporters of an unsuccessful candidate for the Mendi open seat set up roadblocks to prevent people from Upper Mendi from coming to town. They aimed to punish people from Upper Mendi who were believed to have voted for a rival candidate (Baki 1992a).

Two tea factories and several bridges along the Hagen-Baiyer road in the Western Highlands were reported to have been destroyed by supporters of losing candidates. The report was later refuted and the damage reduced to an office complex and two vehicles belonging to one of the tea estates. Resort to violence was by no means confined to the supporters of losing candidates. An unsuccessful candidate in the Nipa Kutubu open seat in the Southern Highlands complained that his supporters were being harassed by those of the winning candidate. According to police, these actions included burning houses, destroying gardens, and shooting pigs (Baki 1992). Security forces claimed to have averted a major disturbance in Mount Hagen following the declaration of results.

Between 400 and 500 people had attempted to enter and ransack a large supermarket. Some were apparently acting on a rumor that opposition leader Paias Wingti, confident of victory, had given them permission to go into the supermarket he partly owned and help themselves.

The police and the defense force were also accused of resorting to illegal violence. Security forces allegedly destroyed village houses in Simbu to punish the belligerent supporters of losing candidates:

Allegations of police misbehaviour abounded all over the province in what police and army officers admitted and boasted to me was a deliberate program of intimidation. Over a 6 week period I counted about 100 houses burnt by police and soldiers, done in the name of preventing electoral violence. I also watched police throwing to a crowd K1,200 worth of betel nut they had taken from a bus they had stopped and searched at Ku village in Yonggamugl, on suspicion it was carrying arms, and bashed the driver. Soldiers were present during some of these instances of intimidation. (Standish 1994, 73)

Rumors of threatened violence by losing candidates and their supporters were rife in the immediate post-polling period. The coastal divisional commander reported that "trouble" was anticipated in Lae and that security measures were being stepped up. Police in Wewak (East Sepik) were guarding key government installations and stepping up patrols after threats by losing candidates to damage telephone services and water and power supplies. In Madang, there were threats to destroy commercial property belonging to newly elected members. Three fatalities were reported in the Western Highlands. Two men were apparently killed in election-related group fights, one in the Nebilyer area and the other in the Dei Council area; the third was killed in a drunken brawl at Kudjip in what police believed was a celebration of an election win. The deceased in the Dei area was a Simbu man employed on a coffee estate owned by an alliance of Mount Hagen tribal groups. His killing may have been linked to rivalry between the traditional owners of the land on which the estate was situated and the tribal owners of the business. Each group supported different candidates, and the unfortunate Simbu employee, caught in the middle, was expected to vote both ways (Ketan 1996, 263–264).²² Shortly after the killing, the Highlands divisional police commander warned that older tribal fights might be revived. His concern was well placed, as this incident appears to have triggered the "Welyi-Kentpi War" between the landowners and business owners. Each side received support from tribal allies and the "war" claimed at least two lives, as well as extensive damage to property.

Losing candidates in the National Capital District called for a recount, followed by more strident demands for fresh elections. Police issued a

general warning against public demonstrations after hearing that disgruntled candidates were planning to stage mass marches. In Mount Hagen, in the Western Highlands, threats of violence by losing candidates and their supporters led to restricted trading hours over a two-week period. According to the Western Highlands Chamber of Commerce, lost sales amounted to over K200,000. Senior judges appealed for calm, stating that the courts were the appropriate forum for those aggrieved by the conduct or outcome of the elections.

The Enga Provincial Police Commander's vehicle was set upon when he inadvertently drove into a fight between rival supporters at Wapenamanda. The post-polling atmosphere in the provincial capital of Wabag was described by police as "explosive," largely owing to the failure of the Electoral Commission to pay election officials. Teachers who had assisted with polling in the Western Highlands claimed to have been threatened and prevented from going to work. Community schools in many parts of the Highlands had to postpone resumption of their third-term classes. Group fighting initiated by supporters of a losing candidate was also reported in the Southern Highlands.

As factional leaders competed to form a coalition government, the police commissioner warned of threats against newly elected members to "persuade" them to join particular groups. The relatives of one new member pleaded for his "release" from the isolated opposition camp in Milne Bay. Bernard Narokobi called for a commission of inquiry into allegations that members "were taken away against their will and locked up in isolation in order to give Mr Wingti the numerical strength to gain office." Many businesses were closed in the Highlands on 17 July, the day Paias Wingti was announced as the new prime minister.

A peace agreement was signed by four warring clans in the Dei Council area in the Western Highlands. The provincial administration threatened to declare Dei a fighting zone and withdraw all government services if the agreement was breached. Government services had been suspended in the Kol district of the province since counting ended in June. Most public servants had fled owing to continuing threats by supporters of losing candidates. Fighting broke out again in September in the Kudjip area of the Western Highlands, with two reported fatalities.

Election-related violence was still being reported as late as October, four months after polling. The Highlands divisional commander claimed that the Kagua district of the Southern Highlands had turned into "wild west" country since the elections. In his view, the problem began with clashes between supporters of rival candidates, but criminals had taken advantage of the breakdown in law and order. The new member for the Kagua Erave seat said that the police were themselves partly to blame, claiming that punitive police raids contributed to lawlessness. The provincial commander retorted that the new member and his electoral opponents had created the conflicts in the first place.

Problems associated with the nonpayment of electoral officials and other administrative matters continued for many months after the election. In December 1992, the East Sepik provincial electoral officer claimed that he had been threatened by losing candidates over the issue of reimbursement of nomination fees. These difficulties lasted well into 1993, with many angry scenes outside the Electoral Commission headquarters in Port Moresby.

Discussion

As the narrative indicates, the incidence of violence was higher than suggested by official evaluations, although not as high as anticipated. Pre-polling violence occurred in the context of confrontations between rival supporters, often following inflammatory speeches by candidates. This appears to have been the case in Mendi, Kundiawa, New Ireland, and the Duke of York Islands. The roadblocks in the Southern Highlands Province and alleged “kidnapping” of a candidate in the Dei open electorate draws attention to the issue of territoriality and the forceful measures that may be taken to protect particular voting bases from rival vote “poachers.” Similar actions have been reported elsewhere. In Lae, for example, efforts were made by supporters to prevent rivals entering areas deemed to “belong to our candidate” (Gaudi 1992, 69). The threats surrounding Gerard Sigulogo’s nomination in Kavieng illustrate the overall lack of legitimacy attaching to electoral law and process in many parts of the country. His earlier misconduct and barring from public office counted for little among his supporters. This incident also reveals how electoral officials become the target for threats and retribution by those who view them as implicated in “unfair” or “unacceptable” decisions.

Much of the violence during polling related to alleged interference with ballot boxes. The purpose appears to have been either to spoil votes, thereby necessitating a fresh contest, or to substitute rival votes with “friendly” ones. Evidence suggests that certain candidates, supporters, and, on occasion, criminals mobilized for that purpose were active participants. Acts of intimidation against voters and electoral officials were reported in several places. The hijacking of ballot boxes in Komo-Margarima and resulting allegations raised the issue of police involvement in electoral fraud. Whatever the veracity of these and other claims, they confirm the significant role of suspicion and rumor in the electoral process. Bias on the part of electoral officials and police is widely suspected by losing candidates and supporters, providing a convenient “explanation” for unfavorable results. Suspicions that certain ballot boxes had been interfered with lay behind the confrontation that led to the first officially recorded fatality in late June. Allegations of police interference in the counting process also played a part in the

attack on the Enga provincial commander's vehicle at Wapenamanda (Willie 1992).

Administrative problems were the source of considerable frustration, sometimes culminating in violence. Shortage of ballot papers aggravated the highly charged electoral atmosphere, led to delays in polling, and, occasionally, to physical assaults against electoral officials—as in Finschhafen and Mount Hagen. Deficiencies in the electoral roll resulted in physical confrontations with polling officials and claims of electoral fraud. Long delays in the payment of allowances to electoral officials also led to several confrontations and threats of violence.

Most post-polling violence was aimed at punishing those believed to have supported rival candidates. Retributive violence of this kind ranged from assaults against individuals (including homicide) to full-scale intergroup warfare. There was also extensive destruction of homes, gardens, and livestock. Threats were made against the property of candidates and their supporters, and against public property such as telephone lines and power supplies. Escalation of intergroup violence, as in the “Welyi-Kentpi War,” indicates deeper-rooted conflicts going well beyond the electoral contest. State violence is also implicated in the preemptive and punitive actions of the security forces. These strategies were often indistinguishable from those used by warring tribal groups. Threats against newly elected members also played a part in the frenetic process of government formation, a phase in which voters play little active role.

These patterns of violence may be examined from each of the explanatory perspectives.

Materialist Perspectives

The increasing intensity of electoral competition provides the setting for election-related violence in Papua New Guinea. Although there is no evidence that its incidence matches that in many other parts of the world, election-related violence is on the increase in Papua New Guinea, particularly in parts of the Highlands. At one level, the violence reflects the significant economic interests at stake. However, important areas of convergence also exist between material and cultural factors.

Few observers would disagree with the growing “primacy of politics” in Papua New Guinea.²³ This primacy can be given both a narrow and a broad meaning. In the narrow sense, it refers to the situation where membership of the national parliament has become the most coveted prize for ambitious leaders in the postcolonial period. In the broader sense, it relates to the increasing significance of political processes, dominated by individual actors, in the allocation and distribution of material resources and “development.” Electoral competition has acquired a heightened significance in the mediation of political and economic power. The primacy of politics in these material senses provides

the basis for a rational-choice interpretation of electoral behavior on the part of both candidates and voters.

In the narrow sense, winning political office constitutes the most accessible means of individual advancement. Former Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu observed that in Papua New Guinea “almost everyone wants to be an elected politician.”²⁴ Alternative avenues for accumulating the wealth, power, and prestige associated with membership of the political elite are scarce. Employment openings in the public and private sectors of the small formal economy are few and remain the province of the urban-based educated elite. Legitimate opportunities for accumulating wealth in the informal economy are even fewer and are subject to fluctuating commodity prices, land disputes, and variable access to markets. Although the educational level of candidates has risen with each election (Turner and Hegarty 1987, 6), standing for elected office requires no formal qualifications, and electoral success promises substantial rewards, material and otherwise, with the most spectacular opportunities for patronage and self-enrichment attaching to ministerial office. The obvious attractions of political office, in combination with the lack of formal impediments to candidature, contribute to the large number of contestants. A high turnover of sitting members and the prospect of winning with a relatively small margin of votes provide additional incentive.

In the broader sense, the growing primacy of politics in Papua New Guinea is to be understood against the decline of government services and the rise in the powers of patronage of individual leaders. Numerous reports have drawn attention to the alarming deterioration in the quality and quantity of essential government services, particularly health, education, law and order, and transport. In the absence of effective government services, promises of development projects—including schools, aid posts, and commercial enterprises—strike a receptive chord in development-hungry constituents. Electoral gifting by politicians undermines bureaucratic policy processes at the same time as it entrenches political patronage as the main medium of service delivery. According to Rabbie Namaliu, “The nature of our political system, and the way ‘we play our politics’ impedes sound policy development.”

With the material stakes of electoral competition being perceived in this way, it is no surprise that elections have become highly charged. Rival candidates are prepared to resort to whatever strategies are necessary in order to attract votes. The relatively small proportion of votes needed to secure victory adds to the intensity of the competition. State controls over electoral malpractice provide little deterrence and experience familiar problems of enforcement. Material inducements to voters are on the increase. These strategies are not only possible in the light of weak or nonexistent controls, but are increasingly expected by voters

Table 6. Estimated Expenditure by Candidates in Mount Hagen
(thousands of kina)

<i>Electorate</i>	<i>1992 National</i>	<i>1994–95 Provincial</i>	<i>1997 National (projected)</i>
Dei Council	20–200	10–15*	50–500
Hagen Central	50–500	20–50	100–1,000

Source: Ketan 1995, 4.

*Ketan suggested that approximately 80 percent of this money was used to buy votes.

and, despite high levels of electoral turnover, are widely believed to improve the prospects of electoral success. A corollary is the growth in acts of intimidation and retribution.

Reviewing the history of the electoral process in Papua New Guinea, Andrew Strathern pointed out a significant shift in voter expectations of political leadership accompanied by a commodification of the voting process (1993a). Candidates in the first elections for the pre-independence House of Assembly in 1964 sought to project an image as representatives who could secure resources from the colonial administration for the benefit of their local areas. This image has been superseded by a popular view of politicians as being preoccupied with advancing their own personal interests through continuous factional struggles and coalition building. In this situation, voters seek to extract benefits directly from candidates and officeholders in return for their electoral support. This shift has transformed the relationship between political actors and their electors from one of representative to one of patron.

Political success is measured not so much in terms of a politician's contribution to abstract national policy goals, as in his ability to acquire resources at state level and distribute benefits to his local support base. This pattern takes its most intense form in parts of the Highlands where politics are more often "the politics of spoils rather than of group action for the general good" (Gordon and Meggitt 1985, 159). Another consequence has been the increasing monetization of elections, with candidates and supporters investing "staggering amounts of money and energy in the race to parliament" (Saffu 1988b, 255).

Votes have become commodities to be bought and sold on the electoral market. In the absence of well-established parties and ideological divisions, votes are promised, though not necessarily delivered,²⁵ to those with most to offer voters. In turn, voters are looking for local "development" projects or other tangible benefits in the form of cash, jobs, roads,

schools, aid posts, and so on. Probably the most spectacular and celebrated instance of attempted vote-buying was Highlands leader Iambakey Okuk's distribution of 4,000 cartons of beer,²⁶ as well as pork and other prestige items, at Kundiawa airport during the 1982 national elections (Standish 1989, 203).

Several candidates in the 1995 Western Highlands provincial elections complained that they were being "forced" into buying votes. The increasing sums of money spent by some candidates is consistent with the spread of vote-buying and corresponding expectations on the part of voters. Amounts are difficult to quantify, but Ketan estimated the expenditure of candidates in the Mount Hagen area (table 6).

Growing levels of material investment by candidates and their supporters inevitably raise the electoral stakes, in the process enhancing the potential for disappointment, frustration, and anger. Voters who receive gifts from several candidates are bound to disappoint at least one of them, increasing the likelihood of retribution (Standish 1995, 4).

Whereas electoral candidates seek financial assistance from kin, supporters, and whatever other sources they have access to, sitting members can employ a variety of government discretionary funds (so-called slush funds). These funds provide a major attraction of political office, as well as being an important cause of the diminishing capacity of government services. At the beginning of 1995 each member of parliament was eligible for a K300,000 electoral development fund and K200,000 in minor transport funds (EIU 1995, 12).²⁷ Discretionary funds have been used to buy votes, as well as to reward supporters after elections and build up local power bases through a variety of strategically located "development" projects. Western Highlands politicians use these funds to employ local "henchmen" to orchestrate voting outcomes through a judicious mix of bribery and intimidation. "These henchmen are not outsiders. They are kin to either the politicians or the local people whom they attempt to influence, or they are linked to both. They receive money, vehicles, and business opportunities in return for promoting the politicians for reelection. A major factor in this process has been the access that both national and provincial politicians have had to discretionary ('slush') funds for stimulating local development and services" (A Strathern 1993a, 47).

In his review of the 1987 national elections, Yaw Saffu quoted political scientist Gopal Krishna, who stated that in many postcolonial situations "elections have become the alchemy that turns base metal into gold" (Saffu 1988, 255). That analogy was particularly apt during Papua New Guinea's so-called minerals boom, when mining revenues fueled opportunities for political patronage.

From a materialist perspective, then, the growing belligerence of elections in Papua New Guinea is symptomatic of the increasing material

interests at stake. In the absence of alternative sources of material advancement, political office becomes the key to gaining access to public and private resources. Resources acquired in this way can be used to promote the interests of individual leaders and those of their small voting base. This environment encourages candidates and their supporters to engage in both vote buying and intimidation in the pursuit of the often small proportion of votes required. From this viewpoint threats, intimidation, fraud, bribery, and violence are fundamentally rational strategies for securing desired electoral outcomes. The ineffective character of formal controls over malpractice and their lack of popular legitimacy add to the attractions of these strategies. Illegality, as in many other contemporary settings, is more often rewarded than punished.

Culturalist Perspectives

The strategic manipulation of resources and votes in Papua New Guinea elections must also be viewed in light of the resilience of older Melanesian patterns of leadership and exchange. In this respect, culturalist perspectives illuminate another crucial dimension of electoral behavior and one that has a direct bearing on the phenomenon of election-related violence. They provide a useful tool for exploring the mutually transformative interactions that have taken place between traditional social forces and more recently established institutions of state.

Reference has already been made to a distinctive PNG political style that draws on features of small-scale Melanesian polities. With parties holding little electoral appeal, political loyalties revolve around clan, local, or ethnic divisions. This situation encourages pork-barrel politics and ensures the interplay of different traditions in the political arena “with the implications this has for the accumulation and distribution of wealth and influence for political purposes, the manipulation of *kastom* to political ends, and occasionally the use of violence” (May 1982b, 645). The expectations of contemporary political leaders among their primary constituency are similar in many respects to those held by traditional leaders or big-men. The social basis of these parochial expectations is usually more powerful than the stipulations of state law (A Strathern 1993a, 57).

Political parties play an important role in government formation, but they play little part in the voting decisions of the vast majority of electors. The nexus between politicians and voters is personal and local. Considerations of more encompassing contexts of province and nation remain largely irrelevant. Kin ties remain a significant basis for the mobilization of electoral support with votes being cast “on the basis of clan, tribe, village, material rewards and personality” (Turner and Hegarty 1987, 13). The government is not seen as a vehicle for develop-

ment but as an “instrument to be used to establish and extend patronage ties” (Gordon and Meggitt 1985, 158).

The skillful manipulation of resources and social relations by modern political leaders (and their “henchmen”) in pursuit of electoral success suggests continuities with the prestige and power-building strategies of Melanesian big-men. Distributive activities by contemporary leaders during and, to a lesser extent, between elections are aimed at building personal prestige and at engendering social debts to be recalled at election time. A documented example is the manipulative antics of the late Highlands leader Iambakey Okuk, the foremost practitioner of big-man politics in recent times.

[Okuk] complained that his constituents were draining him of funds with their constant requests for contributions towards death payments, bride wealth and so on, a traditional aspect of the big-man’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. (Standish 1983, 88)

As they transform the workings of the political institutions of the post-colonial state, the legacies of older Melanesian polities are themselves transformed. The access provided by elected office to public and other resources has become the ultimate prize for the modern political big-man. Projects, cash, and beer have replaced traditional items of wealth as the means of creating electoral and personal credit. Likewise, electoral support has become the currency of debt repayment. New institutions, such as electoral development funds, have been converted from their official rationale as vehicles for rural development into mechanisms for individual leaders to build social standing and accumulate electoral credit.

In practice, politicians’ primary voting bases are unlikely to coincide with formal electoral boundaries. They are more likely to accord with personal, kinship, and other ties (real or imaginary) to village, clan, or language group. Differences in size between constituency units and the inevitably smaller personal support bases of individual politicians have a number of implications for election-related conflict. Distributive activities conducted through personal networks will focus strategically on particular groups and areas, in the process ignoring the vast majority of formal constituents. The understandable frustrations of neglected groups may well be vented against the supporters and property of the elected member. Whereas the mobilization of personal ties is critical to elec-

toral success, it is simultaneously “conducive to the factionalization of relationships between groups within local electorates” (A Strathern 1993a, 46). Friction between groups in this situation can also serve as a catalyst for the revival of older enmities, as appears to have been the case in the “Welyi-Kentpi War.”

As well as conflict between groups, elections can provoke conflict within them. Intragroup conflict is often the outcome of “vote splitting,” real or imagined. Allegations of vote splitting have become an important factor precipitating violence in recent years, especially in Highlands constituencies attracting large numbers of candidates. Electoral rivals are accused of sponsoring candidates to stand as a deliberate strategy to divide otherwise unified groups. In this situation, people often end up blaming members of their own primary group for the loss of their own preferred candidate.

The disappointment and frustrations of losing candidates and their supporters are also regularly directed at electoral officials as a way of deflecting the humiliation of electoral defeat. As Standish suggested for the 1977 election in Simbu, this is also a useful mechanism for preventing conflict escalating into direct confrontation between kinship groups (1992, 197). Aggression directed at the unfortunate polling officials may, in other words, reduce the prospect of more serious conflict between rival groups of voters.

Culturalist perspectives also draw attention to continuities between the role of violence in the modern electoral context and older strategies reliant on violence. Violence continues to be an important political strategy in contemporary Highlands societies, whether to resist or effect change (A Strathern 1993a, 45). Although collective violence diminished markedly during the colonial period, the resurgence of so-called tribal fighting and “payback” since the early 1970s illustrates the persistence of this tradition. Violence as a strategy is embedded in the competitive and unstable political cultures of many Highlands societies, as manifested in leadership models, exchange practices, and intense status rivalries (Feil 1987). Modern electoral contests have been grafted onto inherently competitive local environments. It should come as little surprise that they arouse such intense passions.

The data from the 1992 elections confirm the trend that most reported cases of violence occur after the declaration of results. Many incidents involved supporters of defeated members targeting the persons and property of rivals, as well as the destruction of projects associated with the former member. The apparent “senselessness” of this form of violence is not shared by the perpetrators, who perceive certain initiatives and projects as belonging to the defeated member and his followers. These “properties” can be legitimately reclaimed on the demise of their original patron. As a Western Highlands scholar stated, “The

supporters usually argue that their candidate was responsible for the construction or improvements made to the station or school. However, now that he has lost the election they have every right to destroy all the things that he did and that the newly elected member can 'start fresh' and build up his own from scratch" (Mangi 1993, 42).

What may appear to some as acts of gratuitous violence make more sense when viewed simultaneously through materialist and culturalist lenses. Just as a leader is obliged to share the benefits of his success with his supporters, they are also obliged to him. In the electoral context, the obligations of losing supporters are, in some cases, fulfilled by destroying developments linked to the patronage of the ousted member. A deep sense of shame among the followers of fallen leaders may also influence these actions in some areas.

Post-polling violence also illustrates a more general reluctance to accept as "final" the results of the electoral process as, indeed, of many other formal adjudications. Ethnographers emphasize the perpetual cycle of violence and peacemaking of precontact Highlands political cultures. The outcomes of conflict resolution were often temporary and open to later contestation. Violence is viewed by many, particularly in the Highlands, as a legitimate strategy for contesting unfavorable outcomes. Losing supporters are not prepared to accept that their own tribal or clan group was divided, or that they did not deserve the vote, or that their group is relatively small. The rising number of disputed returns is consistent with a tendency to contest adverse results using the full range of remedies available, formal or informal, legal or illegal.²⁸

Institutionalist Perspectives

The administrative shortcomings of the Electoral Commission and other "bits of state" added significantly to tension and the potential for conflict. Shortages of ballot papers, deficiencies in the common and supplementary rolls, multiple voting, procedural irregularities during polling and counting, inadequate security provision, and so on, occurred across the country. Polling periods that had been deliberately shortened in order to reduce the possibility of disorder had to be extended in many areas because of administrative difficulties. Major communication problems between provincial electoral officials and the Electoral Commission's head office in Port Moresby added to the confusion.

Lack of familiarity with electoral procedures and laws on the part of candidates, voters, and officials also caused problems. Among the illustrations provided by the data are the decision of the Sandaun provincial returning officer to allow sectional voting despite its legal abolition in 1991 and the reluctance of Gerard Sigulogo's supporters to accept that he was legally ineligible to stand for election because of the earlier Leadership Tribunal decision. In the Sandaun case, the provincial re-

turning officer appears to have taken a pragmatic decision to avoid confrontation with voters whose names did not appear on the rolls, thereby deferring the issue of legality to later challenges to returns before the court. Such a response was not uncommon. It also made sense in light of the inadequate security at many polling booths and the propensity to accuse electoral officials of malpractice.

The deterrent impact of the security operation is difficult to evaluate. The number of incidents reported, alterations to the original polling schedule, and the logistics involved in the country's terrain, suggest that the practical effects of the operation were less decisive than was claimed by officials. The orchestrated displays of militaristic strength and warnings of swift retribution for troublemakers disguised the capacity of the security forces to control disorder on any significant scale. As James Griffin remarked in the Bougainville context, "the Papua New Guinea state is too weak for successful coercion" (1990, 14). Data from the 1992 elections indicate that there was little or no security presence in many polling areas.

Many allegations were made of human rights abuses by the security forces. Whatever their veracity, these allegations reflect and reinforce hostility and suspicion between police and many communities. This relationship is both a contributor to and a symptom of the weak legitimacy of the state, particularly in rural areas, where the police are the most frequently encountered embodiment of the state. Ingrained suspicion of the police is also demonstrated in the regular allegations of police interference in polling or counting, as in the Komo-Margarima incident in the Southern Highlands Province. These allegations confirm popular perceptions that, while neutral in theory, state institutions are partisan in practice. As such, they take sides in elections, as in other areas of contention.

The case of Sigulogo's supporters indicates the low level of legitimacy accorded electoral law and state law in general. Candidates and their supporters treat applicable law in a highly opportunistic manner. It will be adopted and appealed to when conducive to a desired outcome but ignored or contested in less favorable situations. As well as the cultural dimensions discussed earlier, this contestability relates to the more fundamental struggle for power evident in many new states. "The major struggles in many societies, especially those with fairly new states, are over who has the right and ability to make the countless rules that guide people's social behaviour. Noncompliance here is not simply personal deviance or criminality or corruption; rather, it is an indication of a more fundamental conflict over which organizations in society, the state or others, should make these rules" (Migdal 1988, 31).

The limited institutional capacity and legitimacy of the state are deeply implicated in numerous reinforcing ways in the growth of election-related violence. The uneven and generally poor quality of basic

government services, most evident in rural areas, has contributed to growing levels of popular frustration and progressive withdrawal from the state. Expectations of material advancement premised on the nation's extensive mineral wealth and fueled by political rhetoric have failed to materialize for most Papua New Guineans. The deterioration in government services is directly related to the ascendancy of political patronage as the principal agency of "development." Increasing sums of public money have been diverted by politicians for dispersal via their personal patronage networks. These distributive activities undermine the capacity of line agencies by reducing the level of funds available for services. Standish has estimated that the discretionary funds available to national and provincial politicians in 1992 amounted to approximately 25 percent of the total provincial budget. In practice, provincial authorities have often been left with little or no operating expenses (Standish 1995, 4).

The dominance of political patronage gives rise to ambivalence on the part of voters. Electors who lose out as a result of the narrowly strategic focus of incumbent politicians are aware of the need to cultivate their own patron. Invective directed at "corruption" does not preclude the same critics from aspiring to nurture "corrupt" relations of their own. The progressive "localization" of the nexus between political leaders and their voting constituencies subverts the broader aims of the "nation-making" project—the creation of an overarching political system. On the contrary, this kind of politics contributes to political fragmentation.

These developments can also be viewed historically in the context of the progressive blurring that has taken place in the boundaries between state and society in postcolonial Papua New Guinea. The local-level interactions that occurred between Melanesians and junior levels of the colonial state have progressively permeated all levels of the postcolonial state. An important outcome of opening the state up in this way has been the increasingly volatile relationship between local and state levels.

Government officials chosen and paid by the colonial power represented government interests and concerns to the people but in no way depended on them for continued employment. Postcolonial politicians, by contrast, must try to favour their electors and are intrinsically likely to seek resources at the national level to do so, as well as to use their local base of support as a means to raise issues at the national level. The potential for volatility and instability in the relationship between state and local populations is thus greatly increased, and the situation is exacerbated when the voting process itself becomes commoditized. (A Strathern 1993a, 46)

Another aspect of this process has been the "tribalization" of national politics, most notably in the Highlands. Tribal and clan groupings have replaced administratively defined constituency units as the primary bases

of support for politicians. “[E]lections are contests between the clans and tribes, a poorly sublimated manifestation of traditional rivalries” (Standish 1983, 117). This development weakens state authority further, enhancing the prospect of local-level inter- and intragroup conflict.

As well as failing to meet popular material expectations, the post-colonial state is incapable of enforcing sustained compliance with its demands. State leaders are themselves implicated in undermining the effectiveness and legitimacy of state controls. Together these major indicators of state weakness have increased the potential for violence in urban and rural areas. On one hand, *raskolism* and other forms of acquisitive and violent crime have become rational choices for many of those excluded from legitimate development opportunities. On the other, there is a growing willingness for communities and individuals to take the law into their own hands. This withdrawal from the state is illustrated in the growing willingness to bypass state processes of adjudication in favor of compensation demands backed up with threats of violence, often directed at the state.²⁹ In the Western Highlands, “the perceived ineffectiveness of a weak indigenous administration has offered few alternatives to western highlanders, aside from violence, for settling grievances, disputes, and for pressing claims” (Feil 1987, 276).

These strategies are, moreover, often successful, with the state yielding to belligerent claims from a variety of groups. These might involve customary landowners blocking roads or destroying publicly owned installations in pursuit of monetary compensation from the government. At other times, they involve bits of the state itself, notably elements of the defense force,³⁰ who use threats or actual force to back industrial or other claims. The Sandline affair provides the most dramatic illustration to date. Elections provide one of the key sites in the increasingly volatile struggle for political and economic domination in postcolonial Papua New Guinea.

Conclusion

In global terms, Papua New Guinea is a poor country in which politics, more than business, the public service, or the professions, provides upward mobility. From a materialist perspective it is no surprise that upward mobility is purchased with votes—just as in societies where upward mobility occurs through joining a profession, mobility is purchased through buying education. In more developed capitalist economies, markets for education and markets for capital (to purchase upward mobility through business) are more commodified. In a less developed capitalist economy like Papua New Guinea’s, where politics has greater primacy, markets for votes are more commodified. Moreover, these markets are ruthlessly competitive, rather than being moderated by the institutions for regulat-

ing political competition to which Westerners are accustomed. The most important of these are political parties, courts of law, and independent electoral offices. As a result, the competition for votes, being at the same time more central to success in life and less institutionally constrained, is more violent in Papua New Guinea.

Adding to these materialist and institutionalist explanations is a significant cultural tradition of competition through violence. Moreover, cultural accounts of the big-man as an institutionally unconstrained gatherer and dispenser of patronage on behalf of his people help explain how older social traditions undermine the effective working of current institutional restraints on ruthless political competition. To some extent, police and public servants, such as electoral officials, also survive only through accepting and mediating patronage, which in turn undermines their legitimacy. They are not perceived by citizens as powers separate from, and with regulatory responsibilities over, the political elite. The rule of law is a casualty in a society where the primacy of patronage politics over all other institutions approaches an absolute level. Electoral violence is both an instrument of patronage politics and a symptom of the decay in the rule of law that is a consequence of that style of politics. In this sense the material, institutional, and cultural dimensions of election-related violence in Papua New Guinea are mutually reinforcing.

Chapter 7

From Disintegration to Reintegration?

Papua New Guinea's problems of order have emerged in their present form against a broader background of decolonization, state formation, and integration into the global economy. Each of the case studies has been analyzed in the context of these larger transformations. The explanatory perspectives have been used as heuristic devices for highlighting the key material, cultural, and institutional dimensions in each case. Using them in a creative way has illuminated the complex interactions between these broad dimensions of aggregate change in the shaping of the postcolonial social order.

The apparent scale and gravity of Papua New Guinea's problems have contributed to the apocalyptic tone of recent commentaries. An implicit—sometimes explicit¹—invocation of social disintegration pervades many of them. Many variations of the disintegration thesis are in circulation, and they can be loosely classified in terms of their emphases on institutional, cultural, or material disintegration. Institutional disintegration focuses on the progressive weakening of the state and, in particular, the incapacitation of state controls. Problems of order are viewed largely in terms of the absence or inadequacies of the state. Cultural disintegration, on the other hand, draws attention to the impact of modernization on indigenous social formations and the manner in which Melanesian societies are allegedly collapsing under the weight of rapid and pervasive change. This view attributes problems of order to the corrupting influence of external forces and their impact on “traditional” institutions and values. By contrast, material disintegration emphasizes economic dysfunction, rising levels of unemployment, failures of entrepreneurship, mismanagement, and how these contribute to marginalization and growing social conflict.

Evidence from the case studies confirms some of these claims and refutes others. New forms of marginalization arising from relatively re-

cent processes of socioeconomic change have undoubtedly contributed to increasing levels of acquisitive crime (Dinnen 1993b). Likewise, the significance of the diminishing capacity of many state institutions, including its principal agencies of law and order, can hardly be denied. At the same time, the case studies indicate the limitations of an exclusive focus on disintegration. The processes underlying today's problems are altogether less certain and predictable than has been suggested by the more alarmist depictions of total collapse. *Raskolism*, for example, varies significantly in form and incidence in different parts of the country, as well as over time. Most reported incidents of criminal violence occur in urban enclaves and other areas of concentrated development, while the vast majority of Papua New Guineans continue to live in rural villages. Even in "high risk" areas, crime tends to be episodic. Like states elsewhere, the state of Papua New Guinea is complex, not unitary, and must be disaggregated for purposes of analysis. Some of its parts, such as the Ombudsman Commission and the superior courts, appear to work extremely well in their own fashion. Certainly none of my informants invoked the bankruptcy of those institutions as a rationalization for exploitative conduct by themselves or others. Forecasts of imminent collapse have been heard for many years now. Although the organization of elements of both state and society may have weakened in recent years, *collapse* hardly describes this change. On the contrary, the case studies provide ample evidence of the remarkable tenacity and adaptability of indigenous social forms.

The more pessimistic accounts tend to focus narrowly on the disintegrative outcomes of what are, in effect, intricate processes of interaction and mutual transformation occurring between different institutions and social forces in a variety of contexts. Conflict and institutional dysfunction are more often than not the consequence of cultural and institutional interpenetration, rather than a result of uniform processes of disintegration. The following conclusions seek to move beyond the profound pessimism of the disintegration thesis by showing how interaction between different social forces has potential for positive reintegration. In turn, positive reintegration may offer the glimmer of solutions to some of the major challenges of order identified here.

Application of the three explanatory perspectives to *raskolism*, mining security, and election-related violence triangulates to a set of overlapping themes that recur in the analyses—the weak state, leadership, international capital, marginalization, and prospects for finding a Melanesian path from disorder to order (as evoked by the criminal surrender). Following the directions indicated by the triangulations, observers may hope to see the larger meaning of the alleged disintegration of order in Papua New Guinea and prospects for future reintegration.

The Weak State

The weakness of elements of the state provides a crucial dimension of many of Papua New Guinea's current challenges of order. The notion of infrastructural power—"the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm" (Mann 1986, 113)—provides a useful way of conceptualizing state power and its limitations. The lack of infrastructural power is evident in the uneven presence of the state and the poor quality of basic government services. It is most apparent in the limited impact of state controls, particularly in their inability to counter lawlessness and social disorder. The failure of state processes of conflict resolution has contributed to the revival of older Melanesian ways of settling disputes. These strategies often rely on intimidation and violence and consequently pose a direct challenge to the state's ostensible monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Tribal warfare in parts of the Highlands provides the most obvious illustration. A tendency to bypass the juridical processes of the state is also evident in the readiness of local communities to take the law into their own hands when confronted by "troublemakers." Elements of the state are themselves implicated in this process in what has become, in effect, "self-canceling" activity. It is not unusual, for example, for the weakness of certain parts of the state (eg, the courts and the prisons) to be used as legitimation by another part (the police) for meting out informal (and illegal) punishments to individuals and suspect communities.

The state is also implicated in the spread of illegal strategies through, for example, its acquiescence in compensation demands from landowner groups, thereby encouraging further extortionate claims backed by force. Where the state does react against disorder, it often does so in militarized ways that inflict indiscriminate damage against persons and property. Such responses have had distinctly counterproductive outcomes in practice. Militarized responses aggravate marginalization and lead to retributive violence by targeted groups. The central role of these responses in the evolution of *raskolism* over the last three decades is demonstrated in chapter 4. Data adduced in that chapter show how reactive policing (and imprisonment) feeds directly into the constitution of *raskol* identity and commitment. Militarized responses also reinforce public distrust and fear of the police and, in turn, affect willingness to cooperate during police inquiries, leading to mounting frustration on the part of the police. The growing proportion of public funds directed toward such responses represents money denied to critical infrastructural services and more productive development activities, which in turn contributes to further marginalization, and so on.

At one level, militarized solutions may be viewed as attempts to disguise the state's weaknesses by relying on its ostensibly strongest aspect.

The police in Papua New Guinea have a long history of resort to violent solutions (Kituai 1998). In recent years the violence of parts of the state has become hard to distinguish from the societal violence it seeks to control. In practice, a growing entanglement between the institutions of state and local social forces has become evident across a spectrum of activities. Officials have been accused regularly of using state instrumentalities to pursue their own personal interests. Standish has told stories of police officers in Simbu mounting raids in response to marital disputes to which they were personally a party (1994, 74). Reay claimed that village court magistrates in the Western Highlands are simultaneously “contemporary fight leaders who see nothing anomalous in urging their groups to battle while being paid to implement the law” (1987, 74). The legitimacy of the state inevitably suffers from such actions. In particular, the police become increasingly viewed as active and partisan participants in local conflicts, rather than as neutral enforcers of state law. Many Porgera people in Enga Province view the police alternatively as either an enemy clan or as a potential ally to be coopted in fights against rival clans (Bonnell 1994, 83).

Growing levels of official and unofficial state violence have promoted the legitimacy of violence as a political strategy among both state and nonstate constituencies. In this respect, the distinction between legality and illegality—on which law-and-order debate is premised—fails to capture what is going on in Papua New Guinea today. In practice, a monopoly of violence neither characterizes the state nor legitimates its actions.

The lack of domestic legitimacy of the state relates to its external origins in a short period of uneven colonial rule. There remains a marked lack of organic unity or shared values between state and society and, in particular, scant commitment to the introduced system of government. Even though it is unusually important in materialist terms, the state has yet to secure its predominance in the national society; it remains merely one of several collective entities competing for popular allegiance. In other words, it has no automatic legitimacy at local levels. Social power continues to be widely dispersed among local-level social organizations made up of loose, often symbolic, associations of kinship and lineage. This is what Migdal described as “dispersed domination, [where] neither the state nor any other social force has established an overarching hegemony; domination by any one social force takes place within an arena or even across a limited number of arenas but does not encompass the society as a whole. Social life is then marked by struggles or standoffs among social forces over questions ranging from personal and collective identity and the salience of symbols to property rights and the right to use force. People’s identities and moral codes remain remarkably diverse in such a society” (1994, 27).

Dispersed domination is contrasted with an ideal of integrated domi-

nation that is characterized as “inclusive” and “society-wide,” with the state playing a central role in the creation and maintenance of a unified social order. The case studies show how, in many respects, the actions of the postcolonial state have contributed to the further dispersal of domination and the perpetuation of multiple social orders. This outcome is both a consequence and a source of the institutionalization of a distinctive system and style of politics based on the personal nexus between individual leaders and their local followers. These relations sustain and deepen political fragmentation and, thereby, the dispersal of domination within the wider society.

Political tensions along both horizontal and vertical lines, accentuated by economic change, are apparent between different sources of social power in modern Papua New Guinea. Whereas horizontal conflict between different social groups has a long history (and longer prehistory) in Melanesia, vertical conflict along the local-provincial-regional-national axis is by definition more recent and constitutes a growing source of instability. Conflicts of this kind can threaten the very integrity of the nation-state through the generation of micronationalist pressures (May 1982a) and even secessionist war, as in the tragic case of Bougainville. Vertical conflict is a manifestation of the turbulent struggle for social control that provides the most significant political challenge facing new states in divided societies. Dynamic tensions characterize the relationship between an emergent and weakly embedded national political culture (made up of state policies and ideologies of control, containment, and development) and local populations with their distinctive cultural commitments, modes of control, and politics (Warren 1993). The concentration of conflict in areas of highest development attests to the significant role of material interests, and particularly the manner in which migration to development generates new frictions and serves as a catalyst for the aggravation of older divisions.

At the same time, a narrow focus on the fragility of state power deflects attention from its simultaneous centrality in materialist terms. A major paradox of the postcolonial state in Papua New Guinea lies in its concurrent weakness in institutionalist terms and primacy in materialist terms. The lack of alternative sources of comparable wealth has contributed directly to the centrality of the state as the single most important repository and controller of resources. The relative wealth of the state has fueled high material expectations locally. More particularly, it provides the context for the progressive primacy of politics, where access to state power has become the principal means for acquiring resources. Chapter 6 has shown how the struggle for, albeit temporary, political control of the state has assumed a “pathological dimension” (Clapham 1985, 40) in parts of the country, manifesting itself in the commodification of the voting process and the growing turbulence of electoral competition.

In many respects, the external legitimacy granted the state, through its membership of the global system of states and the significant level of international financial input from the outside world, has enabled it to survive in the face of mounting internal division and dissent. As in many other nonindustrialized postcolonial nations, Papua New Guinea remains heavily dependent on the international economy for imported manufactured goods, markets for raw materials, and for foreign investment and personnel. Per capita growth in gross domestic product (excluding the mining sector) has been slow since independence and has failed to match population growth. Papua New Guinea has received substantial financial support from overseas aid donors, principally Australia. The switch from budget aid to project aid in recent years indicates, among other things, a growing concern among Australian officials about the planning and implementation capacities of the PNG state. A large proportion of project aid is now directed toward building the capacity of government agencies, including the principal instrumentalities of law and order.

Relations between state and society have, of course, undergone important changes during their relatively short history in Papua New Guinea. The most significant transformation occurred during the transition from colonial to postcolonial statehood. As mentioned in chapter 2, the colonial state generally operated at considerable social distance from local societies, partly as a consequence of the uneven impact and relative modesty of colonial objectives in terms of social and economic intervention. The fact that the colonial administration was almost exclusively run by foreigners reduced its susceptibility to permeation from indigenous society at all but the most junior levels. At senior levels it was staffed from outside the territory. The capacity to appear remote and disengaged from local politics contributed to the myth of the “impartial” and “strong” colonial state, a myth that manifests itself today in the commonly stated desire for the return of Australia as a colonial power (Clark 1997, 73–74). The relative impermeability of the colonial state changed, however, when its control was transferred to an indigenous elite. This transfer was accomplished through the rapid localization of state institutions immediately before and after political independence. The localization of the state, in combination with the more ambitious objectives of the postcolonial state, have in turn opened it up to permeation from local constituencies. As stated in chapter 2, this process was foreshadowed in the ways in which individual Melanesians were able to engage strategically with junior levels of the colonial state. Politicians and public servants operating at national, provincial, and local levels have now become part of the indigenous political process and are readily identifiable with the local social organizations that they come from. In the process, they have become widely suspected of serving their own interests and being subject to partisan influence and inducement. These

perceptions, whether real or imagined, reflect very real pressures on these individuals to conform to the values and expectations of a highly localized form of politics. Within this broader context of institutional transformation, many contemporary problems of order have arisen and been played out.

Contrary to the closed character of the middle and upper tiers of the colonial state,² the postcolonial state has become more uniformly porous, like many of its counterparts in sub-Saharan Africa (Chazan 1994, 267). The increasingly personal exercise of power evident across the spectrum of state institutions in recent years represents both a continuation and a significant expansion of the strategies of indigenous engagement with the colonial state. The opening up of the state in this way inverts the top-down formulation of the exercise of state power that typifies classical depictions of political colonization. The postcolonial state of Papua New Guinea, by contrast, 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.

These processes invert Jurgen Habermas's contention that the "lifeworld" is increasingly colonized by the "system" in late industrial society (Habermas 1987). In nonindustrial Papua New Guinea the state (as "system")—and, to a lesser extent, the resource-rich business system—has been colonized by the Melanesian "lifeworld." This conclusion is also at odds with the view argued in the Clifford Report that the state-society gap underlies the current weakness of state controls in Papua New Guinea. Evidence from the case studies suggests that the processes of interpenetration between state and society, with their mutually transformative outcomes, underlie many current problems of order. In turn, the resulting lack of delineation between state and society has been facilitated and accentuated by the undeveloped character of civil society, which might otherwise serve as an intermediary and zone of demarcation between state and local-level constituencies.

These conclusions are consistent with recent work on nation making in Melanesia. Commenting on the relatively weak penetration of state in many rural parts of Papua New Guinea, Michael Jacobsen (1995) argued further that the social relations of capitalist production have not fundamentally threatened the economic autonomy of local communities in these areas. In his view, this high level of political and economic autonomy at local levels continuously frustrates the task of nation making. Speaking about Simbu Province, he claimed that far from being incorporated into the administrative machinery of the nation-state, local com-

munities appropriate this machinery in pursuit of their own parochial ends. The consequence of this process for the state has been that “the different national institutions slowly become institutional hybrids, thereby endangering the whole process of nation making” (Jacobsen 1995, 242).

Evidence presented here indicates that the state has been transformed most in its interactions with indigenous societies. As the boundaries between state and society have blurred, the state itself has become increasingly compromised. Its own agencies and officials have been implicated in those very areas of disorder they are supposed to control, as was illustrated in chapter 6 by the commodification of the electoral process and election-related violence. Violence and “corruption” have become an integral part of the postcolonial political process, actively provoked by the actions of political leaders themselves. In this context, the struggle for political power is conducted less through policy or ideological differences and more through “contexts of violence and cash payments” (A Strathern 1993a, 56). Although the state does not always conspire with crime, it is clear that in many respects the relationship between the postcolonial state and illegal practices has become a symbiotic one.

The mobilization of *raskol* groups by political leaders during elections, as discussed in chapter 4, provides another illustration. Those responsible for enacting laws to control crime and violence are implicated in spreading those activities through this and other behavior. Reliance on local patronage networks for electoral support, particularly in parts of the Highlands, aggravates divisions between groups, revives dormant animosities, and provokes new disputes. In this respect, elections serve as catalysts for conflicts whose genesis lies beyond the electoral context and which generally outlive the poll. The intrusion of kinship and other associational loyalties into the everyday operations of state institutions creates tensions with the obligations of public service (Larmour 1992, 102). The coercive arms of the state are deeply implicated in escalating lawlessness and violence, as is illustrated in the cycle of retributive violence fed by police and *raskols* in the urban context, and in the mutual hostility and militaristic encounters between police and policed in many parts of the country.

Big-men, Gifting, and the State

The resilience of Melanesian social forms and their manifestation has been demonstrated across a range of institutional and material contexts. As shown in chapter 6, the emphasis on gaining access to and distributing resources in modern politics is not just a rational response to the concentration of resources at state level. Neither is acquisitive *raskol* crime solely a response to the relative scarcity and uneven distribution of

resources within the wider society, as was demonstrated in chapter 4. The manipulation of resources and social relations in contemporary Papua New Guinea connects with older social practices that pre-date both capitalism and state formation.

The concept of the Melanesian big-man remains a highly contested one (Godelier and Strathern 1991). My data nevertheless document how leaders in various social settings enact and reproduce a distinctively Papua New Guinean model of leadership, even where they themselves come from villages without a concept of big-manship. This model revolves around patterns of competitive leadership, prestige building, and the gift economy that shaped the social and political organization of many small-scale, stateless societies. As a status more often achieved than inherited, individual prominence was built up in perpetual competition with others. The archetypal big-man combined a potent mix of entrepreneurial drive, ingenuity, oratorical skills, and, significantly, generosity. Prestige attached to the manner in which wealth was distributed, rather than its mere accumulation. The strategic exchange of resources provided an important mechanism for manipulating social relations within kinship or lineage associations. The gift economy engendered reciprocal obligations or social debts that served to bind individuals and groups together. In this sense, gifting constituted a fundamental modality of social control.

Contrary to the predictions of earlier development theories, capitalism—even in its most concentrated forms—has not wholly displaced the gift economy. Rather, it has led to what Chris Gregory referred to as an “ambiguous” economy (1982). Within this ambiguous economy, social actors move relatively freely between gift and commodity economies. The analysis of *raskolism* in chapter 4 illustrates how this articulation has occurred in urban crime. The criminal leader builds his status through the vehicle of acquisitive crime. Wealth is accumulated through theft, and the prominence of criminal leaders is consolidated through the strategic distribution of the proceeds. This intersection between indigenous and introduced social forces has also produced mutually transformative outcomes. Rather than existing as unified and discrete entities, contemporary social forms in Papua New Guinea have been actively constituted through these processes of interaction between old and new. Peter Fitzpatrick used the concept of “integral plurality” to describe this dialectic in the field of law, a process whereby “state law is integrally constituted in relation to a plurality of social forms” (Fitzpatrick 1984, 115).

From a “rational” Western perspective, these interactions have often produced distinctly disintegrative outcomes. The failure of business enterprises, as mentioned in chapter 4, has been attributed regularly to the effects of gifting and prestige building in undermining market rationality and, in particular, the goals of sustainable wealth accumula-

tion and economic growth. The case studies also illustrate how big-manship and the gift economy have had a profoundly debilitating and corrupting impact on state bureaucracies. This effect is evident in the manner in which political actors routinely divert public funds for electoral and personal ends, undermining the administration of basic government services. Just as these dynamics have had negative impacts on the operations of state institutions, they have also increased conflict within and between local groups by, for example, intensifying competition for resources and political office. Andrew Strathern used the term “disintegrative integration” to describe this process (1993a, 57).

As shown in chapters 5 and 6, political office has become the most promising avenue for gaining access to substantial resources for local redistribution. The political leader builds prestige and a following through the gifting of grants, development projects, infrastructural services, and other resources to constituencies based around personalized associations. State gifting has become a means for constituting political big-manship and is most apparent in the electoral context. It is not so much that big-men use the state primarily to accumulate personal wealth, although this practice is increasing rapidly. Rather, political leaders use the state to distribute wealth in order to accumulate personal power and status. As illustrated in chapter 5, these forces have permeated the commanding heights of the state, with government ministers using their official powers to appropriate entire national policies or divert public resources to their own personal agendas.

In this way, the insertion of a big-man model of leadership in a Melanesian gift economy subverts the integrity and effectiveness of state institutions. The postcolonial state has become the organizing mechanism for accessing and diverting public wealth for parochial, clan, and private ends. Officials may hold positions in bureaucratic organizations with powers that are formally defined, but in practice these powers are more often exercised as a form of private property. Growing levels of “corruption” among public officeholders is in large part a reflection of the entanglement of the state in the domestic gift economy and vice versa. In small-scale, stateless societies, patrimonialism served to provide a legitimate source of authority. However, in a modern bureaucratic state patrimonial-regarding leadership is inimical to the practice of “public service.” In turn, the public-regarding leadership that is necessary for strong formal institutions appears inimical to the workings of the gift economy. National planning, policy coordination, and implementation regularly fall victim to the inherent instability of political patronage and clientelism.

These processes, with their disintegrative outcomes, have been further institutionalized by various legal and administrative provisions. A notable example is the growth of the discretionary funds available to incumbent



Photo 28 A demonstration against corruption, Port Moresby 1990. *Post-Courier*

politicians for local development. Although rarely entrenching individual leaders, these funds entrench a hybrid style of big-man politics and state gifting, while subverting more equitable processes of service delivery. Moreover, this disintegrative process is a reinforcing one. The diversion of state resources away from line agencies to the discretionary funds of individual leaders invariably undermines universalistic principles of bureaucratic organization. In turn, popular expectations of, and dependence on, patrimonial state gifting are increased. Patron and client build complementary strategies of social exchange in what Vincent Lemieux has termed a “double transformation”—an abdication of autonomy by the client and a relaxation of hierarchical controls by the patron (quoted in Roniger 1994, 4). As the dependence of clients grows, patrons have to demonstrate tangibly that their primary loyalty is to their followers rather than the wider world. In the process, patronage and clientelism become institutionalized as a normal modality of state-designated development. For a successful minority, they also become the principal mechanism for participation in national political processes. The outcome is an inevitable and progressive weakening of the capacity and legitimacy of the state and, in the process, an undermining of the prospects of successful nation making.

International Capital and the State

When leadership has only the most localized legitimacy, and state and local markets are weak, there are many opportunities for private inter-

national capital. Its principal representatives in Papua New Guinea are the mining and petroleum transnationals that operate in the most profitable sector of the national economy. Dependency theorists have long argued about the dominant and exploitative role of international capital in weak third world nations. In some respects the story of the Rapid Deployment Unit is one of transnational corporations using their economic power to secure favorable security treatment from the dependent state. At the same time, the demise of this unit, despite the strenuous efforts of the industry, indicates the existence of significant constraints on the workings of international capital. Paradoxically, the very feebleness of the state helped to thwart industry attempts to keep the Rapid Deployment Unit alive. State weakness can thus inhibit, as well as promote, the interests of international capital. Ministerial attempts to divert this initiative, and through it the resources of the industry, to their own advantage, demonstrate how elements of even the weakest states can manipulate powerful international institutions. Ultimately all external organizations seeking to operate within local markets have to negotiate with domestic agencies, and in practice have to deal with the state. A weak state can thus pose as many, if not more, challenges for external agencies, as for local nonstate constituencies.

Chapter 5 demonstrated how large-scale mining and petroleum developments have the potential to generate conflict revolving around issues of political and economic control of resources, as well as issues of social and environmental impact. The Bougainville case illustrates how such conflicts can escalate dramatically. The rejection of compensation agreements by a new generation of landowners led to the forcible closure of the huge Panguna mine and violent confrontations between local rebels and state forces. The withdrawal of those forces in March 1990 was followed by seven years during which the state's inability to either impose or negotiate a settlement was revealed to the world. This failure constituted the single most damaging humiliation for the postcolonial state and the clearest demonstration of its limitations. The political intrigue and violence at Mount Kare provide further evidence of the potential for conflict in such situations, as does the recent dispute over the downstream environmental impact of the Ok Tedi mine (Banks and Ballard 1997).

These conflicts and growing international scrutiny provide the background to the crisis of legitimacy experienced by mining transnationals in recent years. In many ways, this crisis parallels that facing the postcolonial state. However, the manner in which the industry has sought to address these problems has differed markedly from that of the state and provides some important lessons for it. As seen in chapter 5, local expectations of mining companies operating in rural outposts are extremely high. In the absence of other significant sources of wealth, min-

ing projects are expected to serve as catalysts for local development. Contrary to what one might expect, the larger projects have often been creative in their role as surrogate “states.” This role has been facilitated by the tax-credit scheme, established at the instigation of the industry, that has encouraged developers to establish basic infrastructure. A major source of its success has been its ability to avoid the diversionary tactics of political leaders at local, provincial, and national levels. This avoidance has been made possible, in part, because the industry is controlled by foreign capital rather than by local big-men operating through patronage networks.

The limited state presence in such areas is partly a consequence of the lack of state resources and capacity, but it is also a reflection of the official view of such projects as being first and foremost a source of revenue to finance development in other areas. Provided customary land-owners get their royalties, state interest is usually confined to ensuring uninterrupted production and a steady contribution to national revenue. The industry has gone to great lengths to accommodate local expectations, not only in terms of basic infrastructure but also in developing spin-off economic opportunities with a potential for outlasting the lifetime of particular mining projects (Imbun 1994). This newfound community orientation can be viewed cynically as a way of buying the acquiescence of local communities and ensuring uninterrupted extraction. At the same time, the development activities of the larger projects extend well beyond the vicinity of the mine and, moreover, often target the most powerless social groups, such as women (Bonnell 1996) and youth, who are routinely excluded from gifting by both traditional leaders and the state. As well, social initiatives of this kind are usually developed with the active participation of local communities, in stark contrast to state-level decision making.

Much more than the state, as illustrated in the recent Sandline debacle, the mining industry has sought to learn from the mistakes of the past. According to one Papua New Guinean observer, “Since the closure of the Bougainville copper mine in 1990 mining companies in Papua New Guinea have taken an increasingly positive role in maintaining their relations with host local communities and the country. . . . [They] have consciously done [so] as a prerequisite to operating socially and politically sound mines. Such social impact is greatly assisting the host areas and is also creating ‘socially healthy environments’ for the companies” (Imbun 1994, 28).

The industry’s way of dealing with its own crisis of legitimacy has been to adopt a more consultative and socially sensitive role that seeks to include local-level constituencies.³ In the process, it does not reinforce big-manship as the principal conduit for the distribution of social and economic benefits. In the area of mining security, the data presented

here show how the industry has often sought to restrain militaristic and counterproductive state solutions. More positively, the industry has sought to build up local social organization in a way that empowers local communities in their dealings with both the industry and the government. Alan Stevens provided an illustration from the Misima gold mine in Milne Bay Province. The mining company there helped establish Village Management Committees made up of leaders from all sections of the community—women, youth, traditional leaders—and chaired by the local government councillor. The immediate task of the committees was to prepare and prioritize a list of infrastructure required by local people. These committees allowed local communities “genuine participation in the decisions regarding development in their area” (Stevens 1996, 126).⁴

Through interpolating itself between the state and local constituencies, the industry has shown a way to break patterns of state gifting and state retribution. Transnational corporations—contrary to their depiction in dependency theory—can contribute positively to the constitution of civil society in an environment where civil society has historically been weak. This conclusion is consistent with Jane Guyer’s observation that in Africa civil society may include external actors such as donors and major foreign investors, as well as citizens (1994, 218).

Marginalization

The perpetual competition for material resources is a common theme in the case studies, and links the activities of those operating at different levels of the modern social order. The social, economic, and institutional contexts within which this competition is conducted have undergone significant changes. These changes have had different impacts on particular social groups and different parts of the country. For a few, notably those who have been able to connect most closely with state power, they have generated opportunities for substantial wealth. Such wealth can then be used in both commodity and gift economies. For many more, however, state formation and integration into the international economy have led to growing levels of structural marginalization and personal frustration.

The harshness of rural subsistence holds a diminishing appeal for many Papua New Guineans, as for their counterparts elsewhere, and particularly for younger people exposed to global and urban cultures through formal education and other “modern” influences. In effect, if not intention, the urban-oriented education system has contributed to the marginalization of youngsters in the village, while drawing them to the towns (Faraclas 1992). As shown in chapter 4, there are few openings in the formal urban economy for those with incomplete education.

Resort to *wantoks* may provide a temporary solution, but can also generate its own difficulties. Many youngsters, whether “permanent urban dwellers” or recent migrants, have to resort to self-help strategies in the informal economy, including crime. This significant and growing group has, in effect, experienced a double marginalization. Culturally, they are marginalized from the village-based gift economy through urban-oriented processes of socialization or migration. Materially, they are marginalized from the urban-centered commodity economy through lack of legitimate opportunities and inadequate education. Both forms of marginalization are, of course, episodic, with options for some to return to the village and periodic openings for unskilled labor in the urban economy. Further, institutional responses hold little real prospect of remedying these marginalizations by reintegrating the marginal into either gift or commodity economies. In practice, they may simply add a third, reinforcing tier of marginalization.

As documented in chapter 4, the materialist perspectives locate the rise of *raskolism* within broad processes of urbanization and view its progress principally in terms of the growing disparity between criminal and noncriminal opportunities in the areas of highest development. These viewpoints indicate the rational foundation of acquisitive crime, and show that the same material considerations underlie mass surrenders and other reform strategies. Viewing the same phenomena through cultural lenses adds a further layer to the analysis by highlighting social continuities connecting crime to a range of legitimate occupations. In particular, the marginalized have been able to use crime as a way of constructing alternative strategies for pursuing essentially the same social ends sought by their nonmarginalized counterparts in the village, business, and politics. Those excluded from noncriminal routes to prestige and leadership can take the alternative vehicle of *raskol* and post-*raskol* strategies. In this respect, criminal practices are not a category of abnormal behavior, nor the distinctive subcultures of criminological theory, but rather are an option, a rational strategy, that different groups may resort to at different times.

Institutionalist perspectives show how state reliance on militarized responses to marginalized groups have not only failed to contain criminal activities but have actively contributed to their growth by aggravating underlying marginalization. Violent encounters with police, and experience of prison, have been incorporated into the very processes of constituting *raskolism*. In this sense routine interactions between *raskols* and police have become drawn into a reinforcing cycle of retributive violence. Likewise, repressive measures against such groups, while the crimes of the powerful appear to go unchecked, have fueled already high levels of popular disaffection. In turn, these sentiments feed into the legitimation rhetoric of *raskols* and elicit varying degrees of sympa-

thy in the wider community. Although *raskolism* may represent a solution to the marginalization of its practitioners, it creates major problems for its victims, most of whom are other marginal people, often women. In this way, *raskolism* ultimately serves to reinforce the marginalization of the weakest social groups in Papua New Guinea.

Surrenders, Retreats, and Reintegration

While marginalization continues against a background of structural change, deepening social cleavages, and counterproductive institutional responses, the phenomenon of the “mass surrender” provides some hints about how Papua New Guinea might grapple with government corruption, marginalization, and *raskol* crime. In particular, it suggests a way of nurturing and drawing on the strengths of civil society through the provision of socially attuned resolutions to crime. It also holds out a prospect of exit from marginalization. Unlike current criminal justice practice, the surrender is a potentially reintegrative process that might contribute to breaking the relentless cycle of retributive violence documented in this book.

As John Braithwaite has argued, the most ameliorative criminal justice strategies condemn the criminal act “while striving to preserve the identity of the offender as essentially good” (1989, 101). The mass surrender falls squarely within this tradition with its orientation toward “shaming the sin and not the sinner.” This approach stands in marked contrast to present disintegrative practices that arbitrarily stigmatize the socially and economically marginal and deploy negative cultural stereotypes against particular groups. Again, unlike practices that reinforce marginalization, the surrender provides a potential vehicle for reintegrative shaming in the way it can inject employment, education, and social development options into the reform process. As in the case of Jimmy and his followers (chapter 4), it can allow individuals and groups to use their entrepreneurial talents in less harmful ways. It thus encourages less oppressive responses to crime than those associated with punitive politics, while opening up legitimate and, in theory at any rate, sustainable alternatives. In this way, surrender and other reform strategies can create opportunity structures for becoming a respected leader in civil society.

Looking forward, the prospect that is glimpsed in the surrender is of a form of leadership that enjoys the traditional benefits of transmitting gifts in return for undertakings that it be public-regarding. Two key elements are the confining of gifts under the agreement to the genuinely marginalized (rather than to opportunistic leaders), and the nurturing of a public-regarding ethos that would include, for example, concern for women as victims of *raskolism*. More explicit attention must be focused on just how to institutionalize the second element. One possibility would

be to link the mass surrender to that other incipient restorative justice institution in Papua New Guinea, the retreat. Part of a surrender agreement could be a retreat, on completion of the agreement, in which women from the relevant community(ies) would assess how well the agreement had been honored from their perspective. Marginal groups should have a forum to report whether they were genuinely the beneficiaries of the gifts in the agreement or whether these were siphoned off by others.

The surrender provides the gift of amnesty or leniency and, possibly, material resources in the form of jobs and projects. In this way, the surrender provides a point of entry into legitimate gift and commodity economies for those who have previously been excluded. In other words, people who are marginal because they are not recipients of state gifting become less marginal as a result of the surrender. In addition, amnesties, parole, resources, and other gifts provided through surrender are, in theory, conditional on the fulfillment of the terms of the surrender. Where these terms, such as the handing over of weapons, or completion of training or work commitments, are not met, surrender gifts should be withdrawn. In the case study in chapter 4, there was no organized follow-up either to provide assistance to the group, or to ensure that those involved abided by the conditions of the surrender. In that instance the surrender agreement appeared to be largely symbolic. Mass surrenders are unlikely to affect *raskol* activities until they are based on contracts that bind parties to a clearly formulated reform strategy with conditions that are well understood. The basis of such contracts must lie in trust and moral suasion anchored in the cultural values of participants. Monitoring and enforcing need not be done by the state. A state interested in nurturing reintegrative capabilities would do better to delegate monitoring and render the agreement self-enforcing. Lack of organized support for surrendering groups, as well as lack of enforcement of the surrender contract, increases the likelihood of reentry to crime after the initial enthusiasm, goodwill, and resources have been depleted. In order to fully capitalize on the potential for crime reduction presented by the surrender, attention has to be paid to ways of formalizing its linkages to employment, education, and social development options, as well as to ensuring that the surrendering group fulfills its contractual obligations.

The surrender and, more clearly, gang retreats, encourage a participatory process comprising consultation and negotiation between marginal groups and state officials, mediated by a neutral broker. The role of the broker is critical in nurturing the level of trust required to make this process work, and in moving beyond the mutual suspicions between the marginalized and the state. This process can also strengthen the state through the agency of the broker. The broker is an exemplar of

transformative leadership, a practical demonstration of how leadership can be attentive to the needs of the public.

The process of deliberative democracy⁵ in the surrender also provides an important way of constituting civil society that is of particular significance, because the absence of an intermediary between the state and local-level social organization has contributed to many of the disintegrative outcomes discussed earlier. Civil society in this context refers to those institutions and associations “that are separate from the state, yet a condition of its existence, and perhaps a counter to its potential to become arbitrary and authoritarian.” Most territory-level institutions in Papua New Guinea are “creatures of the state [and] their leaders reluctant to bite the hand that feeds them” (Larmour 1992, 107). The churches are an important exception and through bodies such as the Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace, and Development have been vocal critics of authoritarian policies and leading advocates of social justice. Unsurprisingly, the churches have become the leading brokers in surrenders and gang retreats, as well as providing the most active participants in post-surrender strategies. The surrender discussed in chapter 4 was atypical insofar as the brokers came from the community police. Church groups often have close and continuing relations with marginal social groups and have proven adept at nurturing a level of trust that is usually lacking between such groups and state officials.⁶ Given their spiritual mission in a nominally Christian country, they are also ideally suited to administering the integrating rituals of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Surrenders and retreats are distinctively Papua New Guinean modalities of restorative justice. They have sprung up in the soil of indigenous cultures, against the background of the nation’s institutional failures and its critical material needs. They also show the possibility of developing local responses to those material needs. In many cases, at least in the short term, they have helped marginal people. The incipient materialist remedy of the surrender is transacted through a culturally grounded leadership that within the institution of the surrender shows the prospect of transformative gifting. As well, it is transacted through deliberative institutions that are also a medium for strengthening the institutions of state and civil society. Western theories of institutional design based on rewards and costs, which make virtuous citizenship of the state rational (Goodin 1996), are of little use in Papua New Guinea. The necessary building blocks for institutional reshaping are not a classical rational-choice foundation of rewards and punishments, but gifts, because the dominant model of indigenous leadership is not conducive to either the rational maximization of self-interested accumulation or citizenship of the modern nation. Those who conform to this model are accumulators and distributors of gifts that can be distributed in ways that are more or

less beneficial to marginal people, that strengthen or disintegrate existing institutions, and that retrieve cultures or add to their disintegration.

Conclusion

This analysis of current challenges of order in Papua New Guinea demonstrates the resilience of older styles of leadership and the continuing significance of the gift economy in the face of pervasive social and economic change. Rather than disappearing as the old order is swept away by the new, old and new have become progressively entangled. Elaborate patterns of social interaction and mutual transformation exist against the broader background of political independence, state formation, and integration into the global economy. The familiar complex of leadership and exchange manifests itself in crime, reform, and politics. In each context, success in the form of personal power and prestige is achieved by those most adept at manipulating social relations and resources.

The weakness of the postcolonial economy has contributed to the centrality of the state as the principal controller of material resources and therefore to the primacy of politics. In turn the insinuation of the domestic gift economy into the operations of the modern state has accentuated the role of gifting as the organizing principle for state-designated “development.” These dynamics have been facilitated in the transition from colonial to postcolonial statehood. This transition has opened up the postcolonial state to indigenous permeation in a manner that was foreshadowed, but was not possible on such a scale under its colonial predecessor. In practice, these processes of interpenetration at the level of state have produced distinctly disintegrative outcomes. Big-man politics has been inimical to public-regarding leadership, nurturing inequitable practices of gifting that benefit the few while neglecting the majority. In the process it has devalued bureaucratic processes, undermined state legitimacy, reinforced marginalization, and contributed to the dispersal of domination.

Growing levels of violence have accompanied the increasingly desperate competition for resources. Ultimately, the way out of this disintegrative cycle lies in nurturing a deliberative democracy that builds on existing social foundations but avoids the distorting, counterproductive, and inequitable outcomes that have been examined in detail in each of the case studies. At present a distinctive Papua New Guinean deliberative democracy is not dead but has been seriously weakened. This weakening has occurred beneath the weight of mass marginalization under a gift economy detached from traditional reciprocities, and unleashed rapaciously on expanding circles of opportunity from state, overseas development assistance, and exploitation of the country’s abundant nat-

ural resources. Nevertheless, it can be resuscitated when nurtured by institutions of civil society. Surrenders and retreats provide important insights into how this might be achieved in the case of *raskolism*. Likewise, the example of post-Bougainville responses among the larger mining projects provides important lessons on how the state might break out of its present downward spiral. These are, of course, merely glimmers of hope in an environment where crisis, violence, and pessimism are endemic. All the same, the consequences of failing to identify and act on such hopes are sobering. They would certainly include further deterioration of law and order.

Notes

CHAPTER 2: ORDER IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1. See, for example, Watson 1971; Chowning 1979; Salisbury 1964; and Standish 1978, 22–23.

2. The reconstruction of the 1935 Hides-O'Malley expedition into the New Guinea interior provides an unsurpassed account of first contact from the perspective of both indigenous and European actors, the misunderstandings that arose, and their often tragic consequences (Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991). See also Connolly and Anderson 1987 and their 1983 film; Meleisea and Schoeffel 1997, 119–151.

3. See, for example, Wolfers 1975, 62–73; Firth 1982; Sack 1985; Hiery 1995.

4. For a detailed history of introduced law and courts in colonial Papua and New Guinea, see Chalmers 1978.

5. For a discussion of how these principles were developed in the superior courts, see Dinnen 1988.

6. Lord Hailey, a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations (quoted in Mair 1948, xvi).

7. *A Time for Building* is the title of Paul Hasluck's memoir of his time as Australian minister for External Territories (Hasluck 1976). For a recent assessment of Hasluck's work see Nelson 1995.

8. For a history of early police and prison organization in Papua and New Guinea see Downs 1947.

9. For a discussion of the politics behind the Derham Report, see Sack 1989.

10. The term *wantok* in Melanesian Pidgin means one who speaks the same language (literally, one talk) but is popularly used to describe relations of obligation binding relatives, members of the same clan or tribal group, and much looser forms of association. In the context of modern institutions, *wantokism* is generally used in a negative sense to describe the practice of nepotism.

11. In their deliberations, the Constitutional Planning Committee stated, "we do not take development to be synonymous with material progress. For us the only authentic development is integral human development. This means that we use the term development to mean nothing less than the unending

process of improvement of every man and woman as a whole person” (quoted in Brunton and Colquhoun-Kerr 1985, 7).

12. It was considered politically necessary to establish provincial governments in each province after this first concession, and by 1981 each of the nineteen provinces had their own elected government.

13. This view is clearly expressed in a letter to C E Barnes, Australian minister for External Territories, from the vice-president of the Western Highlands Chamber of Commerce, dated August 1971 (the exact date is unclear) and titled “Increase in the Crime Rate.” A 452/1, 71/3627, National Archives, Canberra.

14. The provision in the Inter-Group Fighting Act reversing the onus of proof was subsequently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in *Constitutional Reference no 3 of 1978 (Papua New Guinea Law Reports 1978)*.

15. In this context demands are periodically made for the return of the colonial *kiap* system as a way of restoring order in the rural areas.

16. See Toft 1985, 1986; Toft and Bonnell 1985.

17. For a fuller discussion of the gender of violence in Melanesia, see Dinnen and Ley 2000.

CHAPTER 3: PERSPECTIVES ON CRIME AND DISORDER

1. See, for example, Becker 1968; Ehrlich 1981; Pyle 1983; Buchanan and Hartley 1992.

2. See Levantis 1997a, 1997b; Levantis and Chand 1997.

3. These were advisory committees operating at provincial level prior to the 1995 reforms to the provincial government system. Their task was to monitor and advise on matters of law and order at the provincial level.

4. For a review of law and order discourse in Papua New Guinea, including perceived causes and solutions, see Dinnen 1993d.

5. Critical criminology drew on earlier Marxist and neo-Marxist accounts of crime. See, for example, Bonger 1969.

6. See, for example, Amarshi, Good, and Mortimer 1979; Boehringer and Giles 1977; Boehringer 1978; Fitzpatrick 1980; Paliwala, Zorn, and Bayne 1978.

7. Several of the other papers delivered along with Parkop’s illustrate the dependency thesis applied to social and economic issues in contemporary Papua New Guinea (see CAA-FFH 1993).

8. Academic versions of this view draw on the work on social banditry by historians such as Hobsbawm (1969), and emerge from an appreciation of the prevalence of popular resistance to aspects of colonial rule (see Crummey 1985; Cohen 1986).

9. Australian filmmakers Bob Connelly and Robin Anderson provide a fascinating and sensitive portrayal of cultural interactions in the sphere of business development in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea in their films *Joe Leahy’s Neighbours* (1988) and *Black Harvest* (1992). Chris Owen explores related issues in his *Man Without Pigs* (1990).

10. This orientation is reflected in the front page headline from a 1993 newspaper report: “Once feared ‘King Eric’ is a new man—tears at Nadzab as ‘born-again’ former gangster returns” (*PC*, 13 July 1993). For a discussion of

criminality and religion in Melanesia, see Trompf (1994a, 339–354). For an ethnographic perspective of Christianity in Melanesia, see Barker (1990).

11. In 1988, for example, a government policy paper called for an annual day of prayer as part of the official response to escalating lawlessness (Narokobi 1988). In 1994, the then police minister told a youth gathering that becoming “born again” would solve the country’s social and economic problems (*PC*, 5 April 1994).

12. A study carried out by the Australian federal police on behalf of AIDAB reportedly claimed that about half of the PNG police were poorly educated and incompetent in their jobs (*Times*, 31 January 1991).

CHAPTER 4: *ROT BILONG RASKOL*

1. *Rot Bilong Raskol* is *Tok Pisin* for “the raskol way.” *Rot* is a long-established metaphor in Papua New Guinea. Filer referred to Melanesian “road theory” as the way in which village people describe the best ways of achieving “development” or the good life. Decisions are presented as choices between different “roads,” that is, *rot bilong bisnis* (the business way), *rot bilong kastom* (the traditional way), *rot bilong lotu* (the religious way), and so on (Filer 1990, 86 n 14).

2. First assistant secretary to minister of territories, “Corporal Punishment of Native Offenders: Papua and New Guinea,” 8 December 1960 (A452/1, 61/3271, National Archives, Canberra).

3. See, for example, “Vagrants a Problem, Lae Court Told,” (*PC*, 19 April 1971; “Concern at Lawlessness,” (PNG press release no 2665, 16 December 1971; “The ‘Crime’ of Being Out of Work in a Town Like Lae,” (*PC*, 10 March 1972; A452/1, 71/3011, National Archives, Canberra). This general pattern was confirmed in the 1974 *Report of the Peace and Good Order Committee* (PNG 1974).

4. Inspector J Bonono, quoted in Oram (1976, 15).

5. Unsigned report by Superintendent PR Giddings, Police Headquarters, Konedobu, Port Moresby, 3 April 1978.

6. Draft Hansard, Tenth Day, 12 June 1985, p 20.

7. *Statement no 3 of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on National Emergency* 1985, 7.

8. Toward the end of my research period (1994), the Mafia appeared to split, with a new subgroup called KGK (Kerema-Goilala-Kairuku) breaking away from the main Mafia grouping. Informants attributed this split to the death of the former Mafia “father,” allegedly at the hands of the police in 1991.

9. *Kakana* is a term of respect used to refer to the elder brother of a man, or a woman’s elder sister, in the Hiri Motu language spoken by people in Central Province. Once again, this kinship term indicates the personalized bond between leaders and followers.

10. For a discussion of the origins of this scheme, see Dinnen 1993a.

11. A version of the surrender narrative has been published elsewhere (Dinnen 1995).

12. This account is slightly different from that in Harris’s history of Port Moresby gangs (1988). Schiltz claimed that Goipex is a composite name, with *Goi* standing for Goilala, and *pex* referring to the first leader, Tapex. He also

said that the 105 has no numerical meaning but is a way of writing GOI upside down (1985, 143).

13. This is particularly the case among the Goilala, whose region is now accessible by road from Port Moresby. This strong ethnic identity is also negatively reinforced by popular stereotyping of Goilala migrants as prone to violence and crime.

14. The overall leader of the group was called *apai* in the Kunimaipa language of Goilala. This appears to be another kinship term used to express respect. Jimmy's group communicated with each other in Kunimaipa but were also fluent in *Tok Pisin* and Hiri Motu, and most could speak English.

15. In July 1991, a local newspaper reported the fatal shooting by Port Moresby police of a thirty-two-year-old male from Tapini, Central Province. The victim was reportedly known to police "as a hard core criminal with a history of armed robberies and multiple escapes from prison" and was on the run after escaping from Buimo jail at the time of the shooting (*PC*, 17 July 1991).

16. *Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Police and the Metropolitan Youth League*, 16 October 1992.

17. This is the Office for International Development Assistance (OIDA). Additional confusion was caused when the *Post-Courier* prematurely reported that the Metropolitan Youth League had secured a K8,000 grant from AIDAB (the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau; *PC*, 3 November 1992). At this stage the application for assistance was still being processed.

18. These letters were filed with the Foundation for Law Order and Justice, to whom I am grateful for the access provided.

19. Letter from KGD, Horse Camp Block, addressed to prime minister, 6 July 1991.

20. Letter from Nine-Mile Youth Group, addressed to prime minister, 6 July 1991.

21. Letter from president of Era Youth Group, addressed to prime minister, 6 July 1991.

22. Letter from Horse Camp Youth, addressed to "Mr Minister," 6 July 1991. Capital letters used in original.

23. Letter from GGB-Mafia Branch, Laloki, addressed to prime minister, 6 July 1991.

24. A prime example is Port Moresby-based Pastor Charles Lapa and his Life Outreach Ministries. His organization conducts annual Operation *Tanim Bel* Crusades in different parts of the country, led by born-again ex-criminals and designed to appeal to the "unwanted and lost." (*Tanim Bel* is a *Tok Pisin* phrase for a change of heart, spiritual conversion, or more broadly, personal transformation.) These crusades also aim to "provide a platform for testimonies by gang leaders where they apologise to the community for their former activities" (LOM 1989, 1).

25. For a critical appraisal of Hobsbawm's work, see O'Malley (1979a, 1979b) and Blok (1972). For work addressing the social dimension of crime in the developing world, see Cohen (1982, 1986); Crummey (1986); Sumner (1982).

26. Letter from "Criminals of KGK Koboni of Horse Camp."

27. Contrary to the popular view—by no means confined to Papua New

Guinea—that prison provides an enjoyable and pampered existence for inmates, see A Strathern (1973); M Strathern (1976).

28. Letter read out at the 1991 Mirigeda gang retreat from “Criminals of KGK Koboni of Horse Camp.”

29. This situation is reinforced by the existence of a separate “court” and set of laws, the Leadership Tribunal and Leadership Code, for dealing with offenses committed by those in public office. It is also the popular perception that public officeholders are treated more leniently under these arrangements than those who appear before the “ordinary” courts.

CHAPTER 5: THE POLITICS OF MINING SECURITY

1. Nelson identified three phases in the history of mining in Papua New Guinea (1992): The first, 1888–1926, involved small-scale, alluvial activities by individual miners in the islands and more accessible parts of the Papuan mainland. The second phase, 1929–1965, was “capital intensive company mining” concentrated in the goldfields of the Bulolo Valley in Morobe Province (Nelson 1992, 11). The third and current phase—also capital-intensive company mining—started at Panguna in 1972. Thompson and MacWilliam characterized this third phase as the “internationalisation of mining capital” entailing a massive transformation in the scale of operations (1992, 164).

2. Minister Ijape to president of PNGCMP, 14 August 1991, Port Moresby.

3. The minister’s proposal was titled “Strategic Location for Construction of Houses.”

4. “Security for Mining and Petroleum Projects,” PNGCMP, 18 October 1991.

5. Letter from Minister Ijape, PNGCMP, 23 August 1991.

6. NEC submission from minister of police, not numbered, 22 October 1991, titled “Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary Rapid Deployment Unit.”

7. Letter from minister of police to president of PNGCMP, 30 October 1991.

8. Letter from president of PNGCMP to minister of police, 13 November 1991.

9. Letter from minister of police to president of PNGCMP, 24 November 1991.

10. Press release, 10 January 1992, under name of managing director, CRA Minerals (PNG) Proprietary Limited, Sydney.

11. Faxed minute from PNGCMP, 16 January 1992.

12. The replies from the different projects were summarized in a document titled “Security at Mining and Petroleum Projects,” 24 January 1992.

13. Geno 1992b, 5.

14. Geno 1992a.

15. Fax from project director, British Petroleum Exploration, Hides Development, to PNGCMP, 4 February 1992.

16. While acknowledging that Australia had already contributed over K30 million through the AIDAB-funded Police Development Project, he declined the offer of additional advisers, commenting that “we have more than enough advisers on the field now” (*PC*, 14 February 1992).

17. PNGCMP minutes of security meeting held at conference room, Parliament House, 17 February 1992.

18. According to the same minutes, the minister claimed that the Rapid Deployment Unit base might come under the influence of politicians if it were located in one of the mining or petroleum provinces!

19. As stated in a letter to the commissioner from Chief Superintendent G Vaki, officer in charge of coordinating the project, 27 February 1992.

20. NEC policy submission titled “Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary: Funding Requirement for the formation of Rapid Development (sic) Unit to Protect Mineral, Gas and Petroleum Development Sites.” Not numbered, 26 February 1992. The draft submission appears under Minister Ijape’s name but is not signed.

21. Geno 1992a, 1.

22. This was the third security review conducted during this period. As with the commissioner’s tour, Vaki’s tour appears to have been organized and paid for by the industry.

23. Vaki nd.

24. Letter from president of PNGCMP to Prime Minister Namaliu, 3 April 1992.

25. Details are in the following documents in PNGCMP files, Port Moresby: fax from British Petroleum (BP) Hides security supervisor to Placer security superintendent, “Unauthorised Departure from BP Hides by Mobile Squad 8 Detachment,” 7 April 1992; fax from BP Hides operations superintendent to provincial police commander, Southern Highlands Province, 8 April 1992; fax from BP corporate affairs manager to Chief Superintendent Vaki, Police Headquarters, Port Moresby, 9 April 1992; fax from Chief Superintendent Vaki to police commander, Highlands Command, 13 April 1992.

26. Fax from security supervisor at Hides to security superintendent at Porgera, “Detachment of Mobile Squad from Hides,” 24 April 1992.

27. The PNGCMP executive officer had told the press about the facilities developers had offered the police for phase one of the project (*PC*, 16 April 1992). Commissioner Geno wrote to him on 21 April 1992, stating that “we do not, as a normal procedure, allow persons outside the Police Force to talk to the press on matters such as this.”

28. Discussed in a letter from PNGCMP to industry representatives, 22 April 1992.

29. Project security meeting, file notes, 27 April 1992.

30. Minutes from the meeting indicate that the executive officer would lobby the prime minister through one deputy secretary, while the Kutubu Joint Venture representative would lobby him through another. Both would also seek meetings with the prime minister.

31. For a recent and detailed examination of such a case and its potential for abuse, see PNGOC 1994.

32. “Rapid Deployment Unit Construction of Infrastructure Works and Buildings on Turnkey Package,” policy submission to National Executive Council from Mathias Ijape, minister for police, not numbered, 29 April 1992. In the submission, the minister noted the earlier council decision 15/92 instructing the ministers for police and finance “to report back to the Cabinet on the possible source of funding and conditions of funding arrangements from the Chamber of Mines and Petroleum for the implementation of the Rapid De-

ployment Unit base headquarters to be constructed in Goroka.” The version of NEC decision 15/92 signed by the prime minister and the NEC secretary did not contain any such instructions in relation to the PNGCMP and, moreover, specified Tari as the site for the proposed base.

33. In their formal consideration of NEC decision 15/92, the senior police management committee—the Police Executive Committee—had objected to the proposed appointment of Kias Inape as consulting engineers to the project on the grounds that normal government tender procedures had not been followed (minutes of special PEC meeting, 13 February 1992, signed by an acting deputy commissioner).

34. NEC decision 88/92, “Rapid Deployment Unit, Construction of Infrastructure Works and Buildings on Turnkey Package,” meeting 22/92, 6 May 1992. The decision was signed by Deputy Prime Minister Akoka Doi, as acting chairman (Prime Minister Namaliu was on an overseas visit), and the secretary to the prime minister.

35. This information was revealed in a letter from the police commissioner to the new Wingti government in August 1992, “Re: Review of Turnkey Project: Rapid Deployment Unit, Goroka,” (letter to the secretary of the prime minister and National Executive Council, dated 11 August, 1992.) The commissioner stated that the Finance Department had rejected the turnkey proposal in a letter dated 22 April 1992.

36. NEC decision 120/92, 24 June 1992, signed by Prime Minister Namaliu.

37. Letter from PNGCMP to acting secretary of Department of Finance and Planning, 1 May 1992. The major portion of the industry’s funding was to come from the Porgera and Kutubu Joint Ventures.

38. These figures and deployment details are contained in a subsequent review of the Rapid Deployment Unit prepared by the PNGCMP. Although not dated, it is believed to have been prepared in early 1993. The chamber’s figures differ from those quoted in the media but are probably more accurate, given the industry’s close involvement with the scheme. The *Post-Courier* reported 65 graduates at the June ceremony (11 June 1992) and 38 in August (3 August 1992).

39. Wingti’s subsequent announcement that he would seek to increase state equity in the Porgera mine from 10 percent to 30 percent caused a different kind of insecurity among investors and immediately led to a one-billion-kina loss in the value of PNG resource shares on the Australian stock market (see Standish 1993).

40. Letter from secretary of Department of the Prime Minister to police commissioner, 6 August 1992.

41. Correspondence between Minister Tanao and Finance Minister Sir Julius Chan was reported in the media. According to the *Post-Courier*, Tanao stated that the police department needed K23.4 million to make outstanding payments and that further funds were required to keep the force operating until the end of the year. Police operational costs on Bougainville were reportedly K5 million for September alone. Other outstanding recurrent costs included K750,000 for salaries and allowances; K1.8 million, overtime; K550,000, leave fares; K700,000, travel and subsistence; K2 million, utilities; K1.1 million, operational materials; K3.3 million, transport and fuel; K1.5 million, routine main-

tenance; K500,000, other operational expenses; K1.7 million, replacement of vehicles; and K4.5 million specific maintenance (*PC*, 20 August 1992).

42. As late as November 1992, Western Highlands police were reported to be “furious” over the nonpayment of their electoral allowances by the Electoral Commission for work done during the June 1992 elections (*PC*, 10 November 1992).

43. Letter from Police Minister Avusi Tanao to Prime Minister Wingti, “Papua New Guinea–Australia Security Cooperation: Provision or Diversion of Adequate Funds to Complete the Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU) Project,” 24 September 1992, not signed.

44. Letter from PNGCMP to managing director of Chevron Niugini Proprietary Limited, 9 October 1992.

45. One of the most consistent and vocal critics of the Rapid Deployment Unit was Peter Yama, the managing director of a large private security firm, Yama Security Services (*PC*, 1 December 1992). The tenor of his critique suggested that elements of the private security industry viewed the Rapid Deployment Unit as a competitor for lucrative security contracts with the minerals and petroleum industry.

46. Popular concerns with police excesses in the resource provinces were by no means confined to the activities of the Rapid Deployment Unit. The activities of the mobile squads during the same period also generated widespread local protest. In October 1992, for example, the national member for Kandep in Enga Province publicly called for the dismissal of the provincial mobile squad commander following a series of raids by the squad aimed at eradicating black market liquor operations. He alleged that four women had been raped and about K500,000 worth of property destroyed or taken away (*PC*, 21 October 1992).

47. The Porgera Joint Venture was acutely aware of the need to avoid RDU excesses and took the initiative on several occasions to defuse tensions generated on such occasions. The PJV Community Relations Department was particularly active in this respect. An illustration of such an intervention is found in a report written by Jonathan Paraia, PJV community relations superintendent, to Bruce Gray, security superintendent, “Mediation of Incident Involving Police RDU and Tari Youths,” 9 December 1992. My thanks to Glenn Banks, Human Geography, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, for bringing this report to my attention.

48. PNGCMP file note, 4 December 1992.

49. Copies were sent to the managing director of Placer Niugini Ltd; the minister for Mining and Petroleum; the minister for Provincial Affairs and Village Development; the minister for justice; the commissioner for police; Chief Superintendent Vaki; the assistant police commissioner for operations; the secretary for Provincial Affairs; and the executive officer of the PNGCMP.

50. “Rapid Deployment Unit,” PNGCMP. Believed to have been prepared in early 1993.

51. PNGCMP minutes of Annual General Meeting, March 1993.

52. Policy submission from the prime minister to the National Executive Committee, “Recommendations for Law and Order,” not numbered, April 1993.

53. The draft submission recommended that the National Executive Council approve increasing police funding by approximately K36 million. Only K10 million appears to have been approved in subsequent NEC deliberations (*PC*, 7 May 1993).

54. The commissioner's request was made in a letter he wrote to the executive officer, PNGCMP, 31 May 1993. The industry's favorable response was conveyed in a letter from the executive officer to members of the security subcommittee, 9 June 1993.

55. Letter from executive officer, PNGCMP, to members of the security subcommittee, 9 June 1993. The same letter stated that Chief Superintendent Vaki was being replaced by Chief Superintendent Gamini Ora as head of the Rapid Deployment Unit. Vaki had been appointed in charge of the mobile squads.

56. Letter from Commissioner Tokam to executive officer, PNGCMP, 9 June 1993.

57. Minutes of Security Sub-Committee, 16 June 1993. Two adequately resourced and well-disciplined mobile squads were considered necessary—one at Laiagam (Enga) and the other at either Poroma or Tari (Southern Highlands). Support was also voiced for more general-duties police to be stationed at project sites.

58. Fax from representative of Barracuda, 17 June 1993.

59. A detailed and critical response to this concept was prepared under the name of the then police commissioner, Ila Geno "Creation of a New Constabulary 'Elite' Tactical Force of 300 Members."

60. NEC decision 15/92, meeting 2/92, 31 January 1992. The provision to approve the engagement of Defence Systems Limited appears in both versions of the NEC decision cited.

61. Letter from Minister of Police Mathias Ijape to Alastair Morrison, chairman of Defence Systems (London), 5 February 1992. In his letter, the minister suggested that, subject to contractual negotiations, DSL training could commence in March.

62. Security meeting held in Conference Room, Parliament House, 17 December 1992.

63. "Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary: Funding Requirement for the Formation of Rapid Development (sic) Unit to Protect Mineral, Gas and Petroleum Development Sites." NEC policy submission, 26 February 1992.

64. Letter from Commissioner Tokam to Police Minister Tanao, "Enhanced Tactical Capability RPNGC," 7 July 1993.

65. Information provided in Annex A accompanying Commissioner Tokam's letter of 7 July 1993, titled "Proposed Police Tactical Unit RPNGC." Close similarities between this annex and other DSL documents makes it reasonable to assume it was prepared, at least initially, by Defence Systems themselves.

66. "Proposal for Defence Systems Limited (DSL) to Provide Training Consultancy for the Police Tactical Force (PTF) Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC)," no date. Prepared by DSL Security (Asia), Singapore. Among the training facilities that would have to be provided were lecture rooms, gymnasium, indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, and a close-quarters battle house. The main operational element of the proposed tactical force was the Police Tactical Unit, which in turn would comprise three principal groups: a

command group for planning, command and liaison, intelligence, and communications functions; an assault group, responsible for the physical conduct of hard arrest, raid, or rescue; and a marksman group, to closely monitor the target from a concealed location, relay relevant information to the assault group, neutralize offenders and protect hostages, and reinforce the assault group.

67. Comments made in notes for discussion with the commissioner, signed but not dated.

68. Letter from police commissioner to minister for police, 18 August 1992.

69. Reply from secretary of Finance and Planning to police commissioner, 15 October 1993.

70. These views were expressed in a letter from Defence Systems' country manager to a senior government official, 23 September 1993.

71. NEC decision 168/93, meeting 61/93, "Proposed Raising and Training of a Police Tactical Force," 4 November 1993, signed by Prime Minister Wingti.

72. Document titled "Proposed Raising and Training of a Police Tactical Force," not dated and unsigned.

73. Letter from senior vice president, PNGCMP to Prime Minister Wingti, 15 December 1993.

74. Letter to Police Commissioner Tokam titled "Rapid Deployment Unit," 16 December 1993.

75. Letter from Commissioner Tokam to executive officer, PNGCMP, "Replacement of Rapid Deployment Unit," 21 January 1994.

76. File note of PNGCMP security subcommittee, 15 February 1994. In PNGCMP files.

77. Information from fax to manager, Placer Niugini, from superintendent of Loss Control, Porgera Joint Venture, 31 March 1994.

78. Masket Iangalio was moved from the Minerals and Petroleum portfolio to Finance in the same reshuffle.

79. NEC policy submission, "Proposed Raising and Training of a Police Tactical Force," not numbered, 3 March 1994.

80. Informal record of comments made by acting commissioner to development project official during a meeting, dated 30 March 1994. In the same meeting the acting commissioner said that he believed about K20 million of the K27 million originally asked by Defence Systems consisted of consultancy fees.

81. Memorandum, "Raising and Training of a Police Tactful (*sic*) Force," 31 March 1994.

82. Information from a memorandum from the Development Project Special Services Division team leader, "Proposed Formation of a Police Task Force," 5 May 1994.

83. Letter from secretary of finance to police commissioner, "Police Tactical Force," 18 May 1994.

84. Contractual documents between Defence Systems and the PNG government were supposed to be finalized during the visit but were not because the necessary papers were not ready. It is not certain who funded this visit, but it has been suggested by a close observer that Defence Systems was again responsible (personal communication, 15 December 1994). There appeared to be no government funds available for such a purpose.

85. In the case of the Porgera Joint Venture, Bonnell claimed, “While the PJV had the ability to call upon police—as does anyone—the PJV does not in any way direct the police. However community perceptions are such that any excesses of police action are blamed on the PJV” (1994, 83).

86. During the construction phase of the Porgera mine in Enga Province, for example, the Porgera Joint Venture upgraded 70 kilometers of the Enga Provincial Highway, and replaced 38 bridges between Mount Hagen and Porgera, in order to bring in large earthmoving equipment required for plant site excavation. An additional 70 kilometers of the National Highway had to be upgraded between the Tomba Pass and Wapenamanda (details in address by Vic Botts, managing director of Placer Niugini, to PNG Mining and Petroleum Seminar, Sydney, 31 August–1 September 1992).

87. This scheme was pioneered by the Porgera Joint Venture and became part of the national resource taxation regime in 1992. Under the scheme, expenditure incurred on prescribed infrastructure development becomes eligible for tax rebate to the extent of 0.75 percent of assessable income or the tax payable, whichever is less (see Heim 1992; Imbun 1994).

88. Letter from corporate affairs manager, British Petroleum (PNG), to Commissioner Tokam, 30 October 1992.

89. In his threat assessment report, Chief Superintendent Vaki noted that the Porgera Joint Venture employed 210 security staff working three shifts, twenty days on, ten days off (Vaki *nd*). Approximately 140 security staff were on roster duty on any one day. Staff included static guards, escort teams, investigators, and supervisors. These figures included a group of 40 special constables, known as the Mobile Reaction Force, trained to respond to riots and low-level armed-offender incidents. A dog squad was also provided. On the other hand, the regular police presence at Porgera consisted of 8 constables under the command of an inspector and a sergeant.

90. The 1990 Annual Report of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary defines the primary role of the mobile squads as undertaking paramilitary tasks associated with civil unrest and internal security. In the vicinity of the Porgera mine, Bonnell claimed that the police have been responsible for destroying more houses than have been destroyed as a result of tribal warfare or “payback” arson. In one case the police reportedly burned and looted approximately 39 houses in the Mungalep area after the official opening of the Porgera mine on 20 October 1990. In late 1993 they allegedly burned more than 300 houses at Paiam in retaliation for the killing of a fellow policeman (Bonnell 1994, 89).

91. Proposal for Defence Systems Limited to provide training consultancy for the Police Tactical Force, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (Defence Systems Limited, no date).

92. “Creation of a New Constabulary Elite Tactical Force of 300.” Draft paper under the name of Police Commissioner Geno, September 1991.

93. See, for example, PNG 1992a; PNGOC 1994.

94. Former Minister Ijape’s handling of the Rapid Deployment Unit proposal was subsequently investigated by the Ombudsman Commission (personal communication from a senior legal officer at the Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea, December 1994). The details and outcome of this investigation have not been made public. Ijape lost his seat in 1997.

95. For some illustrations and commentary, see Australia 1991, chapter 2.

CHAPTER 6: FIGHTING AND VOTES

1. “1992 National General Elections: Debrief,” addressed to police commissioner and signed by Deputy Commissioner Nenta (chief of operations), 19 August 1992, 1.

2. For purposes of this chapter, *violence* is defined as the intentional use, or threatened use, of physical force.

3. For an earlier version of this narrative see Dinnen 1996.

4. See Reilly 1996. For a recent critique of the first-past-the-post system by a former PNG politician, see “Dutton: Voting System Cause of Difficulties,” (*PC*, 31 August 1995). According to Warren Dutton, former North Fly member of parliament, this system effectively disenfranchised 90 percent of the PNG electorate.

5. Section 141 of the Organic Law on National Elections.

6. This trend was continued in 1997, with a record number of 2,371 candidates contesting, 716 more than in 1992 (Manning 1997, 3).

7. PNG, 1993b. After the 1997 elections 88 petitions were filed, covering all provinces except East New Britain.

8. Among the ministers who lost their seats were Deputy Prime Minister Akoka Doi, Speaker Dennis Young, Education Minister Utula Samana, and Health Minister Karl Stack. Then Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu retained his seat by less than 400 votes (Wesley-Smith 1993).

9. Sir Julius Chan’s Peoples Progress Party won 8 seats in the 1992 elections. By August 1994, however, its parliamentary membership had risen to 20, and by September 1995 to 30 (*Australian*, 15 Sept 1995).

10. In May 1993 then Leader of Government Business Roy Yaki, MP, suggested that there were probably more illegally acquired firearms in the country than legal weapons in the hands of the three disciplined forces (police, defense force, Corrective Institutions Service). During fieldwork for this chapter, the Enga provincial police commander also claimed that the number of illegal firearms in the province was much greater than those in the possession of the police force (personal communication, Wabag, 10 July 1992). Andrew Strathern provided an insightful account of the growing availability and use of firearms in the Highlands (1993b).

11. Standish, personal communication. These and other data for Simbu are covered in Standish (1996).

12. Inspector Gary Baki, Southern Highlands provincial police commander, said that four handmade guns were confiscated during polling in Mendi, including one from a successful candidate (Baki 1992).

13. Letter reproduced as attachment to electoral commissioner’s preliminary report; underlining in original.

14. Baki 1992. Gaudi noted an increase in the use of gangs in the Lae area to intimidate voters (1992, 69).

15. Interview with acting returning officer for the Komo-Margarima electorate in Mendi, 7 July 1992.

16. Letter to electoral commissioner, 8 July 1992, “The 1992 National General Election Assessment Report: Southern Highlands.”

17. “Preliminary Report on the National Election of Members for the Fifth National Parliament,” Electoral Commission, July 1993.

18. Wabag Station Commander Willie informed me that his men had been instructed not to resist when confronted by overwhelming opposition (1992).

19. In his debriefing report, Deputy Commissioner Nenta stated that the 1,500 police personnel involved in policing the elections in the Highlands had access to only 13 vehicles, which in many cases were used by electoral officials. This “caused Policemen not getting to their assigned polling places. As a result some polling booths did not have Police presence” (Nenta 1992, 7).

20. Raymond Tupundu, law graduate, interviewed at Mendi, 8 July 1992; Timbon Imbalio, assistant secretary, District Services, Southern Highlands Provincial Government, interviewed at Mendi, 8 July 1992.

21. Sam 1992. Sam also claimed that the provincial electoral officer chartered an aircraft to bring the additional ballot papers back to Southern Highlands Province.

22. Ketan indicated that the motive may also have been a straightforward robbery (1996, 263–264).

23. For a more general discussion of this concept in the third world, see Spiro 1966.

24. Address by Speaker of Parliament Rabbie L Namaliu at Parliamentary Library, Parliament House, Canberra, 29 September 1995.

25. Distribution of money and other resources does not necessarily guarantee votes. Ultimately cultural considerations—notably loyalties revolving around local entities such as clan, language group, and village—exercise a more significant influence over voting behavior (Turner 1990, 107).

26. This amounts to 96,000 bottles (Goddard 1995, 66).

27. Discretionary funds have attracted criticism from economic managers inside Papua New Guinea and international creditors at the World Bank, but so far they have proved impossible to abolish. Despite the dire state of the national economy, members of parliament voted in 1998 to give themselves K500,000 a year in district support grants.

28. This tendency has been noted by a number of observers of Highlands societies. Highlanders’ litigiousness is conveyed in Meggitt’s notion of “fighting in the courts” (1977, 157). Ultimately, violence may be used to get around unfavorable court decisions (see A Strathern 1972).

29. In 1991 the National Parliament passed the Criminal Law (Compensation) Act (no 26 of 1991) to regulate such compensation demands. Subsequent failure to implement the act is indicative of underlying problems of capacity and implementation and a feature shared with many other draconian legislative responses.

30. Disgruntled defense force personnel marched on the National Parliament in February 1989 to protest poor pay and conditions. During the march, damage was caused to cars and other property, and officers were patently unable to restrain their charges. The deputy prime minister immediately agreed to resolve the soldiers’ grievances (see Dorney 1990, 193–198); Turner (1990, 172).

CHAPTER 7: FROM DISINTEGRATION TO REINTEGRATION?

1. The late Australian critic B A Santamaria was one of the most consistent proponents of the disintegration thesis in Papua New Guinea. For an illustra-

tion of his views and a spirited riposte, see J Griffin, “A Barbaric Report” (*Times*, 25–31 August 1988). A more recent and refined version that addresses the Pacific Island region is the “doomsday scenario” underlying some of the work of the National Centre for Development Studies at the Australian National University (see, for example, Cole 1993). For critiques of this perspective see Pirie 1995; Hayes 1995; and Fry 1997.

2. The colonial state was, of course, always “open” to Canberra. It was in part located in Canberra.

3. See also “How It’s All Changed since Bougainville: A Frank Review by the Man from the Chamber” (*Islands Business Pacific*, March 1995, 27–28).

4. Imbun has provided further examples from the Porgera mine under the Porgera Joint Venture–funded Communities Facilities Grant administered by the Porgera Development Authority (1994, 38).

5. The model of deliberative democracy, as used by political and legal theorists, conceives of democracy “as a process that creates a public, citizens coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions. Democratic processes are oriented around discussing the common good, rather than competing for the promotion of the private good of each” (Young 1995, 135).

6. There is little critical writing about the role of the church in colonial Papua New Guinea. Most of the existing literature consists of mission histories written by adherents to particular orders. The lack of scholarly analysis of organized religion in colonial and postcolonial contexts is, in part, a reflection of the secular orientation of the majority of foreign scholars working on Papua New Guinea. An anticolonial critique of organized religion was articulated by certain nationalist leaders in the early 1970s. For a brief discussion of mission history and the nationalist critique, see Nelson (1972, 187–193).

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