

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MAKING THE IPILI FEASIBLE: IMAGINING LOCAL AND GLOBAL ACTORS
AT THE PORGERA GOLD MINE, ENGA PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

VOLUME ONE

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To Kate

Whose healthy and practical empiricism
has long been an indispensable balance-wheel
for an incurable theorist

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“We may not have a mine, but Alex will have one hell of a dissertation.”

-Greg, after a tough round of negotiations

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“A set of principles necessarily includes a political attitude,” Henri said. “And on the other hand, politics is itself a living thing.”

“I don’t think so,” Lambert replied. “In politics, all you’re concerned with are abstract things that don’t exist -- the future, masses of people. But what is really concrete is the actual present moment, and people as separate and single individuals.”

“But each individual is affected by collective history,” Henri said.

“The trouble is that in politics you never come down from the high plateau of history to the problem of the lowly individual,” Lambert said. “You get lost in generalities and no one gives a damn about particular cases.”

-Simone de Beauvoir, *The Mandarins*

This dissertation is about the relationship between the Porgera gold mine and the Ipili-speaking people on whose land the mine is located. In 1939 the Ipili were one of the last major ethnic groups to be contacted by the Australian administration of what was then the Trust Territory of New Guinea. Gold was discovered on that initial patrol, and just fifty years later the third largest gold mine in the world opened in the valley. Thus Porgerans have gone from a world without metal or textiles to one in which trucks carrying literally hundreds of tons of rock operate nonstop in a huge open pit that was once their mountain. Since its establishment in 1962, the Porgera government station has been transformed from a remote airstrip to a bustling ‘wild west’ boom-town with – if the census can be believed -- roughly 20,000 inhabitants (Government of Papua New Guinea

2002). The valley's past is littered with spectacular industrial accidents, large scale civil unrest, and one particularly well-remembered beheading. While many would expect the intersection of a world-class gold mine and a relatively naïve indigenous people to result in a 'fatal impact' (Moorehead 1966), in fact the Ipili have been very successful at extracting concessions from the mine and government. In fact, senior management of the mine consider that they, rather than the Ipili, ought to be sympathetically considered as the victims in this scenario, since their billion dollar investment is held hostage by an ethnic group that can, by blocking a road or downing a power line, halt their operations altogether.

In sum, Porgera fulfills every stereotype of Papua New Guineans living '10,000 years in a lifetime' (Kiki 1968) or going 'from stone to steel' (Salisbury 1962) or 'from the stone age to the jet age' (Biersack 1992). The danger of a study of Porgera, then, is not that it will be too dull, but rather that it will give in to an urge to sensationalize. Yet despite this potential pitfall it is worth approaching Porgera seriously, because it is important in many ways to many different people.

To Ipili people, of course, the mine and its operation are of major concern. The mine is literally the biggest thing that has happened to the valley in its admittedly brief history. Understanding the relationship between the Ipili and the mine is thus obviously something in which they are keenly interested. The government of Papua New Guinea is also interested in Porgera. Papua New Guinea is a country where most of the population is removed from a money economy and basic services such as roads, schools, and hospitals remain an unfilled promise due to the government's lack of capacity. Thus policy elites in Port Moresby fund a good deal of the government's operations with royalties, taxes, and other revenue derived from a handful of mining and hydrocarbon

projects operated by transnational companies. Finally, at the global level, the majority share holder and operator of the mine, Placer Dome, hopes that Porgera will continue to be a profitable investment. Concerns with its continued operation run from the mine manager on the property in Porgera, to the managing director of Placer Niu Gini in Port Moresby, to the head of Placer Dome Asia Pacific in Australia, all the way up to Placer Dome's corporate offices in Vancouver, British Columbia.

In addition to this 'real world' interest, Porgera is of interest to an academic audience. An understanding of the relationship between the mine and the Ipili provides a genuine contribution to the ethnography of postcolonial highlands Papua New Guinea. Porgera is also of interest more generally for the way in which it helps us understand contemporary debates in anthropology theory. This dissertation thus aims to contribute to the Melanesianist literature, as well as scholarly discussions of indigenous identity, land tenure and common property, the mediation of social groups by individuals, and governance in weak states. Understanding how Ipili identity circulates, how action is coordinated across time and space in Porgera, and how Papua New Guinea's colonial past affects its post-colonial present, I will argue, helps clarify several issues regarding the construction of 'globality' and 'locality' as they operate today.

This chapter introduces the dissertation as a whole. I begin by sketching out very briefly the ethnographic context of the study and the three main players who shape public life in Porgera: the mine, the Ipili themselves, and the elite in Port Moresby. I next move on to discuss the central theoretical problematic of the dissertation: how is the complex logistical, social, and legal task of keeping the mine in operation achieved? I focus not on 'cultural' (as opposed to some distinct 'technical') aspect of operating the mine, but rather the way in which engineering and meaning are intertwined in narratives of the Ipili

as ‘local’ people and the mine as a ‘global’ institution. These narratives underwrite the coordination of action across space and time that constitutes ‘keeping the mine open’. In the conclusion of the chapter I formulate the principle problems of the dissertation and discuss the organization of the work’s chapters.

The Mine, the Ipili, and Port Moresby

The Porgera goldmine is located in Porgera district, Enga province, Papua New Guinea. Porgera district is in the extreme west end of Enga, and is composed of two valleys which run roughly north and south, and which drain into the Lagaip river, itself a tributary of the Fly. The more western of the two valleys, Paiela, is the source of most ethnographic knowledge about the Ipili, since it was the location of Aletta Biersack’s Ph.D. fieldwork (Biersack 1980) and has been the topic of many of her subsequent publications. Paiela is at a lower altitude than Porgera, and has a more temperate climate as a result, and was probably the more populous of the two valleys prehistorically. The Porgera valley -- which lies at an altitude of over 2,000 meters -- is the administrative center of the district and, of course, the location of the mine (for more on Porgera’s physical environment see Jacka 2003:49-93). Thus despite its less hospitable climate, the presence of gold in Porgera has made it the center of life for Ipili in the historic era.

Porgera is a ‘world-class’, open-cut goldmine. In 1992 – its second year of production - it produced 1,485,077 ounces of gold, making it the third most productive gold mine on the planet and the most productive outside of South Africa (Banks 1997:121). In 2000 – the ethnographic present of this study -- the mine produced 910,434 ounces of gold from 106,520,077 tons of ore milled (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2001:1). The mine is owned by the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV), an unincorporated joint venture which is not publicly traded. Equity partners include Placer Dome Inc. (50%), Goldfields

Limited (25%), Orogen Minerals (20%), and Yuwai No. 65 Limited (5%) (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2001:1). Placer Dome and Goldfields are both international mining companies. Orogen is a state-controlled company designed to hold the government's equity in mining and hydrocarbon projects, and Yuwai No. 65 Limited is a shelf company whose ownership is split between Mineral Resources Enga and Kupiane Yu Anduane, holding companies for the Enga Provincial government and the Porgera landowners respectively. Thus a quarter of the equity in the Porgera gold mine is held by Papua New Guinean institutions including, in some sense, the Ipili themselves.

As these numbers suggest, the key player in the PJV is Placer Dome Asia Pacific, a subsidiary of Placer Dome Inc., a Vancouver-based mining transnational that describes itself as “the world's gold leader” that employs 12,000 people at fifteen mining operations in six countries on five continents and whose shares are traded on the Toronto, New York, Swiss and Australian stock exchanges (Placer Dome 2001:1-2). Placer has a long history in Papua New Guinea that goes back to the 1930s (Healy 1967). In 2000 Placer owned two properties in Papua New Guinea, the Misima and Porgera gold mines. Placer has been involved with the Porgera project for over twenty years – it was the key partner during the prospecting stage of the mine, and today it operates the mine on behalf of the joint venture partners. Thus although employees of the Porgera Joint Venture wear PJV uniforms, the management and operation of the mine is essentially done by Placer and in minds of most Porgerans “PJV” and “Placer” are synonymous.

In 2000 the PJV employed 1,972 people, 1,724 of whom were citizens of Papua New Guinea and 248 of whom were expatriates. Of the ‘nationals’ roughly half (1,000) are drawn from points of hire within Porgera itself, 200 from Enga province, and 400 from other areas of Papua New Guinea. The result is a multiethnic, if stratified,

workforce. Senior management (including the mine manager) and highly specialized technical positions are held by white expatriates (typically from Europe, Australia, or other Commonwealth countries) while most mid-level positions that require education and expertise are filled by Papua New Guineans from outside of Enga – typically people with experience working in other mines in the country. Finally, the bulk of the staff who operate equipment and provide custodial services are hired in Porgera although, as we shall see, whether this means they are ‘Porgeran’ or not is a constant topic of debate (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2001:12).

The person most centrally responsible for the mine is the mine manager. The mine manager was the top employee at the mine and was, like the captain of an eighteenth century ship, given considerable latitude by his distant superiors in managing his operations. The mine manager was thus single-handedly responsible for the lives and safety of thousands of employees and drew up operating budgets that ran into the hundreds of millions of dollars. The position of mine manager is often a leaping-off point for senior management at the national, regional, or even international level. This seems to be particularly the case for Porgera. Four of the nineteen members of Placer Dome’s senior management in Vancouver have been involved in Porgera, and two have them have been mine managers. As one member of senior management told me, there was a strong informal sense in the company that “if you could survive Porgera you were ready for anything.” In the case of the mine manager who lived through the Yakatabari negotiations described in the next chapter – a Dutch man trained as a mining engineer – this seemed to be particularly prescient. He is now the Executive Vice-President of Operations for Placer Dome – essentially the second most powerful person in the company’s global organization.

As the senior official living on-site in Porgera, the mine manager reports to Placer Niugini, the branch of Placer Dome incorporated in Papua New Guinea whose offices are located in a suite in downtown Port Moresby. As the central coordinating point for Misima and Porgera, the Placer Niugini office represented the highest level of management in Papua New Guinea. The office is headed up by the Managing Director, who is responsible for the country at the national level. Two other senior executives – chosen for their experience and connections – specialize in relationships with industry and government representatives. These people report back to both Placer Asia-Pacific (whose headquarters is in Sydney) as well as to the international headquarters in Vancouver. Thus these executives in Port Moresby – basically, three people – serve to represent the mine at a national level even though they are not on site, and hence at a remove from the day-to-day operations.

Back at the mine, a small group of senior managers occupy the position in the mine's hierarchy directly below the mine manager and are in charge overseeing different aspects of the mine's operations. Most of these people had jobs dealing with aspects of the mine's operations in which they did not directly deal with the Ipili except in their capacity as employees. The two branches of the mine that dealt with the Ipili most often were Loss Control, which operates site security and thus had to deal with trespassers, and Community Affairs, whose job is to be the interface between the mine and the Ipili.

Community Affairs was managed by the Director of Community Affairs. Beneath the head of community affairs was a small pool of roughly five men who are in charge of individual units. These units are fluid and responded to change over time. One man, for instance, is in charge of community affairs with the groups downstream of the mine, which he visits by helicopter. Another is in charge of the lands claims office where Ipili

complaints about land and compensation were handled. Unlike the head of community affairs – whose office is in the administration building, which requires a security clearance to enter – these men have publicly accessible offices and are thus the most important people that the average Porgeran can see.

Mining in the third world often evokes memories of Sebastiao Salgado's haunting photos of sulfur mining in Indonesia and gold rushes in Brazil: stark portraits of primitive, dangerous conditions and third-worlders whose lives are shaped by the backbreaking labor of mining (Salgado 1993). Porgera has absolutely nothing in common with this picture. The Porgera gold mine is an enormous, technologically sophisticated, highly mechanized open cut operation. The mine moves roughly 220,000 tons of earth every day, some of which is milled immediately and some of which is stockpiled for future use. Enormous earthmoving machines in the open pit shovel ore into the backs of a fleet of 777 dump trucks, each of which has a payload of over 200 tons. These trucks then deliver ore to the primary crusher. To maximize the efficiency of the milling process, the proportions of rock to ore coming out of the pit must be precisely mixed. Directing the proper combination of trucks to bring ore of varying richness from different sites around the pit requires the operator – who is something like a cross between a bartender and an air traffic controller – to do the equivalent of mixing a one hundred thousand ton cocktail by remote control.

After primary crushing, ore is further processed in ball mills and centrifuges at a plant near the open cut. The ore slurry that results from this process is then piped down to the main refinery. Because the gold in Porgera's ore is bound up with sulfur, it must be processed with large autoclaves, which use high pressure and high heat to essentially burn the sulfur off of the gold. The ore is then sent to flotation tanks where the gold is

freed through the application of cyanide. The cyanide-filled trailings that result are neutralized with lime and are then flushed into the Porgera river. The gold-rich mixture that remains is siphoned off to be refined further and eventually poured into gold bars and removed from the mine by undisclosed means.

The construction of the Porgera gold mine in 1988 and 1989 was a technological triumph which many considered impossible (for an institutional history see Jackson and Banks 2002). Like most large-scale mines the capital outlay was enormous -- the joint venture partners spent roughly one billion US dollars on the property at Porgera. But the achievement of the Porgera mine is more than just financially impressive. Simply creating and maintaining the facilities in Porgera is a challenge because the geology of the area where the mine is built is inherently unstable. The use of autoclaves to process ore was revolutionary when it was first accomplished, and at the time was a daring and ingenious feat of engineering. Using an autoclave requires an enormous amount of oxygen, and creating oxygen requires an enormous amount of power. Porgera's solution to this problem was to build a chain of guy-wired electricity pylons and stretch them 80 kilometers away across a mountain range to a large natural gas plant which generates the mine's power – yet another formidable feat. The mine requires more than just electricity to run, of course. During construction the Porgera Joint Venture completed the first all-weather road into the Porgera valley in order to keep the mine supplied. All of the supplies for the mine must come up this road from Lae, Papua New Guinea's largest port, which is a three day drive away.

While supplies are brought up the highlands highway, non-local employees are flown into the valley. The result is a 'fly-in-fly-out' arrangement in which employees are accommodated in on-site housing during their shifts (exact schedules vary based on

employee). Today, the Kairik airstrip in Porgera features daily landings of de Havilland Twin Otters, while huge transport helicopters leased from Air Vladivostok crewed by Russian pilots and trained Papua New Guinean translators land on the helipad within the mine site itself. Fly-in-fly-out arrangements are one of the most contentious aspects of the mine's operation in Porgera today, since Ipili want the work force to dwell permanently in the valley.

In sum, the Porgera gold mine is an enormously complex operation that has carved out an enclave for itself in an extremely remote area of Papua New Guinea. Its two 'lifelines' – the power line and the road – must remain operational or the mine's work will grind to a halt and the thousands of employees working and living there would be left without supplies or power. Mine management estimates that keeping the lights on in Porgera – maintaining power and housing employees – without keeping the mine in production costs US\$1,000,000 dollars a day.

The Ipili

The people known collectively to the scholarly literature as 'the Ipili' (book length monographs include Banks 1997, Biersack 1980, Filer ed 1999, Golub 2001, Jacka 2003, Jackson and Banks 2002) are possessed of an identity that is as nebulous as it is important. Although the bulk of this dissertation will work to complicate notions of what it means for someone to be 'the Ipili', it is appropriate here to say a few words by way of orientation. Linguistically and culturally, the Ipili are part of the much wider ethnic galaxy which includes the Huli (to the south) and Enga (to the west), both of which are larger in population than the Ipili by an order of magnitude or more (for regional overviews see Biersack 1995 and Wiessner and Tumu 1998). Ipili are thus a 'hinge' or 'intermediate' group wedged between the two much larger groups on either side of them.

Like their neighbors, they prefer to live in dispersed homesteads and practice mounded sweet potato agriculture. Their religion and ritual focused on fertility, and one of the most well-known symbols of Ipili identity is the large bull-horn shaped wigs that young men made out of their own hair as part of an initiation ritual which focused on furthering the growth of men through their separation from the polluting influence of women (for more on fertility, ritual, and beautification amongst Ipili see Biersack 1998b). Very roughly, we can say that their kinship system resembles that of the Huli described by Glasse (1968) and the Garia described by Lawrence (1984), in that it is cognatic. As opposed to the more corporate-minded Enga or the Hagen people of Western Highlands, Ipili believe that anyone with a single Ipili grandparent has a good claim to affiliate with the cognatic stock with which that grandparent is affiliated as long as they demonstrate some sort of solidarity with other members of the stock through work and consociation. As in other areas in Papua New Guinea, affines and nonconsanguines are often incorporated into local groups which are theoretically based on descent (Langness 1964).

As we shall see in more detail in chapter five, it is tempting, but inaccurate, to portray the Ipili, Enga, and Huli as distinct ethnicities separated by clear and bright boundaries. The term 'Enga' and 'Ipili' are neologisms that resulted from contact with Australians and are not indigenous ethnonyms. It is true that the Huli have an extraordinarily acute sense of their own ethnic uniqueness and superiority. However, they also have a folk theory that the groups surrounding them are descendants, albeit degraded and inferior ones, of ancestral Huli stock, blurring any clear division between the Huli and their neighbors. Similarly, despite now-vociferous assertions of province-wide unity made by Engans, they recognize neighboring groups such as the Ipili as related by ancestral clan ties. Finally, one of the most striking traits of Ipili social organization is its

attempts to adopt and co-opt powerful outsiders into its communities – a tendency that makes it hard to figure out where ‘the Ipili’ end and ‘the outsiders’ begin. To be sure, there are certainly distinctions between the Ipili and their neighbors, but these distinctions are more one of degree than absolute difference. The ease and fluidity of migration and ethnic affiliation in this area of highland is clearly evinced in the population figures given above. Ipili identity, then, is not clearly externally bounded.

Neither is it internally homogenous. Due to Biersack’s early publications, the people of Paiela have come to stand for ‘the Ipili’ in the minds of those familiar with the scholarly literature of this area. However in fact Paielans today are the most ‘bush’ of the Ipili. More familiar with Huli than with Engan, Paielans today live in an area that even Porgerans consider more ‘remote’ and ‘unsullied’ – when rich landowning Ipili just want to get away from it all, it’s not unusual for them to spend a few days in Paiela. While Paiela has seen some benefits from the Porgera gold mine – most notably the rough road which Porgeran landowners use to get to their vacation spots – its lack of access to any direct benefit from the Porgera gold mine is often a source of resentment. It is the large and as-yet unproven Mt. Kare prospect to the south of Paiela rather than Porgera that is a source of hopes and dreams by people who live in this area. After a large indigenous gold rush in the late 1980s (Ryan 1991) Kare continues to be an attractive but elusive resource, and Paielans could one day themselves become ‘landowners’ – a fact that keeps them on the political radar of Porgeran landowners, who maintain ties with Paielan kin and kith in anticipation of the day when the tables are turned, the Porgera mine is exhausted, and Kare becomes the center of life for the Ipili.

Paielans are not the only people “on the outside looking in” (Jacka 2001) at the relationship between ‘the Ipili’ and the mine. To the east of Porgera, near the road that

runs out of the valley, are the people known as the ‘East Ipili’ studied by Jerry Jacka (2003). This group is in many ways transitional between the Ipili speakers of Porgera proper and the ‘western Engans’ from the area around Laiagam. They speak a slightly different dialect of Ipili from people in Porgera, and intermarriage with Engans is high. In fact no better example of the fluidity of identity between Ipili and other seemingly discrete ethnic groups could be found than in Jacka’s community at Tipinini.

As one of the outlying communities in Porgera, eastern Ipili receive a number of spin-off benefits from the Porgera mine. Paiyam Town, a multicultural township constructed by the mine at the insistence of the Ipili to house mine workers, is in this area. So is Suyan, the gated and barbed-wired compound where flown-in workers live during their shifts, and Kairik, the airstrip that serves the valley. Overall, though, these benefits are seen by Eastern Ipili less as perks and more as bitter reminders of the mine-derived affluence which an arbitrary fluke of geography has visited upon their relatives further west.

The main area of the Porgera valley is ‘the station’, the ‘wild-west’ township that is the center of life in Porgera. Built around the valley’s original – and now disused – airstrip, this area is the location of the bank, the government offices, a string of stores, as well as the small neighborhood of houses where a large number of immigrants and government employees live. From the station a small road runs west into the Special Mining Lease, the roughly 2,000 hectare area that is home to the mine itself. Within the Special Mining Lease, the road branches both north and south. To the north it ends at the Kaiya river, on the other side of which is the lower Porgera, an area that played a prominent role in Porgera’s history in the early 1950s but which is now peripheral to life in the valley.

If one follows the branch of the road south, however, one comes to those communities of people who live *within* the special mining lease and constituted the ‘true landowners of the Porgera gold mine’ – the seven landowning clans of the Tuanda, Tiyini, Waiwa, Pulumaini, Angalaini, Mamai and Anga. These are the people on whose land the mine’s physical plant and offices are located, and whose mountain is being ground down into an enormous pit. It is these people – the “Special Mining Lease Landowners” – with whom I conducted fieldwork and who I shall refer to here when I speak of ‘the Ipili.’ To tell people in Tipinini and Paiela today that the ‘Special Mining Lease Landowners’ have come to stand for all Ipili would strike them as unfair and, frankly, inaccurate. While benefits from the mine’s presence have been distributed throughout the Porgera valley, there is no doubt that Special Mining Lease landowners have received the vast majority of them, and resentment is both widespread and justifiable sentiment throughout the valley. Moreover, because of ‘the landowners’ long experience with outsiders, they are often seen as the farthest from ‘genuine Ipili culture’ – when I first arrived in the valley in 1998, for instance, I was told that I should go to Tipinini, rather than the Special Mining Lease, since in Tipinini they ‘still had their culture’. From the point of view of the Ipili, Special Mining Lease landowners are the richest, the luckiest, and the most corrupt – a feeling that is partially sour grapes and partially accurate. These people are at the center of Porgera’s historical development – it was on their land that gold was discovered in 1938 and where white miners returned again and again, eventually building the Porgera gold mine in 1989. In sum, it is this community that I refer to as ‘the Ipili’ in what follows.

It is difficult to judge the population of Porgera district because government statistics are notoriously unreliable. Nonetheless, it is useful to note that the 2000 Papua

New Guinea census lists the population of and Porgera at 22,809 people while Paiela is home to 11,084 people (Government of Papua New Guinea 2002:14-16). Even if these figures are inaccurate to some degree, they reinforce my anecdotal experience of the two valleys: Paiela is a sparsely populated area considered rural even by Papua New Guinean standards, while Porgera is a more heavily settled area with a ‘boom town’ that has grown up around the mine. How many of the people living in Porgera and Paiela are ‘Ipili’ is anyone’s guess – no accurate statistics exist, and even if they did the fluidity of Ipili identity would cast grave doubts on the methods used to gather them. People familiar with Porgera estimate that there are 6,000 to 7,000 ethnic Ipili in the Porgera valley today given a reasonably strict definition of that term. Roughly a two-thirds of the population of the valley, then, are immigrants.

Just as the stereotypes of mud-smearred miners emerging from a rough-hewn pit fail to capture the sophistication of the Porgera mine’s engineering, preconceptions of the Ipili as ecologically noble savages (Buege 1996) trampled on and degraded by global capitalism do not capture the complexity of Porgera’s politics. The Porgera mine came on line in the late 1980s shortly after the closure of the Bougainville copper mine. The loss of revenue from Bougainville left a massive hole in the government’s budget, and Porgera was quickly seized upon as a solution. At the same time, the failure of the Papua New Guinea Defense Force and police to keep Bougainville open demonstrated that the government lacked the capacity to force a mine on local populations. These two factors created a moment of opportunity which the Ipili – who are nothing if not ready to negotiation -- seized and became one of the most active and successful fourth world people in the world today in terms of pressing claims against the state and transnational capitalism. Indeed, so thorough-going are Ipili attempts to extract benefits from the mine

that Timothy Andambo, a Porgeran mining engineer, has described the tangle of trust funds, equity companies, and committees that manage the Ipili's numerous investments as "social technology to extract rent from the Porgera lode" (Andambo 2002). And while the benefits package the Ipili negotiated with the government and the company has now been exceeded by other landowning groups in Papua New Guinea, it was the Ipili who set the precedent for the success of future groups.

Legally, subsoil resources – in this case, gold – are the property of the national government of Papua New Guinea. Under the Land Act, however, the land itself beneath which the gold is located is under the 'native title' of the seven landowning clans, although the privilege of leasing it is reserved for the government. Thus the mine operates on a lease granted to it by the government, the lessor of which are the landowning clans. The relationship between the mine and the government is regulated by a Mining Development Contract, while the relationship between the mine and the Ipili is based on three foundational documents: the Relocation Agreement, the Compensation Agreement, and the 'Porgera Agreements.' All of these documents, signed in the late 1980s, form a charter which regulates how life should be carried out in Porgera today. Under the Mining Act, miners and local people must sign a compensation agreement specify what sort of recompense will be made to landowners when their property is damaged as a precondition of the government's issuance of a lease. Porgera's Compensation Agreement specifies the costs of each individual plant of various species destroyed by the mine. In practice, counting each plant on a property is extremely difficult, and these prices have been used to generate an average price per hectare of land based on a typology of land uses ranging from virgin bush to cultivated garden.

While the Compensation Agreement had strong precedents, the Relocation

Agreement was a novel innovation, although it was soon adopted in future mining developments in Papua New Guinea (for relocation in Papua New Guinea generally, see Asian Development Bank 2000:55-73). The future site of the Porgera gold mine was inhabited by the landowners prior to the issuance of the lease – indeed, when it became clear where the mine would be located, people quickly moved there and built houses and gardens in anticipation of future compensation. As a result the mine undertook a relocation program which was without precedent in modern mining history – roughly 3,400 people were moved off needed land and into 420 new houses (Bonnell 1999, Banks 1999, Robinson 1988). For many people, new tin and timber relocation houses replaced those based on traditional ‘bush’ materials, and receiving a relocation house was often the greatest benefit a Porgera landowner would receive from the mine.

While people opted to be relocated to many locations, the majority moved to the new nucleated ‘relocation communities’ built *inside* the Special Mining Lease. Thus ‘villages’ based on ‘clan ties’ were created: Apalaka (for the Tuanda), Yarik (Tiyini), Kulapi (Pulumaini), and so forth. These villages are located outside of major areas of operation but *within* the SML itself, and while some of the operation is shielded by fencing much is not. In order to enter the open pit itself, for instance, Ipili landowners need only walk up the ridge on which their houses are built, cross to the other side, and then descend into the pit.

Finally, there are the Porgera Agreements. These tripartite agreements between the Enga Provincial Government, the Ipili landowners, and the National Government obliged the state to include certain clauses in the Mineral Development Contract which regulated relationship between the government and the mine. Thus they effectively represent concessions made by the mine and national government to the Enga Provincial

Government and the Ipili, even though the mine is not party to them. These agreements were without precedent and arose largely from the initiative of the Porgera landowners and the Enga Provincial Government. The Porgera Agreements were not necessary, but the strength of the Ipili position, along with the government's desire to do the right thing by local people created a situation in which for the first time that the state signed an agreement in which landowners permitted them to issue a Special Mining Lease to a developer. The Porgera Agreements were thus at once illegal and extremely lucrative, and are the source of many of the most important benefits that the SML Landowners receive: quarterly royalty checks for landowners, equity in the mine, a new airstrip, schools, hospitals, and so forth.

Measuring exactly how much the Ipili have received from the mine is difficult because of the variety of benefit streams that affect the Ipili – everything from direct compensation for damaged land to indirect economic activity generated from the mine's presence to the market value of the Ipili equity in the mine might be included under the rubric of 'benefit.' According to mine statistics, Ipili have received K66,000,000 in compensation for land lost during the mine's life time. This is a difficult figure to appreciate due to the kina's fluctuation in value – in the late 1980s it was worth US\$1 while by the end of my study it was worth less than US\$0.25. In 2000 the mine estimates it spent roughly K20,000,000 on donations to groups within the valley, education, and community infrastructure and K113,700,000 in wages and salary – although what percentage of those wages went to ethnic Ipili is difficult to say. In addition, Ipili own 2.5% equity in the PJV (Banks 2003:226-229). They receive quarterly royalties from gold sales, and they have a multitude of new services provided to them by the government including a hospital, new roads, and a variety of other amenities.

Indeed, Ipili are not only the lessors of the special mining lease on which Placer operates the Porgera gold mine, they own the high rise building in Port Moresby where Placer Niuguini has its corporate headquarters!

This money is not distributed equally, however. An emergent elite of ‘big men’ has grown up in Porgera. It is composed of the people appointed to positions of power of the various boards of directors and those who receive lucrative contracts from the mine to provide security, sewage, and other services. When people speak of ‘landowners’ it is really these people who they have in mind – large, well-fed men in Toyota Land Cruisers with opaque windows of tinted glass. They have, like all landowners, a reputation for being incredibly prodigal – stories of landowners abandoning vehicles when they have a flat tire and purchasing new ones are, if not true, at least indicative of how wasteful and imprudent outsiders consider landowners to be. Sean Dorney paints an evocative picture of the dark-glass landowners ‘corruption’ and political involvement in his description of one of my next-door neighbors, Sole Taro, and his engagement provincial politics:

Sol Taro has benefited from the member’s largess even though he is not in need. Sol gets royalties from the gold mine, owns two shops and has four wives. “Members [of Parliament] hold the key to the money,” Sol says sitting on the doorstep to his house in the township above the mine. “They guarantee our business ventures and support us. I supported Anton last time and he brought me a truck. It’s over there, a big Dyna.” Anton also gave Sol \$10,000 from the public purse to start up another business but it never got going. “So, after I failed to get my proposals through,” he shrugs, “I used up the money buying drink, buying beer, buying food. I have a big family and that ten thousand – I couldn’t hold onto it.” (Dorney 2000:44-45).

In sum, the picture of the SML is a curious one. Aging relocation communities and the shanty towns that have sprung up around them teem with Ipili landowners and the immigrants who have come to live with them. These communities exist inside a special mining lease, perched between wastedumps and haul roads, the center of a growing community of people struggling to move “from the outside” and towards the center,

where opportunities for excitement and compensation lay for those who manage to be labeled ‘landowners.’

The Nation

Papua New Guinea has a long history of gold mining that stretches back for over a century (for a very brief account see Banks 2001:12-14) and both colonial and post-colonial regimes in what is today Papua New Guinea have relied on royalties, export duties, taxation, and other forms of resource rent to fund government activities (for an overview see O’Faircheallaigh 1982). Today, mining and hydrocarbon developments continue to be of primary importance to the nation, which has relied on taxes and royalties from extractive industry to prop up its sagging budget. In 1995, for instance, Papua New Guinea’s mineral exports were worth US\$1.83 billion dollars, constituted 71.6% of all domestic exports, and accounted for between a quarter and a third of the national government’s non-grant revenue (Filer 1997). In 2001, this amount was K2.57 billion, which accounted for 46% of all exports (Banks 2001:27), a decrease which Banks notes is a result of the growth of the hydrocarbon and logging industries rather than declining output in the mineral resources sector. Between 1972 and 2000, the mining sector has annually been between 10% (a low set in 1984 and 1997) and 33% (in 1973 and 1974) of the country’s total GDP (for these and other figures see Banks 2001:29). In other words, this government has a strong incentive to make sure that mines like Porgera remains in operation – even if this is against the best interests of its citizens. It also means that the government is keenly interested in ‘what is going on up there’ in Porgera, although news about the local scene only circulates down into Port Moresby in bits and pieces.

At the same time, Papua New Guinea is a classically ‘weak state’ (on Papua New

Guinea see Dinnen 2001, Larmour ed 1996, on weak states in general see Migdal 2001). Indeed, given the government's chronic lack of capacity, the government is often more noticeable for its absence rather than its presence in Porgera, and senior mine management often complain bitterly about the fact that the mine must assume the role of the state in Porgera. Indeed, against the backdrop of decaying government capacity, Filer claims that "the mining industry to be one of the last bastions of bureaucratic rationality in the State of Papua New Guinea" (Filer 1997:174). Throughout this thesis I will approach issues of governance and state capacity not in terms of discussing the state's 'weakness' or 'strength' but how it manages to appear as an actor in people's narratives about the country at all.

Feelings amongst Papua New Guinea's elite regarding resource development are thus ambiguous. Many of the people who wield influence in the country came of age during the Independence period, and this experience has clearly left its mark. Many members of the elite are extremely sensitive to criticism of government activities by non-Papua New Guineans. NGOs and foreign governments critical of the choices that the state makes regarding mining are often reviled – as for instance was the case during the Ok Tedi case, when the government worked to prevent foreign lawyers from entering the country in order to pursue legal action against a mine (Ballard and Banks 1997). Thus the government can be antagonistic to external NGO pressure if it feels that that pressure is an infringement on its own autonomy. In some sense, then, most members of the elite recognize how crucial mining developments are for the country, and appreciate the fact that Papua New Guinea would be worse off if mines like Porgera did not exist. When an external critique is lacking, however, much of this suspicion and unhappiness with foreign intervention is focused on the industry itself, which can be seen as predatory,

untrustworthy, and focused on pursuing its own profit at the expense of the nation.

The expatriate elite have a slightly different set of agendas. Most notable is the fact that many of them have a long history in Papua New Guinea. Much of the mining industry today is staffed by former colonial officers. These officers see working in the private sector as a way to improve the country in the postcolonial age. Often, this desire to continue service to Papua New Guinea is compounded by a bitter sense of disappointment with what they see as the ‘failure’ of the Papua New Guinea state in the post-independence period. Although sometimes reviled for their role in a ‘colonial occupation’ these aging men labor on, attempting to do their best for the country and hence justify and recuperate their own biographies.

Amongst the white elite who came to Papua New Guinea specifically from work, there is a strong commitment to the ‘triple bottom line’ of sustainable economic development, environmental stewardship, and financial accountability to their shareholders (Elkington 1998). There is also a strong sense of the inevitability of a ‘win-win’ situation in resource development. Both of these feelings are the result of the distinct and globalized corporate culture of the mining industry. In my experience the employees of reputable mining companies such as Placer Dome firmly believe that they can do good by doing well, and behave ethically most of the time. In fact many executives would agree with Colin Filer’s quote above and consider themselves to be the last bastion of bureaucratic rationality and ethical accountability in a country with a failed government, corrupt officials, and fickle and violent landowners. It is important to stress at the outset, then, that these expatriates are not fly-by-night confidence tricksters. They are professionals in a global industry that focuses on resource projects that take decades, not years, to run their course. At the same time, it will be important to interrogate the

rhetorical work, often labored, which equates the mine's best interests with those of the state and local peoples.

National elites, long-term expatriates, and career-focused mine employees all share a similar vision of the indigenous peoples who are the landowners of the resource projects located far from Moresby. While sympathetic to landowners in principle, this sympathy relies on a highly idealized view of rural Papua New Guineans that is in many ways similar to that of the European 'noble savage.' But in fact cosmopolitans have quite a bit of difficulty locating landowners to be sympathetic with. The litigiousness and instability of landowner politics has combined with this idealized view of rural Papua New Guineans to create a demonized version of indigenous peoples which the elite use to explain away the difference between their fantasies of the authentic rural "stakeholders" they seek to partner with and the people who come barging into their offices demanding compensation. The result is the 'corrupt landowner': the greedy rural rube who has been corrupted from their former pristine state into one of moral torpor because of the impact that money from mining projects has or could have on them.

While many landowners are vilified at the national level, few seem to have as strongly disliked for as long as the Ipili. The word generally used is 'truculent'. John Black remarked in an interview that he "found the people on the Porgera to be very truculent and cheeky" when he first discovered the area in 1938 (Davis 1994). In a 1964 patrol report a patrol officer wrote that "the Porgera have a long history of truculence" (Porgera #2, 64/65). Mervyn Meggitt records them as being "a truculent and difficult people" (Meggitt 1957:32). Even Father Philip Gibbs, a Catholic priest with many years experience in Porgera, wrote that "the Ipili are not the most co-operative people to work with. At times I was prepared to agree with Meggitt" (Gibbs 1975:23). Contemporary

opinion is much the same, as I found out one day when I was introduced around the Department of Mines in Port Moresby by the Porgera Mining Coordinator. “Everyone, this is Alex Golub,” he said, “he’s an anthropologist studying the Porgera landowners – he actually *lives* with them!” The overall view was summarized with epigrammatic flair by one of the senior officials of the mine who said to me simply “they’re a fucked culture.”

In sum, the community of elites in Port Moresby are keenly interested in Porgera, but hear news of what is happening ‘up there’ in dribs and drabs. Although the national and expatriate communities might vary in their understanding of why mining is important, they share the basic understanding that resource extraction, when properly managed, is something that everyone will benefit from. They also share a sympathy for local people in theory which is often transformed into exasperation when they deal with ‘corrupt landowners’ who they feel ought to be grateful (and pliant) for the benefits that they receive from the mining taking place on their land.

Engineering and Semiosis: Keeping the Mine Open

By now a large literature on mining and indigenous people in Papua New Guinea and the southwest Pacific has developed (collected volumes and review articles include Ballard and Banks 2003; Brown and Ploeg 1997; Connell and Howitt 1991; Howitt, Connell, and Hirsch 1996; Rumsey and Weiner 2001). In this section of the thesis I sketch out my own approach to mining in Porgera and the general theoretical models that might be used to make sense of it. I begin with a central problem of this dissertation: how is the mine kept open, and what conditions permit it to operate?

It is tempting to describe two sets of conditions. On the one hand there is ‘pure’

logistics: At base, mountains are insensible to our words, and there is no way to convince them to yield up their riches. Thus there is a ‘purely engineering’ aspect of the mine dealing with brute material fact of a mountain. Lying at the back of the machines that dig rock out of the open cut and shovel it into dump trucks is an enormous network dedicated to moving materiel into place so that the mine can operate. On the other hand there is what we might want to call the ‘semiotic’ work of making a mine – the creation and maintenance of the complex set of financial, legal, moral, and epistemological understandings that must be brought into place for a single bar of poured in Porgera to be turned into a positive mark on Placer’s balance sheet. Will the National Government acquiesce? How will share floats be managed? How will royalties be shared? What standards of environmental degradation are acceptable? These are strikingly incorporeal problems, solved in a world where millions of dollars are budgeted and spent with a single keystroke and global corporations commit to agreements with a single signature. All of this must be worked out if a social context for mining will be established.

Keeping the mine open thus seems at first to rely on an ability to mobilize and deploy both meaning and material in two distinct moments. Thus there seems to be a clear ethnographic difference between the negotiation process by which the legal and contractual regime for the mine was created on the one hand, and the ‘merely technical’ implementation of those plans in the construction and operation of the mine.

Which one of these two conditions seem more fundamental will depend on who you are. To the engineers and surveyors I met in Porgera, making a mine work meant getting down to the nitty-gritty of grading haul roads and monitoring autoclaves. For them, ‘the creation and maintenance of financial, legal, and epistemological understandings’ was an occult process undertaken by over-paid point-headed lawyers that

had to be patiently endured before the real work of mining could get underway.

Anthropologists, on the other hand, would insist that no matter how technical the requirements of mining, it would not take place at all without contract and agreements in place and without a complex set of cultural assumptions about, for instance, the value of gold, which motivated it.

But mining, like cannibalism, “is always ‘symbolic,’ even when it is ‘real’” (Sahlins 1983:88). It is important to realize that both the semiotic and technical aspects of mining are flip sides of the same coin, not discrete and unrelated processes. As the “pragmatic-poetic turn” of contemporary linguistic anthropology (the term is from Silverstein 2004:623; other prominent statements can be found in Silverstein and Urban 1996 and Baumann and Briggs 1990) has demonstrated, all human interaction requires the deployment of a shared set of sociocultural concepts in order to ensure that interaction coheres to create “a coherent, intersubjectively accomplished interactional text, the interpersonal achievement of a ‘doing’ of something – an instance of some generically understood social act – to which more than one individual has contributed” (Silverstein 1998:270). This is true even of perilinguistic interactions such as those that occur in Porgera’s open pit, where the operators of, say, a Caterpillar 769 haul truck and an O&K RH8 excavator must work together to dislodge material from the mountain’s face and transfer it from the bucket of the excavator to the back of the 769 without either of the operators being killed -- a remarkably easy thing to do in a line of work where the tires of your vehicle are taller than you are. While the complex figuration of text in context in the course of the linguistically mediated interaction of Mr. A and Mr. B described by Silverstein (2004:623-625) may be poetically more complex than the ‘doing-something’ of shoveling ore into the back of a truck, it is none the less true that even miners must

invoke sociocultural conceptions, inhabit roles, and share a set ‘standard operating procedures’ that will regiment action if the most elemental aspect of mining is to occur without mishap. This “mutual tuning-in relationship,” as Schutz (1964:161) called it, is always metapragmatically regimented, regardless of the antintellectualism inherent in the ethnometapragmatics of any single miner who is engaged in the improvisational performance of ‘mining’ in realtime discursive practice.

The question of how to keep the mine open, then, is shot through with two distinct orientations to action which are interrelated rather than opposed. Looked at from the point of view of engineering – moving the physical materials which are insensible to the semiotics of our lives – the logistics involved in keeping the mine open requires ‘practical’ and ‘real’ action: you can not talk the gold out of a mine and, modulo the inevitably culturally shaped means and ends that determine what ought to be mined and how, the physical nature of the resource creates technical imperatives which must be met and simply a non-negotiable part of the world. At the same time, every human being who is part of the complex chain of logistics that runs from machine operators in the open pit to people signing checks in Vancouver deploys some sort of narrative about who they are and what they are doing. This narrative underwrites the technically complex coordination of action of thousands of individuals that results in the creation of bars of pure gold – indeed, it is nothing less than a regimenting description of this coordination. Keeping the mine open is thus shot through with both engineering and signification.

The fundamental subject of this study is, then, the circulation of texts – both artifactual and non – which make mining possible. This study focuses on ‘globalization,’ in the sense of the coordination of action across an extended sector of space and time – literally the organization of action across the face of the globe. How do both consociates

(people who share “temporal and spatial immediacy” (Schutz and Luckmann 1973:62)) and contemporaries (who are merely temporally immediate but “not bodily present” (Schutz and Luckmann 1973: 73) work together to coordinate the complex action that keeps the mine, and how do understandings and people move across space and time to marshal the complex logical and logistic feats which are necessary to ensure that it stays open? I am particularly interested in how identity and representation are handled in this process. Thus the more mundane meaning of ‘globalization’ – in the sense of movement across or exceeding international boundaries – is not of overwhelming importance for this study.

In the next three sections of this chapter I take up the wider issue of ‘keeping the mine open’ by focusing on three particular issues that will be considered at length throughout the more substantive ethnographic and analytic portions of this thesis. First, I will examine the way in which ‘the Ipili’ arises as a category that enables the work of the mine by providing it with a legally and physically quiescent indigenous partner. Second, I turn my attention to the phenomenon of globalization to examine how ‘the mine’ itself becomes an actor to whom the actions of thousands of individual people becomes attributable. In both cases, I argue that what is at stake is a third more general problem of subsumption: how does one particular person come to be seen as a representative of a general institution. The chapter closes with an outline of the general structural order of life in the Porgera that results from the intersection of the work of making both ‘the Ipili’ and ‘the company’ appear.

Imagining Local Actors: Making the Ipili Feasible

‘Feasibility’ is the word the mining industry uses to describe a prospective ore body that will cost less to mine than its product will fetch on the market. Whether ‘there

is a lot of gold in a mountain' is only one variable in the complex set of calculations that make a mine 'feasible.' The cost of supplying a mine, refining the ore and, of course, the going price of gold on the market all play their part in an entire galaxy of variables that, if added up correctly, are sufficient to trigger the massive organization of human labor which transforms an exploration camp into a fully functioning mine – a set of actions that range from from obtaining capital from the international financial market to blasting away the overburden surrounding an ore body. It took decades for these pieces to fall into place and for Porgera prospect to become feasible and transform itself into the Porgera mine. Gold was discovered by the 1938 government patrol which initially discovered and mapped the valley, but Porgera was too removed from transportation infrastructure, and the geology of Porgera too poorly understood, for the valley to merit the attention of more than a few old-time New Guinea hands. Desultory exploitation of alluvial gold continued for decades, and formal large-scale exploration began in the 1960s. But it was not until the 1980s, when Placer joined the joint venture prospecting Porgera, that the funds and expertise necessary to discover Porgera's high-grade zones of gold and to solve logistical problems in working them made the Porgera gold mine became feasible.

Just as the gold in a mountain requires refining if it is to take a form suitable for circulation in national and international financial markets, so too the identities of Ipili people had to be refined and transformed in order to circulate in the national and international circuits of law, policy, and ideas that accompany and buttress transnational capitalism – as we have seen, the government expects there to be a group ready to sign on the dotted line before it will issue a mining lease. Just as the history of mining is the history of exerting control over a mountain to make it 'feasible,' so to is the history of the valley a story of outsiders attempting – and usually failing – to turn the indigenous

inhabitants of Porgera into an ethnic group called ‘the Ipili’ and to *make* the Ipili behave feasibly whether they wanted to or not. Thus, in this dissertation I focus on the way in which the Ipili were themselves made ‘feasible’ in order to facilitate the creation and operation of the Porgera gold mine.

Making ‘the Ipili’ feasible is one species of that much larger process of the ‘construction of locality’ or ‘the creation of indigeneity’ that has been the subject of a good deal of recent anthropological literature (Marcus 1989, Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, Gupta and Ferguson 1997b, Conklin and Graham 1995, Li 2000, Povinelli 2002, Carneiro da Cunha and Almeida 2001). But of course concerns about the ‘entification’ (Ernst 2001) or ‘substantivization’ (Thomas 1992) of indigenous ethnic groups and identities has a long history in anthropology. We have known since Leacock (1954) that traditional land boundaries become more sharply delineated rather than less when outsiders value the things that lie within them, just as Terence Ranger (1983) and (in a different way) Morton Fried (1975) have examined the ways in which it is imposition by, rather than absence of, larger polities that creates tribes and their associated ethnic identities and ‘tribal’ zones (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992). Thus although my use of the term ‘feasibility’ is novel, it should be understood that in using it I reference a topic long-discussed in the literature.

There are three levels at which the Ipili must be made feasible if the mine is to stay open. At its first and most obvious level, ‘feasibility’ involves a certain politics of representation as it occurs ‘on paper’ and hence in the capital of Port Moresby. Both the PJV and government has legal obligations to ‘landowners’ which must be met if the law is to be assuaged. Thus ‘the Ipili’ needed to exist and have certain features if the legal and ethical requirements of the government and mine were to be met. By Papua New Guinea

law, all land in the country is owned by ‘native’ (a legal term inherited from colonial law) peoples and cannot be alienated to non-citizens, although it may change hands through ‘traditional’ means (for a more in-depth review of land tenure in Papua New Guinea see Sack 1974; Rynkiewich 2001; Larmour 1991; Curtin, Holzknicht, and Larmour 2003). As we have seen, activities such as mining are accommodated through a lease arrangement whereby the mining company becomes the lessee and the natives the lessor. Thus a distinct ethnic group known as ‘the Ipili’ had to exist.

Since landownership in Papua New Guinea is tied to traditional tenure, ‘the Ipili’ not only have to exist, but have to own land in such a way that only a certain subset of the Ipili – the ‘landowning clans’ – could make claim to the future home of the Special Mining Lease. This required a form of indigenous sociality composed of clearly delineated ‘traditional’ units with clear ties to demarcated areas of land and rules for affiliation that resulted in unambiguous group membership. Only in this way could clans be mapped to land and a list of individual ‘clan members’ be created. These same principles could also be used to *exclude* individuals and groups from the category of ‘landowner.’ Thus both Porgera’s engineering and significance involved a solidification of the terrain they covered: the (sometimes literal) concretization of the unstable semiotic and geophysical resources of the valley in the 1980s marked an important turning point in Porgera’s history.

An ethnic group with certain features was a necessary but not sufficient subject of governance. In order to interact with the government, the Ipili needed not only to be identified, they needed to be represented by someone who was willing to put their signature (or, more typically, thumbprint) on a document stating that they agreed to the compensation that the mine was willing to pay them. Thus the Ipili needed to be

represented in both a semiotic and political sense (Kelly and Kaplan 2001:22) – not just created on paper as governed subjects, but imagined as a group whose collective acquiescence would be signaled by the consent of agents who could sign agreements on their behalf. This need for delegation of authority in landowner communities produced ‘the twenty three’ – the twenty three members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee who, authorized by their clansmen, capture the consensus of their community and represent this collective will in an official capacity. At least in theory. In order for the Ipili to be made feasible, then, individual people need to be subsumed under two labels. First, ordinary Porgerans need to be classified as ‘Ipili’ or ‘non-IPili’ and particularly as ‘landowner’ or ‘nonlandowner’ Ipili. Second, individuals needed to be able to fill the role of ‘landowner representative’ so that they could negotiate with officials from the mine and government.

While legal and ethical requirements created a situation in which the mine and government needed an ‘Ipili’ partner, the facts of life on the ground in Porgera necessitated that the Ipili be made feasible in a second, much more incarnate way: the Ipili needed to be made feasible in the sense of physically docile if the mine was going to function. Facilities such as workers’ camps did not only need to be legally zoned and built, they needed to be defended: at a very basic level, the mine is in danger of being physically over-run and destroyed by the Ipili. This is not likely to happen as the result of a highly coordinated military campaign carefully designed to bring the mine to its knees and force it to acquiesce to the demands of Ipili leadership – this would require more discipline than most Ipili are capable of. Ipili culture is not particularly martial, and while fighting was common in the pre-contact period, it typically took the form of simmering, long-term feuds maintained by sudden outbursts of emotions and violence. It is more the

case that Ipili are noted for their flamboyant, unpredictable, and extreme emotional shifts which lead to unpredictable and dramatic action. What mine really fears is some sort of spontaneous outburst that could disrupt its very complex operation. For while Ipili organizational ability is remarkably low, the fragile complexity of the mine's operations means that even a relatively small amount of disturbance can be crippling. Rolling a few logs across the road supplying the mine, or cutting down the wires which support the pylons that funnel electricity into the valley can be accomplished by anyone with an axe, and these actions result in massive financial loss for the PJV.

Even more dramatic things could happen. In 1988, while negotiations for the existence of the mine were going on, a handful of people broke into the exploration camp and stole the safe containing the camp's entire cash supply as well as the passports of every expatriate employee at the mine (see chapter three). In 1993 Porgerans rioted after police officers believed to be in the mine's pocket killed a young boy. Local people stormed the mine's barracks, over turned cars, and destroyed millions of dollars worth of improvements (Banks 1997:260-265). Despite the presence of a well-maintained airstrip and an enormous market of cash-rich customers, no commercial airline has operated in Porgera since a pilot embroiled in a disagreement with customers was pulled out of his plane and chopped to death with machetes and axes. As we shall see in the next chapter, during my own fieldwork the mine's operations were nearly crippled when a group of five or six people refused to let the mine drill a tunnel to drain waste water from the open pit – a tunnel located on land whose occupant had given permission for the tunnel to be constructed! In sum, while outbursts are not numerous, they have occurred and Ipili leaders have often suggested to mine officials that more could be arranged in the future if necessary.

Finally, a third and more fascinating form of feasibility has arisen from the conjunction of these representational and pacificatory requirements. For the semiotic requirements of national actors have mixed with the valley's unpredictable nature to make 'the Ipili' feasible political actors at the national level. As we have seen, the closing of Bougainville copper mine during the period immediately proceeding the creation of the Porgera gold mine left the government desperate for money while simultaneously demonstrating their inability to use their military to coerce local land owners into accepting a mine. The Ipili were in the right place at the right time, and were not afraid to seize the opportunity. Today Ipili continue to use their position to effect change at a national level. Ironically, then, attempts to make the Ipili compliant have ended up making them politically efficacious.

Imagining Global Actors: Who Are 'the Global'?

The concept of imagining local actors will seem familiar to many readers – as we have seen, there is a large and venerable literature on the subject. But the concept of imagining global actors may be less intuitive. While we examine how this or that swidden horticulturalist in Kalimantan becomes 'indigenous' and 'local,' we rarely question how this or that Nebraskan living in the East Village becomes 'the UN' when he sits down at his desk in the morning on the Lower East Side. The mechanisms by which indigenous identities are created and people come to be identified with them are easier for us to see because they are contested and uncertain – their achieved nature cannot be taken for granted, and thus the work that goes into that achievement is visible.

Entities such as governments and large international corporations, on the other hand, recruit people to roles routinely and people act on their behalf constantly. When France signs an agreement with Russia, for instance, we never doubt what has happened

despite the fact that neither of these entities, strictly speaking, has hands. But it is important to remember that simply because this kind of semiosis goes unnoticed to anthropologists who have grown up with it does not mean that it does not occur. That it does, and that there is something remarkable about it, can be made clear to us by how mysterious it seems to people for whom it is not *de rigueur*. One is reminded here of Levi-Strauss's quotation of Jenness's quotation of an Indian explaining totemism:

There is no single boss for every species of an animal or plant, but a boss in each locality... Now and then Indians see and kill them, but generally they keep out of sight of human beings. They are like the government in Ottawa, an old Indian remarked. An ordinary Indian can never see the 'government.' He is sent from one office to another, is introduced to this man and to that, each of whom sometimes claims to be the 'boss,' but he never sees the real government, who keeps himself hidden" (Levi-Strauss 1966:239).

In this dissertation I argue that Porgera's classically fraught situation provides a particular opportunity for us to understand how 'global' actors like 'the mine' or 'the government' become taken for granted as 'collective subjects' (Sahlins 2004b) and represented. Classically 'weak' states such as Papua New Guinea provide us an opportunity to see the work necessary to make them appear because it is often unsuccessful. Placer Dome's presence in Porgera provides a local point of articulation with a global organization that allows us to examine exactly how a grafting of 'global' identity onto a discrete – indeed, physically isolated – social network: the men and women on-site who work for (and hence in some sense are) 'the mine'. Finally, the Ipili themselves, like Jenness's Indian, have lived through unique historic circumstances that make them particularly cynical when approaching issues of representation and power and do not consider 'being Ipili' something that happens automatically. All three of these actors, then, provide us an opportunity for us to examine what makes global identities stick to local actors.

Accounts which accept 'globalization' or 'the state' as taken-for-granted actors

are in danger of what one might want to call a “naive phenomenology of globalization.” Such an approach takes as true and unproblematic the narratives of the particular people who consider themselves representatives of ‘globalization’ or ‘global institutions.’ In doing so they render globalization ‘sublime’ in John Kelly’s sense: “so hard to ground and so easy to float, in this guise increasingly, even exponentially... still undefined and undefinable” (Kelly 2002: 258). Such a sublime, however attractive, results in “the occlusion, by sublimation, of the specificities of recent global history” (Kelly 2002:279). Globalization and capitalism thereby become elusive forces, everywhere and nowhere at once. This or that ethnic group do not encounter this or that government representative, they encounter ‘globalization’ or ‘capitalism.’ As a result the specific history and sociology of narratives of group identity and role inhabitation are occluded and we are no longer able to interrogate how they knit together groups of people to produce the concrete coordinated action across time and space that we call “global change.”

Just as we must question how ‘the Ipili’ are created as a collective subject and then represented by particular people, so too we must question how ‘global’ institutions such as ‘Placer Dome Inc’ effect change in time and space by coordinating action between both consociates and contemporaries through their claims to span space and time. Indeed, what is so interesting about institutions such as Placer Dome is how much of this coordination of action occurs between non-consociates. Organizations with a truly international scope and complex logistics must coordinate complex acts of finance and engineering between people who have very little shared background. It is this that I call ‘global’ here (doing only a little bit of violence to the term): entities who are mediated by people who are non-consociates and generally share little background knowledge. How do global actors maintain these complex chains of action across space and time that are

so central to keeping the mine open? In order to understand this, we must come to grips with how individual people come to speak for (or represent, or mediate) a particular institution.

From Simplification to Subsumption

My approach is thus very different from that of authors who take for granted ‘the state’ or ‘the mine’ as a reified actor, and particularly those approaches which examine in detail the political ramifications of representing grass-roots people while rendering invisible the ways in which the state itself is achieved. Consider, for instance, James C. Scott’s work *Seeing Like a State* (1998). Scott’s vision here is of a hubristic and misled high-modernist state imposing its centrally planned schemes to ‘improve the human condition’ onto a reality more complex than its narrow gaze allows it to see. States, he argues, gather information about local people in order to make them ‘legible’ or visible. It is only after this happens that they can be controlled and manipulated.

On Scott’s account, this imposition of groupness to pre-existing, authentic local people is essentially pathological and procrustean, and this misrecognition has catastrophic consequences. It seems to me that there are two difficulties with this position.

The first we might call ‘analytic reification’. Ironically, Scott’s gaze is as myopic as that of the regimes he criticizes. His vision of the nature of governance in the high-modernist mode gives too much credit to the state itself. By seeing modernist governance as monolithic and totalistic he ignores the reality of rule as it is practiced on the ground. While Scott disaggregates what he considers pathological and inaccurate ‘state representations’ of local peoples, he does not examine the work that has gone into making

‘the State’ legible to him. The question of who concretely is producing the planning reports or conducting poorly-run censuses never arises. By assuming the ontological existence of the state in the same way that ‘the State’ assumes the ontological existence of local groups Scott’s account fails to provide any account of the network of civil servants and politicians who make and implement policy in practice. As a result, he misses the ways governance, even the kind with pretensions to high-modernity, is as much about the the disorganized, improvisational work of daily life as are the lives of the subjects it governs. As a result he remains within the constricting confines of a framework which revolves around terms such as state, local people, legibility, and control.

In his hypostasization of ‘the state’ as an actor, Scott is like Jenness’s Indian, except he has not turned up at the government offices in order to be disabused of his notions. As a result we have in Scott’s account no ethnography of the people who make up or mediate the state, merely assertions of its cognitive and sensory shortcomings. The result is an account which is strangely mentalistic and lacks the fine-grained institutional and ethnographic detail for which Scott’s earlier monographs are rightly admired. Rather than remain within the constricting confines of a framework which can only understand the State as nearsighted and local people as ‘resistant,’ I suggest we see governing as a species of semiosis with all its twists and turns. What we need is an account of how both ‘local’ as well as ‘global’ actors are concretely mediated – as they must be – in particular contexts.

The second problem is more wide-ranging, and will become a trope for much of the rest of this chapter. Scott writes that “certain forms of knowledge and control require a narrowing of vision” and that this ‘tunnel vision’ “brings into sharp focus certain

limited aspects of an otherwise far more complex and unwieldy reality” (1989:11). The result are ‘simplifications’ that are “parasitic on informal processes” (1989:6) and do not “successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted” (1989:3). What Scott misses here is that all forms of knowledge, not just pathological ones, require a ‘selective narrowing of vision.’ This is certainly true for anyone adhering to a pragmatic-poetic approach to interaction, according to which people must decide on one account of what they are doing and thus leave other alternative narratives to one side. But it is also true of classification more generally, at least according to the Neokantian perspective that drives most contemporary social science and which posits a hiatus irrationalis between concepts and reality (Oakes 1988:19-21). On Kant’s account, sensuous intuition – the raw material of perception – is always subsumed by the subject’s categories of perception. It is for this reason that Neokantians speak of perception as a ‘cognitive accomplishment of the subject.’ In fact thinking consists in just this subsumption particular intuitions within the general categories of the understanding. Nineteenth-century readings of Kant produced a variety of influential thinkers who are foundational to theory as practiced in anthropology, including Boas (Bunzl 1996), Bakhtin (Holquist and Clark 1984), Durkheim (Barberis 2001), Peirce (Brent 1998:52-67), and Weber (Oakes 1988). Indeed, the modern culture concept depends on the idea that perception is underdetermined by reality, thus providing a point of leverage at which different cultural logics can exercise their structuring influence on perception (Sahlins 1976).

At what level of specificity the subsumption of individual people and things ought to be made – to use Strathern’s (2004) terms, at what ‘scale’ we shall allow ‘complexity’ to appear – will be an issue throughout this thesis. Windelband famously distinguished between ‘nomothetic’ and ‘idiographic’ approaches to phenomenon, approaches which

Boas (1887) believed to be exemplified in the disciplines of physics and geography. On this account nomothetic approaches such as physics “analyze facts only from the viewpoint and for the purpose of understanding the general nomological relationship to which these facts are subject” (Windelband 1980:174) while idiographic disciplines such as geography seek “to reproduce and understand in its full facticity an artifact of human life to which unique ontological status is ascribed” (Windelband 1980:175). One focuses on the general, and the other the particular.

I do not bring this up not because I believe any attempt at governance will fail if it fails to immerse itself in the transcendental doctrine of elements. Nor do I suggest that states have never made catastrophically wrong decisions – that the destruction of the Russian peasantry, for instance, didn’t actually happen or could have been avoided. My point is that all knowledge is partial, and setting a standard of objectivity as Scott does is unrealistic – something like flunking Boas for producing a dissertation which failed to come up with the true color of seawater. On the contrary, any particular person or thing can be understood from a generalizing or a particularizing point of view. As we shall see, determining where the analyst should situate their analysis on this scale, and how different agents in Porgera use this scale will be an issue that will recur throughout this thesis.

Indeed, as Tanya Murray Li has pointed out in the case of community based natural resource management schemes in Indonesia, “the ‘state simplifications’ embodied in the new forest law do not in fact simplify, nor do they necessarily prevail, rather they open up new arena within which state-society relations can be reworked” (Li 2002:276). It is not merely the case that states make simplifications. All sorts of actors do so. As we shall see, Ipili are not the least local attempts to control the physical and social world use

strategies of ‘legibility’ and ‘control’ themselves. Ipili had no scruples about about using “state power backed by records and court” – as long as they got to construe the nature of that state power for their own ends. Moreover, they actively challenge not only the authority of the state, but the authority of people to represent the state. The question then shifts not so much from ‘getting the simplifications of indigenous people right’ to examining strategies of subsumption of both ‘global’ and ‘local’ actors under more general categories. “Politics,” as Silverstein and Urban put it, is “the struggle to entextualize authoritatively” (1996:11).

Personation and Impersonation

Understanding how ‘the Ipili’ are made feasible, I’ve argued, involves understanding how individual people come to be seen as representatives of collective subjects. I’ve claimed that such understanding must be symmetrical – we must ask not only how certain people come to be labeled as ‘the Ipili’ but how they come to be labeled ‘the State.’ Understanding the process of representation or mediation of larger collective groups is key to understanding the way that action is coordinated at a the macro level, and the solidity and givenness of the way that a person represents a global actor is key to making sure that action is coordinated successfully.

The literature on this topic is a long one, since political representation has been the *idée fixe* of Western Europe and its settler colonies for five hundred years or so. One particularly clear discussion of the relationship between effective organization and group identity can be drawn from Hobbes. Hobbes, drawing on precedents from antiquity, spoke of this as “personating”: “to act, or represent himselfe, or an other; and he that acteth another is said to bear his person, or act in his name” (Hobbes 1991:112). Thus Hobbes claims that individual actors became ‘the state’ by virtue of their personation of

Leviathan, the ‘artificial person’ created by (but not a subject to) the covenant of people who impart sovereignty to it in order to escape the perils of a state of nature and enter the happier realm of civil society. It is interesting to note the practical rationale that Hobbes gives for people entering into a social contract. The maintenance of law and order – what we today call the ‘capacity’ of governments – depends on a kind and quantity of coordination of action that does not emerge spontaneously. At the center of Hobbes’s theory of social contract, then, lies the ability of people to act in concert across space and time. This superior form of organization provides a force so much more effective than the disorganized factions found in the state of nature that its punitive capacity acts as a disincentive for free riders. Indeed, it is just this overwhelming retaliatory potential which inspires Hobbes’s biblical imagery.

At the same time, the power of people’s commitment to these global groups lies not just in a raw calculus of power. Often times people are so committed to their causes that they manage to pull things off which any ‘rational’ actor would recognize as untenable – government that is only impossible until its representatives became impossibly committed to it. A good example of this comes from Furnivall’s discussion of the establishment of the British ‘Leviathan’ in Burma (for a lovely little Leviathan-focused piece of Leachiana that explores the colonial history of Burma see Leach 1977). As John Furnivall astutely notes, the Leviathan is a mortal god with a mythic origin:

Hobbes was driven to myth, because Leviathan has this at least in common with the immortal gods: that we know little or nothing of his childhood. That is not strange; for no god is quite immune to ridicule... A god must feel secure in his divinity to let himself be laughed at, and Leviathan is not sufficiently at home in heaven to allow it (Furnivall 1991:1).

In the context of his study of the beginning of British rule in Burma, Furnivall’s point is simply that the personation of global actors such as the British empire is a contingent one. In his account - a sort of Fawlty Towers (Cleese and Booth 2001) version

of colonialism - the local population not only refuses to 'buy in' to the existence of 'Empire,' but the colonial officials struggling to keep order have precious little capacity to enforce it. Thus the colonial agents struggling to produce official documentation of their governance to London even as they are ineffective on the ground end up not personating leviathan, but impersonating it.

Like the representatives of the state and company that we shall meet in this thesis, they struggled to maintain some semblance of order in both their 'practical' administration of their territory as well as their personation of a big actor. Indeed (and this is the point) the two acts of personation and 'practical' action are not discrete activities but different sides of the same coin. The tragic part of Furnivall's ironic tale is that this faith in personation pays off eventually – the British did proceed to establish control over Burma. From the humble tragi-comedy of British administrators trying to fulfill the most basic of tasks to the creation of a fully organized colonial states, Leviathan in Burma managed its apotheosis through a commitment to role on the part of its representatives that was unrealistic by the standards of realpolitik but rational within a cultural framework in which imagined themselves as local instantiations of global powers.

Taking Big Actors Seriously: Synopticism and Irreduction

Thus these leviathans, these 'global actors,' become more powerful when they become leviathans in the sense used by Callon and Latour. They have famously argued that the power and existence of 'macro-actors' comes from their ability to 'translate' "all the negotiations intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force" and use them to present themselves as 'macro-actors'

(Callon and Latour 1981:279). The fact that the network of actors involved “conceals its associations” gives it ‘potency’ (Latour 1983:213) to act and, as they say, to put things in ‘black boxes.’ “A black box,” they write, “contains that which no longer needs to be reconsidered, those things whose contents have become a matter of indifference. The more elements one can place in black boxes – modes of thoughts, habits, forces and objects – the broader the construction one can raise” (Callon and Latour 1981: 285).

We need not embrace Callon and Latour’s ontological agnosticism – a mixture of Serres’s denial of metanarrative and Garfinkel’s ethnomethodological indifference – in order to appreciate their more general point. The capacity of big actors to act is tied to their ability to be taken for granted, to put the facts of their existence in ‘black boxes’ which are, as Callon and Latour remind us, are always ‘leaky.’ Thus even big actors that seem intuitively ‘real’ to us are in fact available for examination as construed and construable.

Thus ‘collective subjects’ are made to appear (or ‘purified’) through the mediating instrument of the people who represent them. On this account, ‘the Ipili,’ ‘the State,’ and ‘the Company’ are abstract entities which are always represented – ‘mediated’ – by particular people in particular places since institutions always subsume particular actors within a more general role. As global as Globalization may be, it always ultimately happens in a particular place. As a result particular actors must always come to represent or ‘mediate’ global actors – to become, as Peirce might put it, ‘local tokens of global types.’ At issue in Porgera, then, is the question of how individuals can become efficacious – how they and others come to see them as representatives of larger entities. How, in doing so, do they mediate different large-scale structures and perpetuate the coordination of action that is necessary to keep the mine going? What are the particular

ways this works institutionally? What are the dynamics at play? It is to these questions that I now turn.

On Latour and Callon's account – or at least the sociological version I am describing here, with much of the ontological weirdness taken out – sociologists such as Scott who take for granted the existence of 'the State' are actually 'helping actors macro-structure reality.' It is thus interesting to note that while both Latour and Bourdieu agree that the act of subsumption and authoritative entextualization always occur in practice and never happen completely automatically, Bourdieu argues that the 'synoptic' picture of human life introduced by the analyst is the result of "a radical discontinuity between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge" (Bourdieu 1990) due to the fact that the anthropologist's relation to his informants' life is merely 'cognitive' or 'theoretical' and hence fundamentally different from their 'practical' comportment. Latour and Callon would argue that the synoptic, 'purified' view in which people see 'the UN' rather than 'Dan Smith' acting is a result of the analyst's connection to and belief in the stories of their informants. This accords well with how the contributors of *Natural Histories of Discourse* imagine their own academic articles which are, as Judith Irvine puts it, part of "a chain if discourse relations extending into the future – all the way, gentle reader, to you" (Irvine 1996:156). "We do," as Silverstein puts it, "just what the 'natives' do, schematically speaking, and we should not ever forget that" (Silverstein 2003:203).

In the case of Porgera, the relationship one takes to the validity claims of one's informants is particularly fraught – who 'the Ipili' are, what it means 'the hold land in accordance with native custom,' and so forth are the sorts of questions which anthropologists are supposed to speak on authoritatively. Throughout this dissertation one of the main themes will be the way that anthropological knowledge is connected at every

level with life in the valley today. Here I merely point out that no study of the way macro-actors (or, as I shall call them ‘big actors’) are taken for granted or problematized is a constant issue when both you and your informants consider it to be your job to produce just such authoritative entextualizations of them.

Conflicting Structures of Agency

In order to keep the mine open, large scale action must be coordinated. For large scale action to be coordinated, people who are not consociates must share a common understanding of who they are and what they are doing. On the one hand, the Ipili must be made feasible – imagined as suitable partners for the mine and (more straightforwardly) pacified. On the other hand, entities such as ‘the mine’ must be imagined and people must come to personate them. As we shall see in this section, life in Porgera is (somewhat tragically) stuck between two different ways of coordinating action. For while ‘the mine’ depends on one way of imagining actors, ‘the Ipili’ use a very different one, and much of the action in the valley can be explained as a result of this conflict that arises from these two different methods of ordering social life. Keeping the mine open involves managing this friction very, very carefully. Finally, at the back of both the Ipili and the mine, the government must also be satisfied, and a narrative of life in the valley created which is suitable to the state.

The most fruitful point of departure for elucidating this conflict comes from Marshall Sahlins’s work on the interaction of structure in history, and in particular his accounts of the way that individual agency is amplified by an actor’s structural position. While Sahlins’s problematic has been discussed as ‘historical’ it is clear his work is applicable to understanding the coordination of action in the present. Napoleon’s logistics, after all, became Tolstoy’s history.

While Levi-Strauss's *Savage Mind* responded to Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason (1976), Sahlins focused on its methodological propaedeutic, *Search for a Method* (Sartre 1963). In this volume, Sartre accuses Marxist authors such as Lukacs of "the terrorist practice of 'liquidating the particularity'" (Sartre 1963: 28). Their analysis is flawed, he claims, because of their tendency to be overly nomothetic. Like the physicist described by Boas, these authors search for general patterns in data rather than understanding, as a cosmographer might, the details of particular situations. But while Windelband and Boas sees the distinction between these two approaches as one of emphasis rather than in terms of right or wrong, Sartre understands his opponents' subsumption of particular phenomenon under general labels as essentially pathological:

There is no longer any question of studying facts within the general perspective of Marxism so as to enrich our understanding and to clarify action. Analysis [on their account] consists solely of getting rid of detail, in forcing the signification of certain events, in denaturing facts or even inventing a nature for them in order to discover it later underneath them, as their substance. (Sartre 1963: 27).

Thus, they replace the fine detail of history with 'general particularities' which are "made to pass for particular, historical realities when we ought not to see in them anything more than the purely formal unity of abstract, universal relations" (Sartre 1963:24). Overall, the essay is an exercise in brand management in which Sartre attempts to position himself as more authentically 'Marxist' than other authors. Whether Sartre or Lukacs is the true inheritor of Marxism is not particularly relevant here, of course, and the success of Sartre's proposed program of 'existential psychoanalysis' is perhaps best judged by its current popularity. What is relevant is that Sartre's own project involved developing a method for analyzing history which sought to rectify Marxist analysis by supplementing it with sociological and psychoanalytic approaches which analyzed how the Marxist economic base was 'mediated' to individual people and the particularities of their historic existence.

While Sartre was searching for a method, Sahlins was searching for an object – a culture concept sufficiently robust as to escape from the “practical theories” which reduced culture to “the social realization of a gainful ratio of material benefits to cost” (Sahlins 1977:15). Sahlins saw in Sartre’s mediation a way to talk about culture. As is well known, Sahlins famously introduced the term ‘structure of the conjuncture’ in 1976, shortly before the publication of *Culture and Practical Reason* (Sahlins 1977:30) in order to clear structuralism from the charges that it could not account for the deployment of structure in practice and culture change more generally. In response to Sartre’s question - “Do we have today the means to constitute a structural, historical anthropology?” (Sartre 1963:xxxiv) – Sahlins’s answer was a firm ‘yes,’ “le jour est arrivée” (1985:72).

While the reception of this article and the string of publications after (Sahlins 1981, 1985) has focused on the political and empirical acceptability of Sahlins’s account of Captain Cook’s landing in Hawaii in 1789, it is clear that Sahlins intended his model to extend beyond an account of Hawaiian historicity and to serve as a more general account of the relationship between individual agency and cultural constraint, synchronic structure and diachronic process. According to Sahlins, general cultural structures always realize themselves in particular situations whose very uniqueness offers a surfeit of reality which exceeds the generality of the cultural category which subsumes them. The stretching of these categories in practice then feeds back into the more general structures, altering them. In this way the innovative use of structures in particular situations modifies cultural structure at a general level – the ‘historical metaphors’ feeding back on the ‘real’ structural-cum-mythical types of which they were tokens. This was part of a wide-ranging conversation occurring at the time -- on the ‘fundamental metaphoricity of language’ see Gadamer (1991:429), for a theory of ‘metaphoric innovation’ with a

similar intellectual genealogy see Ricoeur (1977), on culture and history see Valeri (1990), on metaphor in anthropology more generally see Fernandez (ed 1986, 1991) and so forth.

It was in another longish essay on structural history, *The Return of the Event, Again* (1991), that Sahlins made good his promissory note in *Islands of History* (1985). While that earlier work had focused on ‘exogenous’ events “emanating from natural or foreign causes” (1991: 45) such as Captain Cook, *Return of the Event* focuses on ‘endogenous’ events caused by the relationship “between an incident and a structure” (1991:45). Through an analysis of nineteenth-century Fijian political feuding, Sahlins considers how “a higher order of structure – the relations between kingdoms – momentarily devolves upon certain circumstantial relations between particular chiefs” (1991:47). Here “the heroic capacity of Ratu Qara [a chief] to signify Rewa [his kingdom] and so incarnate its fate” results in a “symbolic magnification of the person” (1991:63). People so endowed – who Sahlins refers to as ‘sociohistorical individuals’ -- “engage social totalities” (1991:63). More recently this has been posed as a series of questions about the “structural-cum-symbolic amplification of minor differences” and thus how “small-scale, interpersonal or factional disputes are turned into large-scale struggles between nations, kingdoms, or their totalized like” (Sahlins 2004b:5). In other words, the way that “micro-actors” structure “macro-history” (Sahlins 2004a, 2004b).

This discussion of Sahlins’s thought allows us to see that what is at issue is not merely the subsumption of a particular person under a general identity, but the way that that identity is embedded in a wider cultural structure that enables individuals to affect change at a large level through their action. Thus Ipili landowner representatives and senior mine management are sociohistorical individuals in Sahlins’s sense – people

whose actions are located in a wider structure which amplified their agency. The question then becomes the nature of the structures in which they are situated. For this I return to Sahlins and Levi-Strauss.

Levi-Strauss famously attempted to undo stereotypes of ‘primitive’ society by insisting these societies had complex aesthetics and social organization. As a result he replaced the distinction of ‘primitive’ and ‘civilized’ with that of ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ societies. “Our Western societies,” he writes, “are made for change; it is the principle of their structure and of their organization.” (1983: 321) Incorporating change, they thus undergo progress – they are ‘hot.’ ‘Primitive’ societies, on the other hand, “which we might define as ‘cold’ because their internal environment borders on the zero of historical temperature, are distinguished by the limited number of their people and their mechanical mode of functioning” (1983: 29). They seek to “annul the possible effects of historical factors on their equilibrium and continuity” and thus avoid change in order to continuously replicate a positively-valued past memorialized in myth and ritual.

Sahlins draws a similar distinction between ‘performative’ and ‘prescriptive’ approaches to history. As he writes in *Islands of History*, performative societies “tend to assimilate themselves to contingent circumstances; whereas, the prescriptive assimilate the circumstances to themselves – by a kind of denial of their contingent or evenemential character” (1985: xii). In performative societies

circumstantial happening are often marked and valued for their differences, their departures from existing arrangements, as people may then act upon them to reconstruct their social conditions. As society thus organizes itself, it knows itself as the institutional form of historical events. But in a prescriptive mode, nothing is new, or at least happenings are valued for their similarity to the system as constituted. What happens, then, is the projection of the existing order: even when what happens is unprecedented, and whether the recuperative interpretation be successful or in vain. (1985 xii)

Thus performative societies seek to emphasize the disjuncture between particular

happenings and the general categories which subsume them – their idiography drives their history. Prescriptive societies seek to subsume without remainder all that they encounter, nomothetically reproducing the general categories that they cherish.

Given Levi-Strauss's discussion, you might expect transnational corporations – the very epitome of global capitalism's restless modernity -- to be hot and Papua New Guinea highlanders – classically 'savage slot' (Trouillot 1991) societies – to be cold. However on further consideration we can see that exactly the reverse is the case. This is the key to understanding both the Mine and the Ipili's two distinct ways of creating (or not) 'structural relays' which 'amplify' the authority of ability of individuals to coordinate action across huge swaths of space and time.

As will become clear in what is to follow, it is the very 'coolness' of the mine's organization that allows it to function so successfully and at such a large level. It is a hierarchical organization with standard operating procedures which are designed to keep it open and running as efficiently as possible. In fact, not surprisingly, it fits Weber's ideal type of a bureaucratic enterprise in which there is an office hierarchy, management is based upon written files (which define 'standard operating procedure') and the employees distinguish (ideal-typically at least) between their official role and their private lives (Weber 1968: 956-957).

The mine operates in this manner for many reasons. But surely one of the most important is, as Weber points out, "its purely *technical* superiority over any other form of organization" (1968: 973). Again we are back to the close tie between efficient coordination of action and the routineness with which people personate big actors. The complex logistics and technical requirements of running a mine in a place like Porgera is met by bureaucratic organization: "precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files,

continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs – these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration” (1968: 973).

Thus the mine’s organization is *literally* prescriptive – the work of its employees follows prescriptions described in standard operating procedure which is meant to exemplify ‘best practice.’ As a result, the mine seeks to deny the historical particularity of, say, any historically unique toilet cleaning in favor of a more efficient ‘stereotypic reproduction’ of rules regarding the standard way to clean toilets – and this despite the fact that every toilet is utterly unique and particular and will never again be in exactly the same state as it is at the particular moment that a janitor experiences cleaning it. “Bureaucratization offers above all the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specializing administrative functions according to purely objective considerations... ‘Objective’ discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to *calculable rules*” and “without regard for persons” (1968: 975). Keeping the mine open depends upon institutions for action which see people in their particularity rather than their generality.

Like Sartre’s ‘idealist Marxists,’ and Levi-Strauss’s ‘cold’ primitive people, prescriptive cultures such as the mine’s subsume particular situations with a sucking sound – every particular situation is seen in its generality. Standard operating procedure is nomothetic in its subsumption – it is of no importance whether this particular refueling is Bob’s first day on the job. All that is important is that the Refueling Technician perform his task while observing all proper safety precautions. Thus every refuelling is yet another instantiation of standard operating procedure. And indeed, Weber writes that “bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is ‘dehumanized,’ the more

completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation” (1968: 975). The result is company discipline, or, as the mine refers to it, a ‘high performance culture’: “The content of discipline is nothing but the consistently rationalized methodically prepared and exact execution of the received order, in which all personal criticism is unconditionally suspended and the actor is unswervingly and exclusively set for carrying out the command. In addition, this conduct under orders is uniform” (Weber 1968:1149).

At the top of these hierarchies are the small elites whose decisions will change standard operating procedure – ‘senior management.’ Like Sahlins’s Polynesian chiefs, these people form an evenementially hot core at the top (or, depending on one’s spatial metaphors, center) of the bureaucracy which takes the form of a ‘reality management pool’ (Murphy 1991:75) which decides what shall be done and then ensures that others implement their orders. Their task is complicated by the fact of having to deal with the Ipili themselves.

If Weber’s ideal type of bureaucracy represents the epitome of a prescriptive structure, the Ipili are a good example of a ‘performative’ structure. Indeed, in the mid-1980s, when academics were busy debunking notions of ‘islands lost in time’ and ‘people without history,’ one can understand why Sahlins would emphasize the performative aspect of Hawaiian culture. And, to be sure, there are definitely patches of evenemential ‘heat’ within the cultural structures of old Hawaii – most notably, the ali’i. Indeed, it is their status as history makers that Sahlins uses as part of his wider argument about the appropriateness of ‘heroic’ rather than ‘popular’ history in Polynesian societies (Sahlins 1985), and their ability to coordinate action on a massive scale can be seen in Hawai’i’s incredible built environment (Kirch 1996). Compared to the Ipili, however, the

Hawaiians described by Sahlins appear downright tepid.

Like many highlands groups, Ipili combine a keen egalitarianism with a dislike of boredom. While the exact history and culture of the Ipili will be given in future chapters, it is worthwhile to outline here some basic proclivities. Like the Nebilyer people described by Merlan and Rumsey (1991), the Ipili have a strong sense “of both the unverifiability and importance of what others’ intentions and motives really are” (1991:225) as well as the potential meaning of significant physical objects (*kokoli* in Ipili). The result is “a common dimension in orientation both to persons and events: the possibility of concealed significance” (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:228). This “revelatory quality of thing” (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:228) means that events are “invested with the expectation of potential revelation” (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:228):

The relative openness of possible meaningfulness leaves ever more to be experienced and discovered, possibly even the terms in which new kinds of meanings might make sense... It is a more rapacious desire to experience and explore the novelty for what this might make manifest... difference can be experienced as the uncovering of new, heretofore covert possibilities. (Merlan and Rumsey 1991: 231)

Thus while Levi-Strauss considered “the avid need for change characteristic of our own civilization” (1991:1966:236) in the case of Porgera we see it to be a characteristic of the Ipili rather than the mine. “Indigenous emphasis and interest is *not* focused upon the conformity of action to structural ‘types’, but upon ‘event’ as that which may offer the possibility for revelation of meaningfulness and exploration of the difference this makes.” (Merlan and Rumsey 1991:239).

In sum, life in Porgera revolves around two conflicting structures of agency. On the one hand, we have the method of coordinating action as carried out by the mine. This is essentially the bureaucratic system outlined by Weber. A ‘standard operating procedure’ is created to guide the routinization of subordinates, while policy is made by

an elite at the top of the chain of organization. On the other we have the performative society of the Ipili, which is anarchic and egalitarian. The result is a constant process of ‘fire-fighting’ – Ipili continue to attempt to disrupt the mine’s operations for their own advantage, while mine representatives often spent their time attempting to patch things up before they unravel completely. As we shall see, Filer refers to this instability as ‘the Melanesian Way of menacing the mining industry’ (1998).

As a result the situation in Porgera today is one in which a small ‘reality management pool’ who have historically served as the interface between Porgerans, the government, and mining companies make decisions about the valley that will be authoritative. But unlike a chiefly class of ali’i which is restricted on the basis of genealogy (albeit creatively figured genealogy) the set of microactors who can structure macroreality is much fuzzier in Porgera. The result is a “high society” of potentially important people who are constantly jockeying for power and personation. At times this jockeying is so intense that it threatens to undo the very structures in the valley that make the amplification of agency and the coordination of action possible at all. Nonetheless, there exists in Porgera an ‘evenemential elite’ – a group of people whose eventful lives can truly change the shape of life in the valley, in Port Moresby, and internationally as well.

In sum, from within the privileged sphere or research with the elite, where the arbitrariness of history-making is so apparent, it is easy to “resolve social totalities into the projects of self-fashioning individuals” just from a distance the complexity of these interactions on the ground can be read as a Scottian ‘Leviathanology’ in which “autonomous cultural behemoths” appear unproblematically as big actors (Sahlins 2004a:142). As Sahlins points out, the dichotomy between individualizing and

collectivizing approaches to human life is an enduring one in social thought. In this dissertation I seek not to collapse one side of this dichotomy into the other, but rather to explore what the tension between the two of them can tell us about Porgera and the more general question that it raises: how we can understand globalization as culture – and vice versa?

Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. In this first, introductory chapter I have outlined the theme of feasibility, provided a rough sketch of the mine and the Ipili, and have laid out the main theoretical issues that are at stake in the dissertation.

The first substantive chapter focuses on a close examination of a prolonged set of negotiations between Ipili leaders and mine representatives called the ‘Yakatabari Negotiations.’ This detailed case study will provide a detailed example of the fundamental issues of the dissertation as they played out in one particular situation.

With this concrete ethnographic instance in place, I then base the rest of the dissertation around a series of explanations of various aspects of the circumstances of Yakatabari. The third chapter discusses Ipili history and how the environment for the negotiations was created. It outlines the institutional history of the establishment of ‘the Ipili’ and the ‘government’ as feasible actors in Porgera and the personal histories of Porgera’s “evenemential elite.” The fourth chapter examines the cultural underpinnings of the different attitudes that the negotiators at Yakatabari brought to the table. Thus it will examine Ipili understandings of whites as well as how white negotiators imagined Ipili, and that way that the biographies of the participants in the negotiation were shaped by Papua New Guinea’s drive to independence in the 1970s and its decline in the 1980s.

The fifth chapter analyzes kinship practices in Porgera. It will demonstrate exactly what 'Ipili kinship' is and how it interfaces with government and mine institutions which benefit landowners. I will argue that there is no clear and unambiguous definition of 'true landowners' both in Ipili villages as well as government offices. In the final, concluding chapter of the dissertation I examine the way the ambiguities that are obvious at a local level are misrecognized at the 'national' level – that is, by elites in Port Moresby. I then draw some general conclusions about the way a study of Porgera can shed light on land tenure and land registration in Papua New Guinea and the role of elites in the national policy process. Finally, I remark more generally on Porgera's applicability to issues that are of a more general interest to anthropology.

CHAPTER TWO
THE YAKATABARI NEGOTIATIONS

Tom: Can't raise O'Gara?
Leo: No, nor the mayor either.
Tom: Hmm... That's not good. They're running.
Leo: They wouldn't dare.
Tom: I don't know, Leo. I warned you not to hit Caspar's club –
Leo: I'm still here, ain't I?
Tom: Caspar's play hurt you anyway.
Leo: Hah! That sorry sonofabitch just slit his own throat. He just made me
decide to step on him –
Tom: Listen to me Leo. Last night made you look vulnerable. You don't hold
elected office in this town. You run it because people think you run it. Once
they stop thinking it, you stop running it.
-Joel and Ethan Cohen, *Miller's Crossing*.

Page five of the Porgera Mine 2000 Sustainability report (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2001) featured a two-thirds of a page spread entitled “Yakatabari Waste Dump Negotiations – Failure or Foundation for the Future[?]” I quote it here in its entirety:

Yakatabari Waste Dump Negotiations – Failure or Foundation for the Future

Planning for economic, social and environmental benefits

PJV proposed a new waste dump site in 1999 and hoped to conclude negotiations with an agreed package of benefits for landowners during 2000. Consensus with the landowners was not achieved and the proposal was withdrawn by PJV. The failed negotiations have had some positive outcomes and identified some important lessons not only for PJV but for the community. It had been hoped that the new dump would contribute to sustainability in the following ways:

Dump Plan Component	Sustainability Outcome
Reduced capital/operating costs of dump trucks.	Decreased operating costs – longer mine life at low gold prices. Continued local and national revenue streams.
Shorter/lower gradient waste rock hauls.	Reduced fuel and maintenance costs. Reduced CO2 emissions.
Compensation for use of land.	Purchase of alternative gardening land as part of a benefits package.
Compensation for loss of housing	Provision of new houses.
Stable low altitude dump	Suitable for reclamation as agricultural land

Factors contributing to the failure of the plan include:

Limited information and awareness of the interplay between reduced operating costs, increased stakeholder benefits and shareholder expectations.

High demands of some stakeholder groups.

Late involvement of some government institutions in negotiations.

Difficulties in identifying alternative gardening and housing sites.

Difficulties in coordinating the provision of government services in relocated communities.

Limited awareness and understanding of the long-term sustainable benefits offered by the plan.

Group dynamics resulting in polarization of views within and between stakeholder groups.

Precedence of immediate issues and benefits over long term principles and sustainable benefits.

Despite the failure of the negotiations many stakeholders and the PJV were in favor of a strategy to prolong mine life involving a new dump package of social benefits. The failed negotiations increased awareness and understanding of the key issues of transparency, multilateral decision making and the need to focus on long term benefits rather than short-term windfalls. These are cornerstones of sustainability.

In November 2000 the PJV identified an alternative possibility, Anawe North, for a new dump site which still provides for significant economic benefits. Potential stakeholder options and discussions are taking into account earlier problems and include more flexible solutions to relocation housing and replacement gardening land to suit both individual and wider community needs.

In 385 words, eighteen months of intense, immensely important negotiation regarding the future of the mine was condensed into a single, authoritative and anonymously voiced narrative. A colorful twenty page booklet, the sustainability report represented Placer's most stylistically accessible and complete statement of 'what had

happened in Porgera in 2000,' with synoptic charts and non-technical prose that addressed everything from the creation of a local branch of the Girl Guides (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2001:6) to the amount of steel grinding media used as a reagent in operations (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2001:16). Distributed widely outside the valley – in fact, distributed *mostly* outside the valley – the report could circulate farther and faster than any other account of the negotiations, including those of the Ipili themselves. Indeed, as a PDF available on Placer Dome's website the 2000 Sustainability report became available to a literally global audience. This is the story, on order words, that became *the* synoptic account of what occurred.

Just as the sustainability report's circulation is a perfect example of the mine's ability to control the narratives of life in Porgera that circulate outside the valley, the events it describes provide a telling example of the struggles for the complex and fragile feasibility which occur within it. This chapter will re-examine the events of the Yakatabari waste dump negotiations in order to provide a substantive ethnographic introduction to the themes of this dissertation introduced in the last chapter. It seeks to provide a richly detailed example of how mine management keeps the mine operating, how Ipili strive to make themselves feasible political actors, and how these two goals are often at odds with one another. Future chapters will then go on to focus on details raised here in order to explicate them more fully.

This chapter begins by describing the situation within which Yakatabari took place – the social and economic context of the negotiations. It next goes on to discuss more concretely how the 'big actors' (or 'macro-actors') which negotiated with each other in Yakatabari – 'the landowners' and 'the state' and 'the mine' – came to be mediated or represented by particular groups of people, and how those people's unique

personalities affected how they mediated those institutions. Next I turn to a discussion of how the meetings for Yakatabari were organized. In the longest and final section of the chapter, I provide an event-by-event breakdown of the course of the negotiations.

Conjunctures and Stakes

At one level, the need for the Yakatabari waste dump was straightforward: the mine's existing operating conditions were becoming increasingly unprofitable, and management decided that the best way to keep the mine running longer and more profitably would be to build a new, very large waste dump on about 150 hectares within the Special Mining Lease at a location that was inhabited by roughly two hundred households. Thus Yakatabari immediately presented the sort of problem discussed in the previous chapter: the engineers could build it, but could the dump be made socially feasible both *de jure* and *de facto*? What assent was necessary in order to create the stable social context the mine needed for Yakatabari to function?

This question was related to another – was Yakatabari new? Officially, relationships between the Porgera stakeholders were regimented by the agreements discussed in the previous chapter, and these should have provided a guide for the mine's approach to future operations within the Special Mining Lease. The question at issue, however, was whether Yakatabari was the sort of thing that could be subsumed within these rules, or whether it was a novel case which entailed the formulation of new agreements.

Technically, any major change to mine operations that deviated significantly from the Mining Development Contract required a new round of consultation with landowners and new submissions to the government stating what the modified plan would be and

demonstrating strategies to mitigate environmental and social impacts. This would in effect involve opening the black box of assumptions and expectations that had been created by the Porgera agreements in the late 1980s and which had provided a charter for life in the valley ever since. This in turn would create an atmosphere of potential instability in the valley that could threaten the routine functioning of the mine. More importantly, it would enable the Ipili to launch new claims for concessions which they would doubtless press with all of the strength available to them. This was nothing new – Ipili make claims of the mine all the time – but if Yakatabari constituted a change from the original plan, then suddenly these claims would gain new legitimacy in the capital and would no longer be constrained by the agreements the Ipili had signed decades ago.

Thus from the start the issue with Yakatabari was not *what* was involved in constructing the waste dump in terms of engineering, but how that event would be understood, and what framing the event in one way or another would imply. Was the implementation of Yakatabari a case of ‘stereotypic reproduction’ of the relations between Special Mining Lease Landowners and the mine, or was it something new, something which opened the door for a reconfiguration of those rules? Were these negotiations, in other words, a ‘structure of the conjuncture’ in Sahlins’s sense (1985), a time when several levels of determination combined to create a situation in which existing orders were put into play and could be reshaped by individual agency, or was the creation of Yakatabari simply yet another instance of the stereotypic reproduction of life in the valley that the mine relied on? In order to understand what was stake, I turn now to the various orders of determination and how they shaped the conjuncture of circumstances that was the negotiations.

The Context of the Negotiations

The Yakatabari waste dump had its origins in the financial constraints within which Porgera operated as it matured. Like all gold mines, Porgera's early years were also its best. The richest ore was mined first, following the 'capital logic' described by Gerritson and Macintyre (1991). Porgera's early days featured unusually rich ore -- often sixty grams of gold per ton (Zone VII had over 350 grams per ton), the price of gold was high, hovering just above US\$350, and the price of production was low, roughly around US\$75 (Jackson and Banks 2002: 228-239, on which this and further discussion is based). Like other mines, however, the quality of ore decreased through time as richer stocks were worked out. The price of gold increased in the mid-90s, but fell precipitously as the decade neared its end. At the same time the cash cost of production began to increase to an all-time high in 1996 of US\$250. By 1999, when the Yakatabari negotiations began, the difference between production cost and gold price was a mere US\$50. Porgera was, as Jackson and Banks noted, being squeezed.

Finances were compounded by engineering issues. As ore grades fell, throughput had to increase in order to keep production levels steady. In August 1992, when the highest grade ore was exhausted, additions to the plant were built to handle additional throughput, which increased to 4,000 tons of ore a day. In 1993 more additions were made and throughput doubled to 8,000 tons a day. In 1994, with knowledge of the ore body's properties roughly in place and as the amount of ore processed had to be increased again, a detailed study was undertaken to determine a long-term plan of operation that would extend through the rest of the mine's life.

This resulted in Stage 4B of the mine plan and entailed a radically different approach to developing the mine. It was decided that the amount of rock mined per day would increase dramatically. By the time of my fieldwork, 220,00 tons of earth were

being moved daily. The plant was expanded to handle up to 17,000 tons of ore a day – more than double what it had been under the previous stage. Under Stage 4B, the excess ore would be stockpiled, mining would stop in 2006, and the plant would continue to process the stockpiles until 2010. Such a plan would maximize both the efficiency of the operation as well as the mine life, which all stakeholders sought to prolong in order to continue to receive revenue streams such as royalties, taxes, and dividends (Jackson and Banks 2002: 208-212).

Increased mining also necessarily entailed an increase in the amount of waste rock which it was necessary to dispose of. The question then arose as to where all of waste produced by the mine would be put. As the 1990s wore on the Kogai stable dump, where much of the waste rock had previously been discarded, became less and less capable of accommodating more rock. The dump, as it turns out, was located on the mountain range just slightly above and behind the mine's open pit – this was one of the few geologically stable areas that could handle such a large load. As time went on, the pit deepened and the waste dump, by virtue of increased dumping, grew higher and higher. The cost in petrol and capital outlay for trucks began to cut into the mine's already-shrinking profit margin in a serious way. The waste dump was literally getting too high to climb.

The Yakatabari dump was designed as a solution to this problem. It was named, like so many other features of Porgera geography, after a mishearing of a local placename – in this case, the Yakitipali stream whose watershed would form the basin of the waste dump. This area had the advantage of being below the open pit, and near the mine's main plant. It could serve, in other words, not merely to receive waste for the remainder of the mine's life, but possibly even extend the mine's life by lowering costs. Its great disadvantage, however, was that it was located in the middle of the area of the Special

Mining Lease (Special Mining Lease) inhabited by landowners.

In order for Yakatabari to go forward, Special Mining Lease landowners had to provide their consent. While who ended up being ‘Special Mining Lease landowners’ and what counted as ‘consent’ was very much up in the air, the mine knew that obtaining it from them (whatever that meant) was going to be extremely difficult. Yakatabari was the most important negotiation regarding the status of the Special Mining Lease since the mine began, and it thus represented a chance for Ipili landowners to gain concessions from the mine that they felt were long overdue. This desire to renegotiate was compounded by their experience of the mine’s development. Stage 4B had been extremely contentious because it had *not* triggered this sort of reconsideration. Landowners insisted stubbornly that the doubling of plant capacity and the decision to stockpile ore was significantly different from what was originally envisaged in the Mining Development Contract submitted to the government, but were ultimately unsuccessful in triggering new negotiations. Given their previous lack of success in getting Stage 4B considered something ‘new,’ there was no way that the landowners were going to allow Yakatabari go through without comment.

This universal desire for renegotiation was combined with several additional facts that reflected the changes in the landowner community since the late 1980s. The agreements that created the mine also created a whole set of new positions of power and privilege for the Ipili lucky enough to fill them. Over the past ten years, the fluid scene of big men that characterized Porgera in the 1980s had congealed into a still-flexible but much more restricted group of Landowners with a capital L – the elite who held sinecures and other positions of power and traveled around the valley in expensive Toyota Land Cruisers with tinted windows. While many of these people actively considered the

welfare of the people they theoretically represented, their personal interests could no longer be considered to always be unproblematically aligned with those of the majority of Porgerans. Nevertheless, it was these people who sat on the Landowner Negotiating Committee and served as the indigenous component of Porgera's 'eventual elite' – the high society whose microinteractions could structure macroreality in the valley.

Contrary to what one might expect, this split between landowner elites and local communities did not result in calls for a reform of this system. Average Porgerans were not unhappy with the existence of a privileged elite *per se* – they were merely unhappy that they were not members of it. Thus the clearest manifestation of this stratification of the landowner community could be seen in the rise of younger men clamoring to replace the now-aging group that negotiated the agreements in 1989. The conjuncture of circumstances that created the possibility of the Yakatabari waste dump, in other words, gave those people who had been busy garnering support within the more fluid and low-stakes realms of valley politics a chance to parlay that success into influence beyond the valley – the black boxes being opened, as it were, this was the chance for young aspirants to stuff themselves into them.

The rise of these younger men also said something about the situation of landowner communities more generally. Landowner relocation communities had seen massive growth since the opening of the mine. An entire generation was coming of age that could not find space for housing, and who competed with their parents for space in the relocation houses built for them by the mine. Youth as a whole, then, were being forced to live in a situation not of their own making without the amenities that their elders received from the mine. This generational conflict was compounded by high amounts of in-migration – nearly every Porgeran family had a group of Engan or Huli immigrants

who were attached to them in a client-patron relationship. This growth in population – along with a more general shortage in land caused by the mine’s presence – resulted in a crisis of subsistence agriculture which led to an increased reliance on money from the mine to purchase store-bought food. In short, communities within the Special Mining Lease were facing serious social problems (for more details of social change in Porgera, see Bonnell 1999 and Banks and Bonnell 1997). Relocation off of the Special Mining Lease, and the compensation that would result from Yakatabari were seen as the silver bullet that would solve many of these problems. Compensation, particularly a *lot* of compensation, could solve a lot problems.

Finally, it must be understood that Ipili dissatisfaction with the deal they had gotten from the mine stemmed from more than just unanticipated social change and a lack of consultation during Stage 4B. The history of mining and prospecting in Porgera overlapped with a series of millennial movements and a more general Ipili eschatology in which mine-derived benefits were considered part of an end-time scenario in which an apocalypse ushered in by Jesus and an ancestral python spirit named Kupiane would result in endless affluence and immortality. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four. Here I will say simply that on this account Kupiane, the protector of the ancestors of the Tiyini clan and inhabitant of the Porgera orebody, is a benevolent spirit whose shed skin or feces became the gold sought after by the mine. Thus Ipili imagine the PJV to be ‘chasing Kupiane’ through the mountain – hence the title of Jackson and Banks’s history of the Porgera Joint Venture, *In Search of the Serpent’s Skin*. Jesus, in his sympathetic sorrow for mankind’s plight, was crucified in the years immediately following World War II, and it was this sacrifice that ‘opened the roads’ and allowed white men and their material culture to come to Porgera.

Different people had different levels of belief in Kupiane, and of course it is difficult if not impossible to measure someone's religious faith. But it is surely the case that beliefs about Kupiane influenced the behavior of some negotiators, and it is undoubtedly the case that all Ipili felt a keen sense of disappointment with the mine that was literally cosmic – ten years into what was supposed to be an age of effortless wealth and health, Ipili felt cheated by what the mine had wrought, and deeply entitled to more than they had received. Ipili dissatisfaction, in sum, was underwritten by cultural structures that ran very deep indeed.

For their part, mine management sought to implement Yakatabari but did not want to let the occasion turn into an open invitation to rethink the politics of the valley from scratch. To this end they settled on a two-pronged approach. First, they submitted a document – the “Porgera Vision Plan” – to the government explaining the Yakatabari waste dump and the changes that it would entail. Second, they began negotiating a new agreement – the ‘Yakitibari Agreement’ – with the landowners that would give more lucrative benefits to those affected by Yakitibari than provided for under the preexisting agreements.

As we have seen, the future stages of the mine's development were originally to be found in the Mining Development Contract that regulated the relationship between the company and the state. Deviation from this plan would trigger a massive restudy and reauthorization that the mine sought to avoid. One would expect, therefore, that the Porgera Vision Plan would lay out the mine's new vision for the remainder of its life in a way which demonstrated as convincingly as possible that Yakitibari could be subsumed by the Mining Development Contract. When pressed, of course, mine management would claim that this was the case. But in fact their strategy was more complicated than simply

claiming that they were within the limits of the present agreements. Instead they claimed that the Porgera Vision Plan was neither an alteration to nor a continuance of the original Mining Development Contract -- this matter was intentionally left ambiguous and in fact purposefully avoided. By focusing on the future rather than the past, the mine sought to keep the question of its compliance with older plans as far off of people's minds as possible.

This was accomplished by making the Porgera Vision Plan more than merely a schedule of future mine operations in the valley. It offered the government not just a vision of Yakatabari, but of the rest of the mine's life, its impact on the valley and the nation, and life in the valley after closure – it was, as the name implied, a complete 'vision' of life in Porgera. The mine's closure plans were attractive and generous – the most comprehensive developed to date in Papua New Guinea, and this at a time when the government was just starting to plan for a future in which it could not rely on revenue from mining. Furthermore, the mine's broad concern with 'sustainability' and social change in the valley allowed it to present itself as a responsible company committed to partnering with government to achieve maximum stakeholder benefits through best practices. Compensation for landowners, of course, was described as part of the mine's goal of supporting and embracing sustainable development with the Porgeran community and not as a cynical quid-pro-quo for a new wastedump.

Thus the mine sought to portray itself as an exemplary corporate citizen – so exemplary, in fact, that there would seem to be no point in mucking about in the details of the Mining Development Contract. Of course, the cynical could easily see this as a simple strategy designed to buy off the government and make the company look good. However it is important to note that this turn towards sustainability was part of a larger

shift in Placer Dome's global strategy – the Yakatabari negotiations occurred at a time when the company and its subsidiaries officially embraced sustainable development and began producing reports of their own efforts in this respect (Placer Dome 2000). Of course, the cynical could easily see this focus on sustainability as a simple strategy designed to make the company look good. In my personal experience, however, it is important to note that mine executives and senior management in Porgera would have found it repulsive to bulldoze people's homes and forcibly relocate them to make way for Yakatabari. Papua New Guinea is not Africa, and Placer Dome is not Summitville – on the one occasion I did hear someone suggest to the Managing Director of Placer Niugini that he hire a private military force to strengthen the mine's position in the valley, the response was a visible and sincere disgust. Thus I think senior management had a genuine desire to do the right thing – as long as was compatible with the imperatives of business. As we shall see, as the situation became more and more desperate the mine was more and more hard pressed to find ways in which it could convince itself the profitable decisions were also the morally right ones.

Was the Yakatabari agreement a precedent-setting, action-regimenting document like the relocation and compensation agreements of the late nineties? Would it apply to the entire Special Mining Lease, or was it merely a private agreement reached with the people affected by Yakatabari? This was also a question that the mine sought to dodge. If the government was satisfied and landowners quiescent then Yakatabari could go ahead and the exact status of what had been agreed could be retrospectively developed later to suit the legal and rhetorical requirements of whoever requested them at some unspecified future point. The key here was that the government would not be satisfied if the Ipili were not. Keeping the agreement negotiations “up there” in Porgera and

preventing them from spilling over to Moresby was essential to the mine's plan. By providing a suitably generous settlement the mine hoped to satisfy the Ipili and prevent Yakatabari from getting out of hand. Indeed, there were hopes that the advantages of Yakatabari (increased mine life and hence more money for landowners) and the changes in landowner communities might even make a better and fairer relationship between the mine and the Ipili possible as 'uncorrupted' younger leaders replaced older, 'corrupt' ones.

A final – and key – feature of the mine negotiation was that the mine was rushed for time. Once the mine reached a certain point in its operations, it would be forced to invest in a fleet of larger trucks necessary for the existing mine plan to go forward and the window of opportunity for Yakatabari would close. Even though negotiations began a year before the mine would be forced to choose between Yakatabari and another plan, the most important and intensive part of the negotiations would happen under enormously important deadlines. In fact, this pressure was augmented by landowner-induced crises which threatened to close the mine and thus put pressure on the PJV to act quickly. In sum, the mine decided to negotiate directly with landowners for a level of compensation that was in all likelihood much greater than what was strictly required – whatever that ambiguously defined level might be. In doing so, it attempted to localize the issue. Even if it was kept local, negotiation had to be timely – unlike other issues in the valley that stretched over years, the mine had to take advantage of the window of opportunity afforded it.

This, then, was the basic conjuncture of orders – of logistics, interests, and engineering – that created the Yakatabari negotiation. But as we have seen in the last chapter, this conjuncture of orders is supplemented by a process in which unique

individual come to personate big actors such as ‘the mine’ or ‘the landowners.’ In order to understand the dynamics at Yakatabari we must understand who concretely ‘the mine’ were and who ‘the landowners’ were in the negotiations that followed. As we shall see, this mediation was not a straightforward process, and the line between the representative and the actor that he mediated was hardly bright and clear. In fact, the course of the negotiations would hinge on just how people managed these multiple roles.

Representatives

The Mine

‘The mine’ itself was a large, complex entity with thousands of employees. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the actual number of people responsible for dealing with the social feasibility of the mine were quite small – essentially the staff of the Community Affairs Department as well as senior management. However, the Yakatabari negotiations took place during a time of transition in Community Affairs, complicating its already-fluid structure. The section had been founded in the late 1980s by a former kiap (colonial patrol officer) with decades of experience in administration in the highlands, and much of the personnel in the department were hand-picked by him based on their work together before independence. Now, after a decade, he was stepping down after just as negotiations geared up. The new head of Community Affairs, Henry Nelson (a pseudonym) was taking the helm after being in charge of Community Affairs’s Business Development Office. His own experience was, atypically, not as a kiap, but as the former manager of an extremely large plantation in Bougainville.

Beneath the head of Community Affairs was a group of roughly eighty employees

ranging from a British woman in charge of the women's center to the Papua New Guinean man in charge of producing monthly glossy *Ipili Wai Pii*, the mine's community newspaper. From the point of view of negotiations, the most important branch of Community Affairs is 'Community Relations,' the people tasked with meeting and interacting with landowners. Almost all of the men employed as section heads in Community Relations (who I refer to here as 'community relations officers') were kiaps – former government officers during Papua New Guinea's colonial period. While it is not unusual for kiaps to work in community relations in the resource industry in Papua New Guinea, Porgera was unusual for the large number of kiaps it employed. This fact – a result of the section's creation out of the informal personal network of its founder – has its advantages and drawbacks. On the one hand, these men had particular familiarity with interacting with Papua New Guineans that other expats lacked. Indeed, many of them had formerly worked in the highlands, and one had even been officer in charge at Porgera. On the other hand, employing former members of an imperial administration meant that 'the mine' was represented by men with pasts complicated by colonialism and a personal history whose import and meaning influenced the course of negotiations.

The roles of these community relations officers within the department were fluid and responded to change over time. One man, for instance, was in charge of dealing with groups downstream of the mine who he visited by helicopter. Another was in charge of the claims office where Ipili complaints about land and compensation were handled. All of these men has publicly accessible offices in a place called Yokelama and hence were the most important mine representatives that Ipili typically encountered. The head of Community Affairs, in contrast, had an office in the Administration Building of the mine which one needed a security pass to enter.

Beneath the community relations officers were a group of Papua New Guinean men who I will call (to simplify the mine's terminology) 'community relations liaisons' who carried out day-to-day interaction with Porgerans. Some of these people were Papua New Guinean kiaps who formerly worked for the government. Others were Porgerans who were meant to act as liaisons to the landowner community. Still others were people who could speak Ipili who were Engans or Huli and married into the community. Even though these men did not negotiate on behalf of the mine *per se*, they often translated in meetings, and their role as middlemen was crucial in mediating, as it were, the mediation performed by mine representatives.

The interstitiality of Ipili working in community relations is perhaps best exemplified in the figure of Jonathan Paraia. Jonathan was the first Porgeran to go to university and was one of the three main negotiators responsible for the creation of the Porgera Agreements. As a community relations officer he was formally employed by the mine and had his own office. In fact, he has few official duties and was hired by the mine mostly to be around and offer advice about the state of things in the valley. His most important day-to-day job was as a translator – he translated at practically all of the meetings between the PJV and landowners that I attended, although this is one he had been performing since the mid-1980s, well before there was a mine in Porgera at all.

While Henry, the head of Community Affairs, took ultimate responsibility for the Yakatabari, the man who was the public face of the PJV in the Yakatabari negotiations was an outside consultant named Fritz Robinson who headed up the negotiations on a day-to-day basis (this is a real name -- I cite Fritz's writings, and as someone who is simultaneously a fellow scholar and research subject I've been unable to find a way to use a pseudonym. Note though that at no point did he ask for anonymity in the study, as

many other mine representatives did).and also describe his actions I used Fritz's real name because I also cite his writings on Porgera, and I have been unable to find a way to do , I have been unable to . Fritz had a long history with Porgera. As a former agricultural extension officer in Enga province, he had visited the valley on at least one occasion in the 1970s. But more importantly, he had spent a good deal of the late 1980s dealing with landowners and had been a key part of the creation of the mine. Originally, he was part of the team of consultants which produced the socioeconomic impact study as part of the mine's feasibility statement. Afterwards he was retained by the mine to produce the relocation study which spelled out how relocations brought about by the mine would be handled. He was then retained to serve as the mine's main negotiator for the compensation and relocation agreements, and finally served as the point man for the actual relocation of people during the mine's construction.

Hiring Fritz presented in a nutshell the more general dilemma the mine faced when it employed people with a long familiarity with the country. On the one hand, he had baggage. On the other hand, he had baggage. His extensive personal experience meant that he would be very familiar to the group of landowners he would be negotiating with. This gave him the advantage of familiarity with Porgera and its history, as well as with Ipili negotiators – he was not likely to be pounded into oblivion by Ipili negotiating techniques the way a novice would. But this familiarity had as its downside the dissatisfaction that landowners had with the institutional arrangements they had lived with for a decade – arrangements which Fritz had been instrumental in creating. For some people, such as the Pulumaini representatives with whom he had worked closely in the past, he was a trusted and known quantity. But for many Fritz was *personally* responsible for what they considered to be the injustices visited upon them.

As a result, Yakatabari became more than a negotiation about a waste dump carried out between two big actors. It became a referendum on Fritz's shared past with the landowners and the inequities which they, rightly or wrongly, felt they had suffered through as a result of his action. As it turns out, they had good cause to doubt Fritz. Hired to represent and pursue the mine's interests, Fritz saw himself as an adept outsider whose job was to find a 'win-win' situation in which both the mine and the Ipili could benefit, even if this meant that he had to press management to make concessions which he thought were reasonable but which they did not. The agents were aware, perhaps more aware than Fritz, of the fundamental paradox of his position. He was essentially being paid to represent the mine's interests while simultaneously advancing a personal agenda which sought to find a solution that might be suboptimal for his employer. He was to have a rocky ride during Yakatabari.

Landowners

Who personated the Ipili? In chapter five I will untangle the history of survey work and census which defined the system of ownership, agency, and representation within the Special Mining Lease. Here I will discuss very briefly the system of delegation that made possible the creation of the Landowner Negotiating Committee and its twenty three members.

Under the land act, individual Porgerans owned particular plots of land within the Special Mining Lease, and the mine treated with them on an individual basis within the guidelines laid out by the 1989 agreements regarding compensation. To take a common example from Porgera: a man's garden is destroyed by a landslip which he believes to be caused by tremors from mine blasting. He visits the lands office at the community relations offices at Yokelama and files a complaint. The lands office then sends

geotechnical engineers to the site to confirm that the mine is liable for the landslip and consults detailed cadastral records to confirm the man is in fact the owner of the land. If he is and they are, the mine pays out compensation on a per-hectare rate derived from the costs of individual plants listed in the compensation agreement. Within the realm of these individual cases, then, individuals interact directly with the mine, just as they have done since the first prospecting leases were issued in the valley nearly a half century ago.

During the late 1980s it was widely agreed that there would have to be some sort of system of representation instituted in order for negotiations regarding the creation of the mine could occur. Government officials used a mechanism of agency described in the Land Act and each individual assigned an ‘agent’ to represent. This produced a pool of 200 or so agents, a group composed essentially of the most prominent person from every extended household in the valley. This number was still too large, however, and so these agents delegated their agency to a set of twenty-three ‘agents of agents’ or ‘super agents’ – one for each of the 23 ‘subclans’ of which the 7 Special Mining Lease landowning clans were composed. These people – often referred to as ‘the twenty three’ then signed the 1989 compensation and relocation agreements. These people then temporarily delegated their agency even further to just three men – Jolson Kuraro, Kurubu Ipara, and Jonathan Paraia – who then negotiated the Porgera Agreements. In all of these cases the idea was to provide a mechanism by which issues of community-wide import could be feasibly dealt with without impinging on the rights of individual landowners. By the time of the Yakatabari negotiations, then, it was the twenty three members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee who provided legitimate consent to the mine and government. They were the people whose signatures (or thumb prints) were to appear on the Yakatabari agreement: ‘Chief’ Ambi Kipu, Nixon Mangape, John Kulina, Mark Ekepa,

and others who will be described in the pages that follow.

However the group of landowners involved in the Yakatabari negotiations were wider than simply the twenty three. A hazy penumbra of important and influential people – that fuzzy set which I’ve called Porgera’s ‘high society’ – surrounded the meetings, each of whom gathered the legitimacy necessary to be present from a variety of sources. The most notable of these was the Porgera Landowner’s Association. The Porgera Landowner’s Association was formed in the late 1980s as the political arm of the Special Mining Lease Landowners and serve as a pressure group. The strength and legitimacy of the Porgera Landowner’s Association derived largely from its historic role in the late 1980s when, under the direction of Jolson Kuraro and Jonathan Paraia, it pursued landowner claims in Port Moresby. Perhaps even more important was the fact that the Porgera Landowner Association had a generous annual budget funded by mine revenues which its officers could (and did) use in a number of ways. This resulted in one of the typical ironies of life in Porgera – the mine essentially funded out of its own profits the institution established to oppose it.

Finally, other factions of the local community were purposefully included in the meetings by the mine. Representatives from women’s groups frequently attended on the grounds that women were actually saddled with maintaining the houses that relocated landowners would receive. Including women also fit well with the mine’s emphasis on sustainable development and the general tenor of sentiment in corporate America at the time, when ‘empowering women’ seemed the thing to do. ‘Youth’ – people in their late teens and early twenties – were also included because they were the people most likely to experience the full impact of Yakatabari as they matured throughout the remainder of the mine’s life. The inclusion of different factions tended to split the landowner community

internally and thus weaken the ability of the twenty three's support back in the village as well as challenge its legitimacy as the spokesman for *all* Ipili – a fact not lost on the mine. In sum, the negotiations involved both personators and impersonators of 'the Ipili,' and deciding who was which would become one of the major preoccupations of the action that followed.

The Government

The final player in the Yakatabari negotiations was 'the government' – an actor whose identity was also up for grabs. Papua New Guinea's decentralized state produced two separate, and often conflicting, actors: The 'National Government' of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Enga Provincial Government. The relationship between provincial and national government is complicated and ambiguous (for an overview see May and Regan 1997) but, as in many other things in Porgera, the relationship presented on paper does not capture the nature of governance as it played out in Yakatabari. In reality, the negotiations were marked by the primary importance of civil servants with personalistic and historically fraught ties to the mine, and not elected politicians.

In a thesis that studies representation in both its semiotic and political sense, it may surprise readers to find just how little role politicians and the political realm played in the Yakatabari negotiations. While figures such as Porgera's member of Parliament, the Minister for Environment and Conservation, and the Governor of Enga Province each intruded occasionally into Yakatabari, they do so when their own on-going pursuit of power and resources in Papua New Guinea's chronically underfunded and chaotic political scene required it of them. Frequent shifts in cabinets and even entire governments in Papua New Guinea meant that the ministry for mining was rarely held by

a single politician long enough for them to gain much expertise in the area, and more than one holder of that title treated it as a sinecure without obligations. Similarly, parliamentarians in Papua New Guinea are rarely reelected to a second term, and rarely have financial resources of their own. Thus they often use the funds and power elected office makes available to them in a desperate, five year sprint to secure some sort of permanent source of power. Finally, while a great deal of the Governor of Enga's clout comes from his position as the executive of the province in which Porgera is located, local politics in Enga – whose mixture of subterfuge and brutality includes political tactics ranging from large-scale prestations of pigs to political assassination – means that the Governor is often busy securing his own position in the province to keep a hand in events up in Porgera (on provincial government in Enga see Derkley 1997, for the province and the mine see Jackson and Banks 2002:213-228). This situation, compounded by Porgera's distance from the provincial capital and the fact that Ipili are not ethnically Engan, means that Port Moresby and Wabag often seem equally distant from Porgera.

Beneath the turbulent waters of Papua New Guinea's political life, however, lies a more entrenched civil service. Since it is their job to implement policy – and much of what goes on in Porgera is nominally the stereotypic reproduction of a state of affairs described in the agreements of the late 1980s – they are the most frequent players in debates about Porgera.

While the Department of Environment and Conservation deals with specific aspects of the mine's presence (such as the quality of water flowing off of the mine's lease and into the environment), the most prominent section of the national civil service that deals with Porgera is the Department of Mining. Like Placer Niugini, its own

institutional structure is relatively unelaborated. The Department is headed by a Secretary, a powerful senior civil servant who is in many senses the final word about what goes on in mining in Papua New Guinea. Beneath him are the heads of a series of departments, including the mining warden who adjudicates disputes between the lessors and lessees of mining leases and the vulcanological groups charged with monitoring Papua New Guinea's very active volcanoes. Of particular interest to us is the mining coordination unit, run by the head of mining coordination, an expatriate Australian who answers to the secretary. Beneath him are coordinators for each mine, including the Porgera Mining Coordinator, an Australian named Harry Ulin (a pseudonym) a senior civil servant who lives in Port Moresby and who describes himself as a "one stop shop" for matters pertaining to Porgera. It is his job to liaise with the company and other branches of government on all things Porgera. Beneath him is the resident mining coordinator, who lives in Porgera and who has been seconded to the provincial government. It is this mining coordinator who works in the provincial government offices at the government station and who deals with Porgerans on a day to day basis.

At the station itself, the ranking representative of the Enga Provincial Government the District Administrator, Kurubu Ipara. It is he who oversees the functioning of government – such as it is – at the local level. Beneath him are a pool of a dozen or so civil servants including several line officers who are still referred to as kiaps. Above him is the Provincial Administrator, the highest civil servant in the province, who oversees the province from Wabag. In addition to the district administration, Porgera is also home to the Porgera Development Authority, a semi-autonomous agency which is funded from royalties from the Porgera gold mine. It receives these funds directly and then uses them to carry out development projects in the Porgera valley on the theory that money sent

directly to Porgera and used in Porgera is less likely to be 'eaten' than that sent to the provincial administration building in Wabag.

In order to understand the government's role in Yakatabari, it is necessary to appreciate that the staying power of the civil service is not due merely to the fact that its institutional structure creates more stable tenure than the political system. For the fact that the people who mediate these institutions do so so effectively is largely a result of their own long personal involvement in Porgera. It is these personalistic ties, their own history of consociation, that makes them so effective. Their effective personation of big actors, to the extent that it is successful at all, rides on the back of this strength, rather than attempting to efface it.

Harry Ulin, the Porgera Mine Coordinator, is a perfect example of this phenomenon. A white Australian, He first came to Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s as an officer with the Australian administration. In 1974, he was put in charge of managing the newly created 'area authorities' of Southern Highlands Province – the embryonic organizations that would, at independence, become provincial governments. In 1977 he wrote the constitution for the province, and he stayed on as the interim provincial governor, provincial financial officer, and first assistant secretary until elections could be held in 1980, after which he served as the provincial deputy secretary.

In 1984, the government of Enga, the province next door to Southern Highlands, was suspended for gross financial mismanagement. As a result, Ulin was asked to step in as interim provincial administrator. He finished off the remaining two years of the electoral term, pulled the government back into shape, and resigned his commission in early 1986, calling for elections. He stayed on in Enga in various capacities, during which time he was an instrumental part of the provincial negotiating team that created the

Porgera Agreements. In February 1990, the former premier of the province Ulin had jailed in 1984 was released, and in May he was reelected to the position from which he had previously been removed. As you can imagine, he and the premier were not particularly pleased to be working with each other again, and so Ulin was made the first assistant secretary of the province's Western Zone, which included Porgera.

Ulin thus served in this function for several years, and then, after stints as Porgera Mining Coordinator (resident in Porgera) and, later, head of the Porgera Development Authority, he was recalled to Wabag, where the provincial government had been suspended again. He returned as interim provincial administrator, a position that he left when he took up his current position in the Department of Mines.

The district administrator, Kurubu Ipara, had a similarly complex history in Porgera, and his biography gives an indication of how complex ethnicity and Porgeran identity can be. Kurubu was born in Tari (Southern Highlands Province) to ethnically Huli parents. His uncle Ipara was one of the young Huli boys taken out of Tari during World War II by Dan Leahy to serve as a translator (this history will be explained in greater detail in chapter three). After the war Ipara served as a translator, foreman, and general middle man for expatriate alluvial miners, and Kurubu was raised by him. He entered the first class to go through the first school in Porgera, and paid his school fees by working as a domestic servant – a literal tea boy – to the kiap at the time. Ironically that kiap was working in Porgera at a community relations officer during Yakatabari, but was not of a sufficiently august position that he could attend the meetings in which Kurubu, who now eclipsed him, played such a great role. After highschool Kurubu returned to Porgera, first as a kiap and later as an employee of the mine in the period prior to its construction. Most notably, he served as one of the three Ipili negotiators who undertook

the negotiations that resulted in the pioneering Porgera Agreements of the late 1980s. Thus by the time of his assent to the District Administratorship, he had represented the mine, the government, and landowners – sometimes simultaneously. At once an immigrant and one of the most important representatives of Ipili during one of the most crucial times in the valley's history, Kurubu represents very clearly the personalistic nature of ties in the Porgera community and the way influential individuals served to represent a variety of institutions rather than merely one.

The Structure of the Meetings in Theory and in Practice

In theory, the structure of the meetings for the Yakatabari negotiations was very straightforward. Once a month or so, the twenty three members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee would meet with mine representatives, typically Fritz. The mine representatives would make a series of proposals and hear feedback from landowners. After the meetings, they would return to their relocation communities, explain what had happened, and consult with their constituents. Community relations officers, in the mean time, would discuss landowner demands with the head of community affairs and the mine manager. Over time, a series of key issues would be identified, resolved, and noted. The result would be a a four or five page agreement based on the existing relocation agreement which would be signed by each member of the Landowner Negotiating Committee.

The actual conduct of the meetings was also straightforward in theory. Community relations liaisons would announce the date of a meeting throughout local communities. Meetings occurred in a building called the 'haus win' -- a largish (roughly thirty feet across) round building with a dried grass (kunai) roof made out of timber with a wood floor with walls covered in their entirety with louvred glass windows. In general,

community relations staff believed that the haus win was ‘like a native building’ and hence more comfortable for Ipili negotiators than a more formal conference room. At the far end of the room a small table was set up, behind which the chief mine negotiators and translators sat. Other mine representatives (if any) sat behind them, in chairs arranged against the walls. Chairs were arranged across the back of the rest of the room, where Ipili participants sat. Most of the time there were more participants than chairs, and many people (including myself) sat on the floor. As may be expected, more influential and powerful people sat in chairs while others sat on the floor. Occasionally, at least one member of the provincial administration was also present to witness the negotiations as well. The meetings themselves followed Robert’s Rules of Order (Robert 1915). A chairman (almost always the same one) was elected, minutes produced, and some system of managing who got the floor was also followed, although motions were almost never passed. These rules were taken seriously by everyone. Indeed, even in the secret landowner meetings at which I was the only non-Ipili present, the rules were followed. Afterwards a light lunch was served and landowner representatives were paid a small (less than K50) sitting fee.

The haus win itself was in Suyan, the large compound at a remove from the mine where the main housing for mine employees was located. Like all areas in the mine, Suyan is surrounded by barbed wire fences, its gates are guarded, and a security pass is required to enter. After the riot of 1995 in which Porgerans stormed Suyan, overturned trucks, and caused considerable damage to the buildings, security at Suyan was reinforced. As a result, it was one of the more heavily fortified areas around the mine.

The landowner elite drove their dark-glass Toyota Landrovers to Suyan and obtained day passes from the security guards there, who had been provided a list of

names of those allowed to enter. Most people, however, did not have cars. These people gathered at Yokelama, the compound in the special mining lease where the community relations offices were located, and which was open to the public. A mine bus would park there, and Ipili would get on board to be driven to Suyan, where a guard would get on board and check the passengers to make sure they were authorized. Community relations officers with officers in Yokelama would follow on in their own vehicles.

The Meetings in Practice

In practice, not all of the members of the landowner negotiating committee were present at all of the meetings, nor were only members of the landowner negotiating committee were present. On the contrary, The negotiations were the central place where power in Porgera was created and deployed, and where the future of the valley was directly shaped. As if this was not incentive enough to attend, people sought to attend in order to receive sitting fees. Finally, anyone who has watched the ferocity with which landowners throw themselves onto the light lunch table, stuffing finger sandwiches and chicken wings into their mouths while competing to shove cans of soda pop into their pockets, shirtsleeves, and pants for further redistribution back in the village will realize that I am not exaggerating when I say that everyone in Porgera with aspirations to power, easy money, or a free lunch sought to attend the meetings.

As a result ambitious and curious people without permission to attend negotiations would attempt to worm their way into the personal entourage of powerful landowners, while less well-connected aspirants would attempt to inveigle their way onto the bus. As with most rules in Porgera, rules of attendance were flexible – mine negotiators didn't want to upset current non-entities who might end up one day living on top of a bit of land that the mine might need. Additionally, it was often in the mine's

interests to bend these rules. Often, for instance, the mine allowed representatives of the Porgera Womens' Association to attend out of a general liberal sensibility that women ought to be included in the process. Powerful and sympathetic members of the high society were often included for their ability to mediate between the mine and the Landowner Negotiating Committee whether they were technically supposed to be there or not. Finally, there was always a small group of people who managed to charm their way into the meetings without a clear mandate to be there. Thus the very attendance of the meeting indicates one of the themes of the later chapters of the dissertation – the lack of concrete institutional organization amongst the Ipili.

In short, kicking people off the bus to Suyan was an inevitable preliminary phase of any meeting. Typically, it involved a fair amount of shouting and invective. But the strong sense of stakes that underlay attending these meetings can be seen in the fact that at one point in the negotiations for one lease, Ipili pushed past an ex-kiap community affairs officers with such force that they knocked him down, had to be pulled bodily from the bus, and caused such a scene outside that guards armed with shotguns and – even more terrifyingly – attack dogs, formed an uneasy perimeter around him and the bus to make sure things did not escalate to an all out riot of the unrepresented.

For instance, I was never on the list of people allowed into Suyan, although both the Ipili and the mine had cleared me to attend. At first, I was vouchsafed entry by government observers or mine negotiators who I would catch rides with. Later, when I was a fixture, I was simply accepted as one of the usual hangers-on. Despite my presence at practically all of these meetings, I was never listed in the minutes as one of those attending despite the fact that other anthropologists, such as Aletta Biersack, were. I was fortunate that the white mine employees who I knew well had more confidence in a

theory of the objective presence of the detached social-scientific observer than I did. I also learned years later that the mine entertained hopes that I would take a more active part in the negotiations as someone who could mediate between both locals and foreigners. For both of these reasons, as well as a more general commitment to ‘transparency,’ the mine did not object to my presence.

My relationship with elite landowners over the course of my fieldwork developed in a way that was more or less the opposite of the relationship I developed with the less prominent Ipili with whom I lived. In the village, I was seen initially as a powerful outsider with whom people could create ties for business opportunities, arranged marriages to American women, immigration to Chicago, and so forth. As time went on and it became clear that I was essentially powerless, Ipili simply liked me enough to keep me around because I was not boring and Ipili hate being bored. My willingness to take people to the hospital, pay for treatment, and serve as translator also helped.

With the exception of Nixon Mangape (who was my adopted mother’s sister’s son and hence my brother) most elite landowners did not notice me initially until it slowly became clear over time that I was the only person in the valley who talked regularly to both landowners and mining representatives and was in fact recording everything that happened. Although I was of limited use to everyone due to my strict adherence to informant confidentiality, there was a sense throughout the negotiations that I was the kind of person it was good to take out to lunch and quiz on the state of politics in the valley. Even when I was unpopular with certain people, I relied on the typically Ipili sense of egalitarianism to be present at important events – if I was sufficiently committed to getting into the haus win in Suyan, it would take an uncomfortably committed attempt to dislodge me. Overall, though, it is a testament to each group’s surety of its own

essential rectitude that I was able to attend so many of these meetings – particularly the secret ones which I cannot document here. Both the mine and the Ipili believed that they had a story to tell in which they were the long-suffering partner of a dysfunctional and unfair institution, and they wanted that story circulated as wide as possible. It is indicative of the moral complexity of the negotiations that I was, with a good conscience, able to honestly tell both of them that I thought they were right.

The Course of the Negotiations

The negotiations for Yakatabari began in April 1999 and ended in September 2000, a period of roughly eighteen months. Over the course of this time they slowly escalated both in terms of intensity and geographical spread. The initial period of negotiations were largely valley-bound: Ipili negotiators met with mine employees in an attempt to forge a new agreement. Soon a group of Ipili found a point of leverage which they used against the mine: during the final days before the deadline by which the agreement needed to be signed, they attempted to extract concessions from the mine in exchange for their permission to construct an urgently needed tunnel for waste water. The maneuvering on both sides brought this issue to the attention of people outside the valley and eventually surfaced in the judicial system. The mine successfully opened the tunnel, and an Ipili faction then escalated the case to the national level, attempting to build alliances with politicians at the national level to put pressure on the mine. The resulting stand off continued until the proposed dump was no longer feasible and other issues forced themselves to the mine's attention.

I will deal with each of these stages in turn, summarizing the activity as it happened. The Yakatabari negotiations involved many meetings, both with groups and individually, and many of them were secret. However for the sake of propriety and

brevity I will here cover here just the highlights of a few key points in the negotiation process in order to give some sense of the tenor of these negotiations.

The First Phase: Negotiating with Community Affairs

The original offer for the Yakatabari waste dump was made on 17 April 1999 with the formal reinstatement of Landowner Negotiating Committee meetings to discuss the potential terms of a Yakatabari offer. These meetings were held monthly between Fritz and the members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee. They ground to a halt when twenty of the twenty three members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee deserted the negotiation process to take up the possibility of a lawsuit against the mine. This move was inspired by the successful settlement of a lawsuit against Ok Tedi brought by Papua New Guineans (Ballard and Banks 1997). Several members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee flew out to Australia and contacted Slater and Gordon, the same Australian firm which had litigated on behalf of the Ok Tedi landowners. By all accounts, Slater and Gordon refused to take the case and the landowners returned to Porgera empty-handed.

By the time I arrived in December, the mine felt that the landowners' strategy had backfired and that Slater and Gordon's refusal to take the case worked in the mine's favor by demonstrating to landowners the basic legitimacy of Placer's approach. The head of Community Affairs told me in an early interview that he felt the Landowner Negotiating Committee's failure would soon lead to a shake-up in how the mine interacted with landowners. He believed that the Landowner Negotiating Committee formed an elite who sought merely to increase their own wealth and power. Their ability to feed information selectively to the local community effectively allowed them to shape public opinion, and there was very little the mine could do about it since mine employees were not welcome

in Special Mining Lease communities. The effect, he claimed, was more or less similar to the old story of what happened in the trenches in World War I: the order “send reinforcements, we’re going to advance” becomes “send three and four pence, we’re going to a dance” as it passes down the line. He had, he said, held meetings with landowners until he was “blue in the face” but nothing got through -- “we’ve tried to explain it to them, but they don’t wish to know” he said.

He also felt the failure of the Ok Tedi-inspired lawsuit and the different interests which various clans had in Yakatabari could conceivably cause a split in the leadership – he gave as an example growing distance between the Tiyini and the Tuanda – and that it was just a matter of time before the Landowner Negotiating Committee fell apart as a coherent decision making group. The question that he was faced with now was whether to work with them and encourage their unity as an organization, or whether to encourage new and more ‘legitimate’ (and, presumably, more ‘reasonable’) leadership to arise – to embrace, as it were, the devil he knew or the devil he didn’t.

Steps had already been taken to fragment the solidarity of the landowner community. Fritz and other members of Community Relations had been actively attempting to spread the mine’s message to local communities in a variety of ways – they had a newsletter in the offing, and had recently completed a video, shown on national television, which they were attempting to disseminate throughout the community. They were also interested in contacting youth (in order to avoid what Filer (1990) had called the ‘process of social disintegration’ wrought by generational change) and especially in reaching out to women. Fritz, for instance, had met several times with the Porgera Women’s Association and was planning the designs for the Yakatabari relocation houses with them rather than rich landowners on the assumption that they would be the ones

actually living in and maintaining them. This attempt to ‘reach out to and empower disadvantaged stakeholders’ also had the happy side-effect of eroding support for the elite landowners inside their local communities.

The serious splits within the Landowner Negotiating Committee was based on a different cause than the mine’s encouragement of special interest groups, however: if Yakatabari went through, some clans would be relocated and some would not. The Pulumaini, Mamai, and Angalaini would have the majority of their population in the Special Mining Lease moved, while the Tuanda and Waiwa would by and large remain. The powerful Tiyini would be split – some Tiyini subclans would be relocated while others would remain. Because each clan would be differentially affected by Yakatabari, their interests were fundamentally divergent. It was this divergent interest, rather than the mine’s attempt to reach out to ‘the uncorrupted grassroots’ that would prove to be truly crucial to the course of negotiations.

The politics of this partial relocation are not, perhaps, what the reader might expect – being moved off of one’s ancestral territory and having one’s home covered by waste rock was perceived as a benefit, not a hardship. Partially this was because the people left behind would be faced with living in a village increasingly surrounded by waste dumps. More generally, however, Ipili saw relocation as a chance to acquire the millennial affluence they missed out on in 1988. Landowners sought to be relocated because they were hoping, indeed, demanding, that this time they would get what they wanted out of relocation. Thus it was that the groups which *were* being uprooted favored the agreement, and those who were not felt that they were getting the short end of the stick. As strange as it may seem to some readers, much of the negotiations would involve landowners attempting to convince the mine to destroy their houses and bury their land in

waste rock, while the mine sought to minimize disruption to landowner communities. An example of how these dynamics played out at the beginning stages of the negotiation can be found in the Landowner Negotiating Committee meeting held on 23 November 1999.

23 November Meeting

On 23 November 1999 the Land Owner Negotiating Committee met for the twelfth time, and the first since the Australian law suit had fallen apart. Forty-six people attended, including a representative from the government. It began shortly after 10 am and continued for roughly two hours. This was the first meeting I attended during my fieldwork. As the first meeting after the attempted legal action by the landowners it was particularly important – a fact indicated by the mine manager’s presence.

The meeting began with a long speech by the mine manager in which he outlined the ‘big picture’ of what was going on with Yakatabari: it would lower the mine’s operating costs and extend mine life, and the relocation would offer the opportunity to solve problems with land shortage and in-migration that the Landowner Negotiating Committee had been complaining about for years. However, he added, there were two constraints. The first was logistical – in order to continue in its current plan, the mine would have to buy a new truck every three months, and each truck cost the equivalent of seventy relocation houses. This meant that the longer negotiations took, the less money would be available for compensation. Additionally, if the negotiations dragged on too long, the mine would be forced to invest so much in trucks that it would no longer make sense to continue with Yakatabari at all.

The second thing he added was to point out that “if you are asking us outrageous things, that is also no use, because if we have no profits it doesn’t make sense for us to do

it. There must be gain for you and gain for the company or else it won't happen." He concluded by pointing out that a longer mine life was in everyone's interest. Thus we can see that the mine manager was not coy about the mine's intentions – it was a self-interested business designed to make money, and it operated on the assumption that if landowners profited as well then they would allow the mine to go ahead. This fundamental belief that what was good for the mine was also good for the valley was a standard feature not just of corporate culture inside the mine, but of the larger world of business of which the mine was a part. This corporate culture also ruled out the use of force or other devious means to make the Ipili comply with the mine's requests. The mine manager considered Placer to be a respectable company, and the alternative to a win-win situation was that the mine would close rather than force itself on the landowners.

Fritz then ran briefly over how the relocations would work, including the order in which residents would be moved – Pulumaini first, then Mamai and Angalaini. The central issue of the negotiations was then broached: the Tiyini at Yarik and its sister-settlement Timorope would not be moved, although the Tiyini at Yunarilama would be. As a result, several of the most important landowners present would not receive new houses. However, Fritz was quick to soft peddle this fact, "what we're saying, we're not closing off forever talks on this issue... we're not saying 'piss off'... we're saying 'let's talk more about this'."

He also emphasized that this relocation would be more generous than the previous one. In the case of young couple who were just starting a household -- "I don't mean sleeping around, people - marrit tru [really married], paid their brideprice." -- it might be possible to establish a trust fund to buy them materials to build their own house when they were ready. Thus he emphasized that benefits from the mine (a house) would be

given out based on distinctly indigenous criteria (legitimate marriage by brideprice). This was the first mention of what would be a recurrent theme in Porgera: the way the mine relied on customary Ipili criteria to give Porgerans non-customary benefits.

And finally there was the house itself. Fritz said he had taken women over to the government station, and that they liked the L40 house – a standard design for civil servants. It would be high-set, have solar hot water, and a 1000 gallon water tank with an underground pipe feed to tanks on the roof which would feed the house directly. The total cost would be K70,000. As murmurs at the figure spread about the room (the final offer made by the mine to the Ipili was, very roughly, worth roughly US\$80,000,000 – this was not a minor negotiation), Fritz said that he mentioned the cost because some people had expressed interest in taking the cash and using it to buy a house in Port Moresby, or put it to other use. This was something that the mine would entertain. He ended with a plea for real dialog and honest representation of community interests. “I think that’s the basic story. I think we’ve had a solid earful from the mine manager, some straight talk. We acknowledge there is [sic] some difficulties for some of the clans, and we acknowledge we don’t have the solutions. If its possible for you to really truly talk to your people and come back with... not some racist [anti-white and anti-mine] talk, but some real information which I can relay to the mine manager,” then, he concluded, they could work together.

Before the meeting broke off for lunch ‘Chief’ Ambi, the elderly agent for the Tuanda (who would *not* be moved) and formerly one of the most important people in the valley, asked ominously whether the Yakatabari dump was part of the original mine plan. The mine manager equivocated, saying that “It is part of the development of the mine. The agreements are part of the development of the mine. And this is still happening.”

Next Nixon Mangape spoke in Ipili. As the agent for the Uape subclan of Tiyini, Nixon was one of those who would see their clan-mates moved while they stayed behind. More importantly, he was scion of Mangape, one of the most powerful men in the valley before his decapitation-execution at the hands of his clanmates in the 1970s. Finally, he was the chair of the board of directors of the Porgera Development Authority and hence one of the most important people in the valley. He had come in to the meeting late and had missed two-thirds of it. Nevertheless, he rose and spoke in Ipili, which was translated by Jonathan Paraia, as “Nixon is saying on behalf of the landowners we are hearing your plan and your ideas. We want to take it back to our clansmen. We’ll bring [the] landowners response and go through the agenda [the issues] one by one”. Nixon added in mixed Tok Pisin and English “finalisim [we’ll finalize it in] in two, three weeks and sign agreement.” With that the meetings ended on an up note.

These meetings demonstrate several important features that came to mark both sides of the debate over the course of the remaining period of the negotiations. The first issue was house size. There are a small number of house designs in Papua New Guinea, and most of them are built off of a set of standardized plans – typically in accordance with the requirements of civil servants, whose housing is provided by the government and who receive larger and larger houses as their seniority increases. These houses are referred to by a design name which incorporates the total area of the house in square meters. Like many Papua New Guineans, Ipili are familiar with these house designs based largely on their experience with houses on the government station in Porgera and the relocation houses they received in the late 1980s -- which were universally condemned as inadequate. Thus Ipili wanted a larger house, and knew of several preexisting plans that could be used to build them.

This meeting also demonstrated an Ipili tactic that would be used throughout negotiations – the constant and repeated assurance that they were just around the corner from an agreement. This idea that there were only a few minor points to be worked out would be used again and again to lull the mine and others into a false sense of security, use up time, and then force negotiators to make last-minute concessions. Finally it demonstrated to all the landowners present that the mine and the mine manager spoke in a language of self-interest that they could understand. His motives and the motives of the mine, then, were clear to them. As someone who represented the mine’s self-interest and who has no prior experience living in Papua New Guinea, the landowners considered him to personate ‘the mine’ in an unproblematic way. As we shall see, this proved not to be true for members of the community relations staff.

9 December Meeting

The next meeting would introduce more of the main dynamics of the negotiations. As we shall see, Ipili representatives were plagued by the disjuncture between what they wanted from the mine and the officially acceptable reasons they had to publicly give for why they ought to get it. I am sure that prominent members of landowner negotiating committee would have liked nothing more than a large house in an urban area – Paiyam or even Port Moresby – supplemented with a generous monthly pension which the mine would pay them in perpetuity. As we shall see in future chapters, this jives rather deeply with the culturally specific expectations of affluence that Ipili have. However the justifications for these sorts of concessions that negotiators gave were based on a discourse about the nature of Ipili society that had been in place for over a decade. This discourse of Ipili primitivity – that clans ought to be moved together, that land is the life of the people, that subsistence agriculture was an essential part of Ipili life and so forth –

and the ends to which landowners used it would grow increasingly distant as the negotiations continued.

Second, the affair with Slater and Gordon also established another split within the landowners and the crystallization of a new faction who would assert themselves with increasing aggressiveness in future negotiations despite their failure in Australia. This group – which was often (erroneously) called simply ‘the Tiyini’ by the mine, but which I will refer to as the Porgera Landowner Association (Porgera Landowner Association) faction – was composed of a core of four people. Mark Ekepa was the president of the Porgera Landowner Association and a member of the Landowner Negotiating Committee as a signatory for the Angalaini. He was also the son of the most prominent Angalaini leader of the past generation, and his rise to fame began after he took his father’s place by shooting him at close range with a shotgun and killing him in a drunken fight – a fact which he sincerely regrets today (he has since become a teetotaler). Anga Aralu, the secretary of the Porgera Landowner Association, was a young man with ties to the Tiyini subclan of Uape (and thus Nixon Mangape) and who was educated – on a mine scholarship – as a surveyor at the University of Papua New Guinea and was thus considered one of the more educated people in the valley. The brothers Benjamin and John Kulina were both Tiyini as well, and John was the agent for the Lakima subclan of the Tiyini and hence one of the twenty three who had signed the Porgera Agreements. Benjamin was also educated and could read and write English. This group, then, represented the younger, educated generation of prominent Porgerans. Their affiliation with the Tiyini gave them a firm grounding in local kinship relations, and the Porgera Landowner Association’s budget gave them money to pursue their ends, largely by hiring lawyers.

At this meeting the main mine negotiators were Fritz and an ex-Kiap named Burt. The meeting began with Fritz's urging that there be "no posturing." Ekale Kangalia – the Tiyini agent for the Akira subclan -- then informed Fritz that the landowners had their own house plan to present as an alternative to the L40. Siapu Yako – an man aspiring to prominence who had joined forces with Ekale on the basis of an enatic connection to Tiyini Akira -- presented a worn and dirty blueprint for an H90 house which was more than twice the size of the L40 and, at K180,000, much more expensive to build. After some more talk Nixon took the floor making a speech in which he complained that he and other landowners had no other land on which to move – no extended clan ties. Fritz replied that his concern was not finding land (that could be managed) but finding land for Nixon (or, more accurately, his eight wives) which was suitable for the subsistence agriculture to which Fritz assumed Nixon sought to return – was that the problem Nixon was referring to? Nixon was nonplussed, since in fact this statement was intended to indicate that he wanted to be settled in an urban area such as Paiyam where there would be no subsistence agriculture at all. His point was that if he had no claims to traditional land in other areas (which was not true, by the way) then they would be forced to give him a real, 'developed' home in town rather than force him to settle once more in the boondocks. Faced with Gerlad's statement, he finally stated baldly that he wanted the mine purchase land that he himself had selected.

Still talking past him, Fritz agreed, saying that it was just this sort of feedback that he wanted, and that landowners should come to Charles's (another community relations officer) office and let him know their preference since the last time Charles attempted to enter Yarik had been stoned. "Ol i ting ting yu wokim old style house [they attacked him because thought you were planning to build us the old style house]," said Nixon

reassuringly. Fritz glanced meaningfully at me for a moment, then Nixon, and then noted sourly “They didn’t ask questions, did they?” Unable to get his point through to Fritz obliquely, Nixon finally stated explicitly that he wanted a house at Paiyam, which Fritz agreed with as long as the land was legally acquired.

Ambi took the floor next, asking whether all landowners would be moved, or only those affected by the dump – a particularly relevant question for him since he was a landowner but not affected. Fritz replied “I made that clear in the beginning. We will move affected people first. The door is not closed. The door is open. The affected areas are Yakatabari and the areas below it.” When this was translated Ambi made a short, extremely angry speech complaining of the hardships of living in the Special Mining Lease, particularly in Apalaka, which would essentially be surrounded on three sides by waste dumps if the plan went through. Fritz replied again “I can’t give you much hope. In reply, the mine manager hasn’t closed the door. The mine in the agreements [of 1988] does claim to sympathetically look... it’s not a promise. We’re keeping the door open.”

This was the first mention of the 1988 Relocation Agreement’s ‘sympathetic examination’ clause which stated that “The PJV agrees to examine sympathetically and where appropriate make special provision for any Re-located Landowner whose situation is affected in a special or unusual manner” (Placer Dome 1988:6). This clause would come to loom large in what was to follow – mostly due to arguments about what constituted ‘special’ or ‘unusual’ whose contours were similar to those regarding the ‘novelty’ of Yakatabari. Ambi, aware of how little leverage this actually gave him, responded with loud, angry tirade whose content was obvious but which was diplomatically translated by the Jonathan Paraia who said, sighing, “he’s saying his people are really affected.”

Ambi continued shouting, only to be shouted down by Benjamin Kulina (the secretary of the Porgera Landowners Association) and Pakiru Pundi (a prominent Tiyini agent) who told him to shut up. Benjamin also insisted that Ambi's outburst not be recorded in the minutes. He then delivered a very long and increasingly heated speech in tok pisin. He said that Fritz's goal was to get the agreement for the company, and that he didn't care about what happened to Porgerans, while Ipili negotiators were merely worried about their future. When the mine was closed, Fritz would disappear, but they would still be there and stuck with the consequences. He then compared Fritz to a bulldozer which destroys everything in its path without even noticing it was there, and accused him of trying to trick the older, less sophisticated members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee. He then gave the example of homeless people visible in the large town of Mt. Hagen who run around naked in public and have to dig in trash cans for food when they are hungry. "You," concluded Benjamin, breaking into English, "want to do the same thing to us."

He then presented his demands. "We must have proper planning. Government services, road, power supply. Schools [both elementary and highschool]. Power – it has to be free. If you want a power bill, put us on the payroll [give us free monthly paychecks] and we'll pay. This is an example of all the bits and pieces that must be in place." He also insisted that if any of 'the Tiyini' were moved, *all* Tiyini must be moved (as everyone in the room well knew, this was the only way that Benjamin would get a house out of the deal, since he did not live in affected area). This was because "Pasin blo PNG, clan ties – noken brekim [in Papua New Guinea clan ties cannot be broken]" He insisted that he must have this "in black and white... 'door is open' em sampela tok blo yu, em tainim kamap bullshit [this 'door is open' talk of yours is bullshit that won't

calmly that he already *was* sitting and that he wasn't going to be derailed. Burt had blown his top, however, and stalked angrily out the door and Fritz had no choice but to get up and follow him. As they passed Benjamin, he turned to face them and screamed at them as they left "You are a thief! It is illegal for you to make that tunnel! I heard rumors of it yesterday. Jonathan Paraia can confirm it. If you do make it, where will your outlet be? If you put an outlet in, you are looking for trouble my friend!" At this all hell broke loose in the room, with people arguing amongst themselves (some had wanted the mine negotiators to stay so that they could meet with them). The meeting then dissolved in confusion.

A few minutes later, Fritz, Burt, and another ex-kiap named Lawrence emerged from the mess and made for their car. I joined them and did a quick after-action on the meeting. Fritz remarked, incredibly "I think we made good progress, we had a very reasonable chat with Pakiru and Nixon." I wasn't sure whether he was trying to put a good face on it for my sake or truly deluded – Benjamin's ability to control the mine negotiators emotionally would demoralize them in future meetings, and give the landowners excellent ammunition in the future, when they could argue that it was mine employees, rather than them, who had stonewalled and left the meetings. Before he drove off, Fritz confided to me that Benjamin was clever, and that he (Fritz) could take an awful lot, but that when a planned insult like that happened, he simply had to leave.

Benjamin's final speech vividly exemplifies one of the dynamics at work at Yakatabari that I mentioned earlier: the way that personal and institutional agendas collided in the negotiations, and particularly the fact that the people who mediated the larger entities in question had personal histories which affected their ability to negotiate. Given the people involved and what was said, this meant that at some basic level the

Yakatabari negotiations were a referendum on the agreements of the late 1980s on a personal as well as an institutional level. At the same time, Fritz defended those agreements – and by implication, his role in creating them. But the interaction of personal histories and institutional forces stretched deeper than just Porgera – what was at issue in Yakatabari was Papua New Guinea’s colonial history and the worth of the mine negotiators as men.

People such as Burt and Fritz had served in Australia’s administration of Papua New Guinea back when it was the Trust Territory of New Guinea. They had devoted their lives to helping Papua New Guineans and felt a deep commitment to the country. Papua New Guinea’s transition to independence – which they considered to be premature – and the anti-white feelings it generated made them feel that their own dedication and commitment to the country went unappreciated. Papua New Guinea’s fiscal and governmental breakdown in the late 1980s and 1990s gave them a certain grim satisfaction because it demonstrated that while Papua New Guineans may not have appreciated their work, it increasingly seemed it was needed. As far as they were concerned, they were better at governing Papua New Guinea than most of its own citizens. Taking careers as community relations officers was the best they could do, given the state of corruption in Papua New Guinea’s government, to continue to help local people as they were accustomed to.

For people such as Burt and Fritz, then, Ipili landowners such as Benjamin Kulina were particularly despicable. Not only was Benjamin ungrateful for their careers in service to his country, he did not understand that their current job was still essentially benevolent paternalism in the corporate mode – they considered themselves *advocates* for local people’s needs and wishes inside the mine. Perhaps most distressing to them was

Benjamin's ignorance. In their eyes, despite his veneer of education, he was still little more than a rural Papua New Guinean with delusions of competence whose excursions into legal and economic policy were so ignorant that he would require extensive education just to understand their criticisms of his outrageous demands.

As might be expected, the view of the Porgera Landowners Association faction was equally complimentary. Their own experience of Papua New Guinea's colonial history did not feature them as helpless, grateful citizens on whom Fritz and Burt sought to bestow their aid. Gold had been discovered in Porgera in the first exploratory patrol into the area in 1938, and Ipili people had experienced a steady increase in wealth and income over the course of their experience with whites. Ipili's slow education in the value of gold in the outside world had led them to believe that colonial officers such as Burt and Fritz had systematically misled them regarding its worth. These kiaps, then, were liars and deceivers who had stretched out Papua New Guinea's long status as a dependency in order to continue to extract value from local people who were intentionally kept ignorant of their land's value. These old men, as Anga told me once, ought to be disagreed with *in principle* – by definition their offers were always untrustworthy and contesting them was, as it were, an act of postcolonial resistance.

As far as the Porgera Landowners Association faction was concerned, their negotiation with the company was part of an agonistic process in which two groups with competing interests each attempted to maximize their own profits. The negotiations were, in other words, *business*, not some the reincarnation of the paternalistic development practices of the colonial period. They distrusted community affairs officers who considered their job to be an intermediary between local people and the mine when in fact the mine was paying them to act in its own best interests. They worried that senior

management did not trust their own negotiators and were not being frank with them about the financial situation. They thus much preferred to deal with the mine manager, who at least was straightforward about the mine's interest in Porgera. In sum, the Porgera Landowner Association faction considered their long colonial tutorial to be over – they considered themselves educated, experienced, and familiar with how important decisions about large-scale entities such as provinces and gold mines were made. That the mine would force them to meet with these aging, washed-up colonial officers could only be considered a deliberate insult designed by senior management to infuriate them.

The Yunarilama Drainage Tunnel and the Deadline for the Agreement

The other major issue that came up in this meeting was the drainage tunnel at Yunitilama (or, as the mine came to refer to it, 'Yunarilama'). As negotiations over issues such as house size continued, another issue quickly arose which the Porgera Landowner Association faction was quick to exploit at the 9 December meeting. The mine had encountered an engineering problem – the open cut was now deep enough that it was a pit, and it required drainage in order for work to continue. The mine thus wanted to build a drainage tunnel from the base of the open cut that would run underneath landowner areas, and empty out into the Kaiyia river. As usual, this engineering issue was accompanied by complex social dimensions. First, time was of the essence – the mine needed this tunnel very badly. Without drainage, work could not progress. The alternate plan – to install pumps to drain the pit – would be so expensive that it would shorten mine life considerably.

The second problem was that while the mine could build the tunnel unobserved and with relative impunity, the land on which the portal was located was part of the area for which John Kulina was the agent. While John's legal right to prevent the tunnel was

ambiguous, he certainly had *de facto* control of the territory. Unless the mine was willing to risk a violent confrontation with local landowners, then John could keep the tunnel from being opened. The landowners could thus use the tunnel as a point of leverage in negotiation – they would not allow the tunnel to be built until they were granted concessions in return.

Third, the situation was complicated by the fact that the drainage tunnel opened just upstream of place where the events of the Tiyini origin story involving the python Kupiane occurred. One ambitious Tiyini landowner (Siapu Yako, who had also produced the alternate house design given at the November meeting) who had even gone so far as to build a model of the house that features in the Kupiane myth (see chapter four) – a sort of shrine – on the site. Given its mythocosmically relevant location, landowners found the idea that the tunnel was merely for waste water to be a completely ludicrous and pathetic lie. It was obviously, as far as they were concerned, a mine trick to extract not just gold, but high-quality diamonds – the thing which Ipili understood to be more valuable than gold -- from the mountain without paying landowners for the privilege. On this account, the tunnel was part of the mine’s on-going attempt to track and capture Kupiane, and the presence of the tunnel secured in their mind the equivalence between sacred locations and precious mineral wealth.

The Letter

On 20 December, eleven days after the meeting at which Burt stormed out of the room, the most prominent members of the Tiyini clan wrote a letter to the mine manager entitled “Principal Landowner Demands on Timorope/Yunalima Proposed Tunnel and Yakatabari Dump by PJV.” The letter, signed by nine people from four of the Tiyini subclans, listed four pages of demands that would have to be met if ‘the Tiyini’ were to

approve of the dump. In poor English, the laser-printed document suggested that other issues -- such as the relocation of affected people, could be put aside indefinitely if their demands were met. Sent privately to the mine manager and not intended for public distribution, there was a strong possibility that the letter was intended to cut a deal that would essentially cut off other Special Mining Lease land owners from receiving any benefits from Yakatabari whatsoever. The split that the head of community affairs had predicted had come – but it was the ‘unreasonable’ people who were attempting to align themselves to the mine (for the right price) rather than the other way around.

The demands of letter were, to put it mildly, extravagant. They included K16,000,000 as a ‘community facilities grant’ to Tiyini subclans, ‘Bonus Compensation’ of an additional K500,000 to the subclans, K10,000,000 for compensation for the tunnel, K2,500,000 for “Kupiane’s Sacred Side [sic] Compensation... for causing destruction and inconvenience to Kupiane’s house in mountain Wuangima as a result of the underground tunnel” (compensation for this site had already been paid nearly a decade earlier) as well as “alluvial, terrace gold and environment compensation.” Most spectacular, however, was the demand for “PJV to agree to produce one gold bar each at twenty (25 Kilogram) [sic] for the following principal landowners of the gold rich mountain every quarter of each year until the mine life ends” a list of individual names followed.

Within the mine, it was widely assumed that the letter was written out of a keen, if uninformed, sense of avarice and it served to reinforce the mine’s sense that landowners were deeply misguided as to their own competency. This may be true, but it is also important to point out how the letter reflects an entrenched misunderstanding between the two parties. For over a decade, mine and government employees had used simplifying metaphors to explain abstract concepts such as equity and dividends. When explaining

equity, for instance, it was common for government officers and mine translators to use the metaphor of gold bars – rather than tediously explain the concept of percentages – and explain that the mine produced seven gold bars every quarter and that each of the partners received one. I believe this explanation had been taken literally by the authors of the letter, who were already convinced that the PJV was ripping them off by selling the gold on the ‘world market’. To this extent, then, the letter is merely an attempt to cut out the middleman and get gold directly into the hands of the land owners.

The Deadline Approaches

The mine had originally intended to have the Yakatabari agreements signed by the first of February, and as the deadline approached the timing of meetings increased – negotiations were held once a week rather than once a month, and there were also a series of private meetings with those members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee who still refused to sign. However, it was not until a meeting in 9 January that the mine gave a draft of the agreement to the landowners. The late date at which they received it infuriated several landowners, including members of the Porgera Landowner Association faction. They felt that now, a month before the deadline, they had finally received the first serious offer from the mine on paper. They were insulted that the mine considered them unsophisticated enough that Fritz could simply tell them what would be in a document, and then produce it later and expect them to sign it without reading it or receiving legal advice regarding its content from their own counsel. The document was identical in wording to the 1988 Relocation Agreement, with the amounts of money increased and a few clauses added to reflect changes in house size – the mine had made a counter-offer to the H90 proposed by the landowners and suggested instead an H75 that might be built. However, what was *not* attached was an annex described in the agreement

itself listing who would be moved. Landowners, in other words, were being asked to sign a document which did not contain information on the issue of most concern to them – who exactly would be relocated.

The mine – or at least Fritz – had presented this document at such a late date for several reasons. First, the mine feared giving landowners written documents because they could be used in legal proceedings against the PJV. Also, the mine had a long history of having Ipili produce forgeries or altered paperwork they had received from the PJV. Thus, for instance, it was the mine's practice not to give receipts to individuals when compensation was paid to them for fear that they would be misused by local people in litigation against the mine. That this incredible double standard shocked landowners is not surprising – one can hardly blame the mine for treating other members of the joint venture that ran the mine so lightly, nor does it seem unreasonable that people signing a legal contract be given early drafts of it in order to seek legal advice.

Secondly, the Porgera Landowner Association faction was correct in assuming that Fritz felt it would be easier and less confusing for them if he discussed what they wanted orally – except that Fritz understood this to be a kindness rather than insult, since he did not think of them as being as sophisticated and cosmopolitan as he was. It is worth noting also that this had been his modus operandi in Papua New Guinea during its time as a dependency, and that this was how he felt comfortable working. An informal meeting where trust and understanding were generated was, he felt, better than a legalistic and antagonistic exchange of proposals and counterproposals. This emphasis on trust and informality also was a reason that there was no annex attached to the agreement – Fritz felt that everyone knew very well who would be moved and who would not, and the fieldwork necessary to draw up a complete list of names would be enormous. It was, in

his mind, a matter of implementation that could be done in good faith after the construction of Yakatabari got under way. Landowners, on the other hand, felt that they were equals negotiating with the mine, and that if the mine was expecting them to give up their homes and lands, then it should also be willing to present them with a thorough and professionally done proposal stating exactly what its intent would be.

As the month progressed and issues of house size and relocation grew increasingly intractable, the Yakatabari negotiations began slowly spilling out of the valley and into more cosmopolitan arenas of contestation. The late date of the offer simply aggravated the existing situation. Both the PJV and landowners appealed to the Department of Mining to tell their interlocutor to be reasonable. The result was the first of many exchanges in which the state of the Yakatabari negotiations began to be affected by action not just in Porgera, but in Port Moresby as well.

20 January Meeting

The week after the mine's offer was made, Harry Ulin, the Porgera Mining Coordinator for the Department of Mines flew into Porgera from Port Moresby to meet with the landowners. As mentioned above, he had worked with most of the Ipili negotiators for a number of years and had their trust as a patient and essentially truthful man. The Department had heard that the Yakatabari negotiations were on the rocks, and so he came up in order to both assess for himself who was responsible for that situation, as well as do what he could to straighten it out. The mine hoped that his history and experience with the landowners would give him their ear.

Harry opened the 20 January meeting with a long speech explaining the issues as he saw them. He explained that the PJV had submitted a detailed plan, the 'Porgera

Vision Plan' which outlined Yakatabari and that the Department had found it acceptable. He said that it was vitally important that the mine continue operations, and urged those present to sign.

In response the Ipili, particularly the Porgera Landowner Association faction, made several arguments. First, they argued that they had submitted a letter to the Department of Mines expressing their dissatisfaction with the PJV and had not yet heard back. Second, they insisted that they had not seen the Porgera Vision Plan for themselves and wanted an account of what the mine was going to do before they would sign. Third, they were disgusted when the coordinator told them that mine employees had assured him they were very close to an agreement – Ipili pointed out, rightly, that they had just received the paper copy of the agreement the week before, and were not happy with it. They neglected to point out, however, that they had spent the last couple of months telling the mine that an agreement 'was right around the corner.' Finally, Benjamin Kulina and Anga Aralu, among others, pointed out repeatedly that they were not the same people who had signed the agreement in 1988 – they were more experienced. Thus they insisted on negotiating an agreement that was not literally cut and pasted from the 1988 agreement and receiving proper paper copies of reports. Finally, they insisted to the coordinator that he and the negotiators for the mine were from the old Kiap times, and that his speech was essentially an attempt to scare (*praitim*, in Tok Pisin) and intimidate the Ipili into compliance, and that there was no way that they were going to do that.

After more discussion, the meeting closed with some goodwill between the mine and landowners restored, but no substantive movement in their positions had occurred. Like it or not, Yakatabari was now officially on the government's radar.

The Deadline Comes and Goes

As the deadline grew closer and closer, the mine's options began to run out. On 2 February in a meeting with the community relations officer named Lawrence, he told me that the mine was not willing to budge on Yakatabari, but that it did have contracts that it needed to sub-contract out, and that it was willing to offer them to Nixon Mangape and John Kulina. In other word, some job inside the mine would be done more or less as it had before, but ownership of the equipment doing it would be transferred to them, and they would receive monthly paycheck as contractors. I suggested, very discretely, that if someone didn't understand that properly, they might mistake it for bribery. "Properly called, it *is* bribery," replied Lawrence with a certain frankness that I am sure his employer wished he did not always exercise. I suggested that Nixon and John would not take the offer on general principles because what was at stake in Yakatabari was a desire to profit – there was no doubt of that – but also a moral and principled stand (misled or not) against the mine and a desire to strike a blow for Ipili people in general. Lawrence disagreed. Did he think there was any normative element in the negotiations are all? Did he really think the landowners were totally self-interested. Yes, he replied. Altruism and thought of others "was lacking in Ipili culture," as proof of which he adduced the fact that Ipili had no word for 'thank you'.

It turns out that I was correct. The landowners did not take the bait and on 9 February the mine manager released a public letter to the Porgera Landowner Association faction categorically rejecting the demands made in their letter of 20 December. Community relations officers at Yokelama also began handing out copies of the mine manager's response along with the original letter to select members of the community (such as myself) in an attempt to discredit the faction by publicizing their attempt to cut a deal. The next day, 10 February, the mine manager attended a special Landowner

Negotiating Committee meeting whose only agenda item was to convince Ipili to sign. This important meeting ultimately failed to reach agreement and the mine, which had hoped to walk out with a signed agreement, was disappointed. As a result, the mine now officially had a full-on crisis on its hands, even as the construction of the drainage tunnel continued to loom large as a more immediate threat.

The original deadline for the Yakatabari agreement had now passed, and the situation began to become increasingly critical. The mine was now at the point at which it had to begin investing in additional trucks to build its fleet capacity to accommodate a Yakatabariless future. While the window of opportunity was still open, it began closing now and space for negotiation became increasingly narrow.

The District Administrator's Letter

With the situation in Porgera coming more and more to the attention of people in Port Moresby and the official deadline for signing a document past, the District Administrator, Kurubu Ipara, began intervening in affairs. On February 16, he wrote a three page letter to the mining warden (responsible for adjudicating disputes between landowners and the mining companies) and send copies to the provincial administrator, the mine manager, the chairman of the Landowner Negotiating Committee, and the secretary of the Departments of Mining and Mineral Resources. The letter thus became the most official, on-the-record statement of the situation in Porgera yet to come from the civil service. Its true power, of course, came not from the title at the top of the letterhead, but the signature on the bottom line – Kurubu had been one of the key players in the creation of the mine, and he was well respected by all involved. Having previously stayed neutral in the discussion, he now threw his hat into the ring in a move which both escalated the stakes while simultaneously providing the possibility that a crisis might be

averted through his intervention. Broadly sympathetic to the Porgera Landowner Association faction, his intervention worked on their behalf – in fact, his letter was the most articulate and reasoned criticism of the mine to date.

Ironically enough, the district administrator began the letter by justifying his intervention in the debate with reference to a clause in the land act which designated the district administrator “to be the protector of landowners and their rights in any dealings with the owners in relation to their customary land” -- the paternalistic clauses which had previously been used by white colonial officers who decided that they knew better than landowners and which so incensed the Porgera Landowner Association faction. He then moved on to use the mine’s own documentation against it. He quoted at length from the mine’s 1996 Social Monitoring report by Bonnel and Banks which found that “Special Mining Lease communities face a severe crisis in land” and that “a relocation of these communities will be essential at some time over the current mine life of 13 years regardless of whether or not further reserves are found.”

“The findings of these consultants are obvious,” Kurubu wrote.

There existed in 1993 a strong justification for the relocation of all landowners living within the Special Mining Lease, especially in Apalaka, Yarik, and Kulapi villages... The fundamental need to sustain human life in the highlands and the Porgeran region is land. A shortage of gardening land impacts on basic human rights, and therefor there arose a situation where the PJV needed to make special provisions for those landowners affected by the land shortage.

In his view, then, the Special Mining Lease was in such a state in 1996 that the PJV was bound by the *original* “sympathetic examination” clause of the 1988 relocation agreement to move people. “However,” he continued,

no action was taken to resolve the situation and now (5-7 years later) the PJV proposes more land (between 127 and 183 hectares) including more gardening land is required for the Yakatabari waste dump... since it will not be possible for the landowners to carry on their subsistence life within the Special Mining Lease due to the shortage of land, they must now be resettled outside of the Special Mining Lease area.

While bolstering landowner claims that they ought to be moved under the old agreement, the letter's particular genius lay in the reasoning it used to argue that *all* Tiyini should be moved. He argued that the mine was planing to relocate only people with primary residences within the Yakatabari dump area despite the fact that other people might have "primary gardening land" in the affected area but houses outside of it. Since subsistence (and not residence) was key criteria for relocoation, he argued that

many members of the Tieni [sic] tribe, who have their residences in Yarik and Timorope villages would not qualify for relocation as their residential land would be located just outside of the perimeter of the Yakatabari dump. However, the fact that most Tieni [sic] people have their primary gardening land in the Yakatabari and Yunarilama areas has been ignored. It is our view that the criteria should be expanded to include those people whose primary gardening land would be required for the further development of the mine.

In effect, the District Administrator provided the Porgera Landowner Association faction with just the logical argumentation to justify their relocation that they needed in an eloquent, official form.

February 21 and 22 were marked by two days of long, intense meetings between the main players in the negotiations. They were held in the boardroom of the main administration building – the nicest and most official space the mine possessed. They were meant to be the final, definitive signing event after the previous planned signing had gone awry. While central to the mine's timetable, the meetings were hamstrung by the fact that Henry (the head of community affairs) and the mine manager were on leave, and their replacements had to step in at a critical time. The meeting on 21 February lasted four and a half hours, but the agreement was not signed.

The Mine Goes Door to Door

By 1 March the negotiations had ground to a halt. Mine negotiators had tried for five days to arrange some sort of group meeting for yet another attempted signing, but it was not going to happen. As a result they switched tactics and began asking individual

agents to come to community affairs headquarters in Yokelama and sign the agreement privately. While foregoing the group imprimatur of the Landowner Negotiating Committee, the mine hoped to get at least the majority of committee to sign and planned on calling that an agreement. I had been told by the head of community affairs that they had consulted their lawyers and been told that a majority signing would probably stand up in court.

It might stand up in the valley as well, provided that the consensus thus formed in private could then be used in public to force the non-signers to capitulate. But in pursuing this course of action, the mine lost the imprimatur of a full and public Landowner Negotiating Committee signing, once of the few stable sources of legitimacy in the valley. The agreement might be signed, but it would not be well signed. The mine was entering unknown semiotic territory, gambling that a novel form of concession from someone who was not clearly ‘the Ipili’ would be worth the risk, especially if the alternative was losing Yakatabari. Additionally, this strategy was dangerous because it appeared to outsiders not as a consensual, private signing but intimidation – community relations officers were driving into relocation communities, collecting agents, and then driving them back to Yokelama and pressuring them to sign behind closed doors. As it turned out, Ipili living in the Special Mining Lease believed that this was exactly what was happening, and I eventually came to the same conclusion.

On 1 March Lawrence, the community relations officer in charge of local affairs in Porgera, told me that the word ‘Yakatabari’ was misleading, since the document landowners were signing was meant to apply to all future activity inside all of the Special Mining Lease. Thus the people who signed it would be entitled to increased levels of compensation and a larger house if they were relocated in the future for any reason, while

the people who did not would be stuck with the terms of the 1989 agreement. I was surprised to hear this because, while it made breaking ranks with the Landowner Negotiating Committee much more appealing to Ipili, this understanding of the agreement has never been mentioned or discussed at any meeting I attended or had heard about. The mine, it seemed, was sweetening the pot for collaborators.

That evening in Apalaka, where I lived, I saw the agent for my adopted clan, the Waiwa. He brandished his still-blackened index finger and told me that he had signed. He began chewing out a friend accompanying me (who lived in Yarik and hence was 'Tiyini' despite being related to Tuanda, married to Waiwa, and agnatically Angalaini) and insisted that he simply wanted to get rich and that my friend should not be surprised or give him grief over it. This theme was repeated with vehemence by one of the more prominent Apalakans, and a crowd of about twenty people gathered and began excoriating my friend in particular and the Tiyini more generally. The general sense of the crowd was that their compensation money was being held up by the Tiyini, who were being needlessly difficult. This was undoubtedly mistaken. Not only did many of the Tiyini agents support the agreement at this point, even if the agreement passed the Tuanda would not be moved. Nonetheless, the mood in the village was that their benefits were on the way, and were being 'blocked' by a corrupt elite of Tiyini landowners.

On 15 March I went to visit Fritz in his office in Yokelama. By this point he had grown increasingly distanced from events in Porgera, and several of our recent meetings had focused mainly on his part time in the valley. Visibly moved, he told me now that he was out of the loop on negotiations, and that the company was more or less done with him. His time would now be best spent, he decided, assuming that the deal would go through, and doing land work identifying new house sites for relocated landowners. This

work, non-confrontational, designed to help and work with rural and largely uneducated Papua New Guineans, was reminiscent of his original time as an agricultural extension officer in the 1970s. It was familiar and comforting to him. Fritz had reverted to type.

The Tunnel Surfaces, Literally

Throughout late January and February, the mine's focus had been of getting Yakatabari signed. As those negotiations ground to a halt, the Yunarilama tunnel once again became the most important item on the valley's technical and political agenda. Throughout this period the mine had been drilling the drainage tunnel, and now all that remained to be done was to open the portal on the other end, an act that became increasingly important as the mine entered a stage where it could not operate at all without drainage.

As mentioned above, while engineering the portal was not overly complicated, creating the social circumstances for it was. The portal area was on land that was owned by the Lakima subclan of the Tiyini – the group for which John Kulina was the signatory, and he was clearly not interested in allowing the PJV access to the land until they agreed to relocate him. At the same time, the portal area was on John's personal land, and so he did not have individual control over it.

The person who did was an elderly man named Busane who had lived there for decades and was the patriarch of an extended family that lived on the banks of the Kaiyia river just upstream from where Siapu has built his shrine to the python Kupiane. Busane was not himself Lakima, or even Ipili – he was born in Tari and was ethnically Huli. Like Kurubu's father, he had arrived in Porgera in the early 1950s along with white alluvial miners and had worked as a foreman overseeing local Porgeran workers. While not as

ambitious as some of the foreman who had gone on to dominate valley life, he had carved out a comfortable niche for himself, married into the Tiyini clan, and had settled near the site of his former alluvial workings. Thus his proximity to the portal entrance was not mere chance – it reflected a five decade history of gold mining in Porgera. The same flat land that provided Busane access to the Kaiyia in the 1950s proved to be the best spot for for the mine to open the tunnel at the start of the new millennium.

The mine argued that technically the portal tunnel was a work inside the Special Mining Lease that was envisioned by the Mining Development Contract. Hence it claimed it did not need John's approval, or even Busane's. If this was the case – and it seemed to be correct to me *if* the tunnel was included in the submissions that accompanied the Mining Development Contract in the late 1980s -- then all the mine had to do was pay Busane compensation for his land and relocate him in accordance with the existing Compensation and Relocation Agreements. Busane's position was somewhere between John's and the mine's. He certainly did not feel that John had a right to tell him what to do on his land, particularly if that involved John stopping him from receiving large amounts of money and a free house. At the same time, Busane was keenly aware that the mine's desperate need for the tunnel gave him enormous leverage – any attempt on their part to pay merely the legal amount of compensation would drive him into the arms of the Porgera Landowner Association faction and create an alliance that the mine could never hope to overcome.

After a period of very intense and very private negotiation with the Busane family, the mine agreed to relocate him under the terms of the as-yet-unsigned Yakatabari agreement. As a result Busane received a generous compensation package and a large house and was detached from a potential alliance with the Kulinas. The mine, of course,

painted this as a precedent for a future Yakatabari agreement and a demonstration that authentic, grass-roots landowners found the agreement acceptable even if the corrupt elite of the Porgera Landowner Association did not. And, as they would be the first to point out, this generous donation to a local landowner above and beyond the legally required minimum demonstrated Placer Dome's sense of social responsibility and stewardship by working with local peoples to find solutions to their problems that would produce long-term sustainability. With the actual occupant of the portal area out of the way, the mine now turned its attention to the Kulinas.

24 March Meeting with the Secretary

Throughout the month of March, the Porgera Landowner Association faction had been in Moresby, and John Kulina had come to the office of the Department of Mines several times with a mixture of demands and requests. Thus the logistical necessity of a tunnel and Porgera Landowner Association attempts to contact powers in Port Moresby had essentially escalated the conflict yet again. As a result the Secretary for the Department of Mines, the highest civil servant with responsibility for mining, flew into Porgera for the morning to meet with both the mine and landowners.

The secretary arrived on 24 March in the early morning and proceeded to the administration building on the mine site to meet with senior management. News of his presence had spread amongst members of Porgera's elite and aspiring elite, and so the crowd that finally gathered to meet him in the haus win at Suyan for his 10 am meeting with the landowners numbered about forty people. As it turned out, the Secretary's meeting at the mine site ran over, and it was not until 12:05 that a car pulled up that disgorged the Secretary, one of the mining engineers from his office, Kurubu, Harry Ulin (the Porgera Mining Coordinator, also up from the coast), a variety of community

relations officers, and the mine manager.

Lawrence began by giving his apologies in tok pisin and explaining that the group had come to meet in order to “pinisim dispela toktok blo yakitibari [finish this talk about Yakitibari].” He then asked that they appoint a chairman so that the meeting could begin. Because Kule, the habitual chair, was not there Anga was elected chair, although as it turned out this meant merely that he sat at the table and made no further interventions into the meeting.

After the usual lengthy greeting to everyone and every notable person present, Lawrence turned the discussion over to Sir Kuma Aua, a small coastal man of obvious refinement. He spoke mainly in Tok Pisin for the benefit of the landowners, with occasional interjections in English – indeed, like many highly-educated Papuans, he seemed more familiar with English than Tok Pisin.. His words were then translated by Jonathan Paraia into Ipili. “The company is important and must go ahead as soon as possible,” he said. “Lo taim kampani wokim dispela project, ol i tok we [when the company undertook this project, they agreed that if] anyone is affected or impacted, they must be provided for. We believe kampani wokim planti tok tok waintaim Ipli [the company has consulted the Ipili extensively], for nine mun [months]. Problem now is sampela no sinim [some people have not signed]. We want to know exactly what the problem is. We’ve had a number of your people visit us this week. We believe about ten have signed out of twenty three. From the delegation i bin kam lo Moresby, mipela bin autim two problems. Namba wan em haus design kampani wokim, ol i tok haus i liklik beacause yupela gat bikpela family, na blo facilitatim family ol i mas expandim haus [the delegation from Moresby talked about two issues. First is the company’s design for the house. They said it was small given the large size of your families, and wanted the size of

the house expanded]. Can the company do this?”

After this was translated he continued. “Second main problem ol i autim em i gaden land [the second problem was gardening land]. Taim ol i wokim [when they will create the] tunnel, their ground will be taken away. So can the company find land? Land em olsem tradestore blo mipela [the land is your trade store]. Your lives are connected to the land. So can the company find more land? Lain i kam tok lo mi, sapos graun i long we [the group who saw me asked whether, if the replacement land was far away], can the house be built there? That’s one concern we are facing” He concluded by noting that “purpose blo kam lo hi [my purpose in coming here] is to find out is this the only problem that’s keeping you from signing? Can we not find a way? Do the three people who came to see me share your views?”

As we shall see in future chapters, the elite in Port Moresby have conceptions of landowners and the nature of life in rural Papua New Guinea that are not often applicable to rural areas such as Porgera. The secretary’s speech indicated a familiarity with the situation in Porgera as well as a few points that he missed. The most telling point here was his use of the concept of the tradestore to clarify the nature of relations to land in Papua New Guinea. At one level the metaphor was simple: just as profits from entrepreneurial retail provided cash which provides one’s livelihood, so to was subsistence agriculture a means of perpetuating one’s family and one’s way of life. In fact, Ipili often used this analogy themselves, but in reverse – they used the familiar realm of subsistence economics to shed light on the purpose and nature of tradestores. Thus for Ipili it was not ‘tradestore as garden’ but ‘garden as tradestore.’

This may seem like quibbling, but it indicates how the Secretary’s own view of rural Papua New Guineans was an urban one, one in which he felt he could tell the Ipili

“your lives are connected to the land.” No doubt this was reinforced by visits from the Porgera Landowner Association faction who emphasized the importance of the land that they were losing. What the secretary – and perhaps Fritz as well – did not recognize was that the Porgera Landowner Association faction and the Landowner Negotiating Committee did not consider their lives tied to the land. They emphasized the loss of gardening ground not because they wanted an equivalent garden to relocate to, but because they sought to use it as a bargaining chip to gain benefits – chief among them land in *urban* areas such as the township at Paiam or even Port Moresby itself. In sum, the secretary saw people concerned to recreate a rural lifestyle after relocation, while the Ipili themselves were attempting to use the fact of their status as victims of the mine in order to escape it.

Nixon took the floor next in a speech that grew increasingly heated as it progressed. He began by reminding the meeting that the landowners had worked with stakeholders in the mine for a decade. However he then invited the Secretary to an aerial tour of the mining lease with him so that he could take a look at the communities living inside the Special Mining Lease. “Mipela stap lo banis” said Nixon, “o mi nap tok, lo bel blo pik [we are fenced in, I could even say that we are in the belly of a pig]!” He went on to state, heatedly, that the lives of people in the Special Mining Lease had been overwhelmingly affected by mining, and that “mi no wanbel liklik lo yupela aprovim dispela mining plan [we are a little unhappy that you might approve this mine plan].” As his temper grew more and more out of control, he castigated the secretary for failing to protect Ipili citizens from the mine and claimed that in fact thirteen people had *not* signed the Yakatabari agreement.

The Ipili, he reiterated, simply wanted to be relocated – all of them, off the mining

lease, and after that the mine to do anything it wanted without interference. However, the mine wanted to move only four groups, and refused to be reasonable and negotiate.

“They are here today and gone tomorrow!” shouted Nixon, but Ipili who stayed in the Special Mining Lease would continue to face the consequences of the mine’s work. He was also unrepentant about the tunnel: “We’ll get lawyers or legal advice. You are supposed to advise us, but you stap lo [stay in] Waigani and Konedobu [in government centers distant from rural Papua New Guineans].” He ended by raising a ‘second question’ (although there was no explicit first question mentioned): “So second question: what is the *government’s* plan lo muvim ol manmeri baggarup lo en? Yu lukim plan blo kampani [to move the people who are affected? You’ve seen the company’s plan], so where is the plan?”

The secretary began by responding: “Dispela design kampani salim i kam [the tunnel], em minor alteration. Em includim lo MDC. It’s already in the approval. That’s why it’s considered to be a minor alteration. The second point in the plan, they’ve talked about this [Yakatibari] with you for nine months.”

At this point Nixon attempted to interrupt the secretary, who managed to hold his ground and said: “Let me addim wanpela point. Depatment i no approvim Yakatabari dump as yet. It’s separate. That’s why we want to focus on the tunnel, because it’s important to the company.”

In this exchange Nixon is purposefully conflating the waste dump and the tunnel. He is arguing – although he was perhaps not always this articulate about it – that the simplest thing to do (which also happened to be in his own best interest) was to relocate everyone from the Special Mining Lease. It would remove obstacles to the tunnel and future development, and also be more humane since people were being affected by

mining activity. The Secretary was attempting to separate these two issues. He insisted that the government was not lax in its duties to Porgerans. Because the tunnel qualified as a minor alteration, discussions regarding compensation should be between the landowners and the PJV and, failing that, be taken to the mining warden for adjudication. Unfortunately his emphasis on the tunnel merely made him look as if he was siding with the company rather than the Ipili. This may in fact have been his intention, for the landowners he encountered in Porgera were loud (as coastal Papua New Guineans imagined highlanders to be) and rude – they appeared, in other words, to fit the profile of the ‘corrupt landowner’ that the secretary had heard so much about. Finally, being shouted at for minutes on end is not a pleasant experience, particularly when you are an important person to whom this does not normally happen. No wonder he was losing patience with them.

Nixon replied testily: “Pinis? [are you finished yet?] Second question yu no answerim yet. Yu givim green light lo drainage tunnel and Yakatabari. Plan lo yupel lo affected pipol em wanem [what is your plan for the affected pipol]?”

“The nine months the company talked with you is the requirement,” said the Secretary, “If it [Yakatibari] requires relocation, it must be agreed in the talks you are having.”

At this point Nixon stood up and moved to the center of the room.

“Mr. Secretary, thank you. Em no olsem Ok Tedi, Misima, Lihir, Tokuluma. Em no stap lo big thick jungle. Taim i laik mine, ol i laik rousim olgeta i go outside Special Mining Lease [This isn’t Ok Tedi, Misima, Lihir, or Tokuluma. Porgera isn’t in the middle of a big thick jungle. When they want to mine, they move everyone outside of the

Special Mining Lease]. They don't mine in the same place people are living because life is important," at this point Nixon's temper began to bubble over again. "You think the safety of the people is safe?! Em lo dispela as mispela sendim delegation lo yu [this is the reason we sent that delegation to you]. Em international company! They are here today and gone tomorrow, we are baggarup! What is your plan? Yu no tok tok. Mi no satisfy [you have not spoken and I am not satisfied]."

The secretary remained calm and reiterated: "the purpose of me coming here is to listen to whether what the company says is satisfactory. Position blo mi is to see if the company has fulfilled its agreement [i.e. it's requirement to consult with landowners]. It's supposed to negotiate with you. That, we believe, is what the company is doing."

At this point Nixon attempted to speak again but was drowned out by four or five other people who wanted to say something. Eventually John Kulina got the floor and asked: "Yu tok tunnel i stap lo original plan. Ating yu mas sowim [you say the tunnel is in the original plan. You must show us where]."

At this point the secretary deferred to the engineer he had brought down from Port Moresby, who confirmed that the plans in the MDC allowed for two eventualities. The first was a tunnel to drain water from the open pit. The second was a series of pumps. He indicated that other mines, such as Ok Tedi, used drainage tunnels, and that this constituted a minor change. Nixon now began another tirade which grew in force and intensity until he was livid in the face.

"Yu tok mine life bai go siot, kost lo usim pump i antap, who wokim decision na wokim license. Tasol you no wokin study o investigatim mine i baggarap life blo as ples. Yu no gat plan blo helpim mipela. Gavman yu laik kissim tax, PJV laik wokim

profit, na yu laik mipela i baggarap [you talk about a shortened mine life, the cost of using pumps, and who makes decisions and who issues leases. But you haven't done a study of how the mine has destroyed the lives of local peoples. You have no plan to help us. The government wants taxes, the PJV wants profits, and you want us to suffer]!"

At this point the mine manager attempted to reply but Nixon was on a roll. "We don't have a bloody report for past nine months. Without knowing what is happening in the mine, we can't sign." He went on to claim that in first world countries there were no tunnels and that the secretary cared more for taxes from the mine than the life of people in the Special Mining Lease. "You don't know what they are doing. They are foreigners. They work twenty four hours [i.e. The mine is unnatural and mechanistic]. Then want quick money!!" At this the mine manager actually got to his feet and attempted to intervene but Nixon was still going strong, shouting now. "What they are doing, Mr. Secretary, is going door to door getting people to sign! It's illegal! This is an independent country. The government must witness!"

Finally the mine manager was able to speak up and attempted to calm down the tone that the meeting was taking:

"In the first place, we are getting carried away. There were at least two sessions when the engineers were here to explain what we would do. We bought you a proposal. Do we want to talk about that or not? We wanted to make money for the mine and the landowners. I'm sorry if that was misunderstood. If it was misunderstood then a lot of people have been wasting their time here. If we are now saying there is no plan [by which both landowners and the company will profit], there is only profit for the company, then we can't talk anymore [i.e. If it is true that landowners believe the mine exists only for it's own profit and not to also profit landowners, then the fundamental understanding that

this mine was built on is gone]. If we want to talk about the tunnel, then we can talk about opening the portal to the tunnel. If not, we can forget about the dump altogether, because without that portal we will be even more earlier out of business.”

As a result of this Nixon began speaking heatedly in Ipili while several other people – notably John Kulina – also attempted to get the floor.

“Let me say something first -- “ said the secretary clearly exasperated as John attempted to speak first. “Yu [Jon] tok tok tumas [you talk too much]. We have to leave at two o’clock. You sent a delegation down and talked about two problems. We need to focus. We’re going off-topic. I want to focus on those two. I’ve been corrected. There are sixteen signatories out of the twenty three. So maybe seven of you are not happy about houses and gardens. That’s what I want to talk about. So John, if you have something to say, please make sure it’s to do with gardens or houses.”

John now began what was to be his long speech in the meeting, starting with a sullen denunciation of the secretary’s memory. “Nem blo mi em John Kulina. Mi bin lukim yu lo Moresby na givim planti tok tok. Mi ting yu misunderstandim mi tok tok blo mi, or lusim ting ting. Mi no givim dispela tupela tok tok. Gavman, yu mas wokim nupela negotiations. Mipela no negotiate, ol explainim plan. Agriment ol i givim nau tasol, na mipela bin bekim. Agrimen mipela givem lo en, house plan mipela givim lo en. Mipela ting ting lo future generations na ol yangpela tu. Yu mas tok ok, na tokim PJV negotiate gen... [My name is John Kulina. I am the one who saw you in Port Moresby. I think you misunderstood me there, or have forgotten what I said. I didn’t talk to you about houses and gardens. The government must mandate new negotiations. We haven’t been negotiating – they’ve just been explaining their plan. They’ve only just now given us a draft agreement, and we’ve responded. We’ve given them a draft agreement and a house

plan. We are thinking of our future generations and the youth. You must agree with us and tell the PJV to renegotiate with us].” At this point Nixon begins speaking loudly in Ipili, telling John what to say. “Please, *please*,” the Secretary urged Nixon, “allow other people to talk.”

John now attempted to continue to exert pressure on the mine while claiming to be conciliatory. He indicated that he was the person who controlled the land on which the portal was located. He insisted that he would not be moved without a new negotiation – although he did agree that people who had signed Yakatabari could be relocated in order to make way for the mine. He thus presented himself as someone who did not want to stop the dump or impinge on the rights of other Ipili to sign, and was willing to have a very civilized and well-mannered negotiation – although in fact by refusing to give his *de facto* permission to build the tunnel (his *de jure* rights being almost entirely lacking) he was in fact being the most stubborn delegate present.

The secretary then attempted to hear from some of the landowners present but John attempted to interrupt again.

“We’ve given you a chance, so please...” began the secretary.

“Sapos i no laik negotiate gen, yumi sanap lo cot box [if you don’t want to negotiate again, we will see you in court]!” replied John in a stern, angry tone

“You -- “ said the secretary, attempting to signal someone else to speak.

“Why now yu no laik bekim tok blo mi [why haven’t you responded to what I’ve said]?” responded John.

The secretary broke down and replied heatedly, but still under control, “Mi harim tok tok blo yu [I’ve heard what you said]. After these discussions [in Moresby], we

discussed three points: Gardens, housing, and the contract. You agreed the agreement needed fine-tuning, so what you said now [about me misunderstanding you or forgetting what you said] is not correct.”

This was remarkably effective at shutting John up, since in fact these were the arguments he made in Moresby – even if they were not what he was really after – and the secretary had inadvertently pulled off the typical Ipili rhetorical tactic of publicly revealing information from a private meeting in order to call someone’s bluff. After this the secretary finally managed to allow a less august figure to ask a question. The result was a relatively minor figure asking a question about whether he would be relocated because his traditional land was currently inhabited by the chopper pad. There was a beat as everyone realized that the man’s question was a complete non sequitur and that he understood very little of the framework in which all of these claims were being made. Finally the secretary asked Reuben Nalepe to speak.

As the foremost, youngest, and most Christian member of the Pulumaini clan, Reuben represented the most legitimate and heartfelt opposition to ‘old, corrupt landowners’ from the clan most closely aligned with the mine. As the most Christian ‘youth’ from the most crowded and polluted community, he represented to the mine exactly the sort of ‘uncorrupted’ younger generation of leader that they had been dreaming of encountering. Regardless of his personal qualities, it was clear to me that Reuben got along well with the mine because their interests were identical, a fact which the mine tended to gloss as ‘uncorrupt’ since, they reasoned, what was good for the mine was good for the valley. In the past Nixon and other has managed to intimidate him into submission in these public meetings, but now he stood up to them and finally had his day in court.

After a long introduction in which he thanked practically everyone in the room for attending, Reuben said “Mi laik toktok lo dispela tupela point. Nambawan em haus, namba tu em gaden. Dispela agriment campani no pusim mipela lo signim dispela agriment [I would like to speak on these two points. The first is the house and the second is gardens. The company hasn’t forced us to sign this agreement].”

At this point Nixon scornfully introjected “hust witness blo yu [where are your witnesses]?”

“Allow him to talk!” demanded the Secretary.

Reuben proceeded to tell the secretary that the Porgera Landowner Association faction did not represent his interests, but only their own. “Lo haus, mipela agri lo H75 na tok yes na signim dispela. Em namba an. Nambwa two, we mipela bin signim, campani save, gavman save. Kogai dump affectim Pulumaini Ambo. Em tasol. Mipela kissim bagarap... Ol landowner no tok tok lo pipol. Ol i tok tok lo bel blo en, ol i no tok tok lo pipol... [we have agreed to the H75 house and signed this agreement. That’s the first thing. Second, the company and the government know knows that we signed. The Kogao dump is affecting Pulumaini Ambo. That’s all. We are being affected... the landowners do not speak on behalf of the people. They speak on behalf of their own bellys, not on behalf of the people...].”

At this point John Kulina attempted to interrupt him.

“Allow him to talk,” said the Secretary.

Reuben continued, addressing the Porgera Landowner Association faction now: “Mi signim dispela agriment. Yu tok tok bel blo yu, yu go lo cot sapos yu laik kisim double stori haus. Mi signim lo eye blo district administrator na Papa Blo Graun. Lo

pinisim tok tok, sapos yu laik cot, ok. Insait lo four mun, start relocation. Mipela dai. Wanem hap mipela laik wokim gaden, kampani bai bihanim. Em tok tok lo mi lo Pulumaini Ambo. Mi no stap aninit wanpela man o ol Tiyin line – Travelodge kamap olsem haus man blo ol. [I signed this agreement. You speak on your behalf – if you want a two story house go ahead and sue them. I’ve signed in front of the district administrator and the land owners. In conclusion, if you want to sue, ok. But within four months, our relocation must start. We are dying. The company will buy land where we want to plant gardens. This is toalk of the Pulumaini Ambo. I don’t answer to the Tiyini or anyone else – the Travelodge [the finest hotel in Papua New Guinea] has become their men’s house].”

After Reuben finished speaking the Secretary attempted to hear from Peakope, another Pulumaini agent, but the overwhelming scramble to respond to Reuben became overwhelming. He continued over their objections, as Nixon yelled “You have to give a chance to the bloody owner of the mountain!” This was his way of expressing the fact that the Tiyini owned the land where the gold itself was located and hence were more important than the Pulumaini. This sort of opposition was especially poignant because Nixon himself, although shouting down a Pulumaini representative, was himself enatically related to the Pulumaini and grew up in a Pulumaini community after his father was decapitated by his Tiyini agnates.

“Please!” Implored the secretary over the chaos in the meeting room. “We should and must respect people!”

“You are not chairman,” said Nixon to the secretary of mining. “Keep your mouth shut and keep quiet.”

Eventually the secretary did allow Peakope and Pera speak. Peakope emphasized

that time was running out and he wanted to be relocated. Pera, another Pulumaini agent, spoke at greater length, noting (through the translator) that the landowners had asked the company to increase the size of the house and that they had done so. He also noted that they had met the landowner's demands that children of landowners receive relocation houses upon moving, and finally that the company had agreed to purchase replacement land for them. In the aftermath of his speech the furor over who would speak next was intense and Jonathan Paraia attempted roughly to sketch out clan divisions for the secretary, suggesting perhaps that one representative from every clan speak their mind in closing. This idea was replaced by a shouting match between Nixon and Ikipa, and Ikipa (the Mamai agent) was able to get the floor long enough to indicate that he too was happy with the agreement as it stood.

At this point it was 1:45 and the secretary was scheduled to depart in fifteen minutes. In an attempt to finish the meeting the secretary designated four more people whose point of view he would like to hear. However Nixon once more interrupted him and, in an attempt to adhere to the secretary's request for comments, he began addressing the issues that the secretary had outlined in the beginning of the meeting. Nixon confirmed that the mine had originally built them an L40 house in the 1990s, and had offered an H75 for Yakatabari, but insisted that "We want H90 to be built by PJV." He reiterated that the subsistence land that would replace their land must be within walking distance of their houses. "Namba wan haus lo Lihir na arapela gold main is H90 [the good houses in Lihir and other gold mines]... This is a world class gold mine. Whether they like it or not they have to give us H90." He told the secretary "Mi laik yu directim decision lo dispela [I want you to formally direct their decision in this regard]" and reported – the mine manager's shocked face notwithstanding -- "mine manager no

rejectim, em tok em reasonable, tasol ol tea boi blo en twistim – olgeta lain grisim em because lo colonial times they are kiaps and didiman. [the mine manager didn't reject this. He said it was reasonable, but his tea boys have twisted his words – they want to fool him because they were kiaps and agricultural extension officers during the colonial period].”

This elicited laughter from the community relations officers who were present – they felt that it really was ridiculous to say. Also, it demonstrated that if anyone was stuck in a colonial mentality, it was Nixon, who was acting like a paranoid Ipili ‘bush kanaka’ (rural bumpkin). Nonetheless, this was a telling moment because, in the heat of anger, Nixon spoke clearly what was in the minds of several landowners in the room.

The Secretary thanked Nixon and attempted to provide an overview of what had happened in the meeting. He said he felt that “if we are talking about something, there is agreement.” He reiterated that the size of the house was up to the company, and all the government could do would be to confirm it, and that there was some “fine tuning” in regards to the house. There was lukewarm agreement. He also said that he was hearing that they wanted the company to buy gardening ground for relocated landowners. Again there was lukewarm agreement – I think on the whole people felt that this was a pretty blatant whitewash of the considerable differences that were enunciated in the meeting.

Mark Ekepa replied by noting that that the PJV had not yet agreed to purchase land for relocated landowners, and that this was a major issue. The secretary then held up a memo which he announced said that the mine would undertake to purchase this land. Mark Ekepa replied that he hadn't received it and John – outraged at what he saw as a PJV trick – replied that that language was not in the agreement. Nixon then asked for clarification from the government that they would mandate that replacement land would

be given for both gardens and houses. The secretary replied that “this is between the landowners and the company, it’s not for the government to push you around.”

At this point Wasa (a Tiyini agent) attempted to speak and Nixon tried to drown him out. “Nixon, I want to hear him talk!” barked the secretary, clearly out of patience. “Can’t you wait?!”

Wasa asked (in Ipili) if the government was telling them to negotiate with the company on these two issues. The secretary responded that the company could work on those problems with the landowners, and the government was not responsible for the outcome, or whether they ought to negotiate part or the entirety of the agreement.

“You have to say ‘whole agreement’,” instructed John Kulina.

The secretary repeated that he had summarized the content of the agreement and if anyone had any objection with his summaries he would hear them or, failing that, he would leave.

“Yu gavman,” replied John, “yu lukautim interests blo papa blo graun. Company em foreigner. Position blo yu, yu mas clarim gut lo position blo yu... yu mas tok olsem yu mas go lo round table na negotiate gen. Klarim mipela na go [The government safeguards the interests of the landowners. The company is run by a bunch of foreigners. You must clarify your position... you must tell us that we must negotiate from scratch. Say that clearly, and then we’ll go].” John, in other words, wanted the government to order the mine to undertake a complete new negotiation of land in the Special Mining Lease.

The secretary dodged this, replying that the presence of the PJV indicated that they were willing to continue to fine-tune agreement, and that that point was essentially John’s point – that the negotiation should continue. Mark Ekepa then spoke up: “Dispela

nine mun, em i no negotiation Fritz i mekim. Mine manager nogat [These last nine months weren't negotiations. Fritz did them – not the mine manager].”

The secretary then gave the mine manger the floor.

“The clear message was that the Yakatabari negotiations are close,” the mine manager said. “That is still slightly the case. What I am prepared to do is to have you work together with community affairs on the house and the gardens. By the time I come back [from break], not this week but next week, we can meet again. What I want to know, particularly from the Tiyini, is if, under these circumstances, the tunnel can go ahead.”

When one of the community relations liaisons demanded that this be translated, the resulting argument grew so heated that it grew impossible for conversation to continue. “Please, please,” implored the secretary for mining with no effect, “I have to catch a plane.”

“We’re not going to negotiate with Fritz!” screamed Nixon. “We’re going to negotiate with the mine manager!”

More furor ensued, but eventually it was calmed down. Kurubu gave a final speech urging unity, and the meeting broke up. Not, however, before John Kulina departed with the ominous words: “Mr. Secretary, my brata, tunnel nogat until we finalize this agreement.”

The Lawsuit

A week later, the mine received a fax on official Department of Mining stationary from the secretary. Written on 31 March, it stated that he was “satisfied that the actual landowners have given their consent for compensation to be paid” and agreed that “the

tunnel portal must be commenced immediately so that the orderly flow in the development of the approved stages of the Porgera Mine are completed.” Mine management photocopied this document and community relations officers began disseminating it to select people in Porgera, including me.

The Kulinas remained intransigent, however. Partially this was due to the fact that Benjamin Kulina was impossible to track down. His house in Paiam was across the street from the local high school, and earlier that month one of his two wives had lured a young girl (to whom she was enatically related) from the high school to Benjamin’s house, where she was invited to have dinner and spend the night. Benjamin had sex with the girl that night – possibly without her consent – and she was not allowed to leave the house for the next week. By the time she was allowed to leave, she agreed to marry him and he sought to arrange for a bridewealth payment.

The girl in question came from an old and distinguished Porgera family – the Kwalas. They had branches in Hagen, Wabag, and Port Moresby and expected their members to finish high school and go on to college or be actively involved in business. As far as they were concerned, the woman in question had been raped and then brainwashed by a man twice her age who was *not* the kind of affine with whom they wanted to forge an alliance. Benjamin was jailed, bailed, and jailed again before he won his freedom. At this point the family began making death threats and Benjamin was forced to go underground. Since the Kuala’s land was based at the government station, this meant that it was impossible for Benjamin to attend meetings at government offices, or, for that matter, anywhere else..

At this point the arrangement of Ipili landowners began to shift somewhat. Nixon and Pakiru began to distance themselves from the Kulinas, whose recent criminal

activities and inability to put pressure on the government had damaged their standing as prominent actors in the negotiations. As a result the Porgera Landowner Association faction was now clearly separated from whatever Tiyini support it had before. Their next step was to hire a lawyer to seek an injunction against the PJV preventing them from working on the tunnel. The case was heard in Mt. Hagen and the injunction was affirmed in the absence of PJV lawyers, who were informed of the *ex parte* order only after it was successful.

The mine was understandably upset. Not only had their lawyers not been informed of the case, but disagreements about lease agreements were meant to be handled by the mining warden rather than a civil court. They appealed against the injunction, and it was overturned. The Porgera Landowner Association promptly appealed the appeal, which was now at the National Court, the highest level of the judiciary short of the Supreme Court. The case was heard on 18 April in Port Moresby. I flew down to observe the case, as did Mark Ekepa and a few other Porgerans. At the case, the judge stated that injunctive orders were only applied in situations where damage done was irreparable, and since all concerned agreed *in principle* that the mine could construct the tunnel and what was argued over was merely the *price* that would be paid, an injunction was not in order. Indeed, the families on whose land the portal would be located had agreed to its creation.

The injunction was thus set aside, providing that the mine give one week's notice that it intended to carry out the work. The mine immediately did so, and fifteen days later, on 25 April PJV workers under police escort entered the area in order to do some basic survey work around the area where the portal would be built. This went unopposed, since the people who actually lived in that area had agreed to the sale of the land and the Kulinas were not expecting them. Two days later, the PJV workers faced sterner

opposition. On their return they faced Benjamin Kulina as well as a crowd of curious onlookers, including me. After a tense, angry confrontation, the community relations officer who accompanied the mine team, Lawrence, decided the situation was hopeless, that Benjamin was willing to use force, and that the mine was not yet ready to risk a violent incident.

On 29 April, Kurubu Ipara weighed in with yet another letter in his official capacity as District Administrator. Sent to the Secretary for Mining and copied to the mine manager, the chair of the Porgera Landowner Association, and the provincial administrator, this letter once again articulated the district administration (i.e. Kurubu's) official stance on the status of the tunnel. Like his previous letter, this one articulated a legal argument regarding the state of affairs in the valley. However, unlike the previous letter, this one was more obviously biased in favor of the landowners, and its legal argument was much less coherent.

Kurubu agreed that the mine had the legal right to carry out approved works within the Special Mining Lease, and that the tunnel was an approved work. However, he argued that before this could happen the mine needed approval from "traditional owners," despite the fact that up until this point, everyone has agreed that it was exactly this approval which had been given in 1988, and more recently by Busane himself. In contrast to this, Kurubu argued that "the landowners or land occupiers who purportedly agreed to a compensation package with the PJV for the land required for the tunnel project, were not legally authorized by members of the clans owning the land, thereby rendering any agreement executed by them illegal." Note he did *not* claim that Busane was an immigrant and not ethnically Porgeran and hence not a true landowners -- that he did not say something about the strength of claims of residence over descent in Porgera that will

be explored in future chapters. Instead he claimed that

the Agents [in this case, John Kulina] claim that all members of the clan owning the land in question have vested authority to deal with the land in the Agents and other members of the clan cannot deal in the land, thus rendering any dealings made by unauthorized person's [sic] illegal. The Agents views in this regard, are likely to be found by a court to be correct.

In other words, he argued that the Agents created in the late 1980s were not merely representatives of a community, but in fact had become a sort of elected feudal elite with powers to deal in land greater than the people who actually lived on it and who (on his account) had to request the permission of their agent to effect any sort of land transaction at all. Thus as part of a larger attempt to support Ipili against an outside force, he cast the debate in such a way that radically undercut individual Porgeran's autonomy by emphasizing the existence and strength of clans as corporate groups and playing up the role of their agents at the expense of individuals. He concluded the letter by suggesting further means by which the dispute might be litigated, but emphasized that until the agents – that is, John Kulina – approved construction of the portal, the mine was not entitled to build it.

On 8 May another Landowner Negotiating Committee meeting met to hear from the mine the outcome of court case in Port Moresby. Previous to this time, documents from Moresby and the mine manager had been disseminated discretely throughout the valley as had been done earlier in the case of the mine manager's publicization of the Tiyini letter of 20 December. In this case, community relations officers went so far as to make photocopies of the court's one page ruling and distribute them to the Landowner Negotiating Committee at the meeting in order to dramatically demonstrate that the law was with them. The entirety of the decision read:

The court orders that:

1. The Porgera Landowners Association (Inc.) by its officers and members and the 13 other Plaintiffs by their agents be restrained from

interfering with or obstructing the construction of a tunnel or portal and related activities by the Defendant or its agents at Yunarilama and that the Porgera Landowners Association (Inc.) by its officers and members and the 13 other Plaintiffs by their agents be restrained from interfering with or obstructing the relocation of the Lokopa family and the Busane Family from Yunarilama.

2. Liberty to apply on 3 days notice to the other party.
3. The time for entry of this Order be abridged to the time of settlement by the Registrar which shall take place forthwith.

However, while tangible, these papers the meaning of these papers was subject to the chronic ambiguity that plagued the valley. Most people in Porgera are illiterate and do not speak English – especially the English used in formal legal proceedings. Most people, then, could not understand what the decision actually said. Amazingly, Benjamin Kulina – who had not been present in Port Moresby because of his attempts to avoid revenge for his alleged rape – picked up the decision, and told the assembled members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee that the mine was lying. He argued that the paper indicated that the Porgera Landowner Association had won the court case and that the mine was under a restraining order that prevented it from constructing a tunnel. He further claimed that he knew this because he had been present at the court case.

The result was a simmering sense of confusion in the valley regarding what had actually happened. Benjamin's claims had by this point had diverged so sharply from reality that it seemed impossible to members of community relations that he could be taken seriously. At the same time, the audacity of his deception was so great that many Porgerans living in the Special Mining Lease could not imagine that it would be possible to lie so baldly.

At this point I became entangled in the negotiations against my will. Copies of the decision began circulating freely in the valley, and I was asked my opinion by several people from Apalaka, my home community, who knew that I had attended the hearing. In the past I had respected the confidentiality of my informants and had not discussed the

negotiations with others. However I felt unable to avoid a direct question about material they independently obtained regarding a public trial. As a result I told people, when pressed, that I thought the words “The court orders that the Porgera Landowners Association... be restrained from interfering with or obstructing the construction of a tunnel” meant that the Porgera Landowners Association was not allowed to interfere with the construction of the tunnel.

As a result of this Benjamin Kulina confronted me in public in front of a crowd of roughly seventy-five people and instructed me to tell people that the Porgera Landowner Association had won the court case. I replied that I did not speak to people about the court case, but that when pressed I had no choice but to answer their questions honestly. He then accused me of lying and I reminded him that I had been present at the court case while he had not -- my field notes included not just a list of participants but a sketch of the courtroom so detailed it showed everything from where they sat to the location of window-mounted air conditioners. Outraged, he called me a liar and insisted he had been present.

After some further argument our discussion ended inconclusively. The next day, rumors began spreading around Apalaka that I was a spy sent from the mine to write secret reports about Ipili in order to keep them from receiving benefits from the mine. This resulted in a brief struggle for legitimacy inside my field site. At this point in my fieldwork I had already responded to one challenge to my presence in Apalaka which involved death threats (for much of the beginning of my fieldwork I slept with a shotgun under my bed), but which had ended happily and in which people thought I had acquitted by myself admirably. Additionally, I had a long track record of taking friends and my adopted family to the hospital, the bank, purchasing antibiotics, and so forth. I also

attended church services regularly as part of my fieldwork. The Kulinas, on the other hand, were seen as greedy elites whose extravagant demands for money had prevented the Tuanda (the clan of my place in Apalaka) from receiving the benefits of the Yakatabari agreements. After a few very uncomfortable public meetings, rumors of my duplicity faded away.

At any rate, I was scheduled for a field break. As a result I spent most of June in the United States, touring the US with a Porgeran friend. When I returned, I found the portal complete – the Porgera Landowner Association faction had been unwilling to risk physical violence and had allowed construction of the portal to go ahead.

Ministerial Involvement and Internal Politics

The tunnel was now finally in place and the immediate future of the mine was no longer in jeopardy. At the same time, larger issues of the Yakatabari and the mine's future had not yet been solved. In this final stage of the negotiations both landowners and the mine used to their influence to escalate their conflict to the highest level of the Papua New Guinea government. Landowners dabbled in ministerial politics in order to put pressure on the PJV while the mine continued to insist that the letter of the law – as they interpreted it – be followed so that they might continue their operations. Obviously this is the section of my study that relies the most on second-hand testimony. However, my statements have been corroborated by several people so I feel confident that my discussion here is accurate.

When I returned to Papua New Guinea in July I found that the tunnel portal was under construction and that Porgera has begun to play into national politics. Sir Michael Somare (GCMG) had recently been appointed the new Minister for Mines, and had

visited Porgera in order to see the mine's operation for himself first hand. People in Apalaka eagerly recounted for me his visit and remembered that he expressed unhappiness with the how landowner lives had been impacted by mining, although whether he had done this from within his car, or murmured these sentiments as he stood at the edge of the village and gazed at the massive expanse of the Anjolek waste dump beneath which their original village was located was a source of debate. Regardless, Somare's visit was truly memorable. He was not merely the minister of mining – he was the central figure in Papua New Guinea's movement to independence, the first Prime Minister of the country, and the father of the nation. His face graced the fifty kina note – the only human figure to appear on PNG's paper currency. His presence reaffirmed for local people Porgera's centrality to Papua New Guinea.

However it proved to be the other minister on the trip – Minister for Environment and Conservation Herowa Agiwa – who would play a larger roll in the events of Yakatabari. The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) was in charge of overseeing the water permits that the mine was required to acquire in order to discharge tailings into the river system, draw running water for the mining camp, and so forth. One of DEC's routine functions was to oversee the renewal of these water permits. DEC personnel made annual trips to the mine site to make sure that the mine was in compliance with the terms of these permits. On 7 July DEC administrators visited Porgera and held community meetings with people in the Special Mining Lease as part of standard procedure in the renewal of permits. Typically, unless the mine has done something extraordinary the renewal of water permits is yet another of the complex ongoing processes that are routinely carried out as part of keeping the mine open.

Landowners quickly moved in, however, to pressure DEC employees not to

renew the licenses. They were resistant, since they considered the mine to be in compliance. Although sympathetic to the plight of the people, they could not cancel leases because of other, unrelated inequities. The landowners then moved to urge the Minister of Environment and Conservation to ignore the decision of his executive council – which is normally binding – and refuse to renew the license anyway. They also encouraged him to make use of his authority and argue in public that by the standards of the DEC the people in the Special Mining Lease were affected by mining and that the company ought to, under the ‘sympathetic evaluation’ clause, be moved out of the Special Mining Lease. On 22 July I heard from senior members of Community Affairs that the minister had made both of these proposals. He had instituted a plan whereby the relocation would be paid for partially by the mine and partially with tax money the government received from the mine.

At the same time, who counted as ‘landowners’ and ‘the Porgera Landowner Association’ was changing. Within landowner communities, there was a strong sense that the twenty three members of the Landowner Negotiating Committee had let a golden opportunity for compensation slip through their fingers because of their own overreaching avarice. As a result an alliance of influential but out of power Ipili coalesced and made a legal challenge against the Porgera Landowner Association. The two most important players were William Gaupe and Jolson Kuraro.

William was famous for a spectacular raid in the mid-1980s on what was then Placer’s prospecting camp that resulted in the theft of tens of thousands of kina and the passports of all foreign workers in the mine. Jolson was the head of the Porgera Landowner Association and a key negotiator in the signing of the Porgera Agreements in the 1980s. He had fallen from a position of enormous influence after his part in a clan

fight which devastated his home village and in which (on all accounts) he killed three people. These men organized a meeting, claimed that it was a legitimate meeting of the board of Porgera Landowners Authority, and elected themselves the new executives.

Technically the Porgera Landowner Association received its budget from a section of the royalties that the mine paid quarterly to the Porgera Development Authority. I was told by senior staff within the Porgera Development Authority that this had amounted to K5,500,000 in the last six years, and that currently there was only K300,000 in the Porgera Landowner Association's account, and that there was no clear record of how the balance of the money was spent. In general, what happened to the money received by the Porgera Development Authority to fund local projects around the valley was, shall we say, opaque. It was in the interests of so many parties that the distribution of these funds not be too carefully scrutinized that now, with legal action in the offing, the head of the Porgera Development Authority (an accountant originally hailing from Ghana) asked Price Waterhouse Cooper down to Porgera to audit the Porgera Landowner Association's books in an attempt to provide some impartial book keeping and demonstrate his own objectivity.

By late July the opposition to the Porgera Landowner Association faction hired a lawyer from Mt. Hagen and gained an injunction against the Porgera Landowner Association which required that their budget be frozen. Their proposal was that, if they were to replace the current leadership, the Porgera Landowner Association budget (minus, most likely, their own salaries) would not be used to fund lawyers and stay in fancy hotels, but would instead be directly distributed to Ipili as a cash payment. This effectively meant dismantling of what had been – regardless of how justly it had been used – the most effective political tool landowners had in the Yakatabari negotiations.

That this proposal was popular demonstrates the Ipili cultural tendencies towards egalitarianism and receiving a free cash handout.

At roughly this same time I heard from a lawyer working for the Provincial Government in Wabag that the mine was shifting positions and attempting to classify Yakatabari as a 'minor change' to the original mine plan and thus on the same scale as the tunnel. This was verified for me a month later in Port Moresby on 1 September by DEC officials. Their opinion was that Placer was unusual in the way it was tight lipped about the submissions it made the DEC. "Even Ok Tedi" the notorious polluter, submitted plans and then just built them – it didn't attempt to revise or reframe its submissions. It should be pointed out that these employees were not partisan to landowners -- in the mid 1990s a community meeting with landowners degenerated into a riot which resulted in them scampering onto the roof of a building and being evacuated by helicopter, an event they remembered without much fondness..

On 15 August I was told by Jolson there was a hearing in Hagen on 4 September to freeze the account. That same day Kurubu told me that negotiations were still stalled, but that he thought some "pressure at the top," including an upcoming meeting of ministers about the problem in Port Moresby, would help pull things together. Apparently he felt that the mine's tax and royalty payments could be massaged to get the mine the money it needed to meet landowner demands.

The next day I spoke with a senior (and Papua New Guinean) member of community affairs about Yakatabari. He laughed ruefully and said "it's dying a slow death." There had been no official feedback from the minister for mines about the plan for the government to take some of its tax money and then plow it back into a resettlement scheme. I was also told that the minister for environment and conservation

was “overstepping his power” and that granting of water rights on the Special Mining Lease are the mining minister’s decision. The Environment and Conservation could only regulate water that flowed off the lease. Ironically, he noted that the mine would soon start relocating the owners off the land on which the portal had been built -- and giving them the H75 houses that the Yakatabari group missed out on. He also sourly noted that in the paper the other day that there was talk of moving the long-anticipated natural gas pipeline to Australia from Papua New Guinea to East Timor. What kind of world were we living in, he said, if *East Timor* was seen to be a more stable investment environment than Papua New Guinea? He used this as an example of the long-term consequences of politicized ministerial intervention at major resource development projects.

On 21 August I had a short conversation with Fritz, who had not been actively involved in negotiations for months. He was extremely negative about the whole situation, as one would expect. He could at least take comfort in the fact that the worse Yakatabari got the less his lack of progress looked like a personal failure and the more it seemed to be inevitable. It also demonstrated clearly to him just how right he had been in his opinions of the shortcomings of landowners. He told me that it was increasingly looking like there would be nothing done at all, no dump at all, and that “the so-called zero-option is beginning to look like a possibility.” He said that there would be no more negotiations (this is something all of us closely involved with the situation recognized long ago) and that the mine now just had a single, non-negotiable offer to make -- “and it’s not going to be an H75, let me tell you.” He said that people who were lucky were the portal owners, who had signed an agreement and were going to get H75s. If other landowners were moved, they would get old relocation houses.

Still, Fritz understood what had happened to his negotiations not in terms of the paradoxes at the heart of personating the Ipili as a larger actor. Rather he considered the pathologies of these personators to be at fault. He said that it was unfortunate that some people in the government were getting on the whole ‘social and environment impact’ bandwagon that “Kurubu and his boys” were pushing. He said he was sorry that he had wasted 18 months of his life attending “all those fucking meetings.” “To have negotiated for so long,” he said bitterly, “and then to turn it down at that last moment is stupid, just stupid.”

I said I was glad I was distanced from the process and that it just ate people up. He said yes, it was too bad as he enjoyed doing implementation. I said I was happy to do work in the village now that the politic part of my work was over, and actually be working with informants who wanted to help you - not “rapist embezzlers.” He much preferred to sit down with the people, most of which were just trying to get along and raise their kids. He said people loved to talk about their gardens, the great frost of 1973 and so on. It was just “the scum on the surface” that was the problem, “some prick putting a layer on it” and separating the mine from authentic and decent Porgerans. Ultimately what Fritz was unhappy about was not what was being mediated at the negotiation table, but who was doing the mediating.

The Anawe Spill

With all of these issues still up in the air, the mine had the perverse good luck to be subject to a serious environmental incident. Waste that was flowing into the tailing flume beneath the mill had overflowed the banks of the waste dump leased for them and had flown onto land *outside the Special Mining Lease*. This was clearly, and very seriously, illegal. However, the mine responded quickly by announcing that they would

‘buy the land’ (i.e. apply for a lease for mining purposes) and indemnify its owners. In fact, their first move was to indemnify the owners by paying them large amounts of cash in anticipation of a lease being granted. In theory, such an action was perfectly legal – the mine was paying for land which it had not yet (but would) acquire, an expediency which had been used several times before, when the engineering timeline of the mine ran ahead of the cumbersome government mechanisms for acquiring leases. When both lessor and lessee were agreed in principle, use of the land and payment for it could occur before the final lease was approved. Here, however, the mine was using this technique as a way to satisfy landowners immediately before they began to realize that a more lucrative route might be via the courts, where the PJV would definitely be found in the wrong.

This spill – in the Anawe area – also quickly proved to be a solution to the Yakatabari impasse. Engineering reports indicated that Anawe could be the future site of a smaller waste dump which could serve as an alternative to Yakatabari. The site was less optimal technically but infinitely more attainable socially, and the damage to it had already been done. The mine commenced discussion with Anawe landowners which eventually were a success.

The logic of the mine’s offer was simple. First, by inadvertently ruing their land, the mine had presented them with a *fait accompli*- now that the land was already despoiled, why not gain as many benefits from it as possible? Second, Anawe landowners had never received much money from the Porgera gold mine compared to Special Mining Lease landowners – although many of them had benefited from earlier mining booms in the valley’s history. Over time, however, they had thus watched themselves be eclipsed by the Special Mining Lease landowners and their sense of jealousy was palpable. Living well, they decided, would be the best form of revenge. Finally, the Anawe landowners

had lower expectations (and no baggage) because they had never received Special Mining Lease money. As a result they were easier to please and -- despite attempts to disrupt the negotiations by Special Mining Lease landowner agents -- they were in fact finally pleased. Negotiations for Anawe stretched on for another dozen months, and it was not until my departure from my fieldsite half way through 2001 that the Anawe agreement was signed. I attended the negotiations for it as well, but that story must be told elsewhere.

With negotiations for the Anawe dump well under way, the mine officially withdrew its offer for Yakatabari on 21 September 2000. The story of Yakatabari circulated many places and was told and retold by its participants. One of the people who pondered it the most was Guy Mascord, the British consultant the mine hired to produce its 2000 Sustainability report. His long experience in Porgera gave him several ideas about how best to portray what had happened. The night before I prepared to leave Porgera and return to the United States, Guy let me stay in his apartment in Suyan so that I could catch a lift to the chopper pad the next morning. He showed me his draft of report and asked me if I had anything to add, since by this point I was well known in the valley as the expert on a now-moot negotiation. I couldn't think of anything to add that wasn't longer than 385 word. Stripped of authorship and written in a formal third person, his narrative became the official version of the story that I quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In 2004 I flew to Australia and met some Placer executives, who told me they remembered Yakatabari as a distant and unpleasant memory that they had "moved on from." The anthropology involved was not so lucky, however -- it would take me five years of musing over the events recorded in my fieldnotes before I could find my own time and my own way of telling Yakatabari's story..

Conclusion

In the last chapter I examined some of the theoretical issues that drive this dissertation: the way that individuals mediate institutions, how the typification of routine underwrites the logistical complexity of global operations such as mining, the importance of disaggregating concepts like ‘the mine’ in the course of analysis, and the way in which it is fourth world peoples, rather than first world institutions, who exhibit ‘heat’ in Levi-Strauss’s sense. In this chapter I have focused on a densely ethnographic analysis of one particular moment in the relationship between the mine and the Ipili.

Each of the issues of the dissertation are clearly evident in the Yakatabari negotiations. The personal backgrounds of the negotiators on both sides of the table clearly affected their ability to effectively represent their respective institutions. The mine’s attempts to create the tunnel demonstrates the way that Ipili disruptions can affect the mine, and the way that a single portal carved in stone can come under scrutiny in the highest levels of government. Actors such as ‘the landowners’ or ‘the state’, while often actors in a general sense have also just as often proven to be complex entities composed of multiple actors with diverse interests.

This chapter has thus introduced the reader into the dizzying realm of mine politics ‘on the ground.’. However, many things remain to be explained. Why is it that idioms of subsistence agriculture and clan unity were the acceptable method of argumentation in Porgera when they so poorly described landowner aspirations? What is the nature of Ipili kinship such that the landowners tended to be so factious? How specifically did ex-kiaps imagine their relation to Papua New Guinea? Who exactly is Kupiane, and why does he protect the Ipili? Why do Ipili feel so cheated of revenue from the mine? We have seen that there are people jockeying for power below the elite that I

have discussed – who are they and what other arenas exist in the valley for the pursuit of power and influence? We have seen that Port Moresby is also an arena for action that bears on the mine. What, then, occurs at the national level?

Each of the following chapters will deal the issues raised in the course of this discussion of the Yakatabari negotiations, expanding and amplifying on topics which have only been introduced here. The next chapter seeks to answer one of these questions: what, exactly, was the nature of the shared colonial past of the negotiators involved with Yakatabari? How were the agreements of the late 1980s – the keystone of so much of life in the valley – established? What is the history of mining in Porgera? How did institutions like the state and the global financial market come to know the valley? These and other questions will be answered in the next chapter of the dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY OF FEASIBILITY

“The 1960s and early 1970s were halcyon years at Columbia... the department was chaired during this period by Harris, Fried, and me, in that order. As we all lived in the same suburban town and car-pooled together, most of the faculty considered us to be a troika. This, however, would call for too much organization and agreement, and it would have been more accurate to call our rides to Columbia a reality management pool, which ended in 1969 when Harris began to drive his own car.”

- Robert Murphy, *Anthropology at Columbia: A Reminiscence*

While the previous chapter served to introduce the details of landowner politics in Porgera, it raised many questions as well. On the one hand, the Yakatabari negotiations demonstrate the incredible power that certain institutions had in delineating boundaries within which negotiations could take place. The Relocation Agreement and the Mining Development Contract defined an arena within which contestation occurred, and stepping outside of them was a venture into unknown and feasibility-destroying territory which threatened to unravel life in the valley. On the other hand, the Yakatabari negotiations also demonstrated the way in which individuals exerted enormous influence in the course of the negotiations. Indeed, personal histories and idiosyncrasies ended up being some of the most important forces shaping life the course of Yakatabari.

In this chapter I discuss the history of the Porgera valley from its discovery by

whites to the beginning of the construction of the Porgera gold mine, a period stretching roughly fifty years from 1938 to 1990. My goal is to explain the origin of the agreements, contracts, and studies that we encountered in the previous chapter. How did these forms emerge out of the government's discovery and pacification of the Porgera valley? In addition to these institutional forms, I will also explore the history of the personal networks that have grown up around Porgera and proved to be as important to shaping its history as the documents whose meaning they mooted. In this chapter I examine where these people came from, and what their history together was previous to Yakatabari.

In addition to providing an original historical and ethnographic contribution to the literature on Porgera, this chapter also engages some of the theoretical issues raised in this dissertation. As I pointed out in the first chapter, while some analysts take granted the existence of big actors and in doing so help them structure macro-reality, I have argued that the tension between individual agency and institutional power is particularly visible in Porgera. I will thus use this chapter to elaborate my general argument regarding the necessity of interrogating the relationship between institutions and the people who personate them.

A History of Legibility?

At first glance, Porgera seems ripe for an analysis which focuses on the link between legibility and administration as Scott suggests. Porgera is obviously an area where the extension of government control has gone hand in hand with a growth in knowledge about the valley: in 1939 Porgera was literally a blank space on the map. By the time of my fieldwork in 2000, it was one of the most studied places in Papua New Guinea and possibly the world. All of this was due to gold. The continual and enduring dynamic of Porgera's history has been increased white presence, increased exploitation of

Porgera's gold resource, and increased wealth for the Ipili as a result.

Sixty years of mining and exploration has led to an unparalleled level of geological knowledge about the valley – a knowledge simplified, of course, but its disinterment. Anthropologists and linguists have produced accounts of Porgera's language and culture. Government and mine employees have censused the population regularly, typically every five years. Their results, stored in a computer data base, can be cross-referenced to a digital orthophoto of the valley's topography which was so detailed that it allowed each individual house and garden plot to be scrutinized. This information in turn was linked to a detailed GIS database on which every property boundary from the house hold to the clan level had been recorded. These databases were themselves linked to the archive of past land claims and ongoing disputes held between the company and Ipili. If this isn't legibility, what is?

Accompanying this knowledge was a variety of 'governmental' processes (Foucault 1994, Pels 1997) which did not merely regulate the Ipili, but which produced them as subjects. Missionary work in the Porgera valley had gone on for four decades by the time I arrived in the valley, and practices such as confession, baptism, and mixed-gender housing had institutionalized an entire pastoral mode of power. The government suppressed fighting and introduced a system of courts by which Ipili life was to be organized. Ipili working for the mine accustomed themselves to the twelve-hour shifts as they became complicit in the temporal rhythms of industrial power. Those relocated by the mine had been given houses made of metal and wood, and the mine had an ongoing program to teach Ipili how to live in them which effectively meant the end of the traditional system of men's and women's houses. In these meetings, women were taught how to care for durable goods such as textiles and houses – how to sweep, how to cook

with stoves, how to wear clothes, and how to wash their feet before they came inside. The Ipili were quite literally being domesticated.

In some way, then, Scott's discussion of the Ipili being made 'legible' and hence visible to big actors called 'the state' and 'the mine' neatly captures the processes of knowing, governing, and control that occurred in Porgera. It would be possible to find 'resistance,' the key term of Scott's earlier work (1990). Ipili peoples' customs, too diverse and multiform to fit the requirements of the state, constantly evade and elude full state definition. The details of their kinship system, misrecognized and reified by the state and its capitalist partners, continue to create problems that could never be explained or predicted by the simplistic centralized models of the laws formulated in Port Moresby. For instance, the Suyan riot of 1995 swept through one of the camp dormitories and Ipili caused millions of dollars worth of damages, smashing in windows and turning over cars. Strikes and other industrial action by Ipili mine workers have been attempted, and above all the mine has experienced the constant, silent, but no less effective methods of resistance – theft, corruption, attempts to scam resources from the company and from community relations. So it is possible to speak not only of legibility, but of resistance as well.

So there is some *prima facie* evidence to indicate that a Scott's approach to legibility could shed light on Porgera's history. However, I think an approach such as Scott's misses the crucial way in which governance in Porgera has involved a tension between the authority of individuals on the ground and the mandated power of institutions which have attempted – often unsuccessfully – tried to establish control over life in the valley. A more detailed examination of the Porgera's history, I argue, paints a very different picture of how the Porgera gold mine came into being.

The Contact Period

Technically, the first white people to enter the Porgera valley were the Fox brothers, who crossed the lower Porgera river in the course of an illegal gold prospecting patrol across Enga and Southern Highlands Province in 1934 (Ballard 2003). The patrol failed to discover any gold, including that in Porgera's mountains and streams. This fact, combined with its illegality, meant that it was not widely publicized outside the valley, and the Fox brothers' lack of enduring or significant contact with Ipili meant that Porgeran oral history is vague about their presence. The case was a classic 'structure of misjuncture' (Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991:285) – the Fox Brother's reticence to discuss their experience and its attendant illegalities meant that their stories about Porgera were never integrated into Territorian knowledge about the highlands and vice-versa. Two groups of people had met, but two cultures had not.

For all intents and purposes Porgera's 'first-contact' with the 'outside world' came on 12 September 1938 (Gammage 1998: 248) when the Australian Government -- personated by the Australian kiap Jim Taylor -- entered the valley during the Hagen-Sepik exploratory patrol (Gammage 1998, Golub 2001: 138-139, Jacka 2002). On 15 March 1939, Taylor's lieutenant John Black also passed through the valley and discovered alluvial gold in the Pongema river. At the end of the patrol both men returned to the valley together and put in a sluice to work the alluvials, took basic notes on the people living in the area, and mapped the valley before returning to Mt. Hagen to finish the patrol. Porgera's entanglement with the world free of the influence of gold had lasted six months.

The Hagen-Sepik patrol was exploratory – its purpose was to 'fill in the blank spaces' on the map of Papua New Guinea. As a result, the patrol was among the best

documented in Papua New Guinean history. The corpus generated by it includes maps, photographs, landscape paintings, anthropometric measurements, film, geologic samples, and artifacts. The centerpiece of the patrol was Taylor's official report, which was 501 pages long. The report was the first of many that would be written by which people distant from Porgera could inform themselves of the state of affairs in the valley. Even given its length, it was still considerably easier to duplicate and transmit Taylor's report than it was to duplicate and transmit Taylor. This report was thus the first of many text artifacts that would be written which people distant from Porgera would use to inform themselves of affairs in the valley without actually going there or engaging in face-to-face interaction with someone who had. Taylor and Black were thus the two people whose description of the valley would prove to be the first precedent for how the valley was understood by distant whites.

What sort of knowledge did this first patrol into the valley generate? Most obviously, Black and Taylor put Porgera on the map – literally. One of the main fruits of the patrol was a map five feet long and two feet high which was the first relatively accurate survey of the area between the Fly river and the Wahgi valley (Gammage 1998:214). While later kiaps would make other sketch maps, Black's work was the only unified map of the region based on original ground surveying. It would not be until the Australian Survey Corp visited the highlands in the 1960s that a more definitive version would be produced, and even present day maps of Porgera include place names and tracks that Black added.

Practically, the Hagen-Sepik patrol set precedents about how to physically enter the valley – with only minor refinements, the route they took over the dividing range between the Lai basin and the Porgera watershed were followed for roughly sixty years.

Patrol officers, their interpreters, carriers, and police men taught each other these tracks informally. The fact that two decades of government patrol and consolidation could occur without any overall attempt to map the area it was pacifying indicates the extent to which the Australian imperial endeavor in the 1950s and 1960s relied on the ‘straight young backs’ (Shearston 2000) of a handful of officers with personal familiarity of the area rather than a more complex and depersonalized bureaucratic apparatus.

Geography, then, was a major part of the discovery of the patrol. A similar major discovery had to do with the geology of the valley – the discovery of gold. Gold booms had been occurring in New Guinea since the late nineteenth century, and gold was something on all territorian’s minds since the 1926 gold rush at Edie Creek. Like many kiaps, Black’s routinely prospected streams and watersheds for gold, and he included in his patrol Papua New Guineans who had worked gold in Morobe and were familiar with panning and prospecting. One of them – named Porti – first found gold in the Pongema river where Black had set up camp. Excited, Black prolonged his stay in the valley a few extra days to prospect. He explored the southeastern tributaries of the Pongema, missing the true source of the gold, which lay amongst the streams of the southwestern side of the valley.

He and Taylor were more fortunate when they returned to the valley together towards the end of their patrol. At that time they traced the gold much closer to its source, at Kakai creek, roughly a kilometer from the house where I lived during my fieldwork and currently within the special mining lease (in fact quite near the Yunarilama portal area). Taylor’s official report noted the presence of gold at Porgera but reported that the field was poor and not ‘another Edie creek.’ Informally, Taylor and Black seemed to report the same thing. The more cynical of their consociates would later doubt the

accuracy of this assessment and claim that Taylor and Black wanted to keep Porgera's gold to themselves. Future events would prove Taylor and Black correct: the richness of the field and its distance from urban centers made working the Porgera more trouble than it was worth.

In addition, Taylor and Black created a body of knowledge about Porgera that went beyond the geography and geology of the valley. They conveyed knowledge of the people living in the Porgera valley back to the metropole. Their patrol thus marked the first transfer of knowledge about life in the valley from its inhabitants to Port Moresby. Indeed, John Black's misrecognition of the very name of the valley was the first of many confusions that would occur in the future. 'Porgera' is not an indigenous term for the valley (which was and is today in Ipili simply called 'Ipili'). 'Porgera' is a neologism based on Black's mishearing, at the time of first entrance into the valley, of Pongema, the name of the river in which gold was first located and which later became a popular site for European visitors who sought to work its gold. Black tips us off that this is the case when in his patrol diaries he corrects his earlier recording with the words "PORGERA=PONGOMA" (NLA MS. 8346). Nonetheless, the name – albeit with the variation 'Pogera' – stuck and continues to stick to this day. The history of misunderstanding in Porgera is thus just as long as the history of the valley's contact with the wider world.

It is also with Black and Taylor that we get the first clear indication of the Ipili as a distinct ethnic group. In the 'ethnographic appendix' to his report Taylor distinguishes between the "Huri" (Huli), "Enga-a" (Enga) and "Hoiyamo" (Ipili), creating divisions that still exist to this day, albeit with different ethnonyms. "Ipili" would not become an ethnonym until the 1950s. Taylor used it, correctly, as a place name (Hagen/Sepik Patrol

Report 38/39:xx).

Of course, Taylor and Black were not creating all of this *de novo*. The guides who they hired were following well known paths over which the long-distance trade practiced in that region was carried out (Mangi 1988), and often times these guides were themselves traders or, more often, young men with ties to many of the groups which Taylor and Black passed through. The tracks in the valley which were passed down from kiap to kiap were originally passed from indigenous trader to kiap. Thus Taylor and Black's practice of hiring local guides to lead them over the pass and into Porgera was also equally precedential – not only did other whites hire people from the same ethnic groups and locations as Taylor and Black, they even hired the same specific *people* who 'had been to Porgera.'

By using indigenous guides and translators, they created not just a new kind of role or job, but a new class of people who specialized in filling it. Even in the late 1950s guides who could lead kiaps on patrol into Porgera were chosen 'because they had been there with Taylor and Black.' This patronage was the beginning of an emergent class of local middlemen who would parlay their ability to manage the interaction between patrol and Porgerans into riches and success for themselves. Taylor and Black were thus not just the point at which indigenous knowledge was repackaged into white texts and text artifacts, they created a personalistic sociology of middlemanship as well. The context in which Taylor used the term Ipili correctly is a word list – the first ever of Ipili – which he reports is a "vocabulary obtained from GWARA of Ibiri" (Hagen/Sepik Patrol Report 38/39, appendix A). 'GWARA' is Kuala Laipia, a young man who joined Taylor's patrol in Porgera and returned with him to Hagen. Kuala was the first of what would become an emerging elite in Porgera in the 1960s and 1970s. A terrified teenage boy in 1938, Kuala

would leverage this comparative advantage for all it was worth, becoming a businessman, gold dealer, and polygynist. Fifty years later his son, one of the most powerful figures in Papua New Guinea's trade union movement, would dine with Fidel Castro in Havana and his granddaughter would be allegedly raped by Benjamin Kulina.

While the documentation the patrol produced was impressive, it cannot be emphasized enough here how little difference there was between the formal sphere of the administration and the informal circle of expatriates known as 'territorians.' While it is possible to see Scott's 'legibility' at work in the Hagen-Sepik patrol, it is also possible to find Murphy's 'reality management pool.' The number of whites in New Guinea at this time was extremely small, and lives on plantations or outstations made for a close-knit community. As a result, the line between 'official government channels' and the territorialian grapevine could be quite blurred at times. White society in New Guinea was a very small world, and Black and Taylor were at the center of it, one the most up-and-coming young officer and the other already a legendary explorer. Knowledge about Porgera thus had a double life, circulating through the territorialian grapevine as well as the official world of reports.

While news of the Hagen-Sepik patrol allowed knowledge of Porgera to circulate in Port Moresby and New Guinea more generally, it did not leak out much further than that. Taylor and Black's report was suppressed when World War Two broke out for fear that it could provide the Japanese with knowledge of the interior of the island. Taylor and Black's advocacy for native peoples made them unpopular in the administration as well (Gammage 1998), and both left the service soon after World War II. With the exception of a few pieces published in the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, knowledge of Porgera was restricted to word of mouth and the bureaucracy in Papua New Guinea.

The Strickland Syndicate

The war radically changed the future of the valley, altering the follow-up patrols that might otherwise have come to Porgera in the wake of Taylor and Black's expedition. Porgera was patrolled only once between 1938 and 1948. In 1945, the improbably named Captain Neptune Beresford Newcomb Blood led an exploratory patrol into the valley with two other whites and a line of indigenous carriers. Captain Blood was an Irishman who had served in the New Guinea police for many years, and although the purpose of his patrol was ostensibly to find and rescue downed allied airmen, it is clear that he yearned to conduct a grand exploratory patrol in the style of Taylor and Black. An amateur ornithologist, he was also particularly interested in discovering new species of Birds of Paradise, which he did in fact do. Accompanying him on the patrol was William MacGregor, an experienced prospector who had heard of Porgera through the territorialian grapevine and wanted to have a look himself.

The turbulent transition from a civilian government to military administration and back resulted in massive administrative tangles as paperwork was moved back and forth and the report from the patrol, like the Fox brother's earlier patrol, ultimately was never absorbed by the administration and disseminated. It was the territorialians grapevine – this case MacGregor - who were to be the most effective disseminators of knowledge about the Blood patrol. MacGregor's opinion of the Porgera field differed from Taylor and Black's. He considered it a rich prospect – so rich, in fact, that he abandoned the patrol after it reached Porgera and headed back to Mt. Hagen on his own to plan his own patrol.

By the end of the war – spring 1949 – MacGregor was ready to lead a large-scale prospecting patrol into Porgera sponsored by Bulolo Gold Dredging. Bulolo Gold Dredging was the largest gold miner in Papua New Guinea before the war. Taxes and

royalties from Bulolo funded the government of New Guinea throughout the 1930s, and the business supplied jobs to natives and territorians alike (Healy 1967) – ironically, it was owned Placer Gold, and thus the Bulolo Gold Dredging patrol marks the beginning of Placer's interest in Porgera. During the war their operations and facilities had been destroyed by retreating Australian forces in order to deny them to the Japanese. After the war they were attempting to rebuild, and MacGregor was able to convince company executives of Porgera's potential. The government in Port Moresby was eager to encourage the company's recovery, and MacGregor's expedition had the blessing of the administration.

The Bulolo Gold Dredging expedition was slow to get off the ground due to its size and complexity, and news of its plans spread through the territorian grapevine. A group of expatriates, including the Leahy brothers, Neptune Blood and John Black (who had both been to Porgera), Joe Searson (a kiap who had legal training and had worked with Dan Leahy during the war) and Doug Elphinstone (a pilot who could provide air support) formed a business group called the Strickland Syndicate and organized a quick patrol into Porgera to locate and peg claims before the Bulolo Gold Dredging expedition could reach the valley. The Strickland Syndicate required special permits and paperwork in order to enter what was then uncontrolled territory. They were aided in this by Jim Taylor who was both the officer in charge of issuing permits and a close friend of every member of the syndicate. Blood and Searson, still officially kiaps, submitted identical, one-line resignation letters a day before the patrol set off. Appropriately certified, the syndicate sped off to the edge of controlled territory to await the date the administration had set when prospecting in Porgera would be legal – 1 April 1949 (this and other information about the Strickland Syndicate is drawn from NLA MS 8346 Series 7 and

Papua New Guinea National Archives accession 61 Box 458).

At this point the administration heard about the syndicate. The punctilious Acting Director of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Ivan Champion, was furious. He felt it was disgraceful that two officers in a critically undermanned area should resign. He also felt that their permits were issued illegally – although on what basis is not clear. Finally, the intense rivalry between the Papuan civil service in which Champion worked and the New Guinea kiaps who participated in the syndicate may have played a role in antagonizing him as well. As a result, the nearest patrol post was radioed, and a cadet patrol officer was instructed to march out to the syndicate's camp and order them to return.

When the patrol officer arrived at the camp on 31 March 1949, he found himself face to face with some of the most experienced patrol officers in New Guinea, the very people whose travel writings and popular accounts of their journeys influenced cadet patrol officers like him to join the service in the first place. Faced with such opposition, his attempt to personate the government failed. Searson -- the group's legal expert -- pointed out that their group had met all legal formalities, and suggested that the scrap of paper with pencil notes from a wireless transmission that the cadet claimed to be from Ivan Champion – items without a seal or signature – hardly constituted an official signal from Acting Director of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs. Michael Leahy suggested that the entire incident was an elaborate April Fool's joke. The cadet, they decided, was merely *impersonating* the government. The group marched on to Porgera.

Eventually Champion flew to Wabag himself and sent a properly authorized patrol to recover the syndicate, although they arrived after the syndicate had a chance to

look Porgera over. Sure enough, the results were as Taylor and Black had predicted – the valley was a wash. The syndicate returned, defeated. Searson decided to stay on and try his luck in Porgera, the Leahys returned to their businesses, and Black went south to start a farm. Neptune Blood was left holding the bag – his attempt to convince Champion to give him back his job failed, and he was forced to become the head of an experimental sheep farm funded by an Australian refrigerator magnate (Baglin 1988).

As brief as this incident was, it was to have profound repercussions in the history of the valley. It represents the uneasy relationship between law, personation, and the balance of power on the ground that grew to be typical of the valley's history: an authority based in a distant metropole claimed to be, and failed to be, the force which created rules which had a regimenting force on the conduct of people living at a physical remove from it. Agents claiming to speak for the state failed to do so convincingly. And yet it is not as if the members of the syndicate *denied* the power or legitimacy of the state. They were careful to follow the letter of the law in both the manner of their resignation, the manner in which they acquired paperwork, and their waiting until the proper deadline of derestriction to march into the valley. They were planning to prospect the valley and submit legitimate requests for mining leases. Indeed, they hoped to fend off a large multinational mining company *by establishing an earlier, legal claim to the land.*

What we see in the incident surrounding the Strickland Syndicate is not a situation where the state's power and existence is unproblematically assumed – far from it. But neither do we have a situation in which the binding power of notions such as 'the state' are reduced to the arbitrary self-interest of actors who simply to pursue the most pragmatic, hardheaded course to the maximization of their own benefits. The idea of the state and the idea of the law had a structuring power on action in the highlands which

could not be ignored by the syndicate – indeed, it hoped to enroll it to its own end. But, contra Scott, the representation and personation of the state was hazardous, and in this particular instance a young man lacked the will to stand up to older, more experienced colleagues. What counted as order and what did not, what was ‘legal’ and what was not were decided, and the method by which law and the state could be construed – all of this was up for negotiation, even while the terms involved (state, law, and so forth) were not. It was not the last time access to Porgera’s gold would hinge on such a dynamic of ‘reality management’

Porgera as an Uncontrolled Area

The sociology and epistemology of Porgera grew more complex in the 1950s. As I mentioned above, between 1948 and 1962 the valley was declared a ‘restricted’ area. Declaring areas restricted was the main way that the Australian administration dealt with the task of ruling a territory and population that it simply lacked the capacity to handle. The expedient had a long history under both German and British administrations and was continued by Australia in the years after the war: interior areas of the island were labeled uncontrolled and set off-limits for all white non-government employees. This was meant to maintain the safety of whites, who were susceptible to indigenous violence, and blacks, who were susceptible to introduced white illnesses. Whites who did want to enter restricted areas needed special passes approved on a case by case basis by a local kiap.

The process by which uncontrolled areas were opened up to outsiders was straightforward. Kiaps based at government stations in controlled areas led semiannual patrols into restricted areas trying to stop violence, heal sick people, take censuses, distribute steel tools, and so forth. After some time, these patrols would find a suitable location for a new government station. This station would be built – typically with an

airstrip – and the area around it would be derestricted, allowing the people who wanted to get in – typically missionaries and miners -- to settle there. This new station would then serve as the point from which kiaps could begin patrolling even more distant areas.

Ideally, the process would be repeated until the entire highlands were under administration control. By 1948 the post-war era administrative responsibility for Porgera had moved west from its original seat in Goroka to Hagen, and then to Wabag. In 1952, Laiagam was chosen as the site of a government station, and became the administrative center for patrols to Porgera. Throughout its time as a restricted territory, then, for Porgerans the government was noticeable largely by its absence. This was not the case, however, for miners.

Alluvial Miners

The presence of gold in the valley meant that Porgera would have a fundamentally different experience of contact than other areas in Enga. The fact that white men – and soon, black men – would come to Porgera to work gold created a set of organizational imperatives which had wide ranging sociological and epistemological implications. While the government did devote more resources to governing the valley than it would have had it not been a source of gold, it still lacked the capacity to suppress violence and create a situation in Porgera sufficiently stable for mining to take place. Despite the attempts of distant whites to control and regulate mining in the valley, it would be the miners on the ground and not the visiting kiaps who would come to know Porgera's alluvials and its people. Miners would be responsible for keeping their operations socially feasible without a great deal of help from the government.

As a result, the fifties saw the continued growth of that class of middlemen who got their start during the exploration period. Previously translators and guides, these men

now mediated between the Ipili whose labor was necessary to wrest gold from Porgera's rivers and the whites who sold the gold they worked. They were responsible for creating and deploying knowledge about the valley, its gold, and its people that was concrete and practical – they kept the peace, kept the workers working, and made sure that gold got to market. They conceived of themselves as middle-men who bridged a gap between two different 'cultures' -- white men who specialized in dealing with black, and black men who specialized in dealing with white. But in fact they were less people at the edge of their culture looking out to another than they were the points of articulation through which both passed and a third emerged.

These men who 'knew about the Porgera' crystallized and formed a distinct social network, a group I have referred to elsewhere (borrowing a phrase from Meg Taylor) as "Medici of the Highlands." They were powerful and influential and had multiple business interests spread across the highlands. They formed a small but powerful elite who filled the vacuum of power and commerce that existed in the highlands in the period between first contact and widespread development. This group had a sociality that was *sui generis*: they were the first white men who had married highlands women, and the first to take up leases on land in what would become Goroka and plant coffee. They were the first Huli, Porgerans, and Engans who agreed to be trained as medical orderlies, translators, and labor overseers, throwing in their lot with their white rulers in anticipation of a better life.

Consider the small world connections of this period: Jim Taylor was the kiap who accompanied Mick and Dan Leahy during their initial exploration of the Mt. Hagen area. Later Dan was to marry two sisters from Hagen while Jim Taylor settled down in Goroka with his own Papua New Guinean wife. Joe Searson had served with Dan during the war, and sent his own interracial son to live with Dan and his children in Hagen. Searson

worked leases in Porgera, which were later transferred to Taylor, and Dan's nephews (also half Papua New Guinean) were the main gold buyers in Porgera when I lived there. Jim's daughter Meg, a former ambassador to the United States, visited Porgera as a child and played polo with George Brugh, whose Australian father oversaw Searson's leases and whose mother was Porgeran, the sister of the Elder Brugh's overseer, who was, with his sons, one of my closest friends in Porgera. I even made a point of clearing away the weeds at Jim Brugh's grave at the old graveyard in Goroka in order to take a picture for the people back in Porgera so that they would know where he was buried. Like the Leahy's, George would later work in Porgera.

As the example of the Leahys and the Brughs indicates, by the time of my fieldwork this network of pioneers and their children was functioning much as it had fifty years earlier with the notable exception that it was now one anthropologist larger. This group, in sum, had its origin in the post-war highlands, and continues to operate as business men, entrepreneurs, and culture brokers much as it did fifty years earlier. It was these networks of kinship and consociation – intensely personal and often incestuously small – that were responsible for so much of the action that occurred in the highlands. Personalistic ties, rather than one's ability to personate a legitimate institution, would come to be crucial in keeping plantation and mining operations in the highlands feasible.

Although a temporary patrol post was established in Porgera after the Strickland Syndicate affair, it was shut down when both the syndicate and Bulolo Gold Dredging's expedition both came up empty. The administration would not have a permanent presence in the valley for another ten years. This left Joe Searson to try his hand working gold in Porgera and, after applying for the necessary permits, he became the only white man living in New Guinea between Wabag and Telefomin. Searson took up two leases at

Porgera, one at the junction of the Kaiyia and the Pongema rivers (where Black had first discovered gold) and another on the Kakai (where Taylor and Black had set up a sluice when they returned to the valley). This site on the Kakai was further up the watershed, and close to the Mt. Warokari, which would later be traced as the source of Porgera's alluvials and the mountain ridge beneath which the Porgera ore body was located. Soon another miner named Jim Brugh began working the Kakai claim on Searson's behalf while he lived and worked on the Pongema.

Between 1948 and 1951 Searson lived in Porgera with an Engan woman, and Brugh was soon – and without his Australian wife's knowledge – to take a up residence with a local Porgeran woman, the sister of one of his foremen. It is not clear if Searson and Brugh were aware just how quickly the steel axes, machettes, and shells that they paid their workers were turned into bridewealth. Nor is it clear that they were aware that helping a young man amass bridewealth was customarily the role of an elder brother or uncle. What is clear is that Ipili understood the way that confluence of kinship and business immediately and worked hard to supply women to the powerful white outsiders who came to live with them – a trend that I would be one of the few to buck. It was during this time that Kurubu's uncle would come to Porgera, and that Busane would settle at Yunatilima.

In 1951 Searson left Porgera in order to make a go of farming when the first agricultural leases in Goroka were issued (Downs 1980:179). He was tired of the minimal returns and incredible work it was necessary to put into Porgera. His leases on the Kaiyia were transferred to Jim Taylor, now a private citizen and Medici. In 1957 Brugh – who had lost his hand while trying to save his dog from a stick of lit dynamite it had unwisely chosen to fetch – slipped and fell during the course of one of the fearsome walks he

periodically took from Porgera to Laiagam to buy supplies. Thrusting its stump into the ground, he swore the small round hole it left was the last Porgera would ever see of him. He left to pursue coffee in Goroka as well, and took his two children with him.

Searson and Brugh had lived in the valley and took the arduous, week-long hike to Wabag to buy supplies only when necessary. Taylor, on the other hand, was fully occupied with his growing estate in Goroka. Every two months or so he would travel to Laiagam (or, in the early period, Wabag), take gold from his leases, and pay his workers in steel, cloth, and other sorts of good with which they were acquainted. He would remain a figure of myth and might for Porgerans, and his absence, along with that of Brugh and Searson, created a void into which Papua New Guineans stepped.

The Legal Status of Early Mining

Technically, the laws governing Searson's leases were covered under the mining act. In 1948, Papua New Guinea's mining laws were essentially unchanged from those passed to deal with the Edie Creek gold rush in Morobe in the late 1920s. By law, any expatriate with an easily-obtained mining license could apply for a mining permit from the government. This allowed them to stake claims on land after submitting a simple one-page form and a sketch map of the area in question. This is in fact what Searson did. Miners also lodged a deposit with the local kiap, who could then distribute it to any 'natives' (a legal term) in compensation for any damage done to their land. The kiap, in his role as line-officer for the Department of Lands and Mines and Surveying, was responsible for deciding whether mining activity disrupted the life of natives on whose land mining was carried out. There were no cadastral records – land was surveyed for the lease, but not to determine traditional ownership.

Legally, the relationship between white miners and Ipili workers would change over the years. In 1964, for instance, Taylor technically transformed his leases to a tributary system. But these legal shifts were little more than formal reframings of facts on the ground which had little to no effect on actual practice. Practice, from the Porgeran view, remained identical throughout the history of alluvial workings. Teams of workers, typically around two dozen or so, would working alluvial deposits in gangs, forcing water through sluices and breaking up larger rocks with crowbars and hammers. This gold ore – it was not, I believe, typically processed – was put into empty coffee cans. When the coffee can was filled – which typically took two months or so -- it would be taken to a white man who would pay them for it in textiles, axes, machetes and – in the early period – shells.

These work groups were overseen by a group of men who could communicate with whites using Tok Pisin, and convey their wishes to the work gangs. Although these men were sometimes Porgeran, many were not. In addition to the Gorokan men who Searson and Brugh would occasionally leave in charge of their camps when they left the valley for supplies, there were also a group of people Enga and Huli speakers – most of them Huli, actually – who used their ability as translators and guides to establish a local power base in Porgera.

The origin of these men varied. Some, like Kuala, has been taken out of Porgera with Black and Taylor. Others had come over from Paiela. But a strong core of these men were Huli, and were taken out of Tari by Dan Leahy in 1945 during his time as an officer in New Guinea's military administration. By that time it had been a decade since the discovery of the Tari basin by Jack Hides (Schieffelin and Crittendon 1991) and the government still had no body of translators and guides to communicate with that large

population. Dan Leahy, now a volunteer in the army, led the patrol to Tari to collect young men (children, really) to volunteer to be taken out on that patrol and be taught Tok Pisin at the Mt. Hagen station. These men were then used by parties heading out west to Porgera. This included men like Ipape Papume, Busane, and others who managed Jim Brugh's line of workers, and especially Tongope, perhaps the most powerful man in Porgera for decades. While Searson and Brugh lived in the valley, Taylor met his workers in Laigam. Tongope was the man who oversaw his operations and became one of the most important men in the valley, setting standards for wearing clothes, eating tinned fish, and using his power and wealth to marry multiple wives which are emulated even today. As we have seen, some of these local coordinators In the case of Brugh, local coordinators would establish themselves *via* kinship connections to whites. As Huli, these men came from a dominant ethnic group whose language Porgerans could speak, and they were also familiar with Tok Pisin. Often they did not learn Ipili. Tongope's Ipili, for instance, never became very good. In many ways they were recreating indigenous patterns of coalition formation and bigmanship.

Government Patrols

While miners proved important to life in the valley the government was was not completely absent in Porgera in the 1950s. After the short-lived Porgera patrol post closed, Porgera was visited more or less biannually until 1962 by a small number of kiaps. It was from them that the most widely disseminated understandings of 'who the Ipili are' and 'what they were like' was generated. This was true despite the fact that these kiaps were not particularly knowledgeable about Porgera and the people living there. Nor were they particularly successful at census, pacification, or the other activities which it was their duty to discharge. The Porgeran experience of state representatives was

more of powerful, easily fooled individuals than of impersonal agents of a powerful big actor called ‘the state.’

The administration of the Ipili through patrols was unsuccessful. The Ipili’s first experience of ‘the government’ was that it could be manipulated to serve local ends – a lesson they would not forget about a circumstance that would not change. The early Ipili attitude to the government is best summarized by J.R. Hicks. Although speaking of Paielans shortly after government patrols began in their valley in 1964, it summarizes what Porgerans generally felt about the government during an equivalent period in their own pacification:

Concerning the ethos of the Pai’ela [sic] people I gradually came to the conclusion that he regards himself as a superior being to the European, in fact as being superior to any other race of people. The superior material possessions and powers of Europeans are nonchalantly passed away as being essential to the white man for him to survive, whereas he, the Pai’ela, needs only a garden of sweet potato, his axe and a bow to exist (Porgera #1, 64/65).

Throughout this period Ipili attempted to co-opt government patrols for their own internal political ends while satisfying government demands for peaceability through simple dissembling. In 1951 M. Brightwell noted that “the patrol being completely free from the usual minor complaints and disputes, and the natives in, what I suspect to be, a transitional stage of tranquility” (Wabag #2, 51/52). A year later B. Corrigan wrote that “The Ivi [Ipili] are now happily at peace. Not so very many years ago the Ivi were from time to time devastated by the hordes from the upper and lower reaches of the Porgera... the last raid of any consequence took place some years ago.” Corrigan concludes that “unless there is a conspiracy to conceal crime, and this I very much doubt, everyone seems to be living in harmony and are at peace” (Wabag #5, 51/52). Brightwell’s suspicions proved to be much more on the mark than Corrigan’s happy prognosis. Indeed, it is clear from the record that just such a conspiracy was taking place. Two years

after Corrigan's patrol Denys Faithful records that

The natives still live dangerously. They are continually having intertribal fights. During a court sitting made on the Patrol we heard that the habit of these natives is as follows. When Europeans are in the area they discard their arms. When Europeans leave the area they all carry them again (Laiagam #1, 54/55).

Government patrols were indirectly implicated in tribal fighting, as murderers and other people in danger of revenge killings would willingly give themselves up to be jailed. Ipili experience of the rule of law, from their first encounter with it, taught them that law and the actors who enforced it were tools to be manipulated, not impersonal forces which regimented action.

“Their general contempt of Government influence,” wrote K. Graham in 1956,

is shown by their attitude to courts. The standing joke in this area is to advise an aggrieved party to ‘go and make a court.’ Their attitude to prison is much the same, and is illustrated by the alacrity the chief troublemakers present themselves to be taken into custody (Laiagam #3, 55/56).

Four years later in a memo on a patrol, RS Bell noted that “the only good thing about Porgera murders is that there is usually very little difficulty in arresting the culprit... murderers are more than willing to be arrested and taken out of the area for a period of time” (Laiagam #2, 59/60). In the same year Graeme Hogg noted that “it has apparently been the usual practice for murderers to give themselves up in order to escape the local consequence of their actions – pay-back killings. Not only does Perari's [a murderer] evasion of the patrol introduce new tactics to the locally accepted norm in such cases, he also exhibits the ease with which malefactors may escape the long arm of the law in such areas such as this.” (Laiagam #4, 56/60).

The period of patrols also resulted in the first anthropological knowledge about the valley. In February 1957 Mervyn Meggitt accompanied an administration patrol into Porgera and became the first anthropologist to visit the valley. The ethnographic report he attached to the patrol report was published later that year in *Oceania* (Meggitt 1957).

Meggitt's visit to Porgera was part of his larger project of mapping out the ethnic groups of Enga province and the report, like other pieces by him, was the first to document ethnographically the area between Wabag and Telefomin. His piece on the Ipili became the first published scholarship on that group and as such it had a definitizing effect. The ethnic identity and placenames of Porgerans were hazy before Meggitt's trip. After it, 'Ipili' instantly becomes adopted as the ethnonym of the people of the valley, and 'Porgera' becomes the definitive name of the valley itself. This convention, which as we have seen was actually incorrect, was immediately adopted in all official reports. Only among native police do we find people still referring to the Ipili as the 'Ipi.'

We can thus see that there was a distinction made very early on in the valley's history between the people living and working on the ground in Porgera and the government officers who were officially charged with controlling life in the valley and making it, as Scott would put it, 'legible.' Ironically, it was the latter who were the least familiar with day-to-day affairs there. This was to become one of the enduring traits of Porgeran history -- the people who know the most about the valley and worked hardest to make mining operations (in this case alluvial ones) feasible were those with strong personal connections to people in Porgera and elsewhere, and not those acting as representatives of the government. In the fifties white miners and black middlemen became specialists in working gold and managing Porgerans, but it was the patrolling kiaps who made the first sketch maps of the valley, carried out the first censuses, and made possible the first ethnographic reports. The kiaps, in other words, were the ones who generated the texts about Porgera which would circulate back at the metropole even as the miners were the people who had control 'on the ground.'

Indigenous Miners

By the late 1950s Ipili began working gold for themselves. In May 1958 Puluksu Poke made history by becoming the first Porgeran to sell gold directly to the government when he traveled to Laiagam and sold 14.4 ounces of fine gold to the kiap there, who weighed it out on a postage scale. Puluksu had previously left Paiela to go to Goroka, where he worked as one of Searson's domestic servants. After watching indigenous small scale mining in the Eastern highlands he returned to Porgera, used his knowledge of the outside world and the power associated with it as a middleman, and began mining in the lower part of the valley. A second miner named Pawe Lembopa was soon to follow. He was an Engan who had been taken from his family as a child and trained as a medical orderly. After traveling around, he too saw gold being worked by indigenous people and when he settled down in Porgera he began working gold as well. By 1962, when the valley was derestricted, over twenty men had licenses to work gold and sell it to the administration.

Indigenous gold miners were not a new thing for the colonial government. Indigenous people had been working gold in Papua New Guinea since the late 1890s, when Misimans began working over claims abandoned by white prospectors (Nelson 1976:41). By the 1950s the government's official policy was to encourage this sort of activity since it introduced Papua New Guineans to the cash economy, accustomed them to a work schedule and ethic that was considered civilized and morally uplifting, and was a way to exploit mineral fields that were unprofitable for whites. By 1957 the department of mines estimated that there were 5,000 'native' miners in Papua New Guinea, centered mostly on fields in the Sepik, Morobe, and Bougainville.

The regulations which governed 'native mining' were more or less identical to those which governed white miners. Natives could apply for the same sorts of leases as

whites, could sell gold in the same way as whites, and were bound by the same forms of adjudication under the mining warden. The main difference between natives and expatriates was the different method of registration used for each.

In 1959 Puluku brought another parcel to Laiagam for sale. This one was worth £597. This was too large an amount to be ignored, and the kiap suspected that Puluku was illegally working gold on one of the leases held by Jim Taylor. Puluku was flown to Mt. Hagen – then the district headquarters – where his case was heard by a judge. Puluku was in fact working an area below Taylors', and explained this to the judge. He was acquitted, and a patrol was designated to visit Porgera to stake the limits of his claim.

Unfortunately, the patrol into the valley was so grueling that by the time the mining warden reached Porgera his feet were too blistered for him to stand, and he was too exhausted to do any work. Thus was the government's exercise of power defeated by the fallibility of its personators.

With Puluku's success more imitators followed, and there was increasing competition between indigenous gold miners, as well as between gold minders and the people who occupied the land they were working. By May 1960 the situation had become so convoluted that a kiap noted that "the native mining situation has degenerated into a seething mass of intrigue." Upon entry into Porgera the kiap was besieged with requests for exclusive permission to work gold in various parts of the valley. While it is not clear whether the kiap himself has the legal ability to settle claims in uncontrolled areas, he claimed that he did not, and that a mining warden would have to visit Porgera. This happened two months later when another patrol was led into the valley which included the chief of the Division of Mines and N.C. Robinson, the Native Field Assistant for Mining, who specialized in educating and organizing indigenous people.

The court case at issue in 1960 boiled down to a rivalry between Puluku and Kuala, Taylor and Black's interpreter in 1939. Both claimed to be legitimate claim holders over the same area of the Pongema. However neither were native 'landowners' in the sense that an Australian might use the term – Kuala was an Engan who had lived briefly with distant relatives elsewhere in Porgera before joining Taylor and Black, while Puluku had distant consanguineal ties to the land in question.

Under the law, indigenous peoples' right to work gold was based on being the first to stake a claim to a particular area, and *not* their own status as indigenous owners of that particular area. Puluku and other gold miners, in other words, couched their claim to work gold not in terms of indigenous authenticity, but in the same colonial framework that whites used to expropriate land from Papua New Guineans. This was, after all, the strategy that had worked for Puluku in Hagen, and was doubtless something that he claimed to other Porgerans gave him legitimacy. While land was held to be in 'customary tenure,' rights to mining – even for indigenous people – were not. Puluku was thus using colonial law, but shaping it to his own ends – a manipulation that would become increasingly common in Porgera's history.

Kuala had only a limited range of options under the law as it existed at the time. If he was in fact the 'owner' of the land in question, Kuala was entitled only to receive compensation for the damage his land had received during the course of mining. In addition, he could bring a complaint to the mining warden who could consider revoking the lease but given the paternalistic nature of Australian law, Kuala's consent was not required for mining to occur. Nor would it ever be likely that Puluku's claim be revoked and given over to Kuala. Obviously, if Kuala argued for the revocation of Puluku's license on the grounds that it was damaging his land resumption of land-damaging

activity, even by Kuala himself, was not an option. There was, to put it simply, no link between indigenous rights to land and rights to mine it.

The result of the case was a decision which was not in accordance with the law deeply fitting with Porgera's rapidly-emerging history of rule-by-compromise. After a period of negotiation it was decided that Puluks would divide his claim into several smaller areas and give other miners the right to work them in exchange for a one-time payment of 30 pounds per claim. Woods, the chief of the department of mining, noted that

The apparent 'sale' of portions of Puluks's [Puluks's] claim is not in accordance with the Mining or other Ordinances relating to transfer of land, but it does conform to local indigenous conceptions of compensation. To have redistributed the claim without requiring compensation would have implied official sanction to the illegal pressures applied by the applicant miners. Reports of all previous patrols to the Porgera, and the report of an anthropological study agree in reference to killing and violence as the common method of adjusting disputes. In view of this it was felt that the duty of this patrol lay in the resolution of tension rather than in the illustration of a system of law foreign to the concepts of such primitive people. The actions taken to resolve the tension were frankly expedient measures, to be interpreted within the existing local concepts of justice rather than in relation to existing statutory legislation (Papua New Guinea National Archives accession 52).

Expedient it may have been, but it also proved to be precedent setting. It taught Porgerans that the law of the government was something that could be negotiated with and not merely submitted to, and it taught the government to couch novel legal arrangements in terms of 'local indigenous conceptions.' The idea that a decision could be made on the ground to keep the peace and the legalities could be worried about later would become the *modus operandi* of the entire valley. As would happen again and again in the history of the valley, an arrangement would be made which would keep mining in the valley feasible, and a narrative would be created afterwards which would tell a story

of law, legality, and the state to distant whites. The intervention of the mining warden marked the introduction of a new layer of government control to the valley, but it also demonstrated to Porgerans exactly how seriously the idea of ‘the government’ could be taken. Thus by the time the Porgera mine had to be negotiated into existence, Ipili had been litigating against each other and outsiders for three decades. The Ipili experience of government, then, taught them to see the person, not the big actor they were personating.

As a result of the court case, Robinson began actively working with local miners in Porgera such as the rapidly-rising Mangape, Nixon’s father. Most spectacularly, this included a paid airplane trip to Lae and other ‘outside centers’ so Porgerans could get some idea of their situation in the world. Robinson’s final notes on the trip captures in a nutshell the Ipili’s unruly expansive nature and the administration’s inability to enforce a rigorous application of the law:

It is yet too early to positively state any direct benefit derived by the Porgera Natives who journeyed and observed much during their conducted tour of the outside centers. In one instance a remarkable change was obvious in a native who had previously not traveled farther than Laiagam. On his return to the Porgera he immediately appealed to me for assistance and is now set up mining gold in his own right on a registered claim. Another had no sooner stepped from the aircraft when he seriously assaulted his “meri” [wife] with a piece of timber and was sentenced to two months prison detention (Papua New Guinea National Archives 52 box 3025).

In sum we can say by the 1950s that Porgera was on the map. Its location was known, the ethnic identity of its inhabitants established, and a few place names and some rough geological data was known. The valley’s interaction with the world was marked by three things. First, a powerful class of middlemen had emerged who were responsible for getting things done in the valley and who relied on their own personalistic ties to accomplish their aims. Second, the government proved to be ineffective in gaining the same sort of capacity in the valley. As a result, third, Ipili began their experience of

governance recognizing its fundamental weakness and manipulability rather than its strength. As a result indigenous people were encouraged to exercise their own agency through in a variety of different arenas, including legal forums.

Derestriction

The Porgera airstrip was completed on 15 May 1961, and the Porgera government station upgraded from an outpost to a permanent patrol post on 1 July 1962. This meant that Porgera was no longer a restricted area – a kiap would be stationed there at all time, and whites could come and go from the valley without applying for a special permit. This had several effects, most notably the introduction of Christianity to the valley and the beginning of more intensive exploitation of Porgera's gold resource. Both of these trends marked an increasing regimentation of knowledge about the valley – to a certain extent.

In the 1960s gold mining had expanded in scope. Taylor's leases were still functioning under Tongope's direction. The number of small scale miners also grew, as did their regulation by the administration. In addition to bi-monthly visits by Robinson, a permanent native mining warden was stationed in the valley. This man was Ludwig 'Ludi' Schmidt Jr., the son of the infamous Austrian prospector Ludwig Schmidt, the only white man ever to be hanged in Papua New Guinea for his treatment of the locals (Mennis 1979).

Theoretically, Schmidt was the terminal node in a chain of command that stretched back to Port Moresby – he was the was man on the ground who represented a distant source of authority which controlled mining. Realistically he was, like kiaps or indigenous translators, a local whose power in the valley hinged on his ability to interface with distant whites as well as locals. He soon became part of the growing Porgeran high

society, an incorporation indexed by the fact that he moved in with Joe Searson when he first came to take up his position in the valley. Searson had returned to Porgera after giving up on coffee farming. His goal now was large-scale mining: now that Porgera was derestricted he could take out exploration leases and begin examining the prospects for a large gold mine. Like many before him, Ludi would also develop relationships with Porgeran women, and his son by one of them worked for the mine during my time in the valley.

Finally, throughout the sixties the middlemen who had grown to prominence a decade earlier attempted to cement their position as elites – wealth from gold was causing social stratification. Men like Tongope. Puluku Poke was the defacto ruler of the lower Porgera, while a coalition of three or four powerful translators took up power on the upper Porgera, around the old Kakai workings.

Theoretically, government control in Porgera went hand in hand with increased knowledge of the valley. And yet official state projects often had little or no effect on life in Porgera. It was in the 1960s, for instance, that the first definitive mapping of the valley took place. Prior to 1939 no large-scale organized survey of Papua or New Guinea had been done (Sinclair 2001), and while the war had produced an improvised attempt to map large areas of the country, it was not until the 1950s that this survey was systematized and completed, something that would not be achieved until the 1960s. Porgera was included in part of this enterprise, when in roughly 1962 the Division of National Mapping of the Department of National Development of Australia surveyed the highlands as part of a project to make a complete set of 1:100,000 topographical maps of Papua New Guinea. This work was carried out by Australian government representatives rather than subalterns of the New Guinea administration (Sinclair 2001:291-292). These

maps continue to be used today throughout Papua New Guinea and are readily available from Papua New Guinea's National Mapping Bureau.

On the one hand, these maps were a pictorial representation of Porgera which could be disseminated and understood by distant whites. Because of their accuracy and integration into a literally global frame of reference these maps allowed accurate navigation for aircraft, provided administrators a way to locate centers of population, and displayed topographic information that allowed engineers to plot roads. However, here again we have an instance of seeming standardization, but once again we see the informal mechanisms which guided life in the valley.

Aviation in New Guinea was an informal affair to say the least, and pilots who flew from Laiagam to Porgera Station or the Kolombi strip in Paiela followed routes which were obvious and dictated by the extreme geography of the area. Typically, aviators would circle about Laiagam to gain altitude, and then enter Porgera by a well-known pass. In cases of inclement weather (not uncommon), there was a southern route known as the 'bad-weather' route (Barnard 1969:88-89). Navigation in Porgera was based on local landmarks and a knowledge of geography that was communicated via informal face-to-face interaction rather than extensive mapping.

Travel within and out of the valley was relatively untouched by mapping as well. The traditional trade route used by Ipili to travel from the western edge of the valley to the salt springs at Pipiraka had been used by Taylor and Black and continued to be used by people traveling in and out of the valley. It was well known and relatively well traversed, but various attempts to turn the rough bush track into a road were essentially unsuccessful – the terrain was simply too rugged. Even after the valley itself had some well-developed roads, the first car in Porgera had to be carried in on peoples' shoulders. Indeed, with the

creation of the airstrip air travel, rather than walking, became the main method of entering and leaving the valley. Thus despite the panoptic potentialities of a new regime of mapping, life in Porgera continued much as it had before

The prospecting that began in the sixties expanded in the 1970s. After a few false starts Anaconda took up rights to drill on Searson's leases and began a medium scale alluvial operation intended to offset exploration costs. As would come to be the case in much of Porgera's history, it proved to be the person on the ground, rather than the company, who would come to have a large impact on the valley. Rudi Jezernik, a Czech national, became Anaconda's man on the spot, and continued to live in the valley for the next fifteen years. Jezernik became one of the Porgera elite, and constituted one of the main links in the social networks that flowed through Porgera.

The community of expats who lived permanently in the valley was now steadily growing. In addition to Jezernik, Searson, and Shmidt there was the local Catholic priest (other churches were run by indigenous pastors), the kiap, and a few mine workers. In at least one case the mine workers *were* kiaps who had jumped ship from the government and gone into mining in Porgera. This community's solidarity was evinced in its commensality – a small private club was built on the crest of the Warokari summit and christened the 'Porgera Heights Country Club.' Originally members could simply take beers from the refrigerator and make a tick by their name and settle account later, but soon people were making ticks against other people's names and Rudi was forced to actively tend bar.

Throughout the 1970s, then, the valley became more and more tightly engaged with institutions that existed beyond its borders. Mining companies hired official representatives, the Catholic church opened a permanent mission post, a kiap existed to

provide law and order, and a native mining warden oversaw indigenous alluvial workings. But however much these people were meant to personate distant big actors, they became part of a tight-knit community where roles could and did overlap. Thus outside forces such as mining companies and the government still relied on the distinct character and personalities of their representatives rather than their authority as agents of legitimate and effective institutions to get things done around the valley. Technically, for instance, Anaconda – and later Mt. Isa Mines – had purchased and taken out a number of alluvial leases throughout Porgera, and local people who brought gold to them (in the form of their agent, Rudi) to be weighed and assayed were technically operating on a tributary basis. As far as Porgerans were concerned, however, Rudi was merely another gold buyer like Searson and Brugh before him. Porgerans did not connect his personation of Anaconda or Mt. Isa Mines to his role as owner and operator the alluvial workings where they also occasionally worked. Nor were they particularly clear that he was the representative of a foreign business. The Catholic priest also administered first aid, making him similar to the government medical orderlies from whom Porgerans received medical treatment. In addition he began – at their request – one of the first stores in the valley. Indeed, as we shall see business and religion were always closely linked in the Ipili imagination. The mining warden was not only the official face of the law, his romantic liaisons with local woman also made him an affine in the minds of many prominent Porgerans.

While the 1970s was a time of expansion of white power and presence, it marked the zenith of the incipient elite who had grown so powerful in Porgera. More and more people were working gold, more and more of them spoke Tok Pisin, and more and more the deeply-seated egalitarianism of Ipili culture began to kick against the consolidated

power of Porgera's middlemen. In 1971 or 1972 this was made particularly clear during the public and fantastically graphic decapitation slaying of Mangape, the father of Yakatabari negotiator Nixon.

Mangape was originally from Tari, but had left the valley early on like Tongope, Ipape, Busane, and others. He had eventually settled in Porgera and affiliated himself with the Tiyini clan on the basis of shared residence and a tenuous genealogical tie – his father's mother's brother's wife's mother was a Tiyini woman. Mangape was a forceful personality and one of the few people in the valley who could speak Tok Pisin, and so was quickly became accepted as one of the Tiyini. Mangape was one of the Medici, and was one of the seventeen men who had received the first mining leases from Robinson in 1960. When the government arrived in the valley, he was appointed Luluai. His personal extensive personal network included 'Chief' Ambi Kipu, the son of Kipu Aiyengi (one of the prophets associated with the serpent Kupiane), who occupied a similar role as leader of the Tuanda at Apalaka – in fact we have met him previously in the Yakatabari negotiations. Between the two of them, they exerted enormous power over the people of the upper Porgera. Mangape was a polygynist as well, with one wife from Paiela, and another whose sister Tongope had married. In Ipili society, two unrelated men who marry sisters are called *timutale* and are typically close. As a result, Mangape had close ties with the most important man in the Mungalep area. Most importantly, Mangape was a good friend of Joe Searson and Ludi Schmidt. Both lived on Tiyini land and both had married women (in Searson's case, two) related to Mangape. Mangape had thus established a security circle that spanned the Paiela and Porgera, included prominent Porgerans and – the ultimate coup – counted two white men as his affines.

As it turned out, he was *too* successful. A plot was hatched among the Tiyini to

kill Mangape and so equalize power in the upper Porgera. During pandanus season, someone stole some of Mangape's pandanus nuts from trees growing in the upper rain forest. In Porgera stealing highly valued pandanus is a particularly egregious act. Mangape was outraged. A group of young men from the area were framed for the act and Mangape scheduled a public hearing to deal with them.

Ipili conspirators typically warn a man who is about to be killed through a *kokoli* -- words and symbols with hidden meanings. The first of these came for Mangape the night before the hearing, when someone stripped the bark from a pine tree near his house and painted the exposed wood bright red. Mangape did not realize the true meaning of this *kokoli*, however, and the next morning proceeded to the public square (*ama*) where the case would be heard. On his way there, someone whispered to him in passing that he wouldn't come to watch the court case because he would be busy chopping fresh firewood up in the mountains. This was the second *kokoli* to Mangape, a common way of telling someone secretly that you are out to kill them - the 'fresh wood' to be chopped is the recipient of the message himself.

But Mangape, like Caesar, was blind to the portents around him. He began the court in full form, laying out his claim to the trees from which the pandanus nuts had been stolen. When Mangape claimed that the land where the trees were located was his own, a young man named Kakali who was Mangape's cousin stood up and pretended to be outraged. He claimed it was *his* land, not Mangape's. Without further ado, he took his axe and, to the shock of one and all, struck Mangape on the neck. Ambi Kipu, who was present when Mangape was cut, remembers that he did not die immediately from the blow. To the surprise of all present, Mangape remained standing and, although partially decapitated and bleeding heavily, said to Kakali "Do you think I am a woman? come here

and fight me!” Then he walked over to Ambi, put his hand on his shoulder, asked for his help, and fell dead.

Ipili are not the most level-headed people at the best of times, and this shocking turn of events galvanized the entire area. Even Joe Searson and Ludi Schmidt are reported to have rushed to get their guns and avenge Mangape’s death. However, as people say today, Kakale had ‘merely swung the axe’ – the real killers of Mangape were the Tiyini who had planned his death. They had other plans in store as well. They knew that they could not kill Mangape and let Ambi live. They quickly spread the rumor that Ambi himself had planned Mangape’s death, and that he had held Mangape down while Kakali cut him. They leaked this news to the Pulumaini, into which Mangape had married. Outraged at what had happened, a Pulumaini man came down to Alipis to find Ambi and kill him. As far as Ambi was concerned, he and the Pulumaini were allies in the common cause to find Mangape’s killer. It therefore came as something of a surprise to him when the man, supposedly one of his allies, gave him a full on blow with his machete. Ambi’s head was split open – by all accounts his brain was visible – and he would have died without medical attention. Luckily Les Barnard, the Seventh Day Adventist Missionary cum amateur pilot, was at the station visiting in his Cessna. Ambi was carried to the airstrip and became the first Porgeran ever to be medivac’d out of the valley. He was flown to an SDA hospital where he made a full recovery. Ambi still has a large scar above his eyebrow from the blow that is visible today.

The death of Mangape is more than just a dramatic story. It had reverberations that could be felt twenty years later. Kakali fled to Paiela, and Mangape’s sons – most notably Nixon -- seized his land, a move that would pave the way for their rise to prominence as ‘landowners’ during the late 1980s and 1990s. It also put Nixon in the

strange situation of negotiating against the mine with fellow-Tiyini who may have been responsible for his father's death. More fundamentally, however, the death of Mangape was a visible sign of the growing egalitarianism in the valley. Medici such as Mangape had failed in their attempt to create permanent discrepancies of wealth and status in that valley that favored them. In the initial years of contact with whites, the Medici exploited opportunities available to them by their role as middle men to acquire wealth and power. By 1970, the Ipili tendency towards distributive justice *in extremis* had reacted violently to the growing power of the elite. The death of Mangape demonstrated that the Ipili would not allow that wealth to gather in the hands of a few people. Instead of rule by a few Medici who could monopolize power and influence in the valley, the local scene gradually came to be run by a 'high society' – less a clearly delineated and small elite than an amorphous web of respected people whose fortunes could rise and fall. For the next twenty years Porgera would have a pool of possible leaders from which it could draw, rather than an elite with which it would have to deal.

Placer and Exploration

In 1980 Placer Gold, a Canadian transnational, became the principal partner in exploration in Porgera. Placer's decision to take up exploration in Porgera in the 1980s proved to be more fateful than the Bulolo Gold Dredging patrol they funded thirty years earlier. They brought to bear resources – both human and financial – that would ultimately result in the creation of the mine. The coming of Placer marked the beginning of a new era for the valley.

The most pressing concern to Placer was the state of the resource – what exactly was the nature of the ore body and would it be feasible to mine it? A group of consultants from Fluor, an internationally known consulting and engineering firm, were hired to write

a report to determine whether this was the case. In fact it was not – in 1980 Porgera's ore was too difficult and too far away from world markets to be profitable to mine. Existing refining processes also looked to be too polluting (Jackson and Banks 2002:111-114).

At the same time that Placer came to know the ore body, it also needed some sort of concrete knowledge of who was living in the mining area. By 1980 decades of dealing with Rudi and local kiaps had made it clear that there were three distinct 'clans' who lived atop the ore body – the Tiyyini, Tuanda, and Waiwa – and others who 'owned' surrounding areas. These were clearly the groups that would have to be dealt with if a mine was ever to be created. Placer hired Ian Smalley, a former Kiap who had gone into private practice as a consultant and entrepreneur, to conduct a census. To the best of my knowledge, Smalley had had no previous experience in Porgera, and his qualifications were based essentially on his time as a kiap.

Previous censuses of Porgerans had been, as I noted above, difficult to conduct and most likely of dubious worth, but Smalley's census was particularly inaccurate. Smalley visited local people and took genealogies one clan at a time. He then added up the total number of people within each clan. As clan membership is not exclusive in Porgera, most people on the census were counted in at least two separate lists, and some were counted as often as six times. The result was that Smalley estimated the population of the valley to be 30,000 people when it was widely acknowledged that that true population could not be more than 10,000 at the very most.

One of the earliest critics of Smalley's work was Philip Gibbs. Gibbs was at that time the Catholic missionary in the valley and had a post-graduate diploma (Gibbs 1975) in anthropology from the University of Sydney, where he studied with Peter Lawrence.

He was, in essence, the first anthropologist to conduct extended fieldwork in Porgera. As he put it,

I took a look at his [Smalley's] figures and immediately picked up that he didn't realize that someone can claim a number of clans and he just added it up. And so I went to the company because I realized the significance of it, because it was very important for the future peace of the place that they really know who owned the mountain.

Gibbs' genealogies proved to be highly accurate and formed the basis for the mine's – but not, note, the government's – records of who 'the landowners' were in Porgera. Here again we see a situation in which a local person is able to transform knowledge gained through informal mechanisms into a text artifact which could be used in distant circles for official purposes. Gibb's methodology was simple and relied as much on his anthropological training as it did his engagement in the local community. He asked the dozen or so men who were acknowledged leaders and expert genealogists and asked them to come to his house in Mungalep. There, in the course of fifteen hours – with breaks for food, cigarettes, and the bathroom -- they enumerated their entire 'clan,' starting with an apical ancestor and ending with the current generation of children. Gibbs did one clan a day. The entire process took a week and a half.

But Placer needed more than reports. It needed someone to help organize their new and greatly enlarged exploration camp, as well as to mediate between the exploration crews and local Ipili – someone, in short, to personate it in Porgera. This man, the 'camp manager', would have to take over the practical task of making mining socially feasible, thus undertaking in a transformed and expanded role the same task originally performed by Tongope and other early middlemen.

The man who finally got the job was Michael 'Mick' Searson. Mick was Joe Searson's son by an Engan. She had run away from Searson when still pregnant, and

Mick had been raised in a village in Sirunki. He had gone to school there, and won a Churchill scholarship to attend high school in Australia. From there Mick became one of the first students at the UPNG but, like his father, he grew restless and dropped out, roamed over Papua New Guinea working in construction, aviation, and coffee farming. He had worked with Jezernik in Porgera between 1974 and 1976, and was brought back to work as the camp manager for Placer in 1980.

Mick's ties were multiple. Half-white and half-black, Mick was technically an Engan but was – and continues to be today – considered by everyone in Porgera to be Ipili, and particularly a Tiyini. When the PLA faction attended their court case in Port Moresby, for example, it was Mick who picked them up at the airport and gave them a ride to court. While non-Porgeran Papua New Guineans had often worked as middlemen before, Mick's Western education and mixed blood marked the collapse of a strong distinction between 'white knowledge of the Ipili' and 'Ipili knowledge of whites.' In addition to minding the logistics of Placer's operations, Mick also served as an unofficial one-man community affairs staff. His ability to move fluidly between both cultural worlds essentially collapsed the space between them. He became a precedent and role model for future Porgerans who were serve as the Ipili interface to the mine and vice versa such as Kurubu Ipara and especially Jonathan Paraia. By combining a multitude of different skills, he became a vital part of the reality management pool working in the valley during the 1980s.

While Mick managed things informally on the ground, every compensation payment made to Ipili whose land had been disturbed in the course of exploration had to be reported to the government. The main method of exploration at this time involved clearing small plots of land for use as drilling pads. Diamond drills would then be

brought in to take core samples. Here most official knowledge about Porgerans – who owned a piece of land, what sort of money they had received, where their land was located, and what their clan affiliation was – paralleled knowledge of the gold resource most closely: every sample spot on the prospecting map corresponded to a compensation claim and landholding record. And just as prospectors attempted to deduce the geological makeup of the mountain through a few small samples, each one of these compensation claims build up a set of haphazard precedents and expectations about Ipili social life, landholding patterns, and identities.

The discovery of the the high grade zone of ore which made the mine feasible is itself indicative of the situation with which Placer was dealing: the Porgerans hired to dig the exploration trench where the vein was located smeared mud on the walls of the trench to keep it secret from their supervisor so that they could take out the ore themselves. Their activities and the high grade zone were discovered at the same time.

By 1987 it was clear that a large-scale mine in Porgera would probably be technically feasible and financially profitable. The question then turned to its social legal feasibility. Although physically challenging to engineer, the mine would also require a more embracing set of social agreements than had existed previously. In addition to buying up all of the existing mining leases that had been issued over the past years, the mine would take up a new, larger mining lease (and several adjacent ‘leases for mining purposes’) which would affect literally thousands of people. When paying individuals under an exploration license, the company dealt with individuals. Now that the company sought a Special Mining Lease, it would have to deal with a corporate group, ‘traditional landowners.’ The informal network of middlemen, their sons, present and ex-kiaps, and mine employees now had to be supplemented with a series of paper accounts of

landownership which could circulate in both Vancouver and Port Moresby. Where previously miners and rulers had relied on face to face communication and a personal knowledge of the individuals involved with mining, the distant cosmopolitans responsible for creating the mine needed a slew of text artifacts which purported to describe ‘what the Ipili were like.’ The bureaucratic apparatuses that coordinated large-scale action for the company and the government had established sets of demands for the structuring of life in Porgera which had to be met. When Placer entered feasibility studies for the Porgera goldmine in 1987, the amount and kind of stories circulating about the Ipili increased in both quantity and quality.

Feasibility Studies

In this section I will focus on two of the most important reports that were written during the late 1980s, the Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIS) and the Land Study. The SEIS was a two volume study conducted by Pacific Agribusiness based on six weeks of research. Despite its seminal nature as the authoritative document on which future knowledge about the valley would be based it is not well remembered as one of the most thorough accounts of the valley. Most notably, the team of consultants who produced it did not include an anthropologist or sociologist. As a result the section on Ipili culture and social organization consisted of a summary of Aletta Biersack’s dissertation (1980). The agricultural specialist on the SEIS team remembers that the head of the consultancy team was responsible for the section of the report on Ipili culture:

“Bob Mckillop [the head of the team] did it. The origin of his knowledge was Aletta’s unpublished Ph.D. Yeah, we had a special bloke to read it -- I’m not kidding, it was so dense, and he said “Ah!” You’d hear him at eleven o’clock at night: “Ah! that’s what she bloody well means!”

It is true that Biersack’s dissertation is technically difficult, but the wider point to glean from this example is not that Biersack’s dissertation was ‘too hard’ bur rather that,

as John Burton has written, “asking a neophyte to stray into the ethnography of a previously unresearched society is a reckless practice” (Burton 1999:286). His evaluation of the SEIS is quite damning:

It is very unlikely that a social impact study team, without an anthropologist, would properly characterize Ipili society in a matter of weeks. To be frank, the SEIS authors should have owned up to this, but instead presented ‘data’ of a quality that is embarrassing to mention, such as a land tenure survey based on a questionnaire administered to Grade 6 school children. When, in the report’s findings, it is claimed that ‘Ipili society and land tenure were studied in detail’, the writer or writers are having us on. (Burton 1999:285)

Thus the SEIS, like Smalley’s earlier census, demonstrates a continuation of the sort of very formal but also very removed style of reporting that we saw in the government reports of the 1950s. Theoretically an objective and scientific act of legibility performed by ‘experts’ its lack of vision was not the result of a myopic, overly-simplifying macro-actor so much as a simple lack of familiarity with Porgera on the part of that macro-actor’s personators. These were simplifications, yes, but ones motivated by and explicable through a distinct sociology of the people who produced them.

A different set of social networks were responsible for producing the Land Study. As I mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, in order for a mining lease to be issued, its owners had to be identified and compensated, even though it was the government, rather than the Ipili, that had the right to issue the lease. The first step in this process, then, was to determine who was ‘a landowner’ and who constituted ‘the Ipili’ that would negotiate with the company for compensation. To this end the secretary of the department of Enga issued an order to the civil service to begin a land study to determine generate a list of ‘customary landholders.’ The result would, as everyone knew, set a precedent of enormous consequence: being deemed a ‘landowner’ made one a point of articulation between the valley and Port Moresby, and decades of middlemanship made everyone aware of how lucrative that could be.

The Land Study that was eventually produced is fascinating. In a country where ‘accurate’ land registration had grown cripplingly problematic, the land study had proved remarkably durable and influential in valley life. While complaints do occur, most Ipili aware of its existence consider it an accurate portrayal of their ‘traditional culture.’ From an anthropological view, it represents an interestingly distorted understanding of Ipili kinship.

The head of the land study team was Jeffrey Puge, a kiap originally from the Mt. Ialibu area of Southern Highlands Province. After two decades of compensation payments and local politicking, it seemed unarguable to anyone that ‘the Tiyini’ or ‘the Tuanda’ had rights over the majority of the land on which the mine would be located. The question was who got to be ‘the Tiyini’. His guideline to the practical task of carrying out the study was a thin photocopied booklet produced by a senior civil servant in the mining department which specified how land studies throughout the country should occur. The official instructions in the book were to record the names of the adult men as ‘landowners,’ and that each of these men could be associated with one and only one clan.

This proved not to be so easy – as we have seen, Ipili have multiple ‘clan’ affiliations, and women and children are not as easily dismissed by them as they are by technocrats in Port Moresby. We can see the difficulties entailed in the land study in this memo attached to the final report by Frank Faulkner, then the local mining coordinator at Porgera:

The main purpose of my letter to you is to re-emphasize the very difficult task that field officers had in preparing this report. The Porgera landowners are not only a particularly volatile people they are possessed of an intricate customary land tenure and inheritance system which is probably unique both to and within Papua New Guinea. It is an extended cognatic descent system in which all individuals have multiple clan affiliations and recognized rights to parcels of land in several clan territories, and they exercise these

right simultaneously... the result of this has been the absolute insistence of landowning family heads to include *all* of those who have rights (including all children) into the Schedule of Owners (Government of Papua New Guinea 1988:2).

On the one hand, the government was working on a lineage model of social organization based on the idea that Ipili were organized into clans with definite leaders ('elders') who could make decisions for the whole group. These clans were then supposed to be broken down into subclans, each of which was a distinct subsection of the clan with its own leaders. Beneath the subclans were the individual households or extended families with a household head. The reality of Ipili kinship, as we shall see in future chapters, was quite different.

The most interesting thing about the land study was that it was conducted entirely by Papua New Guineans, most of whom were highlanders, and much of the work was done by young Porgerans whose experiences outside Porgera – now as high school students and not domestic servants – made them valuable members of the lands team. The result was a compromise between Ipili notions of relatedness and the corporate, lineage-based government model. The final report included the names of every man, woman and child (even infants) who were members of a clan. Additionally, membership was allowed in more than one clan. As a result, well connected Porgerans (including the ones doing the fieldwork on which the reports were written) would be listed two or three or seven times in the study.

The land study's decision to allow people to be listed in more than one clan register had several feasibility-enhancing results. First, no one was unhappy with the land study, as everybody who could possibly have been included was. Government staff thus avoided conflict by casting a very, very wide net. Second, the land study defined a set of people who were definitely 'landowners' but did not articulate the principles – either

imposed or indigenous – used to subsume individuals under this title. By relying on the expertise of educated Porgerans they finessed definitional difficulties in the present, but failed to produce guidelines that might be used in the future. By allowing multiple affiliation to landowning clans, affiliation via marriage, and other mechanisms of association with a clan – none of which were ever spelled out in the study -- created a bounded arena for contests of identity but did not define the outcomes of those contests. Third, it definitely did extinguish the claims of some to ownership of the land in the SML – accompanying the study was a document signed (i.e. thumb printed) by local leaders outside the SML in which they explicitly *rejected* any claim to an interest in the land in question. These were people who lived far off the special mining lease, and who would receive smaller ‘spin-off’ programs in their areas. Thus the prominent people in Kairik and Paiyam would get to be hosts of an airport and a township. Their non-inclusion would meaningfully disambiguate the situation, even as the rules for inclusion, by being quite permissive, kept the situation within landowning clans quite fluid.

The ironic thing to note about the land study was that while it got the sociology of Porgera wrong, it is in itself a perfect example of the valley’s coping style – which is probably why Porgerans liked it so much. Legally a document meant to describe and fix right to land, it in fact became a charter and indeed the raw material for a creative semiotics of landownership which enabled a wide variety of claims to be made.

Negotiations

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Land Study resulted in a distillation of agency that eventuated in the Landowner Negotiating Committee. With a set of official representatives in place, the government and the company finally had a feasible corporate interlocutor – the big actor ‘the Ipili’ had finally been created and had representatives

who were institutionalized licensed to sign legally binding agreements on its behalf. Ipili were certainly ready to come to the table.

By this point the Ipili had developed strong millennial aspirations regarding mining and a strong sense of history as a progressive enlightenment about the value of goods from ‘outside.’ In the 1950s Ipili had to do hard, physical labor, freeing alluvial gold from rock with pickaxes and shovel in freezing water for three or four months in order to earn a piece of shell, a handful of salt, and – if they were lucky – a steel axe. In the 1960s they learned to work gold on their own and began being paid in cash. By the 1970s, AUD\$20,000 was being pumped into the local economy by Rudi Jezernik’s alluvial workings. Ipili wealth seemed to be increasing exponentially every ten years, and with the construction of a large-scale gold mine, their expectations of further wealth would most likely be met. In sum, when it came time to negotiate Ipili were highly motivated.

The Compensation Agreement

While the land study was in its final stages of completion, negotiations began between the the newly formed Landowners Negotiating Committee and Placer about compensation rates for land and improvements damaged the mine’s activities.

Although the Landowner Negotiating Committee had yet to be finalized in the land study on paper, its existence dated back to Mick Searson, who had originally developed an informal group of people with whom he could discuss the relation of the mine and the community – as we shall see in chapter five, it was not so much that twenty three subclans had representatives as twenty three already-important people ‘solidified’ or, as Ernst (1999) would put it, ‘entified’ twenty three subclans to represent. Mick

Searson did not play a role in the compensation agreement, however. When negotiations for the compensation agreement got underway, Mick had already gone. Placer had found its gold and there was going to be a gold mine. He felt he had done his part, and that it was best to leave this new stage of the valley's history to younger, less weary men.

His job was split into three separate positions: business development, lands, and community affairs. Graeme Hogg, an ex-kiap who had patrolled into Porgera in the late 1950s, was brought to serve in business development and to help manage IPI, the business arm of the Porgera landowners. David Moorehouse, another kiap, oversaw lands work. Community affairs was headed up by Kundapen Talyaga, one of the first Engans to graduate from the UPNG. Kundapen's offsider was Johnathan Paraia, Mick's protege. It was Johnathan who was to do most of the translating at these Landowner Negotiating Committee meetings, just as he would a decade later.

Perhaps the most prominent person on the Ipili side of the table was Jolson Kuraro. Among the first Ipili to be educated, he left the valley to train as a policeman. Jolson had continued to grow in power since his return from Lae in the early 1980s. In 1986 he had been elected the provincial member for Porgera and received two ministries from the Premier. He had also been involved in the formation of Ipili Porgera Investments (IPI), a company designed to be the business arm of the landowners which had sold shares to individual Ipili families. Although his English was severely limited, Jolson could make forceful, coherent arguments in Tok Pisin with a logic that whites could understand, and was an even more powerful orator in Ipili. He was so central to negotiation that at one of the meetings the Landowner Negotiating Committee passed a motion that no meetings could be held without Jolson's presence.

The Compensation Agreement negotiations got underway in June 1987. The

compensation agreement for Placer's other major mine in Papua New Guinea – the much smaller Misima gold mine -- had been signed a month before, and formed the basis for negotiation. Even the page layout of the Porgera Compensation Agreement would be the same as that of the Misima agreement. Landowners were also given information about compensation at Bougainville and Ok Tedi to use in their negotiations. Initially meetings were held every Friday, although this was to become more flexible over the course of the negotiations. Ipili showed their toughness as negotiators immediately. After four meetings Frank Faulkner, the provincial government mining liaison officer, noted that

Proceedings are, as expected, proceeding very slowly with the representatives using every argument both rational and irrational to press for as much compensation as possible... initially of course nothing quoted is “acceptable” to the landowners. The statutory occupation fee is not acceptable, the 5% royalty payment is not acceptable, and so it goes... (PPCU memo 6 July 1987).

In August the PJV gave the landowners a draft agreement to look over and review. While the landowners had many problems with the draft, there were two major sticking points. The first was the price of sweet potato and pandanus. Both of these crops were central to the Ipili diet and culture and the prices Placer offered, based on Misiman evaluations of these crops, was unacceptable. The second was that the Landowner Negotiating Committee was unwilling to commit themselves on paper to a settlement without knowing what Placer's plan was for the mine. They were afraid that they would miss out on potential benefits if they locked themselves into an agreement at too early a stage in the mine's planning. The company, of course, argued that it would not know its plans until other pieces of the puzzle were put in place, of which the Compensation Agreement was one.

Finally, on 31 January 1988, the Compensation Agreement was signed. By all accounts, it was a success. Occupation fees were, in toto, K20 higher per hectare than the

agreements at Misima and Ok Tedi. Sweet potato was priced at six kina per mature mound – three times the value set by the Valuer General in 1985. Mature pandanus was valued at K12 per tree, or four times higher than that Valuer General's recommendation. In the remaining fifty eight items on the Porgera list were, in nearly every case, valued at more than the governor general's rates. The result was a list of sixty different economic trees and plants.

The list differed in several ways from what had been done at Misima. The climates of Misima and Porgera are radically different – coconut did not figure prominently on the Porgera list – and the landowners in both locations pursued different strategies. Misimans decided on a set list of plants such as coconut, sago, betel nut palm, and so forth which were highly valued, while the remainder of their plants on their list were worth little money. Ipili, on the other hand, applied their tendency to take distributive justice to its extremes. Each and every kind of plant conceivably used had to be valued so that everyone would get exactly what they were entitled to, even if the that plant was worth a very small amount. As a result, the Ipili had a lot of plants with low value on their list, while Misimans had fewer plants with a higher value each.

The Relocation Agreement

As soon as the compensation agreement was signed, the Landowner Negotiating Committee continued into negotiations for the relocation agreement. This was the agreement specified who the mine would displace in the course of its operations, and what sort of compensation and replacement dwelling they would receive for their destroyed house.

Placer had hoped to avoid dislocating anyone in building the mine because of the

difficulties it would cause. In a 1986 study Richard Jackson reminded the company that “as a cardinal principle, the PJV should, at almost any cost and wherever possible, avoid relocation of any sort” (Jackson 1986:3). The only precedent for what was to be done at Porgera was Bougainville, where relocation was amongst the greatest hardships that Bougainvilleans suffered at the mine’s hand. The mine there had moved 200 households in the twenty years of its existence. The cost of this relocation to the mine was AU\$1.64 million, but, as Douglas Oliver points out, “its cost to the relocated people, in terms of physical and psychological hardship, cannot be expressed in figures. Their sufferings stand out as a grim reminder of the human costs of operating an open-cut mine” (Oliver 1992:23). Bougainville and its armed insurgency was a precedent that no-one wanted to repeat.

But it soon became clear that there would have to be relocations at Porgera. The location of the plant site – where the gold would be separated from the ore and refined – was inhabited by the Pulumaini. In addition the relocation of other areas, although not as obviously necessary, quickly became politically and technically expeditious. In fact, people were moving *onto* the future site of the mine and building houses at a furious pace so that they would receive increased compensation from the mine. When all of the houses were added up, it became clear that the relocation at Porgera was to be larger than that at Bougainville. While Bougainville has moved 200 households in twenty years, the PJV was seeking to move around 230 in the course of the twelve to eighteen months it would take to build the mine. The challenge of the relocation was summed by Fritz Robinson in his report on relocation options:

There is *no precedent in PNG* of the scale and methods proposed in the Porgera SML relocation. The movement of perhaps some 230 families, their rehousing, and their relocation is not simply an enormous and difficult logistics problem. It is a human

problem requiring considerable resources, and great sensitivity. The cross-cultural understanding required for a successful outcome will be difficult and costly. PJV's staffing must continue to be of a high order and the company must seek to be as adaptable to change as have been the people of Porgera over the past fifty years since foreign intrusion (Robinson 1988:12).

While the PJV was right to be mindful of the negative social consequences of relocation, the situation in Porgera was fundamentally different from Bougainville. On Bougainville, relocatees were fundamentally opposed to the presence of the mine and to their relocation. In Porgera, the local community had made a fundamental decision to have a mine in their valley. A mine meant development, and Porgerans wanted development. Thus although one oft-quoted remark of Jackson's 1986 study -- that "it cannot be said too often or too forcefully that for Papua New Guineans the focus of life is land" -- has often been used to demonstrate how distressing it would be for Porgerans to be separated from their land, when read in context it drives home a rather different point:

It cannot be said too often or too forcefully that for Papua New Guineans the focus of life is land. In the Porgera setting, it might be very easy to begin to doubt exactly how sacred and inalienable land is; at first sight, Porgerans seem to fall over each other in trying to offer their land for use by the PJV. For example, during my short stay there individuals during group discussions wanted to offer their land for township development, and the Paiyam people jointly wrote to the Site Manager offering their land for the same purpose (Jackson 1986:28).

Thus we see that while claims for compensation developed a rhetoric of landownership and ecological purity, skepticism about this authenticity of this idiom of articulating demands was born alongside them. As we have seen in the last chapter, this disconnect between what Porgerans want and what they had to claim to get it continues up into the present day.

Porgerans nearly universally saw relocation as a positive, something that would ensure that their lives be fundamentally transformed. Relocation was combined with

expectations for a mining township in Paiyam in a vision in which Porgerans would live like and with white people. As we shall see, this desire for increased material well-being was tinged by and inseparable from the millenarian prophecies. The coming of the mine and in particular relocation was seen as the long-deferred arrival of a time when wealth and plenty could be got without work. There was no sense amongst Porgerans that they wanted to be relocated in houses that were ‘traditional,’ or that relocation ought to involve the creation of a community protected from the corrosive effects that contact with whites might have on some sort of highly-valued Ipili traditional culture. On the contrary, Ipili landowners were not at all afraid or unhappy to be relocated – they embraced the relocation project and saw it as the start of their own ‘modernization.’ The goal was to live with and become like white people.

The minutes of the relocation meeting make it clear that the landowners expected to be relocated in a compound essentially similar to the workers’ camps that were later built at Suyan and Alipis. Their vision was of an SML fenced off from the surrounding area, with paved internal roads and a boom gate at the entrance to control traffic. High covenant housing with free electricity, water, and furniture would be provided. SML children would be taken to school and back in a PJV school bus provided free of charge. They would live white lifestyles (insofar as they understood those lifestyles) in white houses. As one Ipili man told Richard Jackson in 1986:

We expect the Company to provide free permanent houses; when the Company wants to start a mine, all our houses will be replaced with permanent buildings. This includes our *haus kuk* (kitchens), toilets, piggeries, chicken house and our residence and stores with exactly the same dimensions we have on our own land. We will live like the white men. These houses will be used by our sons and daughters when we die. There will be deep freezers, entertainment facilities, furniture and such other accessories in houses. We expect the Company to build our houses with wire fences around it and these houses will have security gates, etc. (Robinson 1988:15).

The man who negotiated the relocation agreement with the Landowner Negotiating Committee was Fritz Robinson. He was retained again to write a consultancy report on relocation options, and was then retained *again* to implement the report. As we have seen, he was also the lead negotiator for the failed Yakatabari negotiations. No wonder, then, that house size was a sticking point in Yakatabari – landowners were reiterating in the late 1990s the same demands they had made to him a decade earlier.

The biggest issue in the relocation agreement was the design of the relocation house. An original PJV design was rejected on the grounds that it was constructed of timber and that the windows were sufficiently big to allow people to see into the house. Neither of these were acceptable to Ipili, who valued privacy and feared that their houses might be burned down in fighting. An alternative design with metal walls and small, barred windows was eventually drawn up based on a sketch done by Peakope Auwikini, a Pulumaini leader. Towards the end of the negotiations there was vigorous debate about whether the company could include a veranda with the house design, as many leaders wanted, but this was finally rejected.

As we can see, there would be considerable argument in the future as to whether landowners had been cheated by the PJV in the relocation agreement. On the one hand, in the future Ipili would compare their relocation houses unfavorably to matchboxes, and view many of the other subsidiary benefits guaranteed in the Relocation Agreement as useless and unacceptable. On the other hand, while many of these criticisms would be valid, the houses they received were to their own design, and it was inevitable that the PJV would not be able to fulfill the expectations of the landowners involved, informed as they were by quasi-religious expectations of a total transformation of Ipili life.

The Development of the Development Forum

With the creation of the compensation agreement and relocation agreement, the PJV had fulfilled its legal obligation to consult with landowners. The Ipili had gotten a good compensation agreement, and had made history by the size and scope of the relocation project that they had signed on for. However, on 15 May 1989 Porgerans broke decisively with the past by signing another, unprecedented set of agreements. These were known as the development agreements or the Porgera Agreements, and were the result of a round-table ‘development forum’ carried out between landowners, the Enga Provincial Government, and the National Government. These were the agreements that created Paiyam town, the Kairik airstrip, and the Porgera Development Authority. They would prove to be precedent setting – every future mining and hydrocarbon development project in Papua New Guinea would include a development agreement based on the one originally engineered in Porgera.

The fact that a development forum could take place at all was the result of several intersecting orders of determination in which larger national and international structures created a space of opportunity which a few Ipili negotiators seized on to great effect. The most important factor was the growing troubles on Bougainville. On 21 August 1987 a groups of Bougainvilleans unhappy with the way that their landowner representatives were representing them took action. They repudiated their leadership as yes-men installed by Bougainville Copper Limited and created a ‘new executive’ which demanded recognition from the company. The chair of this new executive was Perpetua Serero and the secretary was Francis Ona. They wrote to Bougainville Copper Limited and demanded that *they* be recognized as the legitimate landowner group or else there would be “massive demonstrations.” Joseph Kabui, the premier of the province, backed the new

group. In the same month that the Porgera feasibility study was submitted to the government, the first roadblocks on the access road at Bougainville were set up. The Bougainville crisis was underway (Oliver 1992).

There were also events in Porgera that demonstrated that Bougainville might not be a special case. The history of the compensation agreement was not merely one of routine Friday meetings at which motions were tabled and counter-offers made until an official agreement was duly. At times it appeared that Porgera might become another Bougainville before the mine even occurred. For instance, Landowner Negotiating Committee meetings were temporarily canceled during the course of the events known today as ‘the raid on Coya Construction.’

In 1987 the PJV’s prospecting authority came up for review. While renewals of prospecting authorities are generally non-controversial, a group of Porgerans headed up by William Gaupe (who would later attempt to usurp control of the Porgera Landowners Association in the course of the Yakatabari negotiations) used this opportunity to insist that the PJV suspend its exploration activities. They demanded that exploration in the valley cease and that the company shut down its camp and “return to Canada” until a decision was made as to whether prospecting could continue.

It is not clear whether these demands could be made legally – certainly none of them were met. Soon thereafter William and Nelson Akiko (related to each other by Nelson’s enatic connection to the Waiwa clan of which William was an agnate) became the principals in a daring, night-time guerrilla raid against Coya Construction, the contractor who was drilling a test adit into the newly-discovered high-grade zone of ore which had catapulted the mine to feasibility. The group located the camp safe and somehow, despite its enormous size and weight, managed to escape with it up a footpath

into the Warokari range and the safety of their own land. At this time there were no vehicular roads into the area. This meant relative safety for the raiders. Many people in Apalaka and Yarik today remember excitedly the sight of William Gaupe stripped to the waist, covered in mud for camouflage, brandishing an automatic weapon “just like Rambo” on the summit of Mt. Warokari defiantly screaming the Ipili equivalent of “come at me you bastards!” as PJV helicopters buzzed above him.

According to William, the safe contained K69,000. But, more importantly, it contained *the passports for every expatriate worker in the exploration camp as well*. As a result, there was an immediate reaction on the part of the police characterized by the care that police exhibit in Porgera when faced with a major operation in which concerns with due process and human rights are foremost: they engaged in a spree of completely unwarranted looting and pillaging. The main target was the settlement of Alipis – despite the fact that William and Nelson had fled to Paiela. Houses were simply burnt to the ground and, some inhabitants claim, gold stolen as well. Many people with no connection to the raid were left without shelter until they could build new houses. This would be the first of many illegal mass house-burnings conducted by the police in Porgera in the name of the maintenance of law and order – yet another example of the disjunction between the state as macro actor and the idiosyncrasies of its representatives.

In the resulting furor negotiations for the Compensation Agreement were stalled. Tensions ran high and many people in Alipis favored a forceful response to the police. Eventually the situation was resolved when William turned himself in and was sent to Baisu prison for two years. Most of the money and all of the passports were recovered. Nelson Akiko was not jailed or even charged with a crime. He disappeared for a couple of months, and then eventually resurfaced in April. A Frank Faulkner noted at the time,

The leader of the gang responsible for the Coya holdup and robbery Nelson Akiko who has been “on the run” for some months has re-appeared and strangely enough has been employed by the PJV (they are aware of his identity) I suspect for perverse reasons out of curiosity to see whether or not the Police actually attempt to arrest him (PPCU 11 April 1988).

Nelson would later find success as a contractor providing janitorial services to the PJV after a white mine employee, following the precedent established by Searson and Brugh, married one his sisters, a position that would make him of the valley’s richest inhabitants. Ten years after the raid, *The National* newspaper would write of him that, “it is still universal that honest sweat always pays off eventually. Nelson Akiko is another one of those numerous people who sail the crest of success and attest to this phenomena” (The National 2000:10). While Nelson demonstrates the staying power individuals can have in Porgera’s high society, the raid on Coya Construction demonstrated that while the police were able to inflict some damage on inhabitants near the company camp, in the long run Ipili could make the valley sufficiently unpleasant to keep a mining company out of it.

Thus landowner discontent in Bougainville made income from a potential gold mine in Porgera vital to shoring up the national budget even as events in both locations demonstrated that the government had little if any ability to impose mining on local people who did not assent to it.

At the same time, politics at the provincial level also exerted pressure to bring the government and the company to the table. The PJV’s social and economic impact study was quite critical of the Enga Provincial Government (Enga Provincial Government), and they had no confidence that it would be able to deliver the services that a government was supposed to. The authors of the Social and Economic Impact Study (SEIS) wrote that

It is widely accepted that there has been a significant decline in the operating performance of PNG public sector institutions since Independence. Services to villages

no longer patrol to outlying villages and are unable to maintain effective supervision of existing projects; basic procedures are subject to excessive delays; cost recovery and financial control are plagued by mismanagement; and the breakdown in law and order is attributed to ineffective performance by responsible agencies... the outlook for the Porgera people in the short to medium term is that they will have to muddle through with government services of limited effectiveness (Banks and Bonnell 1997:3).

This upset the provincial government. In their comments on the SEIS, the Enga Provincial Government included a lengthy discussion of their dissatisfaction with how they were portrayed. They wrote that “the department of Enga wishes to place on record that it considers the report is consistently biased in its presentation of the role and performance... of the Enga Provincial Government.” The Enga Provincial Government was determined to demonstrate its competence and to be involved with future events in Porgera.

As a result, they developed a set of proposals for the development of the Porgera mine and gave them a grand launching at a press conference and reception at the Islander in Port Moresby on 5 June 1988. The main thrust of the proposals was that provincial governments should be signatories to the Mining Development Contract. They also demanded increased revenue for the province, either through additional taxes or royalty allocations. Finally, they demanded equity in the Porgera project and the placement of infrastructure and other forms of development to Porgera.

The Enga Provincial Government followed through on the launching at the Premiers Council held in September that year. The Premiers Council was a body composed of the premiers of each province, the Prime Minister and the national ministers for finance and provincial affairs. The council met annually to discuss issues of important to provincial government and in doing so avoid legal proceedings between governments by providing a forum for the non-judicial settlement of intragovernmental disputes. In

1988 one issue that was of importance to both Enga province and the Southern Highlands was the upcoming resource developments in at Kutubu and Porgera. As a result they began a push to get the Premiers Council to urge the National Government to revise legislation on mining and petroleum, including the 1977 Mining Act, which was then under review. The council created a 'Mining and Petroleum Working Committee' which was composed of the premiers whose provinces has resource developments in them. The goal was to ensure that any new legislation contain clauses assuring that provincial government would have a say in resource development. The working committee did two things: first, endorsed the Enga Provincial Government's proposals for development and second, it created a series of recommendation about the structure of the new mining act.

While the Premier's Council was meeting, there were shifts going on in politics at the national level. Paias Wingti had been removed as Prime Minister through a vote of no confidence and Rabbie Namaliu had assumed control of the country. While in opposition he had endorsed justice for local people and a revamping of the laws regarding mining. Now as Prime Minister he worked to turn these promises into a reality, spurred on by both his principle and the crisis on Bougainville. As he told me:

We didn't want what had happened in Bougainville to happen in Porgera or anywhere else in this country, and we wanted to create a situation where as much as possible issues and grievances were sorted out before an agreement was reached and before a project was developed. From our perspective, it's extremely difficult for the state to impose its will on the people without expecting some reaction and in some cases some very strong reactions from some quarters. We have many different cultural-linguistic groupings in this country and we must respect them, and the way to do that while at the same time strengthening the nation state is to bring them into your confidence. Because if they feel they are involved and they have a meaningful role to play in something like that, then in the broader context that's also contributing towards building up the state as a nation.

Thus the development forum occurred as the result of opportunities created locally in Porgera and Bougainville, regionally at the level of the relationship between

provincial governments and the National Government, and at the level of national politics itself. However, despite the opportunity that these openings presented, the forum process would not have run the course that it did without the unique individuals who came to serve as representatives of each of the three institutions involved in the negotiation.

The Forum Process

The development forum as it finally evolved thus included three institutions: the Enga Provincial Government, the National Government, and the Porgera Landowners. The course of the negotiations would be shaped by the people who came to personate these larger actors when they met around the negotiating table.

By 1988 Ned Laina was the premier of Enga Province, which had just emerged from a long period of suspension. He was backed up by an impressive staff. Harry Ulin, the future Mining Coordinator who we met in the previous chapter, had been the interim administrator during the suspension and stayed on as secretary of the province under the Laina regime. He was joined in the civil service by Luke Kembol, Philip Kikala, and Kundapen Talyaga. These people represented some of the first Engans to go through the UPNG and were very much the ‘bright young things’ of the province. In addition, the province had received a new provincial lawyer in the form of Harry Derkley, a Tasmanian with a history of working with the Tasmanian aboriginal community. Although mild-mannered personally, Derkley was a strong supporter of the rights of indigenous peoples and actively supported the work of the province by finding innovative ways to accommodate their interests within the law.

On the landowners side, the key players were to be Jolson Kuraro, Johnathan Paraia, and Kurubu Ipara. By this time, Jolson had grown even more prominent. Not only

was he the unofficial leader of the Landowner Negotiating Committee and a minister in the provincial government, but he had made a fortune at the Mt. Kare gold rush. In addition, after some political maneuvering he had become the president of the Porgera Landowner's Association, a pressure group formed in the mid-1980s and which had floated around Porgera in a couple of different guises for some time and which we have already met in the last chapter. Although a powerful presence, Jolson was not exactly a policy wonk. Johnathan and Kurubu, therefore, took up the task of briefing Jolson regularly and doing the nitty-gritty work of the negotiations. By this time, Kurubu had replaced Frank Faulkner as the provincial mining liaison officer, and Johnathan was the president of the Porgera local level government – Namaliu's invitation to the development forum had been addressed to him.

Mick Searson was not the only person to take up his father's footsteps. Placer's expansion happened at roughly the same time that the children of the original Medici came of age. Nixon Mangape and his brothers, the sons of the spectacularly decapitated earlier leader, were at this point in their early twenties. The members of the first class of the Porgera elementary school had graduated and returned to the valley. These included Kurubu Ipara, the son of Ipape Papume, one of the early translators and gold workers, Johnathan Paraia, the first Porgeran to earn a bachelors degree (in political science at the UPNG), and Jolson Kuraro, the first Porgeran to be trained as a policeman. All of these people were the second generation of the sorts of middlemen who had been so key to the development of life in the valley in the 1950s. They thus represented the full-flowering of the Porgeran scene. Among the first Ipili ever to be educated, they had both come of age in an atmosphere full of innovative ideas and excellent role models. Although young – Kurubu was only 26 years old – they felt that the time had come for them to show what

they were capable of.

The National Government drew on a wide range of people to represent it as well. Namaliu, of course, was not involved in every single meeting. The Porgera Coordinator at the Department of Minerals and Energy was John Reid, and it was he who most often met with landowners. The assistant secretary of the department, David Evesson, was called upon at a number of points to deal with politically sensitive problems. Behind the entire forum process, however, was the secretary of the department, Bill Searson. Bill was Joe Searson's son and Mick's half-brother. While Mick had inherited Joe's restlessness, Bill had acquired his cultivation and tact. Bill was a naturally quiet man, like his father, but without Joe's penchant for solitude. Bill's personal network was large – it is hard to dislike Bill Searson – and he had connections in a variety of places. He quickly became the *eminence gris* of the Porgera project. The adoption of the forum process was at least partly due to him, and there is a strong chance that if he had not been on the scene at the time the Porgera mine would never have come into being.

Harry Derkley remembers the first meeting of the development forum:

The first meeting we had, the Prime Minister was there, and Namaliu opened the meeting. PJV was there, they led off, they said this is what we're going to do. The Prime minister turned round to us and said "what have you got to say about it?" And we were prepared and we said "oh, this and this and this." It lasted for a couple of hours, and at the end of it the prime minister said, "well thank you very much, we've heard your views and we'll go off and make a decision" and we said "now hang on, hang on, hang on! This is just the beginning as far as we're concerned!" And that's when we came up with the idea that we wanted to negotiate agreements, and therefore there had to be an ongoing process of negotiation. We said look we want this, we want that, we want that, the landowners had their demands, the provincial government had their demands, and what followed was months of negotiations.

In fact Derkely's team was well prepared – the concessions that they wanted consisted more of "oh, this and this and this." They had prepared an eighteen page

document that was essentially a compact version of the Proposals for Development released at the Islander earlier that year.

The landowners were prepared as well. Johnathan Paraia told me that

Kurubu and I gathered all the clan leaders and even councilors and we developed a development proposal, and in the proposal we told them we want a high school, we want an international school, we want the hospital, we want the long term economic development plan, and provide us with the economist. We want a road, road development, we want the Tari road surveyed, we want the airstrip to be built, we want a town to be built, you know, all that. All the services that were not available here, we put it to the National Government: if you agree to this, we will sign on the dotted line, and you will have a mine. Otherwise - *forget it!* (laugh) Yeah! We gave it to them at the forum. And whatever was missing we talked to them and said this is what we want, and on the cover of the proposal we put a man with a bow and arrow, and said, 'if you don't give it, we'll fight!' (laugh) Yeah.

After this first meeting, the forum process continued for months. The size, structure, and location of the meetings depended on what was being discussed.

Sometimes individuals would meet, sometimes large groups. Harry Derkley remembers that

There were lots of trips to Moresby and there were lots of faxes and rewritings and at times the atmosphere was pretty highly charged on things like the equity and things like fly-in fly-out, you know. There were some toe-to-toe sort of exercises there, you know. Where we said we wanted it and they said no you're not getting it, and that's where you used to have the big meetings. But a lot of it was laborious stuff, you know, technical stuff, and that's where the small groups, Kurubu and Johnathan and Graham and myself sitting down with John Reid and nutting out all the details came in.

Despite the sometimes heated nature of the debate, there was a sense among all involved that it was in everyone's interests to work together – something that would not be true with Yakatabari. With events at Bougainville shaping up as they were, everyone realized that it would be quite possible that there would be no mine in Porgera, and that was something that no one wanted. Namaliu remembers

Well, we obviously expected that it would be difficult from the beginning, because you're dealing with a situation which had never been tried before. But on the other hand we knew it was an experiment to begin with. So we didn't go into it with any fixed lines in so far as what we expected what would happen. We went into it with an open mind. We said, look let's try it out and let's see how it turns out, because the way it turns out would be the best way that we could expect it to develop in the circumstances, because there's no precedent that you can go back to and say well you know this is what was tried before and it didn't work and this is why we have to do it this way. So it was a trial and error thing. The important thing was to be focused on why we had come up with the idea to bring everybody together and give them that opportunity.

In all of these meetings, the interests of the Landowners and the Enga Provincial Government were closely connected. The Enga Provincial Government by itself lacked the power and legitimacy to ensure the National Government that the mine would go ahead – no one could guarantee that but the landowners. Landowners, in turn, found a powerful ally in the Enga Provincial Government. As a result the Enga Provincial Government and landowners cooperated most of the time in order to gain concessions from the National Government.

The tenacity with which the landowners negotiated was impressive. The reputation they had earned as negotiators in the two earlier agreements proved to be well deserved. A single example, the Kairik airstrip, serves to illustrate this point as well as provide an example of how particular issues were worked out over the course of the forum.

Both the landowners and the Enga Provincial Government originally requested that the planned airstrip at Kairik be upgraded to take Dash Seven aircraft. A group of senior ministers met at Waigani to consider these points on 3 February 1989 and were informed by the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) that Dash Sevens could not land at Porgera due to a variety of factors, including the altitude. To an outsider, this seems like an open and shut case – if the plane was not physically capable of landing at the new

airstrip, then it was not physically capable of landing at the new airstrip. One cannot negotiate with physics. Or so you would think. When Kurubu Ipara faxed back his response to the decisions made at the meeting a few days later, he replied that

We intend to challenge DCA's story that Dash 7s cannot land in Porgera due to high altitude. We insist that the Kairik airstrip be built to take larger aircraft than the Twin Otter only. So a clause in the agreement to be signed between the landowners and NG[National Government] should read: "that the Kairik airstrip will be built to take in larger aircraft than the twin otter and should the landowners prove to the national govt. that Dash 7s can land in Porgera, the NG will undertake to ensure that Dash 7s will extend services to Porgera.

The truth – what was physically possible and what was not – was not something that the landowners were going to concede to the government without a fight. Although the clause was not ultimately changed (because it *is* impossible to effectively run Dash Sevens into Porgera) the example illustrates the way that landowners were willing to test and challenge every assumption to get the best deal possible for themselves and their community.

The Signing and the Agreements

The result of the development forum was a tripartite set of agreements. These consisted of an agreement between the Enga Provincial Government and the National Government, and agreement between the Enga Provincial Government and Porgera Landowners, and the Porgera Landowners and the National Government. The PJV were not themselves party to the agreements.

Each of these agreements described the same state of affairs, but they varied in that they each specified the roles of all of the parties involved. This sounds complicated, but made sense in practice. Again, the Kairik airstrip provides a good example. Everyone knew what they wanted to happen: The PJV would build an airstrip at Kairik and then

hand it over to the Enga Provincial Government, although the landowners maintained the option of taking over the maintenance of the airstrip if the provincial government was lax in its duties. The National Government would then organize regular flights into the valley. The way that this was spelled out in the agreements was as followed: In the National Government – Landowner agreement the government promised the landowners that it would make the PJV build the airstrip. In the Landowner - Enga Provincial Government agreement the Enga Provincial Government agreed to take the airstrip once the PJV had built it, but promised the landowners that the newly formed Porgera Development Authority could take over maintenance of the airstrip if it wished. In the Enga Provincial Government - National Government agreement the National Government officially gave its consent to this arrangement. In all of these arrangements, the only thing the landowners had to promise to do was to refrain from burning the mine to the ground.

The end of the development forum was an arbitrary one. The situation in Bougainville had worsened. The presence of four hundred police on Bougainville had temporarily halted the deteriorating situation, but in early May attacks by dissidents increased in frequency. The National Government was eager to get Porgera up and running. As Namaliu remembered

We had a situation where Bougainville was closed, we wanted to see a new project going, not just in terms of seeing a new mine developed but in the whole context of macroeconomic development. We wanted to see a project going quickly that would take the place of Bougainville in terms of revenues and also stimulate economic activities within the country. I suppose if it was a situation that was different, we might have had a bit more time to talk through some of these things. We concluded some things maybe a little earlier than we should have but as a result we got a project going, had a billion dollars coming in at a time when we needed something like that to happen.

The landowners were not so enthusiastic. Johnathan Paraia remembers that

actually, we were not quite ready to sign, but the Prime Minister sent a plane to Porgera and said, hey the aircraft is here. If you want to participate as you have been always complaining to participate, then you jump on the plane and come to Port Moresby and sign it. If you don't come, we won't wait for you, because no law in the country says we have to sign an agreement with you. There's no requirement for you. So we took it as a threat, and we sort of, see, if we don't go, what's going to happen? Maybe whatever we have not secured maybe we can negotiate and discuss later. Its good to protect whatever we've got on our plate already and grab it rather than letting it go, so we developed that kind of attitude and we said OK.

Ultimately, though, the landowners were happy with the agreements. They had received the best deal in the history of the mining in the country – so good, in fact, it was in violation of the mining act of the day. What most disturbed them was not the contents of the agreements so much as the haste with which the final documents were presented. Harry Derkley was to later note that he believed that “the final draft was prepared in haste and was executed before a final ‘vetting’ took place.” Johnathan was more blunt in terms of his assessment of the situation:

Mind you everything that we agreed they had changed in the computer. We said ‘shall’ and ‘will be’ they said oh, they changed it to ‘undertake to consider’ you know? Not shall and will - all that we put in there had been changed, and then we were not shown the final copy before we signed.

As it turns out, the agreements were signed just in time – on 15 May 1989, three days after the signing, Bougainville Copper Limited shut the Bougainville copper mine for good. The Porgera Agreements were over fifty pages in length, and the concessions that they granted to landowners were greater than anything previously seen in the mining industry. For all of the concessions they received, the landowners promised to do two things – three paragraphs out of the fifty pages are devoted to their undertakings. They read:

The Landowners agree that they will work with the National Government and the Porgera Joint Venture to ensure that the Porgera Mine Project is constructed. The Landowners agree that they will not disrupt the operations of the Porgera Mine Project at any time during the lifetime of the mine should any problems

arise which require resolution.

The Landowners agree to explore all avenues of consultation with the Porgera Joint Venture, the Provincial Government and the National Government to resolve difficulties.

Even today it is a contentious issue how many of the promises in the Porgera agreement have been fulfilled. To a certain extent the development agreements were not strictly enforceable because, as Harry Derkley says, “they sought to bind parties such as the PJV that were not parties to the agreements.” Some of the clauses in the agreement required their own separate agreements to clarify the implications and planning of things agreed to. What the development agreements really amounted to was less a legal document than a simple agreement between parties who have all made a commitment to the provisions in the agreement in good faith. They were not settled issues – they were the starting point of discussions which would continue into the future. Thus while the contents of the agreements would be contentious in the future, future disagreements would be settled through negotiation and consultation rather than in court or through violence. By creating arenas within which debate could occur and be controlled, the agreements made Porgera and the Ipili feasible. As Harry Derkley has written,

The agreements are not simply legal arrangement but political ones between powerful political players in the Papua New Guinea context who all felt that when the agreements were made they should combine to accommodate each other’s legitimate interest so as to ensure the orderly development of a project in which each have an important stake. Thus it is probably the political, economic, and social consequences for the nation, the province, and the local clans of failure to make them work which is the more effective guarantee of the validity of the agreements and the ultimate sanction of their enforceability.

Ultimately, some were happy with the agreements and their implementation. As

Harry Derkley says,

I thought the Porgera agreements were always going to be a difficult thing to pull off, you know. And they were always going to be difficult to implement, they could have just gathered dust in the bottom of the drawer, but they didn’t and there have been enormous brawls about things, the equity, the hospital, the IPI, the loan guarantees, but they’ve stood the test of time. I mean each of these issues have in the end been resolved, or have been progressed in some way, you know? So I think in the end they’ve been enormously resilient. They did bring development to Porgera.

What is more, these agreements had a national scope. Rabbie Namaliu remembers

We were dealing with a situation where investment was low in PNG and we were looking for a different approach to development, obviously spurred on by Bougainville, but also before that premiers and provincial governments had been raising concerns about greater participation and these things. So I suppose I see it as one of the most important achievements of our government at that time and as a trailblazer in many ways for future resource development in this country, and it's something that I'm proud of and I suppose will always be proud of.

Landowners were not so sure. They felt that they had finally received the promises of development that they longed for – but could what happened on the ground in Porgera be subsumed as the fulfillment of those processes? Such was the question that they would face in the years that followed, and that would structure so much of the personal dynamics that drove Yakatabari.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a history of how outsiders came to know the Porgera valley's mineral resources and its Ipili inhabitants. I have argued that Scott's idea of 'legibility' has a certain *prima facie* validity when events are examined at a distance. When one examines the history of Porgera in detail, however, narratives of the state as a single coherent actor and observer grow problematic. As I have suggested in the introduction of this dissertation, the interplay of representative and represented institution is much more complex than Scott's vision of the myopic high modernist state allows. In this chapter I have attempted to substantiate this claim by examining the history of the Porgera valley.

The history of Porgera is about both knowing the valley and managing life in it. Despite official attempts to know and control the valley, the group of people most successful in getting things done there were often those involved with mining but removed from official state institutions – first the Medici of the Highlands of the fifties, and their children who composed the 'Porgeran High Society' of the eighties and nineties. The interaction of local efficacy and distant authority was complex, but it is

clear that the history of Porgera has consistently been one where the unproblematic assumption of an entity known as ‘the State’ or ‘the Ipili’ gives way to a richer and more fulfilling analysis of the nature of the representation of abstract institutions on the ground by their representatives.

‘The state’ cannot be assumed simply to ‘see’ and as we have seen here, and shall see in future chapters. To judge records of Ipili lifeways by reference to their ‘accuracy’ is to miss the way in which official representation is part of a complex process in which groups and institutions are created by the act of eliciting information about them. Thus the state and its laws did not regiment life in the valley. Instead, the partially successful attempts of larger, institutional actors to regiment life in the valley created new idioms of landownership and rights which were actively appropriated by a wide variety of actors. Thus it is not merely ‘the state’ which makes ‘simplifications,’ rather it is the case that a wide variety of actors attempt to create and manipulate authoritative accounts of both themselves and others for their own culturally-given ends. The continuing existence of these forms and their relevance to life in the valley today underscore the genealogical nature of this chapter and emphasize its role in the larger work as both a history of the valley and an inventory of the rhetorical strategies that makes up the textual patrimony deployed in the Yakatabari negotiations in the previous chapter.

However, it is impossible to explain the emotional and personal power that these rhetorical strategies had without understanding something of the cultural background of the actors who deployed them. It is for this reason that I turn in the next chapter away from institutional history to provide an analysis of the wider cultural context within which the representatives of these institutions found themselves situated and how they became so emotionally committed to their respective projects.

CHAPTER FOUR

POSTCOLONIAL REDEMPTIONS

In the last chapter I described the historical origins of the Yakatabari negotiations. These institutions created a framework which delimited the sorts of claims that the various actors in the negotiations could make as they pursued their individual projects. To a certain extent, then, understanding the institutional history of Porgera and its gold mine allows us to grasp the history that lay at the back of the Yakatabari negotiators as they attempted to achieve their ends.

It is tempting to assume that an analysis of the negotiations might stop with a description of the institutions, how they articulated with governmental structures and economic markets and how this articulation formed a context for the action of the pragmatic actions of individuals. An approach based on Ostrom's analysis of the management of common pool resources such as land or fisheries (1990), for instance, might examine how the formal and informal institutions governing Porgera incentivize the exchange of self-interested human agents in the valley. However, James Weiner notes of the literature on indigenous people and resource extraction in the Asia-Pacific, "from an anthropological perspective, these studies leave largely unexamined and

unanalyzed the nature of the knowledge systems and the culturally distinct epistemological and discursive processes *within* indigenous societies in this context” (Weiner 2001a:1). Even the New Institutional Economics, the area of economics that has made the largest strides towards a coherent concept of culture, continues to understand “myths, dogmas, and ideologies” as little more than “half-baked ideas” which prevent people from accurately discerning the most efficient means of achieving their ends (Denzau and North 1994:3 – for more on the behavioral assumptions of New Institutional Economics see Hogarth and Reddy 1985, North 1990:17-26, and North 2005). And yet as Sahlins (1976) and Weber (1968) noted long ago, when people act purposively, they always do so using culturally-defined means to achieve culturally-defined ends. For this reason a truly anthropological account – indeed, a *full* account – of the Yakatabari negotiations must describe not only the social fields within which the Yakatabari negotiators acted, it must explain the rationality – the *cultural* rationality -- of that action. It is just this ability to make intelligible the intersection of personal project and general cultural structure, the cultural determination of both means and ends, which North considers so elusive, and which anthropology can provide.

An account of the cultural background of the actors involved is not only necessary because of the tendency of the literature on institutions to ignore the meaningful, cultural dimension of human behavior. It is also necessary because it is extremely easy to comprehend events in Porgera from a ‘commonsense’ view. The story of Yakatabari accords well with the standard average European’s ‘native cosmology’ which sees “need and greed as the basis of all sociability” (Sahlins 2000c:533). Indeed, many people familiar with Porgera simply write off the acts of Ipili elites as motivated by an unremitting greed, and explain the activities of Ipili people as simply a result of a ‘cargo

cult mentality' (see Jones and MacGavin 2001 for one such approach in political science) or pathologies induced by rapid social change. Similarly, anthropological critiques of global capitalism too often assume that transnational corporations are big actors driven by greed and need and that their actions can be explained by reference to their uncomplicated, plunderous intent.

It is thus it is important that this analysis of the cultural underpinnings of action in Porgera move be symmetric. It is not enough to assume that we must contextualize the cultural imperatives of the Ipili but can explain away the biographies and personal histories representatives of big actors by reference to the relentlessly 'modernist' character of the colonial state and its agents who produced "patrols and reports [which] constituted part of a highly ordered and ordering process of intrusion, appraisal, and control" (Errington and Gewertz 2004:33). As we have seen in the last chapter, this is certainly the way kiaps wanted to come across on paper. However, there is no reason we should take their word for it. The unproblematic personation of colonial institutions in the field was never a sure thing. In order to understand Yakatabari, then, we must understand not only the culture of the Ipili, but the culture of the community relations officers involved in Yakatabari. We have to take into account the cultural logic by which they saw their role as negotiators an extension of their previous positions as kiap. As we shall see in final chapter of this thesis, the 'kiap knowledge' they bring to their job has a very real impact on the policy process in Port Moresby today.

In this chapter, then, I will argue that while being incredibly cynical will get you far in understanding life in Porgera, the culture concept will get you farther. Here I will explain and describe the different viewpoints that the Yakatabari negotiators brought to the table. While these were briefly mentioned in the second chapter of the dissertation, in

this chapter I examine the cultural logic of the negotiators' background and goals in depth, using as my theme the central idea of 'postcolonial redemption.'

By 'postcolonial redemption' I refer to the way in which the Yakatabari negotiations – and, by extension, the mine's presence in the valley more generally – has been seen by both Ipili and whites alike as a chance to make good on the undelivered promises of Papua New Guinea's transition to independence in 1975 in light of the decline of provincial government in the mid-1980s (for a readable overview see Dorney 2000:238-262) and national government in the 1990s (Dorney 2000:73-101), and law and order more generally (Dinnen 2001). Ipili see the mine as a chance to achieve the wealth and affluence which they have been expecting since the early contact period, when millennial movements promised an end to poverty and illness. Indeed, the mine's arrival fits in with deeply held Ipili notions which focus on the attainment of fertility and health and an Ipili historical consciousness which sees history in a constant state of entropic decline punctuated by bouts of rejuvenation which theoretically could, but in practice never seem to, break this cycle and establish an unending utopic state. In Porgera, the end of Porgera's colonial tutelage and the arrival of the mine signaled the latest stage of an ever-escalating but never-satisfying flow of wealth and health. For Ipili then, postcolonial redemption involves realizing the promises implicit in the arrival of whites and their material culture, and achieving that redemption means coming to grips with white material culture and mores.

For the men – for they are almost entirely men – who were hired by the company to negotiate with the Ipili, postcolonial redemption had a different but related meaning. They were men who had worked for years in Papua New Guinea, the majority of them as kiaps. While it is undoubtedly the case that they have profited financially from their time

in Papua New Guinea, their experience of the country extends further than monetary gain. These were men who gave years of their lives – often their best years – to the country of Papua New Guinea. For them independence and the country’s subsequent decline meant the destruction, decay, and breakdown of the institutions and infrastructure that were literally their life work. After years in Papua New Guinea, many returned to Australia only to find it more foreign to them than the outstations that had been their homes in Papua New Guinea. For them, postcolonial redemption meant returning to Papua New Guinea to continue their former work in a new mold – as community relations officers. It was their attempt to continue to help a country that had spurned them.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first outlines Porgerans’ sense of their own history and how it affected their expectations of what mining would bring. It then discusses how Ipili conceive of whites and their world. The second begins with a discussion of the biographies of the community relations officers who negotiated Yakatabari. I discuss their history and their understanding of themselves and Papua New Guinea. Finally, I discuss their understandings of Ipili culture and society – what I call their ‘kiap knowledge’ -- and how it emerges from their own exposure to anthropology and their time in Papua New Guinea.

Ipili Cosmology: Energy, Replacement, Embo

In order to understand the cultural origin of Ipili responses to mining, it is necessary to begin at a very abstract level – with their cosmology. As Aletta Biersack has pointed out, at the base of Ipili cosmology is a deep seated concern with decay and labor, “an Ipili metaphysics of finitude” based on the idea that “life is perpetuated only at the cost of life, that regeneration and death are inexplicable dimensions of the human

condition” (Biersack 1998b: 43). Ipili understand their own life energy to be finite, and in expending it through work they deplete themselves in a cycle of work and reward that Biersack calls the ‘service economy’ (1995b: 241): work creates rewards which replace that which exists even as it diminishes the worker. As Biersack has pointed out, Ipili understand children to be people who have incorporated their parents nurturance. Both the transmission of bodily fluids in conception (menstrual blood and semen) and nurturance (milk) as well as the labor of child rearing strengthen the growing child even as they literally exhaust the parent.

Ipili express this by saying that their children are their *lawa*. At its base level, *lawa* means to exchange, in the sense of switching places or roles. Ipili gloss the term in tok pisin as ‘sens’ (change). For instance, a man once told me of his young son “em i sens bilong mi” – literally, ‘he is my change.’ Thus, a man is replaced by the son he nurtured. That son grows to become the hardest worker, and the man responsible for the household. Similarly, the practice of sister exchange is referred to as *imalini lawa lawa* (‘cross-sex sibling exchange’) because the sister of a new affine takes the place of ego’s sister when ego marries her, just as ego’s sister has married her cross-sex sibling. Both of these examples indicate the way that the Ipili verb *lawa* combines notions of reproduction and transformation, replacement *and* innovation in a way that does not pit one against the other. A woman comes to take the place of one’s sister, but not in the same role – the sister’s replacement in an affine and not a consanguine. Thus for Ipili, change is fundamentally tied to transformation. This helps account for the insatiable Ipili appetite for novelty – while there are many factors that make Ipili interested in new things, one of them comes from the fact that there is no deep-seated notion of ‘authenticity’ in the culture, at least not in the sense of a perfect reproduction of the past in which any

deviation is understood as adulteration.

This zero-sum system of energy transmission and replacement is what Biersack refers to as “the sacrificial principle:” “equivalence is always achieved through reciprocal labor and life, through a mutuality of sacrifice” (Biersack 1998:55), while I have referred to it as a “work-wealth equation” (Golub 2001:78-80). Thus unlike the classical protestant attitude which ennobles work, Ipili see work as a necessary but not meritorious activity from which you can gain no surplus – you get out of it only what you put in. You work, you get old, and you die. For the Ipili, there really is nothing but death and taxes.

Furthermore, Biersack argues that the Ipili make a distinction between *nembo*, which she glosses as ‘mind’ and *umbaini*, which she glosses as ‘body’ or ‘skin.’ They employ a theory of action in which promises to act (words) are proved true indicators of a hidden intentionality only when they are redeemed by the performance of the promised act – a movement of the body (flesh). Hence action is, for Ipili, ‘word made flesh’ (Biersack 1996). This notion of agency is directly related to the epistemology of other minds – other minds are in principle unknowable, and the only way that we can guess their intentions is to examine their manifestation through action. Although Melanesian societies are famous for their cynicism about knowing what goes on in other people’s heads, Ipili are particularly concerned with secrecy and concealment. We have already seen the role of *kokoli* or “veiled speech” (Strathern 1975) in the assassination of Mangape. For Ipili, then, the indeterminacy implicit in the unknowability of other minds has been privileged as a mode of politics and sociality in a way it has not in other areas of the country.

This work, this activity, is the manifest form of *nembo*, the mental faculty that Biersack glosses as ‘mind’ or ‘logos.’ While this equation artfully serves to unite her

discussions of Ipili theories of agency and Christianity within a single article punningly entitled ‘The Word Made Flesh’ (1996), it is important to note that *nembo* has an affective component tied to Ipili notions of desire. Translating *nembo* as ‘mind’ -- particularly when relating it to ‘the word’ and its Hellenistic relation to *logos* – produces overtones of logic and rationality that, while appropriate, fails to capture the full force of the Ipili term. *Nembo* does move people to action, and it is made manifest on the skin. But I believe a better translation would be something along the lines of ‘appetitive desire’ or ‘desirous intelligence.’ *Nembo* is the intentional part of people, but it is always directed towards an object which it longs for. It is not just mind which plans, but the hunger or desire that prompts to action. Indeed, the fact that it is manifested in the body and in action suggests that it is incarnated and passion-filled in a way that Biersack’s Johannine structuralism does not capture.

While Ipili conceptions of the zero-sum nature of energy transmission have often been compared to Etoro notions of *hame* (Kelly 1993:147-157) a closer analogy of *nembo* would be the notion of *hame* as found among the more closely related Huli (Frankel 1986: 83-84; 140-143). While Frankel links the Huli faculty of *mini* as a sense of ‘social responsiveness’ similar to the well-documented example of *nomán* from Hagen (Strathern 1981), Frankel translates *hame* as ‘desire’ or – more tellingly – ‘covetousness.’ “This may be a simple desire for food,” he writes, “but extends to stronger feelings including cupidity, lust and yearning” (Frankel 1986:140). The pathology *lingi* results when a person’s *hame* becomes desirous for the food that another eats and enters their stomach, making them ill. The fact that this is seen as an inherent human faculty rather than an unusual or pathological form of sorcery can be confirmed when Frankel notes that cases of *lingi* are accepted with “unusual equanimity:”

In contrast to most conditions which are in some sense attributable to the actions of others, there is little interest in apportioning blame, and in no case was there any litigation. *Hame* is regarded as an inevitable response to the sight of food, so that the individual is not seen as culpable for any ill effects that follow from it. One woman said ‘How could we take anyone to court when we all have eyes?’ (Frankel 1986:140).

This concept of covetous desire, I argue, is very similar to the concept of *nembo* or, as it is sometimes called in Porgera, *emborene*. Ipili believe that at night, when people sleep, it is possible for their *emborene* to leave their body and travel around. As in Frankel’s description of *hame*, the intent of one’s *emborene* is typically malicious – it seeks to injure and hurt those of whom one is jealous and envious.

The ubiquity of this concept of *emborene* as roving, appetitive, vindictive power is evinced in the fact that it is featured in the most popular story of my field site: the story of the python Kupiane, who also features as the protector of the founders of the Tiyini lineage and as the source of the gold in Porgera’s mountains. Although the story of Kupiane has been told before in the anthropological literature (Biersack 1999a), its exemplification of the concept of *embo* along with its importance for the history of the valley make a retelling worthwhile.

The Kupiane Story

The story begins after the eponymous apical ancestor of the Tiyini fights with his brother over the distribution of cassowary meat. Leaving his native Kandep, Tiyini comes to Porgera and builds a house there, attracted by the abundant and fruitful pandanus trees located there. One day, he and his wife left two small children alone in their house and traveled to Suyan – some say for sweet potato runners, some say for a pig distribution.

While the parents are away, a strange man (in some versions of the story, a giant) finds the two children playing alone. When they tell him that they have been left in

Porgera by their parents, the man looks after them, building a fire in the house to keep out the cold of Porgera's ever-present rain. From within his netbag he produces a variety of valued food including taro, cassowary, sweet potato, and various kinds of marsupial meat. As night falls, he stays with the children.

In the evening, the couple are blocked from returning home by a sudden rainstorm which floods the river between Suyan and Yarik at the site of the current government station. Miserably unhappy sleeping outdoors in the rain, they remember their two young children, who are sleeping safely and soundly back at the homestead. The *emborene* of the parents leave their bodies and fly back to the homestead, intent on attacking and perhaps killing their own children out of jealousy and envy. When the story is told, the chirping of cicadas (*lene*) – popularly said by Ipili to be the malevolent sound of approaching ghosts – is narrated in increasing volume as the parent's *embo* prepare to burst into the house. What happens next depends on the teller of the story – in some variants, the mysterious man turns into an enormous snake (or half-snake, half-man) and hisses terribly, blocking the door of the house with his fearsome jaws. In some versions of the story, the man turns into a snake and uses his tail to slap the floor of the house, which he had previously asked the children to spread with dry grass, igniting it and scaring the parent's *emborene* away. In any case, the spirits depart and the man saves the children.

The next morning, the man prepares to leave. Before doing so, he gives the children a set of instructions: when their parents return and ask who looked out after them the night before, they are to reply “Winge Kupiane” (glossed in Tok Pisin as ‘papa Kupiane,’ though I have never heard the word *winge* used in any other context, including terms for parents). He tells the children that since he saved them, they must now do as he

asks. He then points out a sheer limestone cliff with a single breadfruit tree growing out of it which is still widely visible today. He tells them that when the breadfruit tree blooms it is a sign that he wants them and their parents to sacrifice pigs to him. That done, he leaps into the cliff face and disappears into his home inside the mountain.

When the parents return, unaware of the actions of their vengeful *emborene*, they are amazed to see how well-kept the house is. When their children tell them the story and Kupiane's orders, the parents are amazed. From that day on, the story concludes, Kupiane has been seen as an ancestor and protector of Tiyini and his progeny.

This story is disconcerting to whites – the idea that parents could, even unconsciously, desire to hurt and injure their children out of envy and spite goes against the grain of how we imagine parent-child relations should be. Certainly such a reaction is hardly rational, because that hurting their own children will not keep the parents safe and warm. But that is indeed the very point: *nembo* is the dreams and hopes and desires that prompt the body to action. While it is, as Biersack rightly points out, a 'rational' faculty in the sense of involving a ratiocination unique to humans, it is also much more than that. It has an affective content: driven, occasionally greedy, and sometimes violent.

In conclusion, we can say that this combination of an appetitive faculty with a zero-sum service economy means that to a certain extent Ipili culture is all about unfulfilled desire. Thus we can say that in some sense the Ipili are 'an affluent society' in Galbraith's original sense of a people whose historical consciousness is haunted by a past they imagine as an "unedifying mortification of the flesh – from hunger, sickness, and cold" (Galbraith 1958:2) and who rejoice in a historical moment of mine-derived affluence "where the ordinary person has access to amenities – foods, entertainment, personal transportation, and plumbing – in which not even the rich rejoiced a century

ago” (Galbraith 1958:2). Thus while Sahlins famously inverts Galbraith’s image of fifties satiety to suggest that in fact hunter-gatherers had their needs satisfied because they are not infinite (Sahlins 2000d), I suggest that Ipili see themselves in very much the same light that Galbraith suggests. As we shall see in the next section, Ipili attempts to gain endless affluence have been combined with a unique sense of history and just how close they have come in the past to achieving their goal.

Multiple Apocalypses

As we have seen, the Ipili see the present as world full of want, even as they imagine and strive for a future full of plenty. Throughout their short recorded history, the Ipili have experienced constant cycles of enthusiastic belief that a millennial moment lay just around the corner that would finally enable them to short-circuit the work-wealth equation. Their constant disappointment stems not just from the collapse of these movements when they fail to pan out, but from rising expectations that occur when they seem, from the Ipili point of view, to partially succeed. Thus while Ipili share a cyclical sense of decline and regeneration with their neighbors, the history of mining in Porgera has given them a unique take on it. In some sense, the cargo has actually come to Porgera, and despite Ipili disappointment with it, their history teaches them that the millenarian promises made in the past might be redeemed at any moment.

At the broadest level, Ipili seem to have a prehistoric affinity for themes of world renewal. The Ipili shared with their neighbors a sense of the decreasing fertility of the earth – each succeeding generation, it was believed, was growing smaller, sweet potato tubers were becoming less nutritious, sows had less piglets and so on and so forth. Ipili believed that only a large-scale, region-wide series of rituals performed at certain sacred sites could renew the earth’s fertility. The end of the world would be marked by a time of

darkness known in Ipili as *yu undupi* (*yu* meaning ‘earth, ground, territory’ and *undupi* meaning ‘night or darkness’) or *ungi* (Jacka 2003; for cognate beliefs in Huli see Glasse 1995, for Enga see Mai 1981, for Duna see Sturzenhofecker 1998:163-172). If these rituals were performed properly, the cosmic clock would be reset and people would experience a period of unprecedented fertility with bumper crops and strong children. If the ritual was not performed, then the world would end.

Belief in *yu undupi*, like much of Ipili millennial thought, was well founded because it was more or less true. There is a good reason why time of darkness legends are so widespread throughout Papua New Guinea – the time of darkness actually happened. In 1622, a volcanic island off of the coast of Papua New Guinea exploded Krakatoa-style. The resulting cloud covered much of the highlands, blotting out the sun for a period of days and the resulting ashfall coated the ground (Blong 1982). While doubtless terrifying, the tephra soils deposited as a result of the event were high in nitrogen and particularly fertile. As a result, crops planted after the explosion were in fact spectacularly successful, and microclimates where tephra were trapped are still some of the most fertile gardening ground in Porgera.

While not as widespread as they once were, it is still possible today to find old people who remember the instructions – past down orally over two hundred years – for the proper preparation for the time of darkness. In fact, they resemble safety procedures for surviving a volcanic explosion. Ipili are instructed to store large amounts of potable water in doors, to build houses with peaked roofs to slough off ash buildup, and to plant tall sticks in the location of sweet potato mounds so that they could be identified beneath the ash. Other prohibitions – that only children travel outside, for instance – are less obviously ‘practical.’ But the important point to realize was that while I was unable to

explain the complex geophysical conditions that accounted for *yu undupi*, I could not deny to my informants that such an event had taken place in the past and, the earth's mantle being what it is, that it might occur in the future.

The protohistorical period – from first contact in 1938 to the establishment of an expatriate mining presence in Porgera in 1948 – was also a time of world-transforming cults. Ipili, Huli, and Enga peoples formed an active cosmopolitan community through which innovations flowed, including religious and ritual practice (Biersack 1995a). One of the most important of these cults has come to be known in the literature as ‘The Cult of Ain’ (also known as marakamo). This cult existed throughout Porgera between 1943 and 1945, long before anthropologists had visited the valley. Nonetheless, ethnohistorical work on the Cult has produced a surprisingly rich literature on the subject (Gibbs 1977; Jacka 2002; Meggitt 1973, 1974; Biersack 1996).

At one level, the cult was a response to the influx of porcine and human epidemics that swept through Enga province as the vanguard of white penetration. At the same time, as Wiessner and Tumuu have pointed out (2001), the cult was a deeply-seated cultural response to the prevailing social disharmony of the times. The focus of the cult was the restoration of health and the acquisition of wealth through ritual means. It originated in Enga province and was then spread by a group of brothers and their converts. Participants were encouraged to sacrifice pigs to the sky. Old prohibitions and sexual prohibitions were abrogated, and people who undertook cult rituals often underwent ecstatic fits of shaking.

The cult operated on something like a pyramid scheme. People from one community would train members of the adjacent community in the cult's esoterica. Members of the second community would then proselytize the communities adjacent to

them, and so on. As a result the cult spread quite rapidly. While the cult was concerned with issues of fertility and wealth in a way that is typical of a wide variety of Melanesian societies, in Porgera it took on a distinctly millenarian tone. There, the proper performance of the rituals was reinterpreted. Instead of simply bringing fertility, it was believed that the cult would bring the end of the world and the ascension of Ipili to heaven, assuring them immortality and endless affluence. Ipili enthusiastically embraced the cult with spectacular consequences that included the a decimation of Ipili pig herds in enormous sacrificial offerings and even one large-scale mass suicide. By the late 1940s, however, the world failed to end, Ipili became disenchanted, and the cult temporarily died out.

Shortly thereafter – the exact dates are uncertain -- three close friends named Kipu, Pingipe, and Esape began making prophecies about the future. Kipu and Pingipe were prominent people amongst their groups, the Tiyini and the Tuanda. Esape was from a Huli group in Hoiyebia with ties to the Tuanda. Most of these prophecies centered around Mt. Wuangima, where Pingipe had his gardening ground and which, incidentally, was the future location of the mine's open pit. Ulipa Kipu, Kipu's son, remembers that

everyone said that they were all crazy. "At my place at Wuangima," Pingipe said, "a tree will grow. White and black birds from all over the world will come, shake it, and die."

He said "birds will shake the tree and eat. All of these white and black birds will eat," he said. "It will be really sweet and nice, and they'll eat - you'll see."

At the time Pingipe and his companions were feared men, and were known for committing semi-miraculous acts. They encouraged sacrifices to Kupiyan at an *ipa angini*, or sacred pool, on the slopes of Mt. Warukari at a location near the future sight of the Yunarilama drainage tunnel (it was here that Siapu Yako would later build his shrine to Kupiane). Ambi Kipu, Ulipa's brother, remembered that his father had two eyes – one

for this world, and a second one that allowed him to see inside mountains. Within, he saw men and women, pigs, and an entire city. The three, moreover, were said to have the power to travel underneath the earth. They made a number of other prophecies as well. They predicted that Apalaka, Kipu's place, would someday be abandoned (Apalaka sounds like the Ipili word *apala*, or empty) but that Pingipe's place, Yarik, would become beautiful (Yarik sounds like *yari* or adorned). They made other strange predictions, for instance that men with large netbags would come from the mountains.

At the time, many thought that they were crazy. But the development of gold in the valley began to change people's minds. Today, it is taken as a truism that Pingipe, Kipu, and Esapa were predicting the coming of the Porgera gold mine. The birds, people came to believe, were outsiders come to find gold. The fruit of the tree was to be seen in future years as the gold in Mt. Warokari, adjacent to Wuangima. You cannot talk about the prophecies today without people pointing out that they have been fulfilled. This was made clear in another prophecy that Ulipa recounted to me.

My father said that there was a Komba fruit inside of Mt. Wuangima. He told all of the people here, "you are all rubbish people, but you will become rich, there's a Komba fruit underneath Mt. Wuangima." He was right - that thing was gold, gold can do that. It covers up the earth like water, and people go around slitting each other's throats over its sweetness. They talk behind each other's backs. The company worked gold with us at the headwaters of the rivers here. They came and stayed with us and they gave us the first kina shells. "They'll come and give you some good sharp axes and knives," he said. Now we have them right here in our hands. They said that he said these things because he was crazy, that they were all crazy, Esape, Kipu, and Pingipe

Shortly thereafter alluvial gold began to be exploited in Porgera at the base of the mountain where Kupiane slept. At first, this activity was limited to the two white prospector Brugh and Searson, but mining activity grew. Later on, after a decade of irregular patrols into the area, a patrol post was built to provide a permanent base for

governance in the valley. One of Pingipe's prophecies that received the most play during my time in Porgera was that 'men would come with wonderful things in their netbags' – a prophecy that was assumed to refer to the coming of white men.

The arrival of missionaries and material wealth to the valley that resulted from derestriction caused the Ipili to reevaluate their earlier prophetic movements. They now considered Jesus's death (which most Ipili today believe occurred shortly after the Second World War) the moment at which 'the roads were open' allowing good things from outside the valley to enter it. The similarities between the earlier cult and Christianity were also striking to Ipili. As Philip Gibbs writes,

Both call for the rejection of the old which is 'bad' and the acceptance of a 'new way', a 'good road'. Both have a ritual purification ceremony of washing. Both have extraordinary happenings: shaking, or now speaking in tongues. Both present a new figure as the center of worship: the sun and God... There is a sharing of food which distinguished the faithful... Adherents are to wait for the imminent end of the world... Both have the same basic function of improving general well being. (Gibbs 1977:24)

These good things, symbolized above all by labor-saving steel implements and sickness-curing injections of antibiotics, seemed exactly the sorts of things prophesied by the precontact cult. Indeed, since most precontact Ipili ritual revolved around acquiring wealth and health through magical means, the coming of these goods was itself proof that the precontact cult, as well as Christianity, was efficacious. Gibbs continues,

Now when I ask whether the cult from Lyeimi was true I hear, 'of course it was true. Now we see the skin of the white man. Look at my axe, my bush knife.' 'Yes, it was true. It has all come with the white man.' 'Yes, it was true; now the white man has come and we have plenty of pigs and pearl shells and soon Jesus will come and we will go to heaven.' (Gibbs 1977:25).

The first contact of Ipili with whites took place at the same moment as the discovery of gold and the arrival of a millenarian cult. Ipili historical consciousness would be fundamentally shaped by this conjunction, and the increasing wealth the valley

received as mining expanded only served to make plausible the idea that Ipili were gaining increasing amounts of wealth and health through a historical dynamics that could only end with their ascension to immortality. The establishment of a government station also meant the coming of Christianity, and this, in turn, prompted a reevaluation of the previous work of the Cult of Ain. The influx of material objects, the suppression of fighting in the valley, and the arrival of health care (particularly injections) left a huge impression. Ipili quickly came to believe that the Cult of Ain was completely true and that Ain, like John the Baptist, had prepared them for the coming of Jesus.

Massive Change

In sum, every two decades events occurred in Porgera which fueled the Ipili belief in a sea change which would short circuit the hated work-wealth equation within which they labored. While the Ipili have not yet become immortal, by the 1980s such a transformation seemed increasingly plausible. In 1938, they had only stone tools. In the 1950s, metal tools revolutionized life in the valley, while workers were paid in salt and shells – previously scarce commodities – in copious quantities. In the 1960s, Ipili began to earn cash, and by the 1970s ambitious miners owned cars and houses made out of metal and timber. By the 1980s, then, the Porgerans on whose land the actual ore body was located had already developed an understanding of why and how gold would be mined in their valley. The semi-religious experience of development in the 1960s had only served to bolster these beliefs.

Ipili responses to Placer and exploration have to be understood with this background in mind. In 1990, when the mine was finally being built, Ipili were receiving a million dollars a month in compensation from the mine. In September 1990 the PJV had 1,500 employees working on construction – a number of people equal to the population

of the entire valley in 1952! The company was spending a million dollars a day building the mine, and the results were tremendous. When considered abstractly the work of construction seems impressive— but when viewed from the ground, it appeared downright magical. Even the Australians involved in community affairs were amazed. Fritz Robinson remembers:

Basically it was cultural shock. I mean neither Noel [the head of the lands department] nor I had any experience of a construction of anything of this scale. I remember walking from here where I'm sitting [in Yokelama] to Kulapi as it is now -- which was big bush -- and it took me an hour and half to walk there. And there was some pegs in the ground over here and I said "what the hell are they?" And they said "that's going to be the haul road." I said "don't be silly, don't be silly - look how far apart they are! They're a hundred meters wide!" And he said "yeah?" I honestly couldn't believe the scale. From the ground up you know, a two minute drive from an hour or more walk. It just blew my mind. Suddenly these bloody huge lumps of concrete and these gigantic trucks and fellas with no name and great power suddenly appearing, it was pretty magic stuff. It was not all good, but it was certainly not boring.

Many Porgerans had already come by a considerable amount of money as a result of the Mt. Kare gold rush (Ryan 1991), but now they were receiving wealth that could have been described, if it wasn't for the extravagance of the Ipili imagination, as beyond their wildest dreams. Between August 1987 and December 1992 Porgerans received a total of 25.9 million kina in compensation for damage to land that was required for the mine. Assessment and payment were made in accordance with the compensation agreement – lands officers came to the landowner's home, counted the economic crops, and then returned to the PJV, where he put in a request for the money. When the request was approved, the lands officer then carried the money up to the landowner. During construction, huge amounts of land were needed – most of the face of Warokari, for instance – and the amounts were large. In one case a single family received K520,000 for the land that they lost to the mine. This was before the issuance of the fifty kina bill, and

so the highest denomination that compensation could be paid in were the twenty kina notes known to Porgerans as *yia perene* (very roughly, ‘the one with the pig on it’). Despite the fact that the cash was often carried in large crates, the lands officers still had problems getting it all physically to the landowner – often times large payments were made partly in cash and the rest was put in the bank. In addition to this money, landowners also received their new homes, and a substantial amount of cash with the keys. Soon their houses would have electricity and they would begin receiving their first royalty payments and occupation fees.

In 1945 the excitement of the Cult of Ain had triggered a wave of enthusiasm for cult movements in the valley. In 1962, the coming of Christianity, the availability of white material culture, and the pacification of the valley combined to produce a deep impression -- with the ‘roads open’ the Ipili reckoned correctly that a new age had begun in the valley. But now, in the early 1990s, all of these events paled in comparison. People whose fathers’ idea of supernatural wealth were pigs the size of horses were literally receiving crates full of money. The amount of money and benefits coming to the Special Mining Lease landowners was unprecedented in the sense that nothing like it had happened in the valley before, but it was not unexpected or unheard of -- as far as the Ipili were concerned, the events taken place in the 1990s had been predicted for nearly half a century. As Ambi Kipu told me in 2000, “noken abrusim, stori bilong Pingipe kamap olgeta (you can’t ignore them, all of Pingipe’s prophecies have come true).” As one Seventh Day Adventist pastor told me, “olgeta prophecy i fulfill pinis” – every prophecy has been fulfilled. Pingipe, Kipu, and Esape were vindicated. Birds from all over the world had come to eat the fruit growing on the slopes of Mt. Warokari.

Everyone agreed Kupiane was behind it. He told them so himself. He had

appeared to ‘Chief’ Ambi Kipu in visions throughout the course of exploration. When the first adit was drilled into the mountains in the 1970s, Ambi had killed pigs and offered them to Kupiane. “Chief,” the python told him, “yu kaikai (you eat).” Now, in 1990, Kupiane appeared to him again. He told Ambi to have a feast celebrating the new found wealth, and that the spirits inside the mountain would celebrate along with him. Just as he had brought every different kind of food to Tiyini’s children, so too should Ambi’s feast include every kind of valuable food stuff. Ambi spoke to the then-head of community affairs, who provided him with cattle bought up from Hagen which Ambi killed and distributed on two separate occasions, one at Alipis before his community was relocated, and one afterwards at the new relocation community of Apalaka. Thus a collective feast meant to frame relocation as proof of the eschaton was encouraged by the mine, which underwrote it as a ‘community event.’

Social Change

Shortly after relocation beliefs about moral and physical decay that had long been a part of the culture of the area came to life in new ways. Previously, people believed that children were maturing more slowly than their parents and were shorter than previous generations. Now these began changing. While some people considered their children to be smaller than them, others saw an apocalyptic process going on in reverse: they believed that children were now growing prematurely and much larger than was normal and healthy. They were having sex earlier than previously, and traditional ways of life had changed. One particularly educated Ipili man who was sensitive about his short stature and balding head had assimilated these distinctively Ipili beliefs to the scientific theory of evolution – he believed that he was the most highly evolved Ipili, and that Ipili would grow shorter in the future as brains, rather than brawn, became central to survival.

These beliefs about the end of the world seemed realistic to Porgerans because all of the symptoms that they described were in fact coming true. Porgera has never been a good place for gardening and Ipili do tend to be very small people. Changes of diet and access to protein rich foods such as rice have resulted in physical phenomenon that were rare or absent in traditional Ipili society – obesity being the most noticeable. While I did no biological anthropological work during my fieldwork, my impression is that in Porgera children fed healthy diets often *are* much taller than their parents.

Sexual mores had changed as well. Traditionally, Ipili were prudish people. Gender segregation and misogyny was very common in Ipili society. Although originally women wore only grass skirts, one of the earliest white practices that Ipili women adopted was to wear clothes to cover their bodies. Traditionally men and women lived apart, and men shunned food prepared by women for fear of female pollution. They did not marry before initiation and were taught a plethora of magical rituals and spells to use immediately before and after sex to protect themselves. This separation of sexes, which had been in decline since the arrival of Christianity, was finally completely extinguished with the creation of relocation homes.

For this reason, it is difficult to judge the state of social change in Porgera based on reports from the Ipili themselves -- activity that many white people would consider normal would be viewed by Ipili as a sign of moral decay or degeneracy. In 1930 the idea of an Ipili man sleeping in the same house with a woman would have been viewed with horror and disgust. The idea of eating food cooked by a woman, or sharing food with them was still abhorrent. Despite the fact that originally neither men nor women wore any clothes at all, the arrival of textiles and the combination of Christian modesty with precolonial concerns with exposure to women meant that by the 1980s any woman who

could be totally clothed ought to be. In fact by the 1990s, women in clothes that revealed such taboo sections of anatomy as the knee or elbow were viewed as licentious hussies. Behavior that the average Australian viewer might expect to see on television shows such as ‘Neighbors’ or ‘Home and Away’ were viewed with alarm by Porgerans. The idea of a young (and uninitiated) man taking a woman out to dinner and then actually *sharing a milkshake with her* was repulsive enough to Ipili, but then to actually have sex with her – without even taking the simple precaution of inserting bespelled leaves into one’s nostrils to keep out her polluting female smell – and then *sleep in her bed*, a bed in which one could only presume at one point she slept in while *menstruating*, could only be interpreted as a sign of impending eschatological breakdown. The advent of the teenager, in other words, was viewed by Ipili as a sign that the end of the world was at hand.

To be sure, some of the changes to life in Porgera are not the sort of thing that one might make light of – the spread of HIV and sexual violence being chief among them. Still, while these ought not be made light of, it is nevertheless true that it is difficult to know whether sexual violence is more common today than it was in the past. Consider, for instance, an anecdote from the kiap Chris Vass about the state of male-female relations in the early 1960s:

a party of Porgerans arrived carrying a home-made stretcher with something bound up to it. They brought it up to my house... this wasn’t an ordinary dead body. It was a headless woman, and she had a sapling about two inches in diameter pushed right up her vagina so the top end of it was up near her neck, and just the bottom end of it sticking out between her legs. And the separated head was placed alongside. (Nelson 1982:36).

In light of the possibilities for violence against women that existed in Ipili society in the past – even if they are sensationalized in this kiap’s account -- measurements of the long-term change in attitudes towards gender need to be made in terms of both history and recent events in the valley, and they are very difficult to make. While Biersack

suggests that “individualism, or some highlands version of it, may be on the rise” and laying “the foundation for complementarity without asymmetry – for horticulture, as it were, without hierarchy” (1998b:87-88) it seems more likely that what is happening in Porgera today is the entrenchment of gender divisions that reflects a world with an increasing amount of hierarchy, but lacking in horticulture.

A similar thing could be said for public order. Through the 1990s the valley would be disrupted by civil unrest on a scale that it had not seen before. Civil disturbance and even rioting became a feature of life in the valley in a way that it had not been previously. The visibility of civil disturbance and the frequency with which it occurred were undoubtedly the cause of many people’s perceptions of Porgera as a ‘wild west’ or ‘frontier’ town. As Glenn Banks remarked in 1996, “minor disturbances are so common that they are often just considered part of life in Porgera” (Banks and Bonnell 1997:23). As a result, the image of Porgera as a place with a ‘law and order problem’ or a ‘deteriorating law and order problem’ became endemic in the 1990s. Susanne Bonnell summed up this point of view when she wrote that “the deteriorating law and order situation in Porgera is the main problem affecting the quality of life of Porgerans and the long term viability of the mine” (Bonnell 1999:132). It is important to note, however, that the very existence of the peaceful public sphere that is being torn apart is itself a relative novelty that is the result of the pacification of the valley that occurred in the 1960s. It was only at this point that people felt safe moving throughout the valley and that something like a ‘public sphere’ or ‘public space’ was created. Despite the Porgeran sense of an increasing affluence, then, some aspects of life in Porgera which seem to be declining are in fact an artifact of foreign rule and may end up being a blip in the long-term history of life in the valley. Nowhere is this more evident than in the massive physical change that

has occurred in the valley.

Physical Change

The massive physical changes in the valley that the valley experienced during construction did not end after the mine came on-line. The first example of this ongoing, large-scale physical change in the valley was the Maiyapam landslip. Porgera is a geotechnically unstable place, and landslips and landslides are frequent. In 1985 a landslip occurred above the Porgera station on the Maiyapam river. At the time people were not particularly worried about this as it happened four kilometers or so from the station. However, in 1991 the slip became active again and began moving down towards the airstrip. Its progress was too slow to be visible to the human eye, but it soon sped up, moving forward at a meter a day. It became clear that it was going to plow through the middle of the station, destroying the buildings and improvements there. As Harry Ulin, the zone coordinator (whom we met in his role as Porgera Mining Coordinator during Yakatabari) wrote in a briefing of that time, the landslide

has slowly been working its way down the mountain, it has now reached Porgera Station. It is an enormous landslide and it cannot be stopped, it will plow its way through Porgera Station as surely as night follows day. Currently, the Bromans store has been shut down and it's being pulled down this week. The Porgera Health Center is slowly each day slipping sideways, we must make a decision to either pull it down or let it collapse down in the near future. The buildings to follow after this will be the Community Hall and the school, the landslide has not reached these buildings yet but it will. On the other side of the station in the future the police housing and vocational school will be affected and prior to them the complete commercial section, it is only a matter of time.

Finally, after attempts to avert the bulk of the damage, the Porgera airstrip was closed on 22 September 1991 after having been in use for just short of thirty years. Suddenly, all of the long-term planning that had gone into the Porgera agreements had to be rethought in light of the destruction of so much of the valley's infrastructure. The

Kairik airstrip suddenly assumed much greater importance in the minds of all involved, as it was now the only way for planes to fly into the valley. With the threat of future land movements at the station Paiam town, which had previously been more of a long-term project, became the focus of future urban development in the valley.

In any case, by 1994 yet another event would lend credence to the Ipili belief that the world was on its last legs. Porgera uses 200 tons of high explosives a week in its operations (Jackson and Banks 2002: 207), and all explosives are manufactured on site in an explosives facility. One of the most commonly used explosives are piped into a casing creating what are essentially highly explosive sausages. On the day of 2 August, a friction build-up of some sort occurred around this machine, and the resulting heat caused the 4,000 kilograms of explosives in the machine to detonate (Jackson and Banks 2002: 207). There was a loud explosion and eleven workers were killed. The vast majority of the remaining explosions were intact.

This was not to last. Most of the remaining explosives were designed to be inert until subjected to extremely high temperatures (hence the use of blasting caps and other priming explosives). The fires that resulted from the first explosion grew in size and heat until, seventy-seven minutes later, the remaining explosives in the explosives plant – roughly 75 tons – detonated. Windows ten kilometers from the site were shattered, the explosion was heard in Mt. Hagen 200 kilometers away, and the bodies of the eleven victims of the mine site were – according to the PJV employee who led me on a tour of the site -- extruded through a chain link fence around the perimeter of the plant. The cloud from the explosion was moving fast enough that it formed a mushroom cloud. Debris and shrapnel from the explosion ended up embedding themselves in people and buildings kilometers away. The explosion was a severe industrial accident, and shook the

confidence of investors – Placer Pacific's shares fell thirty cents within two days of the explosion. The mine's operations were disrupted for a fortnight, and operations were halted for a day to commemorate the tragedy, the only day in the mine's history prior to my fieldwork that they completely stopped production. Eventually a memorial meeting hall would be built in memory of the deceased, and a monument erected on the location of the former explosives plant.

Initially, there was fear on the part of the community that a nuclear explosion had occurred. The fact that there had been *two* blasts led many people to believe that it might not be an isolated event. The explosion was also understood in terms of Ipili culture. It had been caused, they said, by Kupiane. The fact that none of the people who died had been Porgeran was proof that although he was angry with the mining company, the feasting carried out earlier by Ambi Kipu and others had acted to ensure his happiness with Porgerans themselves.

The final momentous change that I will discuss occurred during my fieldwork, and was connected with the arrival of the year 2000. When I first arrived in the field in November 1999, there was already a palpable concern in the valley about the end of the world, although belief about the end of the world were, as Ira Bashkow (2000) would say, 'soft.' While people were unsure exactly what would happen on the millennium, that fact that they thought *something* would occur was unbelievable overdetermined.

Ipili constantly read the national newspapers in order to be informed of 'wol nius' in a way similar to that described by Robbins for the Urapmin (1998). These newspapers frequently reported on concern about the upcoming millennial bug and possible power outages, an event glossed in Tok Pisin throughout Papua New Guinea as 'wol blakaut' (world blackout). The importance and relevance of this was underscored by the fact that

The National, the second largest daily in Papua New Guinea, printed a millennium countdown on its masthead that featured a large box with the number of days slowly ticking down to zero. This concern was immediately assimilated to early Ipili notions *yu undupi*, which in fact can also be glossed in Tok Pisin as ‘wol blakaut’. Indigenous myths of a time of darkness, then, articulated with globalized news stories of possible power outages in a particularly elegant way.

What exactly would happen during the coming time of darkness was unclear. Some claimed that the world would end utterly, while others thought that all forms of illumination (the sun, fire, electric light) would not work. Everyone made preparations, including those who considered their lives would mostly likely be instantly snuffed out but who reckoned it was better to be safe than be sorry. Some people reported that they had lived in the past without power, and that they could simply ‘eat sweet potato’ through the blackout and revert to the ‘bush ways’ they had given up when they received relocation houses – a clear harkening back to the Paielan quoted in chapter three who needed “only a garden of sweet potato, his axe and a bow to exist.” Others planned to rely on store-purchased food. My adopted sister, an ardent Seventh Day Adventist, told me that she was planning to buy a large number of soft drinks and flavored biscuits and put them next to her on her bed. When the world blackout occurred, she would simply reach over and take the supplies she needed and eat and drink when she got thirsty.

As this story demonstrates, there was also a strong Christian millenarian tone which combined with precontact beliefs and global news sources to confirm people’s fears of the millennium. As noted above, Ipili Christianity has always had a strong apocalyptic bias, and news coming from all over regarding the coming of the millennium was eagerly incorporated into internal church doctrine. The possible existence of the

timing of the millennium was quickly swept up into the political wrangling of local church groups. At the early stage of the onset of the millennium, the Seventh Day Adventist community – the largest, youngest, and most quickly growing community in Porgera – were the most enthusiastic about the upcoming of the millennium since, obviously, Seventh Day Adventists had a strong doctrinal interest in the millennium. The Lutheran church was older and previously more prestigious because of its links to the outside world – the pastor was Engan and the liturgy was done in Engan as well. Now that they were eclipsed by the Adventist congregation, the Lutherans were particularly eager to brand their millenarian enthusiasm as bird-brain. Repeatedly citing injunctions that Jesus would come “as a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2), they argued that while Jesus would return we did not know when. As the millennium approached, the national Seventh Day Adventist church explicitly disavowed the notion that this was definitely the end of the world. Local enthusiasm remained undiminished, however, and a week-long prayer vigil drew literally thousands of new converts to the enormous and newly-completed Adventist church in Yarik.

Millennial expectation was ratcheted up dramatically after the events of 27 December, when an industrial accident occurred on the mine site. Mere days before the new year, one of the pipes carrying highly-pressurized oxygen burst, and the resulting high heat melted a pipe running parallel to it that contained slurry. The result was the creation of a stream of ultra-hot vaporized water and rock that created an enormous cloud. Because the metal and rock in the slurry had oxidized (i.e. rusted) in the course of treatment, the cloud was a bright red. It was accompanied by a large explosive sound. Many reported that it formed a mushroom cloud, although this seems unlikely to me.

This was an impressive, if not serious, industrial accident in and of itself, but its

timing in Porgera elevated it to an event of eschatological significance. The mine was operating on a skeleton crew because most employees – and particularly the expatriate management – had returned home for the holidays. As a result community relations staff were ill-prepared to deal with the resulting community concern. Assurances that the accident was a minor one and that the situation was repaired were cold comfort to a community that remembered the delayed explosion in 1994.

At this point, whatever ‘soft’ beliefs that people had about the coming of the millennium rapidly hardened. Hours after the accident word had spread throughout the community that ‘gas’ had escaped that was poisonous and – according to one prominent man – it would kill everyone in a thirty-mile radius. Memories of the 1994 explosion were widespread in the Porgera community and – in scene amazingly reminiscent of Cecil B. DeMille’s *Ten Commandments* -- there was an exodus of people out of the valley as cars and buses streamed out on the only road leaving the valley, while other people fled on foot to Paiela. My own community – which was filled with in-married people of other ethnicities as well as many guests who were living in the community – was noticeably empty, and many local people made loud speeches about the shallowness of these outsider’s attachment to them and their status as fair-weather friends.

In sum, the landslip, the explosion, and the millennium, like construction itself, were part of a string of incredible events that occurred in Porgera in the early 1990s. Most communities in Papua New Guinea – or anywhere else for that matter – do not usually experience mushroom-cloud explosions, or destruction of their city center due to natural disaster. In the case of Porgera, these fantastic events were happening almost *annually*. All in all, inhabitants of the valley were living through times that any community would find extraordinary. The previous lack of development in the valley

only served to highlight the magnitude of the events going on in Porgera. The Ipili reaction to these events involved casting them in light not only of beliefs and stories they had inherited from their traditional culture, but also in light of the specific historical experiences leading up to the creation of the mine in the valley. No wonder, then, that millenarianism is still a popular belief amongst Ipili.

Fulfilled Promises, Increased Expectations: Whites and Their World

One of the senior employees of the Porgera gold mine in charge of ensuring ‘sustainable development’ likes to use biblical imagery to explain his job. Ipili, he says, are walking through the Sinai desert of turbulent times and need strong, responsible, ‘uncorrupted’ local leadership if they are to reach the Canaan of a sustainable, post-mine future. While he attributes his inability to find a Moses among landowners to the ‘corruption’ of local elites, I would argue that his difficulties are caused by the fact that Ipili consider his metaphor to be fundamentally flawed. Given that the Ipili see their prehistoric existence as one of deprivation, and given the amount of goods and services that have been pumped into the valley, it is not surprising that they consider themselves to have already arrived in the land of milk and honey.

Or are they? The signing of the Porgera Agreements was meant to bring an end to the days when Ipili would not be paid the true value of their gold, but doubts still linger. Like utopias of previous times, this new age of mine-derived affluence fails to live up to the Ipili hopes of unbridled affluence. Their experience of the white world has been one of initial excitement and growing disenchantment. Even with – especially with – the arrival of the mine, Ipili feel more strongly than ever that the utopia they long for and feel so entitled to has not yet been delivered, despite the fact that most of their wishes have been fulfilled. In this section of the dissertation I trace this disappointment through two

areas: Ipili dissatisfaction with white material culture, and Ipili disillusionment with white social mores.

As I mentioned earlier, Ipili have -- like the Hagen people described by Strathern (1988) and Merlan and Rumsey (1991) -- a keen sense of the way in which the white world is a *lawa* – replacement, augmentation, transformation – of their own and hence simultaneously both new and familiar. Thus the arrival of unprecedented change in the valley – a totally novel and indeed unbelievable change – was in fact seen as typical and expected. After all, unexpected, unimaginable change has been happening to the Ipili regularly for the past fifty years – if one impossible thing happens, why not another? As a result Ipili see the material culture that whites brought with them as fundamentally familiar, a transformed but recognizable version of their own. New but not essentially *novel*, white material culture is thus in some sense *familiar* to Ipili. They are the *lawa* of the objects that Ipili have been using for as long as they can remember. In particular, they are seen as augmented -- ‘better’ or ‘improved’ -- versions of what has come before. The value added by whiteness is typically understood in terms of two qualities which Ipili objects lack: either of their infinite durability or endless replaceability.

The example of prepackaged food demonstrates the way in which Ipili see white material culture as being augmented through its replaceability. As every member of America’s affluent society knows, some commodities are meant to be disposed and replaced by an infinite succession of exact duplicates which are cheap and readily available -- one’s desire for food can be fulfilled without any effort at all.

Take salt, for example. As in many other areas of the highlands, salt was a valuable and scarce commodity in Porgera and the wider region (Wiessner and Tumu 1998). Typically, wood was soaked in salt-springs, burned, and the ash was collected and

traded over long distance. Salt was a scarce and highly-valued commodity – while it is not clear, it appears that it may also have been essential for the local diet. Much of Ipili involvement in long-distance trading involved acting as middlemen in the salt trade or traveling to salt-springs owned by other groups with whom they had ties in order to make their own salt. Today Ipili are true saltaholics – every meal, be it rice or sweet potato, can and should be eaten with salt, preferably *lots*. Salt, like cooking oil and sweet potato, are considered *de rigueur* in any Ipili household. Ipili without salt are poor.

So what is the white equivalent of salt that the Ipili use in the valley today? It's salt! The now-ubiquitous plastic bags of salt available in trade stores are seen by Ipili as essentially similar to the salt that they consumed before contact, but 'new and improved.' Today's salt is purer, cheaper, healthier and more readily available. The salt that Ipili eat today, then, is not merely analogous to the salt that they had before, it is identical but transformed – the same but better. No more boring trading! Why waste hours soaking wood at a salt pool? Just heat and serve!

While the similarities between salt and salt are fortuitous, this tendency to see things in new items is even more clear in the case of less easily equated objects such as tadpoles and cheese twisties. These deliciously cheesy snacks were explicitly described as 'white men's frogs' (*one monge*) and were definitively labeled as food eaten only by children – so much so that people laughed at me when I ate them. Why? Ipili children traditionally spend a good deal of their time unsupervised, running around the bush. A lot of that time is spent hunting small animals such as frogs, tadpoles, spiders, and other insects which are then cooked (or not) and eaten. Most Ipili – and especially Ipili boys – engage in this activity, which is not surprising given the presumably low level of protein in the typical Ipili diet and the nutritional demands of growing children. As a result,

children's love of the sodium- and fat-rich cheese flavored snacks has caused them to be identified as analogs of these foods – the *lawa* of tadpoles. As a result, adults never eat them.

Here, the work-wealth equation is short circuited through replacement and convenience – one's desire for food can be meant without any effort at all. Consumer goods, in this case premade food, offer the opportunity of satisfying one's appetite without laboring to create food. They can be purchased using mine-derived money for which one did not have to labor. But Ipili also imagine white objects to be better than their own because they are infinitely durable.

Ipili encounters with the white world have been with a segment of it concerned with efficiency, durability, and precision. The presence of mining culture in the Porgera valley has heightened the Ipili's preexisting concern with durability and given them a familiarity with the productive, industrial technology of the West. Ipili have incorporated as 'white' items that many anthropologists, whose occupation and class background often puts them at a remove from primary industry, may not be familiar with. Backhoes, load masters, autoclaves, primary crushers -- all of these are familiar to the Ipili. Thus while the Hawaiians described by Sahlins may have sought "everything new and elegant" while spurning "coarse articles" (Sahlins 1990:50), Ipili predilections for the permanent collided happily with miners' concerns for equipment and gear that would survive heavy-duty wear and tear.

This quality of durability is encapsulated by the term 'permanent material,' which has worked its way from English into Tok Pisin and Ipili. White goods are seen as the 'permanent material' versions of indigenous Ipili objects. For instance the Ipili think it is funny, but also absolutely accurate, to refer to a cigarette lighter as 'permanent material

matches.’ The clearest example of improved durability comes from the paradigmatic case of stone and steel tools. By the time of my fieldwork, almost no one in my community had had the experience of making or using a stone axe. Nonetheless, the difference in effort that using stone versus using steel took was universally remarked upon when people reflected on the differences between the past and the present. One person, when summarizing their view of contact with whites, said to me simply “before we had stone axes, now we have steel ones.” Steel axes had become metonymic of the labor-saving properties of white material culture.

One of the most ubiquitous signs of the superiority of white technology are the relocations houses which the mine had built for Special Mining Lease landowners. Made out of a timber frame with metal siding, these sorts of houses are known in Tok Pisin as ‘coppa haus’ (coppa being ‘copper’ or ‘metal’) or ‘permanent material house’ in contrast to indigenous ‘bush houses’ or ‘bus haus.’

Ipili take the ‘permanent’ in ‘permanent material’ seriously. Permanent material houses that have been built are expected to exist forever without maintenance. There are other examples. Axes stay sharp forever. Strong boots – another keenly sought after item – will keep their tread and waterproofing even after extensive use on limestone. The idea of something being permanent and unchanging, stable, and durable across time holds enormous appeal for a people whose culture focuses on decay and regeneration. Thus the idea of white objects being ‘permanent material’ speaks not only to dichotomies between asocial bush and the cleared social space of Ipili homesteads, it speaks of a way of short-circuiting the work-wealth equation which is central to Ipili culture.

The tragic side of this belief comes from the fact that ‘permanent material objects’ are not maintenance free, but in fact maintenance intensive. Shoes require care – and

preferably two pair worn on alternate days – if they are to last. Houses must be maintained. Delicate clothes restrict what a wearer can do in them without destroying them. It is one of the ironies of Ipili life that objects which they imagine will free them from work and care one in fact ensnare you in a web of maintenance and work much greater than that involving bush material objects which are all, at heart, disposable. Like the prototypical American housewife in a kitchen full of ‘labor saving devices’ which in fact demand more work from her than they save, Ipili are often disappointed by their experience with white material culture. Houses with burnt-out light bulbs, clogged gutters, and broken water pipes seem to Ipili to have *essentially missed the point* and not to be *permanent* at all. Cars which break down, shoes which wear out, axes which require sharpening, electric stoves that require new heating coils, all seem to renege on the bet that Ipili have made that their mountain will be replaced by ‘permanent material objects.’

The disastrous devaluation of the Kina over the course of the mine line (from US\$1.05 in 1990 to US\$0.36 in 2000) means that the purchasing power of mine-derived revenue has decreased – a fact frequently commented on by Ipili. Thus items like store-bought rice and tinned fish which Ipili expected to be cheap and ubiquitous are now relatively expensive. Ipili expected white objects to allow them, as Audrey Hepburn puts it in *Roman Holiday*, “to do just whatever they like” -- give free rein to their *nembo* without care or restriction. Instead they have become, as Bob Marley (or was it Karl Marx?) once put it, “possessed by their possessions.”

How could this have happened? To many the answer is obvious: they were cheated by the mine, and that the real houses, the *high quality houses* are somewhere else – the most likely locations being in white countries and at other mining developments where landowners have gotten ‘real’ houses. The decreasing value of their royalty and

compensation payments is somehow tied to the occult forces of ‘the market’ and financial arrangements which they do not understand and which white miners control. Thus disappointment with white material culture leads on to Ipili disappointment with whites themselves.

Dealing with Whites and Their World

Just as the Ipili see the world of white material culture as a version of their own, so too do they understand the wider white world – by which they mean largely Port Moresby and tropical north Queensland – as in some sense familiar (for the construction of whiteness in Papua New Guinea, see also Bashkow 1999). Initially, Ipili understood white society as having solved the problems which they feel plague their own. As they grew more and more experienced in dealing with whites, however, they began to imagine life in Australia as an inversion of their own values. Either way, there is a sense amongst people who have had the most dealings with whites that white life is a dystopic transformation, or *lawa*, of their own.

Earlier on in Porgera’s contact history, white society was seen as utopic. While Ipili perceptions of the government as something trickable continue to exist, it is nevertheless true that the ability of colonial officers to end internecine feuds and pacify the valley was seen as proof of the powerful ability of whites to live in peace and harmony with one another. Obviously, the introduction of Christianity and the explicit articulation of an ethic of Christian living by white missionaries lent force to this idea.

In the mid-1960s and early 1970s when Porgerans were first introduced to the court system and fighting was suppressed in the valley, courts were understood as something new, an innovation of the white men which had no clear equivalent in

Porgeran custom. Although analogies were drawn between the way that both courts and homicide compensation ‘ended fights,’ the novelty of this method – in which no-one had to be killed before peace-ensuring prestations were given -- was striking. Ipili were also particularly impressed with the idea of due process and the right of every person involved in a court case to present their own opinion in group meetings with the kiap – two features of the white world that greatly appealed to Ipili egalitarianism. The suppression of violence by the government, the maintenance of social relations via litigation rather than violence, and the Christian emphasis on love and fellow feeling all came together to provide an alternative to the Ipili way of life that seemed powerful and compelling to the people who first experienced them.

Today, this sensibility has been dulled as Ipili have gained self-confidence in their dealing with outsiders. Sixty years ago Puluku Poke and other indigenous miners were part of a small group that understood white law well enough to use it to their own ends. More and more, however, more and more people have developed the self-confidence they need enter the world of litigation, and Ipili have become more and more litigious. Experience with court cases at the national level, the work of hiring lawyers, making depositions, and so forth has given a small but significant number of Ipili a chance to experience the operations of the legal system in a non-local setting. Amongst these people and those close them, the law is not seen as the way in which white men pursue peace, but rather the arena in which they undertake conflict. Litigation, in other words, is the *lawa* of tribal fighting and courts, as one man said to me, are “how white men fight.”

No more is this more clear than in an interview I did with one of the most well-known and experienced of Porgeran middlemen, Jonathan Paraia, who drew the parallel explicitly when he described how he explained the origin and purpose of the Porgera

Landowner's Association to landowners in the late 1980s:

Now you must have your haus man as well. The haus man is called association. That is going to be the mouth for speaking on behalf of landowners. Because no politicians and nobody will come and help you unless you form a pressure group like this who will talk on behalf of the landowners. Because they don't understand what association is. So I have to put it in a local context where they can understand what it's like, you know, how it operates. And they know what *akali anda* [the men's house] is, you know. The haus man is where you sit down and talk and plan and how to go and attack other people and how to go and take things from other people. (laugh) How to negotiate. And they are already used to that. And I was saying, you know, we've got to build our own *akali anda* now, and you guys some of you are going to be leaders like clan leaders and sub clan leaders, you're going to be leaders like that. And that is where you are going to deal with from which you can deal with national government, provincial government, and company on behalf of the landowners.

Here Jonathan analogizes a political pressure group with a traditional military institution. His gloss of 'negotiate' as 'go[ing] to attack other people and how to go and take things from them' is revealing of the way he and the Porgeran elite who interacted with the mine understood negotiation with government and company representatives as the 'lawa' of Porgeran raiding parties.

On the one hand, contemporary Americans believe that systems of redistributive justice such as the Western legal system enshrines standards of impartiality, justice, and procedural fairness which could not be more at odds with guerrilla raiding in the central highlands of Papua New Guinea. On the other hand, lawyers, judges, and other people actively involved in the legal system might ruefully admit that Jonathan is more right than some would care to admit. Ipili see Western law as an augmented, transformed version of their own methods of conflict, but this identification might not, however much we might like it to be, a misrecognition. In some ways Porgerans' long history of litigation has led them to some valuable insights about Western culture. While this understanding of white culture is not the same as the understanding that many whites –

including kiaps – might have of it, this does mean that it is *wrong*.

Ipili save their greatest shock and dismay for white familial relations. It is here, more than anywhere else, that Ipili see white lives as a dystopic inversion of Ipili mores. The basic contrast here is between Papua New Guinea as a ‘free country’ and Australia as a ‘money country.’ Porgerans are proud of and emphasize their autonomy. In Papua New Guinea, I was told repeatedly, “you can run free, eat free, sleep free.” Those without formal employment could rely on ‘wantoks’ for food. In contrast, Australia is a place where those without money are destitute and homeless. In Australia, you must purchase food, rent a house, and pay taxes.

Classically, sociology distinguishes societies with ascriptive versus achieved status, and the creation of a formally free, monetized economy is understood to result in more freedom and autonomy rather than less, even if this includes the ‘freedom to fail.’ But Porgerans, like Marx, are keenly aware of just how far one can fall in a world where one can not exit the market and return to a subsistence lifestyle. Thus Ipili understandings of whites articulate a certain leftist suspicion of merely formal freedom.

On one level, this Ipili understanding of Western society reflects an impressive intuition about the consequences of ordering the organization of society through a steering medium such as money. At the same time, it must be understood that this is more than an Ipili diagnosis of a particular type of sociality. Indeed, Ipili understand *all* of white life to be completely and totally commodified – as if *all* interactions were mediated by cash payment. It is this aspect of white life that Ipili find appalling. The number one question I was asked – after requests for my Goretex jacket and the work boots that I wore – was whether it was true that white parents charged their children money for food and rent. The idea, I gathered, was that mealtime in white households was more or less

analogous to eating in a restaurant. This horrified fascination with the soulless regimentation of white life can be seen in Nixon's description of the heartlessness of industry simply by saying "they work twenty four hours!"

In sum, exposure to the 'outside world' has brought Porgerans benefits that their ancestors could barely conceive of. But even as Porgeran wishes are filled, Ipili familiarity with the outside world grows, and their sense of what 'true' satisfaction is changes. The more they learn of the white world, the less compelling the material culture available to them seems, even as the white lifestyle they come to know more and more seems less appetizing than it once was.

Whites in Papua New Guinea

Just as Porgeran's sense of the Yakatabari negotiations were based on a culturally specific historical consciousness focused on the rising expectations that developed as contact with outsiders grew more sustained, so too were the biographies of the negotiators they faced on the other side of the table shaped by their own expectations for the country's gradual improvement. But while Ipili experienced their entanglement with Western colonialism and the postcolonial state as an ever-increasing if never satisfying affluence, the community relations officers with whom they dealt understood Papua New Guinea's postcolonial history as a fall from its pre-independence grace.

In this section of the dissertation I will focus on the history of the white Australian negotiators involved in Yakatabari – the community relations officers who served as department heads within the community affairs department. As I mentioned at the start of this chapter, all but one (who had worked in plantations) had served as government officers during Papua New Guinea's colonial period, and of those all but one

(who worked as an agricultural extension officer) had worked as kiaps. My discussion of the world view of these community relations officers will be based on my fieldwork inside the mine, as well as discussions with other former kiaps and colonial government officers who I encountered in Port Moresby and other places in Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Studying expatriates in Papua New Guinea can be difficult. On the one hand, the formal academic literature is extremely thin. In their recent discussion of expatriate life, Errington and Gewertz (2004:109-137) very correctly point out the paucity of information on this topic (their literature review includes, for instance, Bettison 1966; Bourke 1993; Griffin 1978; Nelson 1982; Sinclair 1995; Upton 1998). On the other hand, there is a much larger literature that they do not engage which, although not officially ‘anthropological,’ has genuine documentary value and is often written to high standards. At the very least, it is highly evocative of the ethos of expatriate life in Papua New Guinea. To focus merely on volumes that document the post-war years, we have Michael Chalinger’s (1992, 1994) portraits of expatriate life in Port Moresby, Missionary memoirs by Chatterton (1974), Barnard (1969) (Porgera’s famous ‘flying missionary’), expat memoirs (Harnkness 1994; Clelland 1985; Hollinshed 2004; Inden 2001; Lloyd et al. 2001), biographies (Fowke 1995), and accounts of traveling in-country by airplane (King 1993, Sinclair 1971, Ward and Serjeantson 2002), and surveying (Sinclair 2001). Biographical and autobiographical accounts of Kiaps’ lives are common (Downs 1986; Fitzpatrick 2005; Gammage 1998; Sinclair 1969, 1981, 1988; Kituai 1998; MacPherson 2001) as are richly evocative (and often quite thinly disguised) fictional accounts (Downs 1970; Shearston 1979, 2000; and the particularly outstanding Stow 1981).

This literature reflects more than the public’s appetite for adventure stories or

expatriate's interest in self-memorialization. It points to the crucial role that kiaps played in Papua New Guinea's postwar development as well as the strong social ties they developed and continue to maintain today – seen, for instance, in the active postings at the website exkiap.net and the existence of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia (former the Retired Officers' Association of Papua New Guinea), which publishes a regular journal. Former colonial officers – indeed, former Papua New Guinea expatriates in general – form a close-knit group which is the latter-day reincarnation of the territorialian grapevine I discussed in chapter three. Their own mutual understandings exhibit the collective, enduring, and integrated beliefs that makes their personal experiences more than mere idiosyncrasy. There is, as Gordon put it, a distinct 'Kiap High Culture' a "characteristic professional or at least occupational culture" which in some respects "differed markedly from contemporary Australian or civilian culture" (Gordon and Meggitt 1985:49). It is perfectly appropriate to speak of (and analyze) an 'Papua New Guinea expatriate culture' or, as I will (perhaps unfairly) label it here, a 'kiap culture.'

Rather than pursue a detailed account of the themes and history of this culture as I did with the Ipili, I take it for granted that the reader has some familiarity with standard average European culture and perhaps even Australia's own version of it. Thus my own discussion of kiap culture will be more a sort of collective profile of a generation of Australians and the commonalities in their collective biographies, and is intended to provide an ethnography – however incomplete – of at least one sector of Papua New Guinea's postcolonial expatriate population. I will begin by outlining the role of these former government officers in Papua New Guinea's mining sector, and how their life history led them to work for the mine. I will turn next to an examination of how that same

life history provided them with a unique way of viewing Papua New Guineans, and how this has influenced their interaction with the Ipili.

Heading North: Kiaps in Papua New Guinea

Like many countries in the world, Papua New Guinea is a place whose postcolonial history is marked by the continued presence of a small number of expatriates in key positions throughout the country, both in the civil service as well as in the private sector. This is particularly the case for Papua New Guinea's mining and hydrocarbon industry. It is a truism today that large resource extraction companies tend to assume the role and function of the state in the rural areas where they are based, and perhaps the most obvious sign of this is the fact that they often employ the same people as the former colonial government. As Banks and Ballard write, "one of the ironies of contemporary Papua New Guinea is that the Australian Kiap, the ultimate icon of colonial rule, has reappeared as the visible face of the mineral resource industry" (1997:160). The reasons for this are simple. As Banks and Ballard remind us,

Many tasks which confront community liaison staff are strikingly familiar to those who were kiaps. They become embroiled in mediating disputes, overseeing compensation payments, determining land ownership and group membership, censusing, and as mediators in labor relationships (Banks and Ballard 1997:162).

At mining and hydrocarbon developments across Papua New Guinea there tends to be at least one – and often more than one – former colonial government officer acting as a community relations officer. In fact Porgera is a particularly clear example of this phenomenon. The head of Community Affairs for the first decade of the mine's existence was a kiap with an extensive and impressive history in the administration of Papua New Guinea, and the community relations staff he put in place were all people who were hand-picked by him on the basis of their performance as government officers. Thus while

every mining or hydrocarbon project tends to keep kiaps as community relations officers, Porgera is truly unusual because of the way that its community relations officers are almost entirely kiaps.

While each of the people who worked in community relations had their own unique personality and biography, there are similarities in their careers that are worth noting. Each decided to move to Papua New Guinea as young men, and most experienced considerable success – indeed, some rose to occupy some of the most powerful administrative positions in the country. However, each experienced personal unhappiness as their work was undone when Papua New Guinea’s civil service began to be politicized in the 1980s and the government’s capacity began to decline. Almost all of them ended up leaving the country. Some left simply because their time was up, while others left due to quite traumatic circumstances – the revolt on Bougainville, for instance. After a period of reorientation they ended up back in Papua New Guinea, where they attempted to continue their lives not as government employees, but as the next best thing: representatives of the current big actor attempting to regiment action in Papua New Guinea’s hinterland, the Porgera gold mine.

How does one end up moving to Papua New Guinea in the first place? The men who I interviewed were on the whole from working and middle class families – often from rural Queensland -- who might otherwise have grown up to be farmers or bank clerks. They came to Papua New Guinea between the years of 1959 and 1970, with most of them arriving in the late 1960s. During their childhood, Papua New Guinea was a place remembered by Australian veterans of the war, and the location for almost a century of romantic travel literature about brave young men who traded in lives as bank clerks and farmers for ones of dangerous excitement in the ‘last unknown’ (Souter 1964).

For this reason, most of the community relations officers that I talked with were reluctant to discuss their initial decision to move to Papua New Guinea – the general feeling was that one ought to be sucked into such lines of work ‘accidentally’ and that to admit to intentionally seeking it out was a bit embarrassing. To seek a life of adventure was simply not done – *real* men had it inadvertently thrust upon them. Even those who admitted to being entranced with Papua New Guinea’s allure preferred not to reflect on how intelligent their choice (often made in their late teens and early twenties) to come to Papua New Guinea had been – a reluctance that is, if not universal, perhaps experience-near for those of us who entered graduate school directly after college. In some instances people remarked that they had “a romantic notion” or “knew people who had settled in [Papua New Guinea] from where I had originated in Australia.” This uneasiness with discussing their motivations was epitomized by one man who told me “I guess I’ve always wanted to come to Papua New Guinea. My father was here during the war, my uncle was here during the war... My father was a ship’s doctor round the coast before the war. There’s family connections.” There was an awkward pause before he continued: “a sense of adventure – you’re allowed to have that!” Some had elaborate, well-rehearsed narratives which ascribed their actions to fateful but random decisions which accidentally propelled them into life in Papua New Guinea. Alcohol often features prominently. One man remembered

I finished the third year of a degree in primary metallurgy, focusing on analytical chemistry and I realized that I wasn’t particularly interested in it... About the same time I saw in the newspaper an advertisement under the old Department of External Territories. They required field officers in Papua New Guinea. I had drunk sufficient whiskey at that time to scribble out an application and a few weeks later I got this telegram saying ‘front up for an interview’... They interviewed me in Melbourne, that was about the end of November. Didn’t think much about it. Just before Christmas I got another telegram saying ‘you’re accepted!’

Another man blamed his mother:

The Vietnam war was on, and in Australia we had a system like raffle -- your birthday dates were all thrown into a big barrel, and if your birthday date came out, you were called up. And that's how you got called up. And the only other way you could get to go to national service, you could volunteer... Seeing as my father, my uncle, and my two grandfathers all died of war injuries, and I'm the only son my Mom reckons that was a bad idea. So she actually found an ad in the paper for a kiap in New Guinea and she says instead of gong to Vietnam why don't you do that? So I said ok, that looks pretty good, so I applied and became a kiap.

It is important to realize that going to Papua New Guinea in the 1960s was an entirely different affair than it was in the interwar period memorialized in books like *First Contact* (Connolly and Anderson 1987) and *Like People You See In A Dream* (Schieffelin and Crittendon 1991). While it would be facetious to describe the Australian administration as 'the Peace Corps with guns' it would also not be too far off. This was, after all, an era when Gough Whitlam's labor government was responsible for undertaking far-reaching and extremely controversial liberal reforms. By the 1960s the benevolent paternalism that had always characterized the Australian administration of Papua New Guinea was stronger than ever, and work had shifted from exploration – which was by then largely accomplished – to the development of infrastructure. The counterculture of the sixties had made its mark as well. "I always hate to use the word 'hippy' because it has all sorts of implications of 'dope' and 'peaceman'," said one man, who then went on to admit that that wasn't far off from describing his own folksy background and the interest in self-sufficient agriculture that led him to be an agricultural extension officer. Another man described his shock arriving at Laiagam with "me guitar and me love beads and my long hair and my buffalo jacket" and being told to build a road. Not every kiap who arrived in Papua New Guinea was wearing a buffalo jacket, of course, but the story is telling.

One of the most important differences between kiaps such as Jim Taylor and John Black and the kiaps of the 1960s is the way they viewed their position in the international order. While the atrocities of the First World War had shaken Europe's confidence in its status as a paragon of civilization and the Dominion system was changing the relationship of England to her settler colonies, it was still possible to participate in colonial work in Papua New Guinea for the glory of Britain and the advancement of civilization. By the 1960s, in contrast, decolonization was a fact, 'civilization' seemed less and less a good idea in general, and the British Empire was rapidly turning into the Commonwealth. In this period, then, the sentiment that Papua New Guinea was "never a colony" reported by Hank Nelson (1982:8) was particularly strong. In fact, one of the most important points the former kiaps sought to convey to me in interviews was that Papua New Guinea was not a colony and that they were not colonial officers. They emphasized the fact that the expatriate lifestyle in Papua New Guinea was hard and not particularly lucrative and that they were there to help. As the former head of community affairs put it:

I don't think Australia knew how to be a colonial power. It was an ex-colony itself from England. It doesn't show the signs of what colonizing powers did. There are no big grand stone buildings around this place like there was in the old colonial empire of the Dutch and the Spanish or the more modern one of the 1800s... These things don't show up here. It was very temporary. We had fibro buildings and louvres, you know, these sort of things. They aren't seen in what I call true colonies. You know, the French in Indochina, in India, in African countries, because Australia's time here was very short.

Many of my interviewees preferred the term 'imperial administration' to 'colonial rule' and emphasized that Papua New Guinea was a Trust Territory of the United Nations that was administered, but not owned by, Australia.

We were an imperial administration here, it was an imposed administration. Australia did not hold Papua New Guinea, the New Guinea side as a possession... Australia took it over

under the League of Nations as the administering authority and later on under the United Nations. The New Guinea side of this place was subject to every three years to investigations, to a visiting delegation from the United Nations to see what Australia was doing here. We did not own this place.

For many the most obvious indication of their humane treatment of the subjects they governed had to do with land rights – the topic which of course would become crucial to their position as negotiators in Yakatabari:

To me one of the things that denoted a true colonialism was total disregard for native land rights. This country had law, law in the country, under the Australian administration of protection of native land rights. Hence even today there's only five percent of land in this country which has been alienated. The other is still in the hands of the traditional landowners. I think the examples of what I call true colonies in Africa [is] where there was total disregard for land rights, it was just ripped off them. This didn't happen in this country. I think that was one of the things that really denoted a colonial type thing was just total disregard for whatever traditional land rights were and they just took it off them.

Once settled into the country, the careers of the community relations officers had several things in common. First, almost all of them worked in the highlands, and many of them had worked in Enga. One of them has actually served as the officer in charge of Porgera in the early 1970s. In fact, there was a great deal of friendly joking about one former kiap who had spent his career entirely in coastal areas and his inexperience in dealing with the aggressive ethos of most highlanders. Second, in my experience these community relations officers were on the whole remarkable men who had achieved remarkable things in their lives – when the department was created much care went in to choosing people with outstanding records. Admittedly, some led lives that were a bit colorful. The former kiap in Porgera who now works for the mine described his period of administration thus: “I just went down there, Crazy old Kelly with his shotgun and all sorts of things, and said ‘you fight, I shoot you.’ So we didn't have any fights. Not while I was here.” On the whole, however, most had a more nuanced approach to administration. Indeed, many had distinguished careers and some had risen through the

ranks to truly extraordinary positions of power and influence. One man began as a foreman on a plantation in Bougainville over seeing workers and ended up general manager of the company, responsible for literally tens of thousands of employees. Two men I interviewed had become Provincial Secretaries and had budgeting and other power over provinces with literally hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. One wrote the constitution for one of Papua New Guinea's provinces during independence. Yet another helped create a development corporation which effectively organized all public works in Western Highlands province, organized the 1980 national census for the province, and then moved to join the the provincial office in Mt. Hagen. He remembers: "At one time I was commissioner for liquor licensing, assistant secretary for social development, I was on the town planning board, I was a resident magistrate, provincial statistical officer and several other things." Thus it was not only Ipili who were used to the idea that 'governance' involved a network of powerful people who combined in their person a bundle of institutional representations – preindependence Papua New Guinea operated in much the same way.

Postcolonial Disenchantment

All of these people, then, felt deeply responsible for a large part of Papua New Guinea's development, and most of them stayed on in Papua New Guinea after independence occurred in 1975. However, they shared the widespread sensibility that independence had come 'too soon' and that Papua New Guinea was not ready to be 'on its own.' The politicization of the civil service soon confirmed their suspicion. Many of them chose to leave. One man remembered "By that time I had twenty seven years of service all up, and I could see the politics the way it was eroding and gnawing away at all aspects of government, especially the public service, I decided it was time for me to get

out.” Another man remembered

Shortly after independence came this drive for provincial government. And that came about and became a very unwieldy and expensive exercise. Duplicate elections, duplicate officers, access to funds without due ethics -- without due training to be honest -- political appointees of staff who would listen to the politicians rather than following the rules. The more outspoken more developed areas such as the Wahgi and Hagen and the more educated people were able to manipulate things and control the large slice of the cake... at the end of 1985 we [the kiap and his wife] decided there was corruption and everything that we had each strived to attain for the province was being undone by corruption and rather than try to carry on it would be best if we left before we became very bitter. So towards the end of '85 we left.

For the plantation manager leaving was not a matter of choice – events on Bougainville forced the evacuation of his family and the destruction of a business he had devoted two decades of his life to developing. Others finished their contracts and simply left in the mid-70s without much regret. Even these people, however, were dismayed by the performance of Papua New Guinea's state throughout the 1980s, and they way they were vilified as colonial. Even worse, they found themselves blamed for Papua New Guinea's predicament. The irony of being accused of deserting Papua New Guinea in its hour of need was not lost on men who felt they had been forced against their will. As one man wrote on the exkiap.net message boards:

The United Nations resolution 1514 in 1960 called for the immediate independence of all colonial peoples. It stated that inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational development should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence. Good government was not a substitute for, nor preferable to, self-government. The Administration took action as best it could (given the resources made available to it) to implement these goals, particularly the recommendations of the Foote Report in 1962 and the World Bank report in 1964 but time was not on their side. If we had been allowed another generation to train a critical mass of indigenes to form a viable core of experts in all fields, things would probably have turned out differently. As it was, the pressure was on and many schoolboys became master craftsmen without having served an apprenticeship. The legacy of this failure is the shambles that the country has become *and this was predicted at the time.*

Working for the Mine

While many people left, not everyone came back. The men who returned to Papua New Guinea to work in the mining industry did so for many reasons. Despite what I have said about their sense of commitment to the country, it is important to note up front that one of the main reasons was, in many cases, the fact that the money was good. For some, it was extra money to fill out the time until they retired that could be combined with entrepreneurial activity in Australia – many ex-kiaps run small businesses in Australia or fix up houses and sell them. To others without a job or long-term financial security, working in Porgera was a real necessity – being a kiap was the only job they knew how to do, and the only way to earn a monthly paycheck greater than that of their pension or the dole. For most, however, the truth was in-between. As they approached retirement, or decided to push the date back a bit, they viewed their work in Porgera as an opportunity to make a generous amount of money and do some good as they wound down their careers. Regardless of whether they stood to gain monetarily, there was a clear sense that coming to Porgera could be justified on the same grounds as their colonial mandate – it was good work that included good works.

As might be imagined, the community relations officers were very different from the rest of the mine's employees. Other mine employees, for instance, considered them to have 'gone native' in a literal sense -- the word "feral" to describe them. They were viewed as socially separate and somewhat suspect by the other expatriates with whom they shared the mine's fenced-in compound. This is not to say that they were deeply socially isolated or made no friends at all, but it is to say that they were a recognizably distinct group with their own social mores. "Its not only me," explained one kiap tellingly when explaining something to me, "because I speak to the other exkiaps over dinner."

They also tended to eat together and often played sports together. For instance, after dinner the community affairs officers engage in a fast-paced walk around the grounds of the worker's camp, circling several times through the main road as they talk and share some conviviality. This small but distinctive gesture to maintain solidarity and settle one's meal was not, as far as I know, practiced by any other group.

Community Affairs was an unusual branch of the mine because it was non-productive – not part of the process of making gold. Such departments are not highly-valued in the corporate culture of mining. Yes, within Placer Dome, Porgera is well known for the extraordinary amount of time that the mine manager must spend in dealing with community affairs. I have heard estimates that fifty to sixty percent of the mine manager's time is spent keeping the Ipili 'in check.' As a result community relations officers have access to senior management that the average foreman does not. Indeed, many mines simply do not have large community relations offices. Some lack the department at all. As a result the community relations staff did not fit in well with a corporate culture simply because that culture typically did not have a place in which they could fit.

Community relations officers differ not just in corporate culture and role from the other employees of the mine, they also differ in their conception of their job. Mine employees typically move from one mining property to another, advancing (if they are lucky) to more and more senior positions as they do so. While they will sometimes move from company to company as they move from property to property, some spend their entire career with one firm. Very often, then, professionals in the mining sector feel more loyalty to their company than they do to a particular property where they happen to be working, and most certainly feel more attached to the property than to the place where it

is located.

Community relations officers on the other hand, are more committed to working in Papua New Guinea than they are working for a particular mining company. While some people have moved from Porgera to Misima, Placer's other property in Papua New Guinea, on the whole community relations officers come to the company late in life without the intention to climb the corporate ladder into senior management. They have a strong sense of themselves that comes from successful accomplishments in another career. As a result there is a sense of independence from the company.

Community relations officers see themselves as mediators whose job is to explain the mine to the Ipili and vice versa. This conception is obviously a transference from their previous job as government representatives. It also accords well with corporate culture -- both benevolent and (when possible) paternalistic, community relations officers' role as mediators plays into the senior management's portrayal of themselves as partners with local communities seeking to maximize stakeholder benefits. Corporate imperatives, then, are often (but not always) well served by kiaps' desire to explore the way the mine's pursuit of its own interests opens up a space in which they find a 'win-win' situation for all parties concerned. As one man explained to me:

We do still tend to take the people's side. If it's a land claim, when we look at it we might think 'well this is perhaps fifty-fifty, let's go the landowners side.' And this is endorsed by management if it's not too far - if it's taken to sixty forty maybe that's ok, but let's not go any further. But there's always in the back of your mind: "how can I best help the people? How can I use this company to help those people?" Keeping in mind of course the company's paying me, so the companies got to get something out of it. So we're looking for the win-win situations, not just the company gets its results and the people are secondary. We're trying to find the road, the method that will give both parties what they want. I think the kiap background - I don't think you could do without the kiap background. I don't think you could be in the middle. You'd have to be one way or the other. You'd be the tree-hugging do-gooder on the side of the people and you wouldn't

last too long with the company and you wouldn't do anybody very much good. And if you were the highly trained professional administrator you'd be too far to the company and you would not consider the people's needs fully.

The head of community affairs quoted his predecessor who said that community relations officers could only survive in the difficult environment of Porgera by mimicking it. It was for this reason they did not fit in to the ethos of professional engineers or technicians:

We behave like it and we look like it. Now that can be a bit dodgy if you belong to a corporate structure. If you get too far out you loose track of where you are and that's the delicate balance and I see that as my role, is to keep the department closely aligned with the company without being so close we loose touch with the people who we're supposed to be servicing.

Indeed, more than one person remembered that the difficulty of making the transition from the public sector to the private was not learning to work with Porgerans, but learning to work with white people after a career in Papua New Guinea.

This was my first exposure to working with the private sector, and it happened to be a mining culture. And I had to become used to working with white people. I had spent most of my life working with Papua New Guineans. So I had to become used to working with a large white group, with expatriate people, and trying to be the bridge between a traditional culture to this expatriate culture that came in here, which were miles apart in many ways, and you became the bridge between the two, trying to marry the two together where it was necessary, and you were the in-between part.

Kiap Knowledge

Community relations officers approach Ipili, then, on the basis of a historically particular and long-term experience of Papua New Guinea. They did not arrive in Porgera, like some colonizers who have been described in the literature, with essentialized images of the Melanesian other in their heads and one-dimensionally 'modernist' plans in their hands. Instead they have extensive experience in Papua New Guinea and a deep affection for the country. Their view of the Ipili difference and

pathology, then, are made not in contrast to the civilized West, but to other people in Papua New Guinea with whom they are familiar.

In fact community relations officers had developed what might be called ‘kiap knowledge,’ a genre of knowing about Papua New Guinea’s indigenous peoples that combined anthropological knowledge with the sort of practical understanding of people required by their profession. It is the latter-day incarnation of the ‘knowing about the valley’ that Porgera’s middlemen of the 1950s and 1960s exhibited. It was this stock of knowledge, rather than some sort of formal schooling, that qualifies them for the work they do. “Your training,” as one man told me when discussing his qualifications, “is your experience in Papua New Guinea, which is more broadly based than one particular school.”

This kiap knowledge was formed not only by long experience in Papua New Guinea, but also by the kiap’s own background in social science. All community relations officers who were formerly kiaps had done training at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA), where they were required to take a short course in anthropology as part of their Patrol Officer Certification course (Lawrence 1964). Since many of these men went through the course in the 1960s, they received training that was standard in Australia at the time and were taught by lecturers such as Ian Hogbin and Peter Lawrence. Westermark reports that a 1965 syllabus “includes articles and books by such well-known anthropologists as A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, J.A. Barnes, Robert Redfield, Raymond Firth, Ward Goodenough, Paula Brown, and Kenneth Read” (Westermark 2001:50). Thus Jorgensen is right suspecting that this is situation where anthropological models have “taken on a life of their own when deployed in legal and political contexts far removed from their original sources” (Jorgensen 2001:100).

Some who were sensitive to their relative lack of education vis-a-vis the visiting anthropologist made a special point of noting that their ASOPA certificate was in fact a tertiary certificate and that they had, in some sense, 'been to university.' Although spy novels were perhaps the thing most commonly read on chopper flights into and out of Porgera, some community relations officers enjoyed reading popular non-fiction as well as 'literature.' The tenor of the kiap reading list can perhaps best be seen in the fact that one man offered to lend me his copy of *The God Of Small Things* by Arudhati Roy, while another was nonplussed when he volunteered to purchase some books for me when on leave in Australia and I requested a copy of *Gravity's Rainbow*. One man who had been reading Geoffrey Blainey's *Very Short History of the World* told me how surprised he was to find Judaism lacked a missionary tradition, while another thought superior European culture developed in response to cold winters which forced people to spend time indoors together and discuss innovative technology. All of them enjoyed browsing through ethnographies from areas where they had formerly been stationed. In sum, community relations officers, like their legendary predecessor Jim Taylor, conceived of themselves as "intellectuals in action" (Gammage 1998), but the emphasis was on the 'action.'

It would be disingenuous to say that kiap knowledge was some sort of corrupt and derivative of the pure and untrammelled discourse of anthropology. Their instructors at ASOPA were not the only anthropologists who kiaps met. Indeed, many of the men working in Porgera had rubbed elbows at various rural clubs and outstations with some of the most well-known anthropologists to have worked in Papua New Guinea. This point was driven home to me quite forcefully very early on in the course of my fieldwork when one old Papua New Guinea hand asked me idly if I had ever read anything by Robert

Glasse. When I said that I had his eyes misted over in reminiscence and he murmured “Robert Glasse.... my God, that man could tango!” Others remembered Mervyn Meggitt and Andrew Strathern. The same was true of many Papua New Guineans as well. My very first day in Porgera when I told one man I was an anthropologist he responded “oh, so you record myths and take genealogies, like Aletta [Biersack]?” The janitor at the Porgera District Government Station is warmly thanked as the chief informant in the acknowledgments of Wohlt’s doctoral thesis (1978), and one of the police officers at the government station had two children named ‘Francesca’ and ‘Alan’ after the authors of Merlan and Rumsey 1991.

My point is that anthropological knowledge and kiap knowledge – indeed knowledge in and about Papua New Guinea more generally -- exist in reciprocal relationship with one another. While this is explored further in the conclusion, I wish here to note the way that personal experiences with anthropologists have made kiaps skeptical of the value of academic anthropology. Despite some memories of people such as Glasse and Meggitt, most kiaps’ experience of anthropologists occurred during the authors’ formative years of fieldwork, during which the kiaps were seasoned professionals with great power and the anthropologists were tender naifs in search of a patron. Thus where we see ‘The New Melanesian Ethnography’ (Josephides 1991) they saw a confused twenty-something badly in need of a shower and desperate to catch a ride in the jeep to the nearest airstrip. Indeed, these men’s familiarity with this role as mentor and patron of the innocent anthropologist greatly eased my ability to talk with them during my own time as a confused twenty-something badly in need of a shower and desperate to catch a ride in the jeep to the nearest airstrip. In sum, while few anthropologists have had valets, most Melanesianists can attest to the fact that, sadly, no man is a hero to his kiap.

Thus kiaps had a strong sense of their own familiarity and expertise with Papua New Guineans, combined with an appreciation for what anthropology could teach them as well as what it couldn't. The deflating effects of knowing the authors while in the field, and a concern with 'practicality' and 'efficiency' which was typical of both the requirements of their occupation as government officers as well their working-class Australian sensibilities, which often had more than a streak of anti-intellectualism. There was a strong sense amongst the community affairs officers I encountered that life's complications could always be handled if looked squarely in the eye, and that doing things 'proper' was not difficult if one was sensible, not distracted by frivolities, and simply rolled up one's sleeves and got to work. They were, as Gordon records, "practical men of action" (1985:50).

As a result there was a strong sense that academics often quibbled over small points. "The Enga had clans and they called them clans," one man told me, referring to debates decades dead in anthropological theory. "There's always arguments amongst you guys about what's a clan and what's a bloody parish and what's a whats-his-name. They themselves adopted the word and called themselves clans and subclans and being an outsider I just adopted the same thing." Another man remarked fondly, "ah, Jimmy Weiner – why doesn't he write a book that someone could actually read?" We have already seen that Biersack's dissertation was considered 'too difficult' to read.

In sum, kiaps had more time on the ground than any anthropologist. However their point of view was shaped by the requirements of their job as well as their own cultural predisposition for plain speaking. It was this kiap knowledge they deployed in their time in Porgera.

The Ipili as Pathological Losers

What sorts of understandings and opinions, then, did these community relations officers have about the Ipili, based on this background? We have already seen in the introductory chapter of this dissertation how poorly liked the Ipili are by white people who know them. Although very few community relations officers were willing to say so explicitly on tape, there is a widely-held understanding of Ipili prehistory and culture which circulates throughout the valley's white elite. This account is based on a sort of folk theory of 'evolution' and 'civilization' that is a mix of somewhere between White's cultural evolutionism (1987), William Graham Sumner's Social Darwinism (1992), and Huli and Engan chauvinism. The idea here is that the Ipili are the losers of wars and competition in Engan and Huli territories who were exiled to Porgera, a harsh and undesirable territory. On this account Ipili are literally the dregs of humanity – a mongrel culture which shares the traits of both Huli and Engan people. As one man put it,

I became very aware that they evolved here mainly from Enga and from Tari and they brought aspects of what I regard as core cultural things with them from both societies. And over a period of time they took aspects of both cultural groups where they originated from and as they evolved as a group, those cultural aspects which they brought with them were put into what had evolved as Ipili society.

This view is thus a way of understanding the complex diasporic nature of settlement in this area of Papua New Guinea (which will be discussed in the next chapter) within the existing folk-social science understanding that the kiaps imbibed through reading social science and their own time in Papua New Guinea. One suspects it is also informed by discussion with Huli and Engans, whose well-known chauvinism often combines with envy for Porgeran's incredible luck as landowners to produce a less than pleasant attitude towards their less populous neighbors.

It is not surprising, then, that Community Affairs Officers consider Ipili to be physically weaker, less courageous, and less talented militarily than other highlanders

they have encountered. As one man put it,

Well actually, when I came to Porgera I thought the Porgerans were pretty mild when I compare them with the Engans. And like you know they used to have some really good tribal fights out in the Enga... I had the feeling that the Paielans were basically the Kukukuku of the Enga. They were fierce fighters, and they were very good shots with bows and arrows. Whereas most Engans and Porgerans were not real good - I mean I even came second on a competition on the [Porgera government] station! (laugh) So they're not that good mate! So they seemed to me fragmented. And they weren't as aggressive as the Engans. Nowhere near as aggressive... not as in your face as Engans were.

Often times people explained Ipili secrecy and their ability to negotiate as an evolutionary adaptation to their physical shortfalls.

Porgerans are not as strong, not as physically strong or aggressively strong as say Engans or Huli or Western Highlanders or people from Chimbu or Eastern Highlands or whatever and I think there's no accident. I think they perhaps arrived here because of that. And they have developed other techniques for defending themselves so they're not as aggressive necessarily say as a Laiagam. I think that's one of the reasons they are just sensational negotiators is that they've learned to talk their way out of trouble.

For working class Australian men who were used to plain speaking highlanders, Ipili secrecy seemed particularly problematic.

These guys are much more hidden than the Enga. They're secretive. They're almost bloody paranoid. You know: "How are you?" "What do you want to know for?!" That sort of stuff. I asked Kurubu I said "Don't you trust anybody?" He said "No!" I said "What about your wife?" And he said "NOT HER!" (laugh).

Often times, these community relations officers have served as chaperons for some of the first trips that Ipili leaders have taken to Australia to attend board meetings or other functions. There is a small but robust body of stories these men tell about Ipili behavior in hotel bars. These typically revolve around some Ipili leader drinking in a bar and becoming panicked when a stranger strikes up a conversation with him. Their subsequent panicked phone call to the community relation officer's room ("there's a strange man talking to me for no reason! What does he want?!?") -- is humorous to kiaps

because it casts the Ipili leader in the role of confused and helpless client whose pathological paranoia renders him unable to engage in the paradigmatic Australian form of masculine sociality – mateship.

Not everyone considered Porgerans as weak. Sometimes the reverse was argued -- that Ipili were in fact more tenacious and rugged than other highland groups because of their poor lot in life. On this account, skill in negotiation is a result of Ipili social structure

They're different. They're hole in the wall. They're smaller, they're probably tougher in some ways. I think that cognatic structure is a response to the situation in which they found themselves. I'm sure Aletta [Biersack]'s right about it being an inclusive culture, they're trying to gain people all the time... all those things I think are part of the facts of life of being a mixed group from between two huge groups I mean the two biggest groups in the country probably.

As this last quote indicates, community relations officers were keenly aware of how different Ipili patterns of kinship and residence were from other areas where they had lived and worked. This was often described as 'fragmentation' -- implying an ideal state of corporate integrity that was presumably lost in the past. Again, the idea that this was result of a series of historical migrations was common. As one man who had served as kiap in Porgera in the early 1970s put it,

They seem to be fragmented. They didn't call themselves Porgerans, they called themselves by their group names or large clan names. Whereas even in the Laiagam area, even though they were Laiagams, in conversation, you'd hear the word Enga. The Porgerans didn't often use the word Ipili to describe themselves as people from Ipili. Ipili was their language, but it wasn't a joining together. My theory was that they seemed to have come from all these different places, they still had those sort of ties there and they didn't make themselves as Porgerans. You know, "we're Porgerans, this is our valley, and we'll all stick together and here we are." To me as an outsider just walking in and used to the big Engan clans, and how those sort of looked at themselves, Ipili seemed to me a bit fragmented. And the Paielans, well, they were their own people.

While this community relations officer casts 'fragmentation' in terms of an

absence of shared ethnic identity, others understood it in terms reminiscent of anthropological studies of kinship and residence:

The clan-subclan structure here is quite different from everywhere else. This is almost a dual matrilineal-patrilineal society. Very rarely anywhere else that I've worked and been in the highlands has there been this degree of women's land rights. Also here there's more, tends to more individual land plots whereas in other places its communal land and you have the right to use it with the consensus of the community. You go there and you say I want this plot to grow coffee and you have to argue your case with the community and once they say you have the right, you have the right for your lifetime but it doesn't then go on to your children, and if you don't follow the tribal laws you can lose your right to that, so there's nothing permanent about it. Here in Porgera people tend to have control of a block and it's theirs and it's passed on getting broken up as they have more and more children getting more and more fragmented, forming little islands dotted all over the place and our GIS system can illustrate that quite well with compensation payments. Once you start to analyze it you'll find a name down at Mungalep, the same name will have rights at the back of the open pit, and in the Anawe they'll have a small block half a hectare or a quarter of a hectare and they'll have several blocks spread all over the place.

This 'fragmentation' was tied to an oft-noted lack of unity and organized leadership, which was often blamed on a penchant for secrecy. As one former kiap with extensive experience in the Mt. Hagen area remarked

Generally in the highlands you have a very clear and specific leadership hierarchy. You have your big man, big orators, the five leaders, the people who are good at trading land, the people who are good at trading commodities, the specific purposes for each leader, and they're respected for those skills and abilities. They became big men and they have a lot of authority. Its not ultimate authority, they can be deposed very quickly by an axe in the head or by general consensus, but there is a hierarchy and you're able to go to any community and speak to handful of people and know that the information will be disseminated throughout the community. That doesn't happen in Porgera... They tend to hold information as power. "I know something you don't know, ha ha ha." If I hold it I might be able to use it to gain something.

Often this lack of leadership or corporate organization was seen as 'more primitive' than the 'more advanced' people in other areas, and was remarked on by more than one person in the course of my interviews

They were different. They had many traits of all the highland people I had worked with but I became aware they had differences because they did not have a regimented big man society like other large groups who they neighbored, for example Enga, Huli and beyond Enga [Western Highlands]. It was not as evolved as a big man system like you had in those places, and hence there were differences in how these people negotiated. They didn't come to a conclusion about things as quickly as what a big man society would. This wasn't as apparent in Ipili society.

This man went on to explain the source of this difference using an idiom reminiscent of cultural ecology and drawing on the idea of prehistoric migration into the area:

I think a lot of [Ipili culture] was dictated how they were evolved by the environment here. It's a much harsher environment for subsistence because of the altitude and the ruggedness of the place, the kaukau [sweet potato] here, which is the staple diet, doesn't mature as quickly as it does in the warmer and more fertile alleys of Enga. Also the Huli have very very advanced agricultural patterns, and that's shown by the population that they sustain and also the pig culture that they sustain. The pig culture requires good agriculture practices to be able to feed the pigs and look after them, this place here couldn't sustain a lot of that because of the altitude, the types of soils and everything else. So it wasn't in the scope, they were lesser in numbers of course, and it wasn't in the scope of what say the rest of Enga was, or the main part of Enga or the main part of the Huli basin.

This, then, was the view of Ipili in general: a pathological, paranoid race who had been on the losing side of contests of strength for most of their history. Individually, of course, many community affairs officers had warm relations with particular landowners, even when relationships between 'the mine' and 'the Ipili' were strained. "We have never lost our relationship with individuals," the head of community affairs told me, "We've certainly had damaged relationships with CICs [a community committee] and certain factions of the agents and whatever and that's the politics of the mine. But the personal relationships are still in place." But collectively, the features of Ipili society discussed here add up to a picture that many community affairs officers did not much care for. Many of them viewed the Ipili – and particularly elites -- as essentially duplicitous.

The most bitter opponents after the most horrendous arguments in an LNC meeting will be the first people here the next day. “I’ve got this lovely plot of land and I think you might need it. Can we do a deal?” These same people are saying “You’ve destroyed all our garden land and you’re doing everything terrible -- by the way I’ve got some spare ground here and you can have it if you want it.” So the development side of Porgera is one of greed on the community side.

This duplicity is then compounded by bad decisions on the part of most landowners, induced by the rapid nature of social change in the valley. As one man put it:

I think we’ve got to think that about 12 years ago Porgera was a little backwater with a very small Mt. Isa mine with a handful of employees and very quickly almost over night it became a very very big thing with a lot of money, and there was no education process, no experience, there was this sudden wealth. And through lack of experience they’ve misused it. It’s their right to do with it what they like, but they’ve misused it in my opinion.

These, then, were monsters which the mine believed they had themselves created. As one man said to me, “The simple fact is Nixon has his nice big car and nice big house and all of his wives because of the money we’ve made available to him. And when the mine is closed, he’ll be back to wearing ass grass.”

In sum then, community relations officers felt that the Ipili were not the same as the groups they encountered in other areas of the country. ‘Ipili’ culture was seen as an amalgamation of the achievements of several more “evolved” groups, and Ipili behavior surrounding the mine was not seen as culturally distinct – it was understood to be pathologically driven by out-of-control social change.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the way in which the viewpoints of the Yakatabari negotiators were shaped by their biographical experiences. These, in turn, were shaped by the culture in which they were situated. I have tried to demonstrate that both sides of the encounter had specific ideas of who they were and who their interlocutors were that

fundamentally shaped what they wanted and how they thought they ought best to get it.

We can now see more clearly the gulf that separated the negotiators in Yakatabari. On the one hand we have the Ipili, who saw the world in terms of people driven by occult, appetitive forces with a keen concern with secrecy who felt they were dealing with old men who had continued to deny them the satisfaction they deserved of receiving what they considered the full value of the gold in their mountain. On the other side we had a group of men who said what they meant and meant what they said who felt they were forced to deal with a group of mongrels whose culture was not up to not only their standards, but the standards of the highlanders they had devoted their lives to. For both, the offers made at the table at Yakatabari were not just about a Porgera's future, but Papua New Guinea's past.

The ironic fact of life in postcolonial Papua New Guinea is that each side saw perhaps a bit too clearly the failure of their interlocutors even as they missed positive aspects of them which might have allowed them to humanize their interlocutors. Each, of course, found it easier to see the positive things about themselves. The problem, in other words, was not that they did not understand each other, but that they understood each other *too well* and, simultaneously, too partially.

It is tempting to assume that the Ipili point of view is a reflection of their unique circumstances – that their orneriness is a result of social pathologies brought about by the gold mine next to which they live. But we need to also take seriously the proposition that Ipili within the Special Mining Lease are becoming “more themselves than they ever were before” (Sahlins 1992) and take seriously the fact that Ipili culture as it has developed in the Special Mining Lease, no matter how “fucked” it seems to others, may be a unique and legitimate transformation of preexisting cultural themes which –

pathological or not – are certainly rational from the point of view of an Ipili cultural logic.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that community relations officers are, in a way, Papua New Guineans as well. Although their job professionally is to serve as representatives of big actors – and, indeed, of ‘civilization’ more generally – they have as people lived lives so deeply rooted in Papua New Guinea’s colonial history that many of them returned home to Australia only to find themselves strangers in the country which they were supposed themselves to be serving. To this extent they have more in common with Kuala and Tongope than they might imagine.

This discussion of the history of Ipili and kiaps answers several questions raised by Yakatabari. However, it leads to further issues as well. We have already seen that both Ipili leaders and kiaps had fairly well-elaborated reflexive accounts of ‘what Ipili society was like,’ and we have seen how these reflexive accounts affected practice in the valley. Equally, we have seen that anthropological accounts of Ipili are related to Ipili and Kiap accounts in several different ways. All of this leads us to ask a wider question – what is the nature of Ipili sociality as practiced on the ground in Porgera, and how does practice that literally occurs ‘in the village’ interface with official representations of Porgerans? What, in other words, is the relation between the grassroots Ipili sociality and the mine? What are Ipili communities actually like on the ground? I take up this question in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE
BEING IPILI IN PORGERA

Every attempt to specify the set of agents to whom an issue of justice pertains will itself, as an act of identification and recognition, be a potential site of injustice; and as such will demand a kind of critical scrutiny that cannot appeal to a distributive principle... every appeal to the identity as a settled criterion of distribution will likewise be a potential site of [nondistributive injustice], both because existing patterns of identity and difference may bear the traces of past wrongs, and even more fundamentally because those people for whom justice is a live issue are not done becoming who they are; or, better, who they will turn out to have been.”

-Patchen Markell, *Bound By Recognition*

They're cognatic, if by 'cognatic' you mean 'accommodating.'
-Head of Community Affairs, Porgera Joint Venture

Throughout this dissertation we have seen numerous references to 'life in the ground' in Porgera, and 'how real Ipili really live.' In chapter two we saw how elites used their authority as representatives of 'grass roots' Ipili to bolster their position in negotiations, and examined briefly the way in which these claims to authority conflicted with 'on the ground' claims regarding the ownership of the land for the Yakatabari tunnel portal. In chapter three we saw that the land study was meant to create a stable social context for mining in the valley by accurately registering 'traditional native land rights.' In chapter four we have seen how expatriates decry the excesses of Special Mining Lease land owners and contrast them with the authentic, 'uncorrupted' practice of other

highlanders they worked with in the past. Thus throughout the dissertation we have seen how Porgera's history and institutions create a certain notion of authentic 'Ipiliness' which contrasts with actually existing Ipili. None of these discussions, however, have led to a sustained analysis of Ipili kinship and identity and how it articulates with the the mine and government as Ipili live their lives every day. In this chapter I turn to the task of describing the circulation of Ipili identity, the ethnography of which will extend over the next two chapters. In the next chapter I will examine how 'the Ipili' are understood at 'the national level' – that is, in Port Moresby, the national capital. In this chapter, however, I begin on a smaller scale, with an examination of how Ipili identity is claimed within the Porgera valley itself.

As we have seen, the creation of 'the Ipili' as a coherent ethnic group was part of a process of creating a social context within which the mine could operate. This in turn resulted in an unexpected second type of 'feasibility' as well, insofar as it has rendered people subsumed under the title as efficacious political actors. This was particularly clear in the case of Yakatabari, where those categorized as 'representatives' wielded extensive power and influence and were able to both enrich themselves as well as influence the valley's future. Few Ipili, however, are involved in the closed-door world of high-stakes negotiation that we saw in Yakatabari. Most of the inhabitants of the Special Mining Lease lead very different lives. Being 'Ipili' in the more mundane sphere that they inhabit is still important, but the benefits that these people accrue are less glamorous and the spheres in which they move lower-profile.

While Yakatabari dealt with issues of novelty and events which had no precedent, Ipili today shop around their identities around the various institutions in the valley in order to tap into the money and resources which are regularly handed out according to

fixed rules and policies. Being Ipili in Porgera, then, involves dealing with Porgera's institutions during the course of their 'stereotypic reproduction.' Doing so means working to make sure that you are subsumed under the proper categories such that you are processed the right way by the valley's institutions. Quarterly royalty checks, annual occupation fees, preferential hiring, and compensation payments are all available to people who can be incorporated into the administrative machinery of the mine and the government.

In Porgera, being Ipili is closely tied to 'Ipili kinship' or 'Ipili ethnic identity' – an overall set of attributes that I will refer to here as 'having an Ipili identity.' My particular focus will be on 'Ipili kinship' since this is the main criteria that people in Porgera themselves take to be central to Ipili identity – being part of one the seven landowning 'clans.' Unfortunately, it is not easy to discern what constitutes Ipili kinship. In the first place, while anthropologists today might agree that kinship can be understood in its loosest sense as idioms of sociality or 'relatedness' deriving from metaphors of marriage, procreation, and nurturance which structure action, anthropological surety in the existence of a distinct object called 'kinship' which is amenable to study is not what it once was (for an overview that I am sympathetic to see Carsten 2003). Equally, as we shall see, the idea of 'Ipili' itself is problematic, as kinship practices in this part of the world are pliable and readily reshaped. Furthermore, identity is often articulated in diasporic, regional terms that do not fit well with the 'African model' of Ipili identity used by the mine and the government.

Finally, and most interestingly, the idea of 'real Ipili kinship' is complicated by the fact that Ipili and outsiders are engaged in a mutually-determining relationship in which what it means to be Ipili is shape by outside requirements, just as outside

requirements seek to use Ipili notions as the basis of their legislation, are forced to conform with the more intractable bits of Ipili culture even at times when they would prefer not to. This makes it hard to take the the sort of position that James C. Scott does and model Ipili identity in terms of the imposition of gaze and the response of resistance. If this were the case one could easily describe ‘how the state and the mine misrecognize and distort Ipili identity’ and then go on to show, as the privileged specialist, ‘how the authentic kinship system really works.’ But in fact decades of wrangling over land and compensation has made this clean split unrealistic. Porgera today is a place where what ‘Ipili kinship is’ is something that has been shaped to correspond with the expectations of outsiders. Thus as Foucault (1994) (with whom Scott mistakenly believes himself to have something in common) has pointed out, the issue is not the imposition of inaccurate or myopic models upon local people so much as it is the interplay between the personation of big actors who believe themselves to describing populations whose very description elicits – in classic Strathernian fashion (1988) -- the creation of the entities which they believe themselves to be measuring.

This chapter thus has two tasks. First, it seeks to present an ethnography of Ipili kinship practices as they are practiced ‘in the village’ amongst Ipili people in the Special Mining Lease. Second, it seeks to understand how Ipili represent themselves and their ways of life to outsiders who share their valley with them. I will describe, in other words, how they interface with representatives of institutions on the ground in Porgera. These two tasks are related because in each case they involve the circulation of Ipili identity in areas outside of the direct experience of Ipili themselves. A final third task, that of relating anthropological views of Ipili with those of people in the metropole, is the subject of the final chapter of the dissertation.

This chapter thus begins by describing my ethnographic field site: the relocation ‘villages’ or ‘communities’ of landowners that exist inside the Special Mining Lease. I then move on to a discussion of Ipili identity which focuses on the configuration of ethnic identity in the larger region of which Porgera is a part. I then move to a rather abstract description of Ipili kinship and sociality and how it operates. With this in place I then present some very basic census data from Apalaka, the community in which I stayed during my time in Porgera. My particular interest there will be to describe the relationship of *epo arene* – people who come to reside in Porgera despite lacking both affinal and consanguineal ties. I conclude that Ipili themselves do not have a clear, delineated sense of what it means to be either Ipili or a landowner in a way that allows them to easily and routinely exclude people from these categories. I then move on to discuss how official and government representations of Ipili identity affect how Ipili get access to good and services within the valley – how well, I ask, do the criteria of receiving compensation, royalty payments, and preferential hiring correspond to indigenous notions? I conclude in the final section of the chapter that even these institutions themselves lack any sort of coherent internal logic that might provide a ‘simplifying’ clarity that Ipili identity itself lacks.

Relocation Communities

As we have seen, the Porgera Special Mining Lease Land Study officially divided Ipili landowners into seven landowning clans: Tiyini, Tuanda, Waiwa, Angalaini, Pulumaini, Mamai, and Anga. Each clan is composed of subclans. The Waiwa, Mamai, Tuanda, and Anga have two, the Angalaini have five, and the Tiyini and Pulumaini have six each. When the mine was being built, the members of these groups living within the Special Mining Lease were relocated to an area of their choice. While some people were

relocated at a distance from other people, most chose to live in nucleated settlements built around an *ama* (a cleared area or central meeting place). In fact the history of relocation is complex, and includes several bouts of house-building as the mine acquired land initially for the mine, and then for its growing waste dumps. The result, however, is straight forward – densely populated nucleated settlements, each associated with one ‘clan.’ Each village was placed on a named piece of land, and each piece of land was associated with a particular ‘clan.’ Thus the Tiyini lived in Yarik, the Tuanda lived in Apalaka, the Waiwa lived in Waiwanda, the Pulumaini lived in Kulapi, the Angalaini lived at Mungalep (much of which was adjacent to, but not in, the Special Mining Lease) and the Mamai lived at Panandaka (for more on the Porgera relocation see Banks 1999; Bonnell 1999; Robinson 1988; for relocation in Papua New Guinea more generally see Asian Development Bank 2000:55-73).

I lived in Apalaka, one of the most heavily populated settlements in the Special Mining Lease. Much is made by cynical expatriates of the idea that settlements in Porgera did not predate the mine and were built opportunistically in order to receive compensation. While there is an extensive history of migration and resettlement around Porgera’s various mining and prospecting projects, it seems clear that Apalaka is a settlement of some antiquity – it appears as ‘Abaraka’ in John Black’s 1938 diary of his patrol into Porgera. This does not mean that the Apalaka Black recorded is identical with the settlement where I live, however. Most of where Apalaka was originally located is now covered by the Anjolek waste dump, a large erodible which carries waste rock from the open pit down to the Kaiyia river (see Parker 2004 on the geotechnical aspects of the waste dump). Today Apalaka is a cluster of relocation houses and the improvised residences that grew up around them. Perched on the slopes that emerge out of the waste

dump, Apalaka is basically a bulging pocket of land which the waste dump wraps around on three sides. Apalaka is surrounded by two satellite settlements. Ekanda, which is upstream of the main settlement, is a break-off community founded by the brother of one of Apalaka's two Landowner Negotiating Committee members. Up the slope from Apalaka is an area known as Waiwanda which extends to the uninhabited ridge top. On the other side of that ridge line is the relocation settlement of Yarik. Here I will focus on Apalaka and Waiwanda.

We can say roughly that each territory is associated with a particular 'clan' and its constitutive 'subclans.' Apalaka, for instance, is the home of the Tuanda, while Waiwanda is the home of the Waiwa (*anda* meaning *house* in Ipili), and Yarik is the home of the Tiyini. These are then subdivided on sub-clan lines. Thus (very roughly) the Tuanda Ulupa own the land between the waste dump and the Apalaka *ama*, while the Yapala own the land between the Apalaka *ama* and Waiwanda. There is only one subclan of the Waiwa in Waiwanda (the Yaliape) – the other subclan of the Waiwa lives outside of the Special Mining Lease. My house during my stay in Porgera was in Waiwanda proper, however since Waiwanda is a satellite community without an *ama* of its own, I took as my field site both Apalaka and Waiwanda, and was considered to be affiliated with both the Tuanda and the Waiwa. When asked where I lived in Porgera I would tell people 'Apalaka' and then specify 'Waiwanda' only if my interlocutor had lived in the valley for some time or knew quite a bit about it – it was sort of the equivalent of describing yourself as from 'Manhattan' as opposed to 'Alphabet City.' As a result, for much of this chapter I will use the term 'Apalaka' to refer to both communities collectively.

The Tiyini, Tuanda, and Waiwa are not just any clans. They are the triad at the

core of the seven landowning groups. As we have seen, the Tiyini are not only the owners of the land on which Porgera's open cut is located, they are closely associated with the serpent Kupiane, the mythical origin of the Porgera ore body. The genealogies of both the Tuanda and the Waiwa involve migrations to Porgera, and both groups record their early ancestors arriving in Porgera and marrying women from the Tiyini, thus aligning all three of them as interrelated and the truest of the true landowners.

As we saw in the second chapter of this dissertation, it is hotly contested whether or not these relocation communities are healthy and safe places to live in and, if not, whether the PJV or local people are to blame. Because these communities are located within the Special Mining Lease, and the extent to which they are being 'affected' or 'squeezed' by the mine is a topic that could only be addressed by someone with extensive expertise in assessing the ecological and environmental impacts of gold mining on a community. As an anthropologist I lack the expertise to judge what sort of environmental impacts the mine has upon residents of relocation villages. Experientially, however, I can report that people in Apalaka do feel surrounded by the mine. It is difficult to convey to the reader the extent to which relocation communities feel hedged in by mining operations.

While I am not a geographer or epidemiologist, I must say that experientially these relocation communities are not like other areas of Papua New Guinea that I have visited. The view downhill from practically every area of Apalaka is of a massive expanse of waste dump – a flat moonscape out of which a few brave weeds poke. The vast surface of the waste dump alternates between soil-like firmness and a quick sand consistency. People often venture out on to it to try the rock within for gold (inevitably unsuccessful, as far as I know), while children swim in the large pools of gray rainwater

water which collect on depressions on its surface. When blasting operations are regularly scheduled, it is possible to set your watch by the tremors that accompany them. Similarly, the mud – which is ubiquitous in Porgera and even more omnipresent in the Special Mining Lease - and what expatriates describe as the ‘squalor’ of the relocation communities make these places fairly grim. The incredible density of settlement makes them crowded, and the presence of cash means the presence of purchased food stuffs, which means the creation of garbage for which no sanitary system exists. There is no sufficient supply of fire wood, and a jury-rigged system of electrical cables extends from relocation houses which are connected to the power grid that supplies the mine and connects relocation houses and bush houses without power. These new communities are too high up for and on too poor terrain for much agriculture to take place (although gardens are still planted) and firewood is scarce. Anyone who has had occasion to live in Apalaka will find Banks and Bonnell’s assessment of the plight of relocation communities quoted in the second chapter to be convincing indeed.

The community in which I lived, in other words, was considered dangerous, dirty, degraded, and squalid by expatriate mine employees and others who visited it. At one point a high school student from East Sepik Province came to visit her brother who had married in to the community there. A smart and modern young woman, when I asked her what she thought of the place she replied “I can say these people live like animals.” Drinking bouts, gambling, prostitution, and violence against mine employees are said to lie in store for any who venture up there. Many outsiders consider these communities to be at the forefront of the decadent, self-destructive behavior of Ipili who receive money from the mine. They point to outrageous expenditures on alcohol, and increased rates of polygyny and domestic violence as two of the most obvious ways in which Ipili have

misused the money they have received from the mine. At the same time, the steady influx of immigrants from other area – the ethnic Huli and Engans known as *epo arene* in Ipili – is key to creating social change in Porgera and, when it is particularly intense, it threatens to turn Porgerans into strangers on their own land. While stories of prostitution in Porgera have, in my opinion, been greatly over estimated (at least during *my* fieldwork), the rest is more or less true – on one occasion when a Porgera Joint Venture vehicle drove into the village after dark (to drop me off after a meeting at the mine site) it was stoned by local people.

Thus these communities remain black boxes for the government and mine – although densely populated by Papua New Guinea standards, they are so unwelcoming to outsiders and mine employees that it is difficult to gage exactly what is going on within them. Even the work that has been done, such as that by Glenn Banks (1997), is based on brief survey work and, while well-done, does not paint a detailed picture of life in these places that long-term participant observation can provide. Still, in order to understand the dynamics of life inside relocation communities, it is necessary to have a sense not only of how Ipili live in them now, but how Ipili lived before the arrival of mining in the valley. In the next section of this chapter I describe Ipili kinship in general before turning to a more detailed analysis of Apalaka and its environs.

Regional Identities and Clan Diasporas

It is telling that the terms ‘Ipili’ was not a prehistoric ethnonym and appears to be a colonial neologism whose popularity was inspired by Meggitt’s early work in the valley (1957). There is an even further irony in the fact that the term ‘Porgera’ – which is, as we have seen in chapter three, is a mishearing of the ‘Pongema’ river – is unpronounceable to Ipili, whose language eschews consonant clusters. Even today, when elderly Ipili

speaking amongst themselves, the names ‘Ipili’ and ‘Paiela’ referred to the two valleys in which ‘the Ipili’ (as we call them today) live. Thus discussions of ‘Ipili’ identity must start by recognizing that there does not appear to be an indigenous term for ‘the Ipili’ at all.

Prehistorically -- and, indeed, even today – Porgerans were, as Aletta Biersack puts it, “centered not on themselves as geographical isolates but on culturally diverse fields in which their mythology, trade routes, and marriage practices embedded them” (Biersack 1995a:7). As a result, “the region was neither atomized nor centralized but was organized (through its myth, rituals, trade, and intermarriage) as a polycentric system of overlapping yet noncoincident worlds” (Biersack 1995a:27).

This regional embeddedness is tied to kinship at the most general level. Ipili genealogies run deep – typically beyond ten generations – and terminate with an eponymous apical ancestor. These genealogies frequently trace the migration of ancestors across the region, leaving communities dotted across the landscape which are connected via genealogy. These mythological accounts of ancestral movement seem to correspond, at least in Enga, to actual prehistorical migrations of clans from one area to another (Wiessner and Tumu 1998:119-155). The result is what I refer to as a ‘clan diaspora’ – a network of related clans which spread across the Southern Highlands and Enga Provinces and which cut across the ethnic boundaries of what are today considered to be the three distinct ethnic groups of the ‘Huli’ the ‘Enga’ and the ‘Ipili.’ Even though the fact that both Huli and Engans are well-known for their strong sense ethnic particularism would seem to undercut this approach to regional ethnicity, it should be remembered that the term ‘Enga’ is also a colonial neologism and that Huli have always conceived of themselves members (albeit of the most superior sort) of a galaxy of related ethnic groups

(Ballard 1994). Thus while the literature today discusses three separate groups – the Huli, the Ipili, and the Enga – most scholars would emphasize the real sense that ethnicity in this area is based on grades or continua of cultural difference in a population crisscrossed by flows of people.

Regardless of whether other researchers feel comfortable identifying mythical stories with actual prehistoric human migrations in their areas the way that Wiessner and Tumu do in theirs, it is undoubtedly the case that these mythic linkages were and are mobilized by Ipili and their neighbors. Indeed, rather than fading away as Papua New Guinea modernizes, the spread of roads in the highlands and creation of resource developments in formerly-peripheral areas has meant a renaissance for these regional identities. In the past, these ties were used to facilitate long-distance trading (Mangi 1988), to gain concessions at locations such as salt springs (Wiessner and Tumu 1998) controlled by related groups, and to request hospitality when ecological hardship such as drought or frost meant temporary migration from one's home (Wohlt 1978). Today Papua New Guineans use these ties to conduct business along the highlands highway, to find hosts at areas near mines and hydrocarbon projects, and to travel safely through areas where tribal fighting occurs.

While these diasporic relations thus have a real sociology and use, it is important not to overstate their coherence. While it is tempting, as Burton puts it, "to uncover as many of them as possible and and map them out" (1999:284) when doing fieldwork in this part of the world, to do so would not result in some sort of master narrative sufficiently coherent to provide a basis for landownership in regards to land rights. Even master genealogists can not state with precision the specific spread of lineages and clan ties beyond the mythical level – and even these were unclear and subject to confusion. It

is tempting to consider this a sign of the loss of genealogical knowledge as the result of contact with the West. However, it is important to note that Wohlt, who conducted research twenty years earlier than I in Kandep, recounts that while everyone “know the gist of the myth” in fact “if one asks a dozen informants over [the] age of forty the particulars of genealogical connection... one gets a dozen different versions” (Wohlt 1978:42). He concludes that “beyond the unity maintained through oral tradition and the ceremonies described above, relationships among tribal members entail little else that hospitality, and that only in need.” (Wohlt 1978:54).

So while these clan diasporas are not literally corporate groups or have the sort of lineal, segmentary genealogies that anthropologists find so attractive, they do represent communities linked by an ideology of ancient consanguinity. This ideology thus has implications for how one understand ethnicity in this part of the world. Writing of Wohlt’s analysis of these diasporas, Burton notes that a recognition of their prominence

throws into question whether the Ipili people even ‘exist’ in the same way as, say, Motuans or Hageners do... They begin to look far more like the local representatives of regionally dispersed ‘genealogical groups,’ lumped together under one name only because they live in one place as neighbors. (Burton 1999:291)

This is not to say that there is “no such thing as the Ipili” (neither Burton nor I would say that) or that there was no sense of a coherent and unique set of culturally specific practices for people in Porgera – styles of wig and dialect, for instance, clearly indicated that Porgera was home to a culture with such distinctiveness. But it is to say that belonging in Porgera and to Porgera was much less a matter of being part of an externally bounded group, and much more about living in one of many culturally distinct centers whose influence with the others faded away as one moved farther from them.

Thus the situation we are presented with is a continuum of cultural difference across a landscape through which people have long moved. Within the Porgera valley, for

instance, there does seem to be a distinction between Ipili from Porgera proper and the outlying community of Tipinini studied by Jerry Jacka. The distinction is a linguistic one – Jacka’s community being referred to as ‘tumbiame’ and Porgerans in my area being referred to as ‘wakiamé.’ This is based mostly on different verb conjugations – particularly in the case of imperatives – and a small difference in pronunciation. This distinction was not, however, a particularly strongly articulated one.

In the case of Tuanda, genealogies relate that Apalaka was settled when Tuanda left his home in Hoyebia in the Tari basin (north of Tari town and near the location of Glasse’s original fieldwork) and settled in Apalaka, although not before establishing communities in Enga territory around Multaka. Some claimed that if I traveled to Hoyebia I would be able to trace a further Tuanda diaspora all the way southwest to Lake Kutubu, where the landowners of the Kutubu oil project ‘were also Tuanda.’ While the connection to Hoyebia and Multaka seemed certain to me – I met people who were from there and who visited there and confirmed it – these farther flung ties to another lucrative resource development seemed suspiciously convenient to me. At any rate, the Waiwa claimed much more clearly to have ties only with groups in Paiela and the Tari basin and did not claim connection to any group in Enga.

In sum, Ipili identity is not something bounded with clear and bright lines. While there is no question that there is something culturally distinctive about people living in Porgera, they are situated in a wider ethnic universe with groups in other valleys, and those ties are based on a sense of shared agnation. This lack of a clear and brightly bounded ethnic identity at the regional level should immediately make one suspicious that even a first approximation of what it is to ‘the Ipili’ is problematic.

Vertical Expressions of Horizontal Desires

So far, my emphasis on lineality and agnation may seem puzzling to those familiar with the literature on Ipili kinship, which overwhelmingly describes it as ‘cognatic’ (Biersack 1995, 1980; Jacka 2003) and emphasize the lack of corporate groups in Porgera. Consider, for instance, John Burton’s literally emphatic declaration that “we can abandon any pretense at trying to fit the Porgeran lines of descent to the orthodox clan model. *In fact, there are no corporate groups we can call ‘clans’ in Porgera.*” (Burton 1991: 9, italics in original). Government and mine employees, used to the Special Mining Lease’s seven clan system, might wonder at how this can be the case given life in the valley today. Equally, anthropologists unfamiliar with the area might see the names of corporate groups like Tuanda and Waiwa and consider Ipili society as organized into nonunilineal kinship groups (à la Davenport 1959) rather than cognatic kindreds. The key to resolving these differences is to understand the way that in Porgera, as in Wohl’s Yumbisa,

the cognatic nature of groups in practice is the product of the interaction of a “vertical” agnatic ideology and “horizontal” ideologies concerning cognation, affinity, and, particularly, exchange, as these are played out against limitations and emergent opportunities in the existing physical and social environment” (Wohl 1995:215).

In Porgera, then, Ipili live their lives and achieve their aims by creating ego-centric networks of people who work with them and whose action they (ideally) coordinate. People express these coalitions as though they were the result of a vertical, agnatic lineage by saying ‘the Tuanda do this’ or ‘the Tiyini do that’ when in fact the networks in question are based on ‘horizontal’ relationships with collateral relatives and affines. Understanding the way this is true in Porgera ties in with several larger themes of the dissertation (a similar approach could also be used, incidentally, to resolve the impasse between cognatic and agnatic readings of the Huli material). It helps explain how

what analytically appears to be a cognatic system of kinship could come to be described as a lineal one by outsiders interested in creating a feasible corporate group named the ‘Ipili.’ It also helps explain why Ipili themselves do not object to this method of representation. Indeed, understanding the role of agency, innovation, and entrepreneurial activity in the coordination of action via idioms of kinship allows us to understand the claim in chapter three that the seven clan system as an extension of Ipili kinship practices rather than a deviation from it.

There are many things that lead one to conclude that names such as ‘the Tuanda’ or ‘the Waiwa’ do not refer to clans in the classic anthropological sense of the term. Problems with a lineage model arise immediately. First, Ipili do not have a word for ‘clan’ in the sense of a corporate group defined by descent. The most common term used to describe the Tuanda is that they are a *yame* – *Tuanda yame*. But *yame* simply means ‘group of people’ or ‘organization’ – it has no connotation of descent, consanguinity, or kinship whatsoever. Thus Ipili use the term indiscriminately to refer to Security Guards, descendants of Tiyini, and Lutherans. An Engan word, *tata* is sometimes used and this word does carry with it the full weight of Engan organization as it does further east among the Enga themselves. Furthermore, this word appears to be a borrowing from people further east and the ‘eight *tata* system’ reported by Jacka for Tipinini (Jacka 2003:107-110) does not appear to be present in the Special Mining Lease. Thus the idea of *yame* describes the principle or idea around which a group forms. “Daniel *yame*” for instance, does not refer merely to the descendants of Daniel, it refers to his descendants, close affines, and other people whose mutual imbrication is a result of his central position in their social networks. Similarly, people often refer to ‘Tuanda *yame*’ or ‘Tiyini *yame*’ to refer to a group of people related to each other on the basis of their shared heritage of a

common ancestor rather than the total group of people descended from that ancestor. It is telling, for instance, that for much of Yakatabari many people referred to the faction opposing the opening of the Yakatabari waste dump as ‘the Tiyini’ when one of the leaders was an agent for Angalaini and most the most influential of the Tiyini agents were not active participants in the their clique. ‘Tiyininess’ became a basis of the mobilization of personal networks, not an exclusive and clearly defined corporate group.

Famously, affiliation in ‘clans’ is not exclusive in Porgera, and one can claim affiliation with multiple groups. As we shall see in a moment, clans do not in and of themselves form the basis for exchange or collective action or even (in a curious way described below) claims to land. Ipili consider themselves to have a ‘portfolio’ of eight lineages to choose from – they are associated with each of the lineages of their grandparents (this is the same domain within which sexual relations are considered incestuous), and Ipili enjoy discussing the twists and turns of their genealogies (known as *malu* in Ipili) and those of prominent people in the valley the same way that Americans dwell on the statistical minutiae of professional baseball players. Finding and mobilizing these connections is thus an art.

It is not only the case that ‘clan’ affiliation is nonexclusive, it is telling that Ipili do not consider it a virtue to identify strongly with one named clan. In contrast to a notion of pure and exclusive membership in an agnatic clan, Ipili seek to be middlemen operating in the interstitial spaces between groups, using multiple affiliations to be ‘in the middle’ of things. Thus often times people who outsiders consider to be ‘not really Tiyini’ or ‘not really Tuanda’ because their claims there are not based on an unbroken line of agnatic descent are mistaking their own ideologies of lineal purity for those of Ipili. It was occasionally said by mine employees that Kuala *yame* – the group of people

descended from the early alluvial miner Kuala – that they were ‘not really Maipangi’ because Kuala was originally from an Engan area and was related to Maipangi via only the most tenuous of tenuous connections. When I tried this out on one of my informants he looked surprised and remarked that if anyone was Maipangi it was Kuala *yame*, since they had no other groups to claim affiliation with. For him, ‘pure’ and singular affiliation was thus seen as an unfortunate problem, and impoverishment of a potentially much richer and wider set of relationships.

We can agree, then, with Gabrielle Sturzenhofecker when she writes of the nearby Duna that “what is articulated in *malu* genealogies is a principle not of group recruitment but of individual entitlement” (1998:79-80). While *malu* begin with an apical ancestor, after a few generations comes a level of named ancestors after whose names the ‘subclans’ of Ipili are sorted. Shortly thereafter genealogies include people within living memory of the current oldest generation, and the genealogies begin to form something approximating my own census data. The pattern here, in other words, is similar to Enga, where there is a sharp break between historical’ events (*atome pi*) and ‘mythic’ ones (*tindi pi*) (Weissner and Tumu 1998:25). While Ipili do not draw this distinction as sharply as Engans appear to, it does seem clear to me that something similar holds for them. ‘Real’ genealogical time seems to start just below the ancestors of the several subclans. The result is a wide swath of collateral space within the lineage that extends up a few generations. When people trace their connections with their relatives, they tend to move horizontally through that space in often quite elaborate ways, locate themselves in relationship to other consanguines, and shoot directly up through layers of mythical forebearers to the apical ancestor.

In sum, it is clear that groups are organized in a cognatic fashion, with one’s

individual kindred serving as the effective pool from which relatives may be recruited. Although conceived by Ipili in terms of genealogical depth rather than collaterally, this pool operates on the classical principles of the kindred as described by Freeman: “a group of persons who acknowledge their descent, genealogically or by adoption, from one family, whether through their fathers or their mothers.” (Freeman 1962).

A personal kindred consists of ‘people who have a relative in common’. However, it in no sense follows that all of these people know or are known to one another: they are not a group but a category... Thus, a kindred has no name except with reference to the individual or sibling group at its center and is not a discrete or autonomous unit in the society to which its members belong. Furthermore, by the very nature of its composition, the members of a kindred have no collective perception of unity, no persisting common objective and no leader or organization. A kindred, therefore, is not a group in the sociological sense of the term, but rather a category of cognates, a set of persons who have in common the characteristic that they are all related cognatically in varying degrees to the same person.

Put another way, the kindred is a field of possible relationships of blood which can be mobilized by an individual, not a predefined group in which the individual takes his or her place.

Burton has argued that Ipili social organization mirrors most closely that of the Garia as described by Lawrence, and I agree (for similar suggestions see Langlas 1974 on the Foi). Thus Porgeran kinship is less a matter of corporate groups than of a massive mesh of egocentric personal networks of individual ‘security circles’ - “those persons with whom he has safe relationships and towards whom he should observe stringent rules governing marriage, diet, and political obligation” (Lawrence 1984: 28) – of which the consanguineal ties we are currently discussing are merely a part. Thus Terms like Tuanda, Waiwa, and Tiyini form a vocabulary of cognatic stocks which gives an individual a portfolio of possible groups to which they could be a member. As a result, Ipili are networkers not only social-structurally, but in the more prosaic sense of the term – inveterate hand-shakers and let’s-do-lunchers, they are always on the look out for new allies and potential ways to expand who they know and where they know them.

Kin, Kith, Consociation

To Ipili, the mere fact of genealogical relatedness does not necessarily produce relationship. Cosanguineal ties count for little until they have been realized through the contributions of work, wealth, and consociation – the ‘service economy’ that I discussed in the last chapter. Thus we can say that relations of consanguinity and affinity merely provide a kinship portfolio of possible ties which are activated through consociation. Each individual Ipili converts these possible kin relations into *actual* relationships of mutual support through work. This includes giving pigs during bridewealth, sharing food, chatting together, and all the nebulous activities of sharing life together which is typical of face to face interaction.

This process of transforming potential relations into real ones through consociation applies not just to kin, but to affines as well, and even more broadly to that group of nonconsanguineals known in classical accounts of Anglo Saxon kinship (Philpotts 1913) as the kith. Ipili kin terminology tends to follow an ‘Iroquois’ type terminology and cross-sex sibling’s spouse is referred to by the same term as that used for a same sex sibling. Thus ‘brothers’ who are married into one’s immediate family are often very close members of one’s security circle. There is even a special term (*timtale*) for unrelated men who have married sisters (such as Mangape and Tongope in chapter three), and this relationship is often a close one as well. It is for this reason that Ipili speak of women as ‘bridges’ (*toko*) across which men go and come. Relations between same sex female affines is also often very close, although given male domination of public life in Porgera, this closeness is often made evident politically in the relationship between men whose mothers were sisters (which includes brother’s wife), and who were thus raised together because of their mothers’ time together.

The importance that Ipili place on mutual aid and shared time together as opposed to abstract genealogical principles can be seen in the frequency with which people include non-related friends in their security circles. In their quest for multiple affiliations, Ipili often travel away from their natal area – after all, that’s the one constituency they’ve got nailed down. The ideal ‘big-man’ is a roving polygynist who rotates between wives and (hence) his in-laws as he keeps circulating. In Porgera, where gold has been a draw for migrants for so long, a more typical issue is not people going out, but people coming in. The Ipili are not people to cut someone off from membership in a local community simply because he cannot trace his ancestry back to a common ancestor. They feel that any individual who has demonstrated his commitment to a group by investing time and energy in it should have a say in what goes on there. In fact, Ipili welcome newcomers to their community if they feel that they will bring something of value to that community.

In fact, welcome is not quite the right word. Ipili actively seek to draw powerful outsiders into their personal networks and into the valley. Ipili have a long history of incorporating powerful outsiders such as members of the more powerful Huli and Engan ethnic groups which surround them into their communities and personal networks in order to benefit their presence. Many of them are in fact the children of powerful outsiders –Huli and Engans – who came to live with Porgerans, married Porgeran women, and who raised their children as Porgerans as we saw in chapter three. As you can imagine, being host to a mine appeared to Ipili to be merely a variation on this theme, and Porgera is unique as the only mine in PNG whose inhabitant not only didn’t mind, but actually *demand*ed that workers at their resource development be accommodated in the valley in and among them in a multiracial township.

Land Ownership

This mention of coresidence brings us to the issue of land. Porgerans divide the surface of the earth into two layers, the underlying ‘bone’ (*kulini*) and the surface or ‘skin’ (*umbaini*). At the most general level, there was a clear relationship between the bone of a ground and a particular cognatic stock. Thus the Waiwa have two blocks of land, one of which is named ‘Waiwanda’ (or ‘house of the Waiwa). Similarly, the Tuanda ‘own’ Apalaka, the Tiyini ‘own’ Yarik, and so on. The attachment between cognatic stock and land was quite close. During pig exchange groups chant the name of a river or mountain from their territory as a sign of which stock they are from, and hence from which stock their hosts were about to receive pigs. Each group also had a set of sacred sites on their territory where various spirits associated with the line were said to live and where sacrifices to those spirits (such as Kupiane) were made.

We can thus say that in a straightforward sense that ‘the Tiyini owned Yarik’ or ‘the Waiwa owned Waiwanda.’ The catch is, of course, figuring out who ‘the Tiyini’ is. Once again, this dissertation’s wider concern with the theme of subsumption comes to the surface. As we have seen, the Tiyini are not a clan in the sense of some sort of bounded, corporate group with a determined and exclusive membership. Any of the descendants of Tiyini have a claim to be Tiyini tucked away in their kinship portfolio linking them to one Tiyini great-grandparent and hence – via a seven- or eight-generation long genealogy – to Tiyini himself. But having a possible relation to Tiyini is very different from living at Yarik and making gardens in the area there. Although there were many people who could not be completely discounted in any future dealings with the bone ground, many – indeed, most of them – rarely ever went to Yarik and had let their claims to Tiyini-ness languish in favor of other connections in their portfolio when mining began in Porgera. In sum, some people who live at Yarik may not be Tiyini, and most people who have a

claim to Tiyininess do not live at Yarik.

Another central distinction that Ipili make regarding residence and descent is that of people who are *tene* and people who are *wana* in regards to territory. This means roughly something like ‘people whose claim to lineage-owned land comes from their father’ (*tene*) and ‘people whose claim to lineage-owned land derives from their mother’ (*wana*). These are the terms whose Engan equivalents proved so troublesome for Meggitt’s model of Enga lineality when his data was examined by McArthur (Barnes 1967). *Tene* and *wana* refer only to the sex of one’s immediate parent rather than an unbroken line of agnatic or enatic descent. Thus Meggitt famously included anyone counted as *tene* as ‘agnatic’ kin – a term which in anthropology suggested an unbroken line of male descent but which in Enga and Ipili simply refers to people in a residential group whose fathers had ties to that residential group – although the fathers themselves might be migrants. As a result non-agnatic families in a settlement can be converted to *tene* in two generations if they have male sons. As a result Meggitt’s data indicated an erroneously high degree of agnatic residence which contrasted starkly with Brown’s claims for residence among the Chimbu.

I mention Meggitt here to indicate the dangers of reading ‘agnate’ or ‘enate’ directly into terms such as *tene* and *wana*. *Tene* and *wana* should not be considered measures of agnatic or enatic lineal succession. In fact, in Porgera at least, this distinction, although cast in terms of agnation, is actually one about coresidence. Thus it falls in the category of gender and lineage related explications of behaviors that we as anthropologists might want to classify as ‘the activation of agnatic ties through consociation.’ When Ipili discuss these categories, they do not, as some other Melanesian peoples might, speak of these children as ‘not having the blood of the father’

or ‘not being of his semen.’ Instead, they speak of ‘eyeball time.’ “I never see those people” they say, “they live with their mother in their father’s place. They never come around here.”

In sum, ownership of the bone ground is very deep in Ipili society, but in a very abstract way – the cognatic stock which owns the bone ground is clear, but who exactly constitutes that stock is something that is locked up in the ambiguity of Porgera’s network-driven social system. Thus in land disputes in Porgera, the question at issue is not what stock ‘owns’ the bone of the ground, but rather who will successfully be subsumed as a member of that stock.

The skin of the ground, in contrast, is something that people have rights to use and transfer on the basis of their individual security circles. Individual plots within a territory can be given by one person to another for use and, in some sense, ownership can be conferred as well – keeping in mind that it is only ownership in the skin (that is to say, usufructory rights to the surface of the land) and not the bone of the ground that is being transferred. The actual distribution of rights of use and occupancy of the surface of the earth is a complex mosaic that is the result of the interaction of numerous peoples’ personal networks. In some cases, land inheritance can be as simple as someone’s mother passing on gardening ground to her daughter. But sometimes – and this is the case the majority of the time – it may be much much more complicated.

An example of the complexities that result may be taken from the situation of the gardens immediately adjacent to the house where I lived during my fieldwork. A prominent man of group A with many wives has a claim to a large area of land. His daughter makes gardens on one of them and, when he dies, becomes the ‘owner’ of her garden plots. After her first husband dies, she remarries a man from Paiela, who comes to

live with her. This man's sister (actually, his first cousin through a polygynous marriage, but classified as a sister, so never mind the details) marries a man of group B, a group who lives adjacent to clan A. Affinal connections kick in, and the husband's wife and his sister become close friends, and the sister receives a portion of garden plots from the wife. The wife's son, when grown, marries a woman of group A, but of a different branch than the original prominent man. This woman makes gardens on her mother-in-law's land. Although the woman is a member of group A, she traces her rights to the land not through some claim to owning the ground's bone but through the – to the Ipili – simple fact that it originally belonged to her husband's mother's brother's wife's father. Because the land in question is right on the border between territories belonging to group A and group B, after a couple of generations of being passed back and forth between them, everyone gets a little fuzzy as to whom the bone of the ground belongs to at all. And in any case, if a huge gold mine were come along and buy up that land, what kind of person would say that the members of group B who had worked it over the years weren't entitled to some sort of share of the money derived from its lease, even if they weren't 'owners' of the ground's bone?

In sum, ambiguity in land ownership takes a double form. On the one hand, there are a vast number of people with a claim to the bone of the ground which is very deep but also very vague, since the vast majority of them have not turned their possible identity as a member of a landowners stock into an actual one and many may not even know of their genealogical connection to that land. On the other hand, there are people deeply embedded in a residential group who have definite rights to the skin of the earth, rights no one can deny, even though those rights are based on 'eyeball time' – work and coresidence – rather than a link of blood. These links are definite and indisputable, but

not as strong as more enduring claims to the bone of the ground. So in fact, the art of making claims to land in Porgera is, at the practical level, far from a simple case of ‘Clan Y owns land Z’ model. Thus the situation in Porgera is, as Biersack writes, “anomalous yet also brilliant at every turn, and with an unsurpassed openness, and ability to respond organizationally to every contingency” (Biersack 1999b:262)

It was into this dynamic and complex web that the mine and government entered in the 1980s. The situation they encountered was one of an entrepreneurial *agency*: Ipili are networkers not only in the sociological, but the cocktail sense of the word. Ipili seek to grow their social networks constantly, and will engage in constant meeting and greeting, accompanied by every possible intrigue, whenever presented the opportunity. Ipili constantly mull over the fine details of their own potential heritages with an excitement and nostalgia that is somewhere between Talmudic exegesis and the American tendency to discuss in detail the batting averages of the great left-fielders of the 1930s. We can see now why the land study team had to creatively rework Ipili kinship, and why the Ipili themselves were amenable to such a reworking.

Who Lives in Apalaka and Waiwanda

With all of this in mind, let us now turn to the actual inhabitants of Apalaka and Waiwanda. Although the settlement of Kewanda – visible on the hills on the other side of the waste dump -- is also technically in the Special Mining Lease and includes a few relocation houses, Apalaka is the ‘relocation village’ at the furthest remove from the government station. The unsealed, all-weather road to the community is maintained by the mine, but landslips not infrequently make vehicular transport up to the village impossible, halting the privately-run PMVs which provide bus service to the village, as well as the shuttle service which mine contractors run up to relocation communities to

bring local mine employees to work.

Apalaka itself is at the top of a gruelingly long and steep hill. As one walks up the hill one passes settlements on either side, including the seldom-used community school. The road dead ends in the main *ama*. The *ama* is lined with ‘tradestores’ – the ubiquitous mom-and-pop metal shacks that represent entrepreneurial activity in the minds of most Papua New Guineans. In addition to selling cooking oil, canned fish and meat, soap, tea, guitar strings, and mercury (for refining gold), some tradestores supplement their sales with pool tables and a few have VCRs and televisions which show movies for an eager audience. The Ipili taste in film is erratic – Superman was too corny, *Fight Club* unfathomable. The most popular films during my time in Porgera were *Kickboxer* (Jean Claude Van Damme, who Porgerans believed to be named ‘Frankie’), *Anaconda* (starring Jennifer Lopez and Ice Cube), and the documentary *The People of Porgera*, which offered a village without old photographs a glimpse of deceased loved ones.

In theory all Ipili loved the idea of owning and running their own business. In practice, however, most tradestores were not actually open. Half operated sporadically when they had stock, and four or five were regularly open, but in fact there was only one tradestore in Porgera that was consistently open, and that was owned by an enterprising Huli man who had settled there years before. The inventory of the other store suffered from the pressures of hungry but penniless relatives to whom food could not be refused, the difficulties of transporting goods up to Apalaka, and more competitive prices at the government station, where more serious businessmen sold wholesale. Thus most tradestores were closed and locked up, or acted as places where the families that owned them could sell betelnut, cigarettes, ‘palawa’ (fried dough a la *The Grapes of Wrath* similar to silver dollar pancakes), ice pops, and rest and relax without having to hike up

to their house (for more on tradestores and business in Porgera more generally see Banks 1999).

In more traditional Ipili communities people live in homesteads dispersed across the landscape and separated from one another by gardening ground. People value their privacy in Porgera as well, but lived in much closer quarters. It was considered unacceptable to be able to see another person's house from your own. In general, it was not acceptable to visit someone's house without warning them beforehand of your visit. Any movement in one's house area after dark was a cause for alarm and was met by the use of force. Occasionally when I, the clueless anthropologist, took a wrong turn and stumbled into a neighbor's compound, I would be met by angry men with machetes. As I found out in the course of my census work, even those residents of Apalaka who had lived there since it was created had never visited large areas of it, including the homes of people with whom they were acquainted.

As a result, the paths that led out of the *ama* up to people's houses were often so overgrown that the canopy spread overhead and created a tunnel around you. Houses were surrounded by fences and hedges. This fact, combined with the steep and uneven geography of Apalaka could make finding one's bearing very difficult. The flip side of this fact was identifying and delineating Ipili households was relatively straightforward since they were literally bounded off from their neighbors. Typically they were clustered in compounds based around one or more relocation houses which had been built together. Alongside these numerous bush material houses – typically referred to as *haus kuk* (cook houses) -- were constructed. The most important reason that Ipili built these structures, they told me, was to ensure that in the 'next relocation' (whenever that might be) they would receive a permanent material house in exchange for it. Many also prefer to sleep in

them rather than in their relocation houses. Cynical mine employees determined to squeeze every ounce of irony out of the situation inside the Special Mining Lease often raise their eyebrows at the fact that people are so keen to have another relocation house in the future when they appear to prefer bush houses to the relocation house they already have. I have already briefly discussed dissatisfaction with relocation houses in the previous chapter. Here I will merely note that in my experience they are in fact quite cold compared to bush houses, which can be heated with less fuel, and are more comfortable for older people who need more heat and are accustomed to them. In general, these houses were places where visitors could stay, where people could cook using an old fashioned stove, and where old people could sleep comfortably.

Some Notes on Methodology

The novice anthropologist can find Porgera an intimidating place to work. Some of the researchers – I think here of John Burton and Glenn Banks -- who have done census work or other more quantitative studies in Porgera are, in my opinion, some of the best working in Papua New Guinea today. Following in their footsteps can be intimidating. At the same time, Porgera has also been the subject of extremely poor census work (see Burton 1999:286) including, famously, a census by one Engan scholar which failed to include any women. I feel, therefore, that the standards of my colleagues are very high and that the possibilities of failure have been amply demonstrated. My own analysis of the population of Apalaka is hampered by the fact that I have no prior experience performing census work, and in fact little or no training in any sort of quantitative social science whatsoever. This is compounded by the difficulty of studying residence among a people like the Ipili, and particularly in a place such as Porgera, where people tend to be multilocal (for more on difficulties of work in this sort of area, consider

Allen 1995).

On the other hand, what I lacked in concrete method was made up for with long-term, personal experience with the people of my village, which gives my own work a stronger background in the community. This is particularly important given how reluctant people are to allow white outsiders – inevitable seen as ‘spies for the mine’ -- into their villages. Porgera is well-known for being a place where it is difficult to separate the ‘true landowners’ from the ‘*epo arene*,’ or migrants into the area. This is particularly true when being identified as an *epo arene* means being excluded from landowner privileges, and as a result few people are honest about their status when enumerators come to their door.

In fact, as I hope to show, what counts as an *epo arene* is quite difficult to ascertain. Perhaps the only person in Apalaka during my fieldsite who was identifiably a migrant without any kinship ties to the valley was myself. This ended up working in my favor, since as an immigrant I became the *most* familiar with other immigrants and the Ipili families who were happy to host them. Ironically enough, it was the more ‘traditional’ families who preferred to stay away from the noisy public life of the *ama* that I had trouble tracking down.

Similarly, this may be the only census in Porgera’s history that is more likely to be an under- rather than an overcount. It represents an enumeration of the people who in my experience were more or less permanent residents in Porgera, insofar as anyone could be. As a result I may have overlooked people who might have strong and legitimate claims to being members of the community but who rarely visited, or people who were passing through when other censuses were taken. Most particularly, my data is *not* filled with duplicate names, false names, and the other means that Ipili resort to when faced

with any sort of survey or census on the general grounds that the more of them there are, the more benefits they are likely to receive.

Although the focus of my dissertation research was negotiations between the company and the Ipili, I began collecting genealogies in Apalaka and taking more or less complete censuses of households where I was invited, typically in the evening for dinner. During these trips I would take along a photo album of my own family, and our evenings together became less an enumeration than an exchange of family knowledge. Because Ipili enjoy discussing the intricate and often obscure genealogical connections between individuals, people often enjoyed finding their genealogical connection to my host family, or startling me by revealing hidden connections between people who I saw in the *ama* but did not realize were related. This was particularly true of my own fieldsite of Waiwanda. Given the politicized nature of my research and the fact that the average white person is often assaulted when venturing into these communities, Waiwanda was a good choice for me. As the least influential and smallest of the seven Special Mining Lease clans (excluding the Anga, who were in essence a nonentity), it was easy to become a bit of a mascot for the Waiwa as ‘their white man’ and fit into the community without the distrust that I might have encountered initially if I moved directly into the center of Apalaka. The community in Waiwanda was also quite small by Special Mining Lease standards – the size of communities studied by Jacka and Biersack – and more easily digestible. I will use data from Waiwanda to provide some more detailed information about the population.

Towards the end of my stay – in June 2001 – I conducted a more thorough survey of households I had not visited. Using a three foot by two foot sketch map of the village made by my adopted brother and an aerial photo (the famous ‘digital orthophoto’) of the

Special Mining Lease taken by the mine, I was able to make sure I had visited every settlement and view every structure of size in Apalaka with my own eyes. I then created individual folder for every household, combining data from my informal household surveys, the 2001 census work, and an extensive genealogical database I had developed out of more informal fieldnotes. I then tabulated the inhabitants of each house, often choosing to locate people in one location rather than another if I knew them to spend their time in more than one house, and then tabulated the results in a spreadsheet on my computer.

Some Basic Census Data

What, then, is the population of Apalaka like? Given how many people flow in and out of the community daily and how even local Porgerans prefer to be multilocal if at all possible, it is extremely difficult to develop an accurate number. My own census data show roughly 811 people, although how many 'households' there are in Porgera is difficult to say. Some 'households' were houses which were home to only two or three people who preferred their privacy. Others were composed of a compound of six or seven bush houses surrounding a single relocation house and might house more than sixty people.

The immediate question becomes how to reconcile this figure with the much higher one of Papua New Guinea's national 2000 census which occurred during my fieldwork and which in fact lists me as one of the inhabitants of Apalaka. There, the Apalaka census unit is listed as being home to 1,077 people in 157 households. To be honest, I do not have much confidence in the value of any of the 2000 census figures. While local kiaps and many educated Porgerans made an admirable effort attempting to train for the census, money to pay enumerators did not arrive until halfway through the

census week, and in my experience census activities in Apalaka consisted of one man with – to be charitable – relatively low literacy skills sitting on an overturned plastic bucket in the *ama* and waiting for people to approach him to be counted, and this despite the fact that the two thousand census was meant to be a door-to-door enumeration. Similarly, while I do not doubt that the population of the valley has grown enormously since the opening of the mine, the figure of 20,000 reported in the census for Porgera district seems unreasonable to me as a count of permanent inhabitants, although it may capture the total amount of traffic into and out of the valley.

TABLE 1. Total Population of Waiwanda and Apalaka

	Waiwanda	Apalaka	Total	
Men	62	334	396	
Women	70	345	415	
Total	132	679	811	

Since I do not have access to individual census sheets I cannot compare them to my own census. One thing to note is that I did not count the outlying community of Ekanda in my census. It is possible that the differences between my figures and those of the census can be explained by this fact. It is possible is that the enumerators actually walked to Ekanda, the small hamlet upstream of Apalaka, and counted them while I did not. This seems unlikely given how physically difficult it is to do this and the enumerators' unwillingness – as far as I know -- to get even as far as people's houses in Apalaka. In my own visits to Ekanda it seemed to me that there were roughly fifty people there, not 200. The inclusion of Ekanda, then, seems unlikely to account for the difference.

TABLE 2. Outsiders living in Apalaka and Waiwanda						
	Paiela	Non-SML Porgeran	Engan	Huli	Other/Unknown	Total
Waiwanda						
Husband Marrying In	4	1		3	1	9
Wife Marrying In	5	3	2	1	1	12
Relative of Husband Marrying in				3		3
Relative of Wife Marrying in	1					1
Epo Arene Man						0
Epo Arene Woman				1		1
Child of Epo Arene						
Waiwanda Total	10	4	2	8	2	26
Apalaka						
Husband Marrying In	19	5	7	7	3	41
Wife Marrying In	18	11	16	3	7	55
Relative of Husband Marrying in	1				3	4
Relative of Wife Marrying in	3	1	4			8
Epo Arene Man	1		9	7	6	23
Epo Arene Woman			8	3	3	14
Child of Epo Arene			21	2	2	25
Apalaka Total	42	17	65	22	24	170
Total	52	21	67	30	26	196

The mostly likely source of this inflation is that the census included the substantial amount of people who pass through Apalaka during the course of the year and the census figures reflect that. While a few unusual people estimated that they hosted up

to ten different people in a single month in their house, more often people reported two or three people might visit them at a time. I would not be surprised if this figure included *everyone* who passed through Apalaka more than once a year, even if not for a very long time and even if they could not be considered 'residents' by any stretch of the imagination. Overall, though, the discrepancy between my figures and those of the national census is the result of the fact that I probably committed a few sins of omission while census personnel performed a more substantial over count.

Table 1 shows populations statistics for both Apalaka and Waiwanda. You can see immediately that Waiwanda has a much smaller population than Apalaka. My census indicates that there is a slight gender imbalance in favor of women. What the table does not encapsulate, but which household tallies clearly indicate, is that the population of Waiwanda – and also most likely Apalaka – is heavily weighted by children under the age of ten. Of course, this is not unusual – there is a reason, after all, that they call it an 'age pyramid.' Still, the amount of children in the SML is striking and obvious to any visitor. Practically every household I visited included four children under the age of ten. This age group corresponds nicely to construction and the opening of the Porgera gold mine. Between the opening of the mine in 1990 and my own census in June 2001, thus, every married woman had been having children once every two years or so and the infant mortality that is strikingly and sadly present in genealogies of earlier generations is markedly absent. This fact indicates that whatever 'youth' issues the mine might have at the moment regarding young married couples will be dwarfed as the mine nears closure unless there is significant out-migration from the Special Mining Lease. While I did not have the time, energy, or confidence to perform a similar analysis of the population of Apalaka, anyone looking through the genealogies I have collected or who visits a

relocation house in this area will see immediately that a similar pattern holds. While these children may, like their parents, become more peripatetic as they grow older it seems that for the near future Porgera will have to deal with its own ‘baby boomer’ generation.

Will the Real Epo Arene Please Stand Up?

Another frequently commented-on pattern in the Special Mining Lease is migration into Special Mining Lease communities from outside. Unrelated outsiders known as *epo arene* (from an Ipili chain verb construction meaning ‘come and stand’) are seen by mine employees as one of the biggest sources of social disruption in Porgera today. As I hope to show in this section, accurately counting *epo arene* is an exercise in futility, since the term does not exist as a stable category in Ipili villages.

Table 2 provides information about residents of Apalaka and Waiwanda that lack a consanguinial relationship to Tuanda or Waiwa. Very roughly, we can see that 196 people out of 811 – 24% -- are not in some sense ‘Tuanda’ or ‘Waiwa’ based on either *tene* or *wana* status. This is not surprising, since the population should have a population of in-marrying spouses. However, depending on which principles of inclusion and inclusion I chose to use, this figure could also easily have been 293 people out of 811, or 36% of the population. I will discuss this first figure, and then explain the sociology and politics of *epo arene* such that could be used to produce the second figure.

Because Apalaka as I encountered it is just barely a decade old, it does not make much sense to speak of ‘migrants’ and ‘nonmigrants’ in terms of some sort of long-term residence on the land. Most of the Tuandans now living in Apalaka had migrated out of the original village to be closer to the mining camp that operated at Alipis in the 1980s. Thus ‘relocation’ to Apalaka was not so much the shifting of an established residential

group from one location to another as it was the (re)creation of a village out of the people who had – with the exception of a small population – not lived there for some time. Thus rather than labelling ‘migrants’ or ‘non-migrants’ this chart divides people up based on their reason for moving to Apalaka other consanguineal ties.

As noted above, the number of non-consanguines is not surprising when one considers that this table includes in-marrying spouses. Note that it does not include Tuandan spouses who have settled in Waiwanda and vice-versa. The lack of other Special Mining Lease landowner spouses dwelling in Apalaka is noticeable, but easily explained. First, most Special Mining Lease landowners lineages are heavily intermarried, and so further marriage would be incestuous. Second, Special Mining Lease couples do not live together, or they live some place closer to the station than Apalaka, which is far away and difficult to get to. Finally, marriages that occur between landowners are often polygynous unions in which men take additional cowives in order to secure their position as members of all seven landowning clans. These men are typically multilocal and while they often visit Porgera to network with their wives and affines, they do not sleep in the village often enough to be considered ‘resident’ there.

The two figures indicate immediately the difference between Waiwanda and Apalaka. Waiwanda is a more rural enclave of a less powerful stock which rides on the back of the more densely populated Apalaka. It is not surprising, therefore, that there would be considerably less *epo arene* moving in to Waiwanda than Apalaka. This chart indicates clearly that one of the most common class of people to move to Apalaka are Paielans who are marrying ‘up’ to Porgera. The high number of men who marry Porgeran women and then reside in Porgera clearly indicates what on-the-ground fieldwork confirms: these men were leaving low-prestige rural communities and coming to the

more urban high-prestige Special Mining Lease area. Porgerans see their country cousins as hard workers who knew how to do things like make bush houses, tasks at which Special Mining Lease landowners were inexpert. No other ethnic group in the study had as many men choosing to reside uxorilocally as Paielans.

The other thing the table indicates is the predominance of Engan women coming down the highway and settling in the Special Mining Lease as spouses. Although I did not attempt a rigorous tabulation of these women's place of origin within Enga, in my experience almost all of them were from the Laiagam area, or other points between Laiagam and Porgera in west Enga. Paielan women continue, as they always have done, to marry Porgeran men. Porgerans from more distant lineages such as those in the Lower Porgera or Tipinini are also not infrequent spouses, usually because Special Mining Lease landowners do not have preexisting consanguinal ties with those areas and hence can marry them without concern with a possible incestuous tie in their kinship portfolio.

Despite popular opinions in Porgera amongst the government and mine, these findings indicate that it is relatively uncommon – at least in Apalaka -- for in-marrying spouses to act as ‘migration anchors’ which members of their natal community then use to come to Porgera. The image of a woman's entire family moving in from Laiagam three weeks after she's married a Porgeran man isn't borne out by the data – at least not in Apalaka (it would be interesting to contrast my data with communities that live closer to the government station). Indeed, the number of ‘true’ *epo arene* – people who settle in Apalaka without consanguineal or affinal connections – is relatively small: 40 out of 811 people, or just under 5%. These people are often friends or clients of powerful Tuandans. One family of Engans from Laiagam, for instance, were referred to as “work men” for the powerful landowner who hosted them, indicating their subordinate status as clients. In

fact, it is telling that the largest single class of people in Apalaka today who lack any kin ties to the Tuanda and Waiwa stocks are not people who have migrated there at all, but children born in Porgera to in-migrating Engan parents. This mirrors the crucial and more general dynamic we are seeing of massive generational growth which is not offset by infant mortality or outmigration.

It may be that 'pure' *epo arene* in-migration is more common in communities closer to the government station, and that the difficulty of getting to Apalaka has made it a less-popular location for *epo arene* to visit. I would not be surprised to find that communities nearer to the station and off the Special Mining Lease exhibited different demographic patterns. However, I think that in order to get a better grasp of what is going on in the Special Mining Lease when it comes to outsiders coming to settle in relocation communities, it is necessary to retrace in more detail the sociology of movement into Porgera, and what is meant by *epo arene*. Having explained one possible tabulation of *epo arene*, then, I now turn to another.

Rentier Leadership

Like other Ipili, Apalakans and Waiwandans actively attempt to incorporate powerful outsiders into their security circles. Unlike them, however, Special Mining Lease landowners can offer outsiders incentives such as royalty checks and access to jobs which other Ipili cannot. This provides a mechanism for landowners to convert what would otherwise be friends and acquaintances into subordinate clients. In order to explain this dynamic more fully, and the implications that it has for how people are subsumed into the category of *epo arene*, it is useful to contrast the situation in Porgera with the 'rentier leadership' described by John Burton (1996) for the upper Watut.

Burton's discussion of rentier leadership also comes in the context of rural Papua New Guinean society affected by mining. In his case, this is the distribution of benefits from prospecting activity undertaken by CRA around Hidden Valley prospect in the upper Watut (Morobe province). Burton argues that in the case of the Upper Watut, revenues and power derived from mining aggregate power in a 'patron,' a term he deliberately uses for its English connotations of "a reasonably expansive fellow, a sponsor" as well as the "stern figure not to be argued with" of the French usage, with its connotations of "not-to-be-brooked autocracy" (1996:5).

On Burton's account, a patron is a man who controls a piece of land over and against the claims of his other relatives by virtue of his seniority. He then gains in power by allowing non-owners to settle the land in return for allegiance to him and deference to him when it comes to decision making in public forums. Typically, the patron also operates a sort of embryonic tributary system where he receives a portion of the food, firewood, and other resources produced on that land (1996:8-9).

Arguing in a vein similar to Levi-Strauss's argument about the development of house societies (1987, 1982), Burton suggests that the rise of a patron marks the formation of a sort of semi-institutionalized personal power that emerges from and yet surpasses kin-based ties. He argues that these temporary inequalities would normally be leveled as a result of patterns of migration but solidify in the context of resource development.

In pre-colonial times... the inequality I have described would have been temporary and unimportant... But this circle is now broken and settlements are permanent. As a consequence, as secondary landowners are removed from active participation in village decision-making, a stratification of rights has occurred (Burton 1996:9).

Burton's prediction that "it may be that he [the patron] is a creation of the *post-colonial* period with its growing emphasis on the ownership of resources" (Burton

1996:9) appears to borne out, at least by the situation in Porgera, where a similar stratification is taking place. However, there are differences between settlement in Apalaka and what Burton describes for the Watut. In the Watut, the rentier leaders's position is tied to claims to land which are themselves legitimated by reference to some sort of genealogical charter. This source of legitimacy is thus based on kinship and genealogy despite the fact that the interests of rentier leaders are often orthogonal to those of his kin.

The patron heads his patriline, but far from ruling it, he is likely to be permanently at odds with most of it for quite a lot of the time. This is because it lacks the features of group solidarity that it would have if it were clan-like. Nor do patriline 'brothers' owe a debt of allegiance to the head, as clients are expected to. They should be loyal, but they offer a divisible loyalty at the best of times. The patriline is only a pedigree with rights attached to it, not a small bit of a corporate group. As for members of other patrilines who reside with the owners of the land the settlement stands on, these people are simply clients of the patron and have limited rights to say or do anything. (1996:8)

As Burton describes it, the patron's control of land can conflict with the interests of his kin when his position closes off the formerly-available possibility that they might be able use the open field of social arrangements to their own interest to secure use and rights to land.

While Burton's description of genealogy as "a pedigree of rights attached to it" describes Porgeran *malu* quite well, there are differences between the upper Watut and Porgera. In regards to land in Apalaka, we do not see the marked sense of conflict between the rentier leader and his kinsmen that Burton describes for the Watut. Rather, each Ipili household has become something of a rentier operation in miniature, each with its own line of migrants – typically affines, but also occasionally *epo arene* – who are their clients. In a few situations – such as my own, and the Huli store keeper who was an important part of the community – these relationships could be reversed and individuals

could find themselves clients of the too-powerful outsiders they had invited in to their communities only to find themselves eclipsed. Indeed, the danger of this occurring and of Ipili becoming ‘strangers on their own land’ is a constant source of concern for outside analysts. On the whole though, Ipili in Apalaka have been successful in taking traditional ties of affinity, consanguinity, and friendship and remaking them into rentier ties of patronage.

In Porgera, what *epo arene* largely means today is the group of people who were formerly entangled in Ipili security circles and came to live in Porgera as guests but still roughly equals of the Tuanda and Waiwa. Now, in the post-mine age, they have become subordinates and clients to their Ipili hosts. Whereas *epo arene* once had connotations of ‘friend’ and ‘guest’ it is now translated into English as ‘squatter.’ This shift in the English translation of the term corresponds with the shift in sociology that has occurred in Apalaka. Much of this transformation has to do with immigration, of course, but much of it has to do as well with the way in which Ipili identity in the village is being refigured as a result of its interaction with outside forces.

As you will remember, in the course of the Yakatabari negotiations we saw that the land on which the Yunarilama portal was to be opened was owned by Busane, a man who originally came by it after moving from Tari to Porgera as an alluvial miner. It may have seemed strange, at that point, that he should be considered ‘the true landowner’ over and above the Tiyini agents for the land. However, this sort of settlement is not an isolated incident. There is a similar Huli household in Porgera, which is also based on a Huli miner who came to Porgera and settled. He has been part of their community for literally decades longer than most Porgerans have been alive. Equally, there is a large Engan household which has a long history in Porgera. It dates back to a founding father,

who was good friends with an Apalakan man. They contributed to each other's bridewealth, and the Engan man came to settle in Porgera with his friend. He is now a grandfather and three generations of Engans live in Apalaka. And who is to say that he is not a resident? The claims of these sorts of '*epo arene*' are very strong, as the case of Busane demonstrates. This demonstrates how seriously *epo arene* ties could be used in Porgera prior to the coming of the mine. Do we say that these people are not 'true Porgerans' and are *epo arene*?

The problematic notion of 'the Ipili' as a clearly bounded ethnic group also makes it difficult to decide what – other than a commitment to the community – makes one an '*epo arene*.' An even clearer – although less clear cut – example of this involves the Marinaka people who live in Apalaka. In this case, the 'clan diasporas' mentioned earlier in the chapter provided a charter for in-migration. The Marinaka are considered one of the 'brother groups' of the Tuanda and live down the highlands highway in the area between Porgera and Laiagam. In the late sixties and early seventies Ambi Kipu (a powerful patron and son of the man who was part of the prophetic group who originated the Kupiane story) befriended a Marinakan man who eventually settled to live with him in Porgera. This man served as the anchor for a wave of Marinakan migration which has created an entire community of ethnically Engan citizens within Apalaka. Or are they ethnically Engan? After all, they are related to Tuanda himself. We shall return to them again in this chapter. The point to take here is that regardless of whatever status they may have had in the past, today they form a sort of mini-community of second-class citizens because they are not considered to be 'true landowners' and do not get access to money and job opportunities – despite the fact that they have lived in Porgera for as long as most Porgerans.

Finally, it is interesting to note that much of the ‘outsider’ movement perceived in Porgera is a result of migration to the valley that makes sense in terms of the mine’s reified notion of ‘landowner,’ but not in the terms of the Porgeran community themselves. One household in Apalaka is based around a married couple of two Tuandans, whose union was considered incestuous by the rest of the community. Disgraced, they still live in the village but have little to do with it and are rarely seen in the *ama* – I was surprised, in fact to find how large their household was when I visited there during my census work. Their children married people from Waiya, a fringe Engla settlement that Jacka describes (2003:289-303). Previously a center of population, it is today distant from the highlands highway and relatively underpopulated. In fact, many men and women from Waiya moved to Apalaka. To a certain extent, then, we can say that Waiya was absorbed by Apalaka. This shift in population does not fall strictly under the category *epo arene* because people use affinal connections to come to Apalaka. Nonetheless, they are considered by many Apalakans as tolerated but unwelcome ‘outsiders’ who are part of a disgraceful household. Thus they are in some sense *less* a part of the community than Engans and Huli who have strong histories of coresidence but lack affinal and consanguineal ties.

In sum, not everyone in Porgera is a rich landowner who drives around in a four-wheel drive truck with tinted windows. But even within the relatively humble households of the Special Mining Lease, landowners are leveraging their identities to become rentier leaders. Indeed, they are not merely leveraging them, they are remarking them. When *epo arene* become squatters rather than ‘friends who have come to stay’ a more restrictive definition of ‘Ipili’ emerges and the number of people who can be considered ‘outsiders’ increases dramatically to over a third of the population.

Arenas for the Claiming of Identity in Porgera

In the last section I examined the way that Ipili identity is used within Apalaka and Waiwanda. But Porgera is more than just the village, and Ipili identity can be employed in contexts which are still ‘local’ even if they are not ‘the village.’ As I mentioned above, being a landowner in Porgera gives individual Ipili access to benefits that most Papua new Guineans dream of tapping such as royalty payments, compensation, and employment at the mine. The key, of course, is making sure that they can feasibly construe themselves as ‘being a landowner.’ And yet as the analysis in this section will suggest, the structures within which they must subsume themselves are murky, ambiguous, and poorly-structured. As a result, they resemble more closely the open-ended repertoire of relationship-making that Ipili themselves practice rather than the structured, routinized bureaucratic rationality that governments and companies like to believe are their typical *modus operandi*. Critics of high modern attempts to make local people ‘legible’ might expect government institutions to refuse to see the complexity of Ipili identity. And yet Ipili identity is not coherently ‘purified’ by these lists, not merely because of landowners attempting to ‘corrupt’ the lists in order to maximize the amounts of benefits they receive, but because the lists themselves lack a coherent rationale for who is appears on them.

On the surface, there is a ‘paper world’ of names, identities, and criteria whose goal seems to be to panoptically list and describe who the ‘Porgera landowners’ are based on categories which they themselves have put forward. However, closer examination reveals to us that this paper world is in fact quite messy. In fact it forms a series of ‘arenas’ within which claims and counterclaims for identity and hence entitlement are made. Because most of these claims are also made in the physical space of the

government station at Porgera or the mine's community relations offices at Yokelama, the paper world also represents the first geographical remove by which discussion of Ipili identity in the village spill out into the wider world and into the mines of people who do not live within the Special Mining Lease.

Who are the Official Landowners in Apalaka and Waiwanda?

Who are 'the landowners?' Who signed all those agreements in 1989? How does the government keep track of Ipili identity? Perhaps the most 'canonical' list of Ipili landowners is the schedule of owners that was generated by the team that produced the land study. This document is theoretically the most legally salient statement of who owns the land in Special Mining Lease. It was completed in 1988, and has been supplemented since then by two 'children registers' which are meant to update the total number of landowners. I only have access to the 1994 report, which I believe was drawn up by Kurubu Ipara. These documents, then, constitute the government's official records of which individuals are officially considered landowners.

As the existence of 'children registers' suggest, these lists appear to operate on a principle of consanguinity. Anyone and everyone who can trace a blood relation to the apical ancestors of the Special Mining Lease clans is included. Thus the schedule of owners for the Tuanda 'clan' includes 608 names while the 1994 child register accounts for 510. The schedule of owners includes for Waiwa Yaliape has 564 names, and the child register has a further 411 names – far larger than the population of Waiwanda. These lists were designed to be inclusive, and to accommodate all Porgerans who had ties to the Tuanda and Waiwa ancestors in their cognatic portfolio, even if they had not activated them or if they resided in Apalaka – everyone, in otherwords, who could possibly be considered to have a claim to the bone of the ground in Porgera. They thus do

a very poor job of describing who is actually living on the land's skin in Apalaka.

The closer that one looks at these records, however, the more problematic they become. First, they include spouses, which complicates the idea that landowner identity is tied to descent. Second, even these consanguineal ties seem rather occult. In the case of the Waiwa, the schedule of owners lists *two* clans, Waiwa Yaliape and Waiwa Lunda. This in itself is not a surprise – the Lunda are a large group who are associated with a piece of ground known as Upalika, and whose members include William Gaupe (the commando-style raider of chapter three and pretender to the throne of the Porgera Landowners Association in chapter two) and the wife of Kurubu Ipara. The Lunda are not, however, the ‘owners’ of any land within the Special Mining Lease, if by ‘ownership’ one means making claims on the ‘bone’ of the ground discussed above. Only Waiwa Yaliape have land in the Special Mining Lease, not Waiwa Lunda – their land can be found lower down in the Porgera valley. It is not clear, then, why they ought to be included on a list of owners or have an agent who signed the Porgera Agreements of 1989, as the agents for Waiwa Lunda did. This issue is further complicated by the fact that the agent for Waiwa Lunda listed in the land study is William Gaupe, but the agent listed on the Porgera agreements themselves is Pospo Karapis. Did Gaupe delegate his authority Pospo? There is certainly no record of that fact, and during the time that I knew him William certainly did not claim such a thing.

Perhaps this suggests that there is an implicit recognition of the rights of *all* subsections of a clan to have a say in the disposal of land within the Special Mining Lease? But this goes against the practice as I understood it in Porgera. It is further contradicted by the logic of the schedule of owners for the Tuanda. As we have seen, the Tuanda are divided into two groups, the Ulupa and Yapala, and these two ‘sub-clans’

have two agents, Sole Taro and Ambi Kipu. One of the Porgera Agreements, however, list ‘Aiyope Yawane’ as the signator for Yapala rather than Sole Taro and to confuse matters even more, the ‘signature’ on the document is a thumbprint with the word ‘Sole T.’ written over it. This is most unusual since Sole is proud of his education and is one of the agents who could sign their own name. The agreement between the National Government and the Porgera Landowners includes nine signatures and twenty-one thumbprints, if one interprets ‘signature’ generously), including a large John Hancock from Sole, as he indeed did in the agency delegation document within the land act. Whose signature, then, is on the Porgera Agreements... and whose ought to be?

Furthermore, the words ‘Ulupa’ and ‘Yapala’ do not appear in the schedule of owners itself, which includes a number of other entries in the ‘subclan’ spot on the top of each page. Instead we have ‘Kareya’ and then a series of what are presumed to be sub-sub clans in parenthesis – Kareya (Aiyengi), Kareya (Amini) and so forth – as well as a handful of other names of corporate groups. Most tellingly, the subclan ‘Marinaka (Lio)’ is included, and its ‘address’ (i.e. location before relocation) is listed as “c/- Catholic Mission Kasap, Yangiyangi Vilage, Mulitaka Patrol Post – Lagaip District.” This is, in other words, the Marinaka group which is part of the larger clan diaspora associated with Tuanda – Mulitaka is ethnically west Engan and outside of the Porgera district. They are the same group mentioned above which as a large ‘outpost’ which live in Tuanda – and this despite the fact that they are in fact listed as landowners! The list includes 94 names: 87 in Laiagam, and then seven people who live in Porgera proper, including one Marinaka man, his wife, and three children. There was, however, no Marinaka agent, the Marinaka do not appear as one of the subclans in the land study or the Porgera Agreements, and they are not listed in the child register of 1994. Between the schedule of

owners and the land study they had been ‘delandownerified.’

Examples of this sort could be given in many of the other clans. The Pulumaini, for example, were not happy with the idea of having agents at the ‘sub clan’ level and instead opted for ‘sub sub clans’ or, as it is sometimes said in Porgera, *haus lain* (the Tok Pisin that means term that means something like ‘extended family’) level. In the Porgera Agreement between the National Government and the Porgera Landowners, there are six Pulumaini clans: Ambo-Wagia, Ambo-Amu, Ambo-Endewe, Ambo-Gai, Ambo-Paramba, and Ambo-Yuga. In the Porgera Agreement between the Porgera Landowners and Enga Province Amu, Endewe, Gai, Paramba, and Yuga are listed, while Amu has been added at the bottom of the document in pen. The delegation documents in the land study, on the other hand, include Ambo-Wagia, Ambo-Amu, Tokome, “Pulumaini Subclan Yamawe” (with the word ‘Ambo’ penciled in between ‘Pulumaini’ and ‘subclan’), Ambo-Napali, Ambo-Endeme, Ambo-Gai, Yamili-Wapini, “Pulumaini Subclan – Paramba” (with the word ‘Yamili’ written in pencil between ‘Pulumaini’ and ‘subclan’), Pariwana, and Yunga. Two subclans of Anga are listed in the land study (and both have the same agents) but only one is listed in the agreements, and so forth. In other words, these documents have never – even since their inception – presented a coherent model of the segmentation of landowner lineages.

Pessimists might see this as a sign that the land study was irredeemably sloppy, or that leadership in Porgera was helplessly corrupt and cynically manipulated official representations of their lineages. Optimists (or at least people familiar with life in the valley) might be able to explain these irregularities away, insisting that this sort of rigorous approach to the land study is splitting hairs, or that a few corners -- such as having more than one agent responsible for different subclans or last-minute signatory

substitutions -- were cut with everyone's approval.

To a certain extent both are right. The incoherence in the formal documents creating feasible Ipili agents indicates clearly, I think, how much corporate entities like 'clans' creatively emerge in response to the context that elicited them. We see reflected in the land study not clearly delineated lineage segments with exclusive membership, but a world of malleable corporate identities that take shape around a few prominent people. They reflect the fact that everyone 'on the ground' in Porgera knew who had to sign to make an agreement feasible that would protect the mine and allow it to operate, rather than accurately mirroring some preexisting clan structure. It would not be too much, therefore, to say that there were not so much twenty-three subclans in search of an agent but twenty-three agents in search of subclans.

Ironically enough, although the schedule of owners is in some ways the most legally important document associated with Ipili identity, it is also one of the least relevant to Ipili today. Other than the fact that it was key to the issuance of the lease on their land, Ipili today gain little direct benefit from being included on this list. The examples that I found were locked away in disused and dusty government files. Others form of identity, such as royalty payments, are much more relevant.

Royalties

For the Ipili who I encountered in the course of my fieldwork, the most important mode of being a landowner did not mean being listed in the schedule of owners, but on the list of people who receive royalties. As we have seen, the Porgera Agreements mandate that a certain percentage of the government's royalty on gold sold by the mine be redistributed to landowners. As a result landowners receive checks every three months

based on the mine's performance. These checks thus represent a sort of permanent dole or pension to which every Ipili can aspire. These checks are distributed on a sub-clan by sub-clan basis, and are tied to the total amount of land each sub-clan owns within the Special Mining Lease. Thus clans who have lost more land receive larger checks. Checks are also paid out at two separate rates – adult checks are worth more than checks for children.

The dynamic of the distribution of these checks is based around a few facts. First, the size of royalty checks is linked to the mine's profitability and the amount of land that each clan has alienated to the mine. Hence it is theoretically in the Ipili's interest to maximize the mine's profitability – a fact which the mine often reminds them of. Second, there is an inverse relationship between the size of each check and the total number of checks issued. As we shall see, the size of the checks are fixed and are not particularly large. The easiest way to gain more money is thus to receive more checks, although this then decreases the amount of each check.

There are several ways to acquire more checks. Since one can have multiple clan affiliations, the most obvious thing to do would be to be listed on the clan rosters of every clan that one belonged to. Men who are not members of all seven clans – as few men are – can round out their check receivership by marrying polygamously into the remaining clans. Since children receive checks, parents can grab a larger slice of the royalty pie by having (or claiming to have, or claiming responsibility for) more children. As we shall see, since men often take the checks of their wives and children, a single man may therefore walk away from royalty payments with upwards of twenty or thirty checks. And these methods only touch on the legitimate and legal ways of getting checks.

How, then are these lists compiled, processed, and paid off? Theoretically, the

lists of landowners are taken from the original land study. They have grown over time as periodic child censuses have been conducted to add newborns and infants to the list.

Additionally, landowners can appeal to the local government to add the names of people who they have approved – typically newly-acquired affines – to the list. The local government is, in this case, personated by Morep Tero, a long-serving kiap who was one of the people who conducted the Land Study itself. Tero is himself a Porgeran, and can be found in his office where, when presented with a new person to add to the list, he will add them if they are vouched for by someone he knows.

These additions to the list are added to a Microsoft Excel database in the Porgera Development Authority office. When royalty money is delivered in the relevant Porgera Development Authority bank account, checks are printed out on the office laser printer. The resulting stack of paper is then brought to the government office building and, over a course of a week or so, they are handed out on a clan-by-clan basis. Queuing up – or indeed, any form of public order – does not come naturally to the Ipili, and so the government officers sequester themselves in a room with no windows and hand out the checks through a small hole with a security grill in order to prevent an ‘incident.’ With a landowner representative observing, the government officers hand out checks and then get people to sign a receipt indicating that they have taken it. People receive their checks, cash them at the local branch of the Bank of Papua New Guinea (or other, more sketchy places), and then are free to spend the money on whatever they like.

The occasion of royalties results in a huge three day long party in relocation communities whose location shifts as money runs through each of the communities as their turn comes up in the list of checks. Thus if the Tiyini receive their checks first there is a huge party at Yarik, which then dies down. The party then shifts to Apalaka as the

Tuanda begin cashing their checks, and so on and so forth. What is done with the money? Well first, the distribution of the checks is quite complicated since various family members compete to receive each other's checks – my anecdotal evidence leads me to believe that the most common offense in this regard is men taking their wives's checks. Second, gambling is popular, and I've witnessed pots of enormous amounts of money up for grabs in public card games that occur during royalty parties. Third, of course, is splurging on beer and alcohol. Fourth, money is given to friends and affines. Fifth, money is used to pay off debts in trade stores for store-bought food purchased over the past quarter. Although this last form of expenditure is the least obvious, it often accounts for much of the royalty checks that people receive. Despite the reality of royalty parties, many people use the majority of their checks to pay off debts at tradestores for store-bought food that they have eaten over the course of the last quarter since their gardens cannot grow enough food to support them. The remainder is then spent.

As I said a moment ago, theoretically the royalty lists are compiled based on the schedule of owners. The truth is somewhat different. Despite the existence of twenty-three landowning clans, the royalty lists are in fact divided up into twenty-one different lists: The two Waiwa subclans have been collapsed into one (not surprising, since the Lunda shouldn't be receiving royalties at all), while the ever-amorphous Pulumaini have been reduced from five subsections to four. While it is not clear where the names on this list come from, they surely do not come from the Schedule of Owners. As we have seen above, the schedule of owners counts 608 adult Tuanda and there are 510 children on the 1994 children register, while the Waiwa include 564 names in just the Yaliape subclan, and the child register has a further 411 names. However, the list of royalty payments from the second quarter of 1999 lists only 179 adult Waiwa and 169 young adults –

which includes the Lunda, while the Tuanda number 480 adults and and 644 young adults.

Untangling the actual distribution of these checks proves to be quite a task, and I will offer only the most cursory of remarks. Let us examine for a moment the 284 checks distributed to the adult members of the Ulupa subclan of Tuanda. According to the signatures on the completed payment sheet, these 284 checks were distributed to 94 recipients. The highest number of checks a recipient received was 38, while the lowest was (not surprisingly) 1. Thus each person receives roughly 3 checks. In fact the distribution of checks is skewed – some people receive many while most receive few. Of course, this could simply mean that one person is taking the checks for their entire family, but this goes against Ipili egalitarianism as well as the rationale of having individual checks in the first place. There are some procedural issues that accompany handing out the checks. Some are, perhaps, understandable. Morep Tero, the government officer who was responsible for witnessing the check distribution, received one himself in his role as a landowner (which he is) despite the fact someone else should technically have countersigned as witness for him. Others are more suspicious – Nixon Mangape is simply listed twice (he married into Tuanda).

It could be argued that the small number of people on the royalty lists is based on a principle of residence in an area, rather than cognatic consanguineality. But if this is the case then why does the government employ two different standards for defining who a landowner is? In fact, it appears that these royalty lists are also being used as a way to transform people drawn into the security circles of prominent Apalakans into clients. Names can be added to the list by anyone who is already on the list providing that they can pass the relatively benign test of Morep Tero. While Morep is very easy-going when

it comes to adding names to the list, he is also very familiar with Porgera and the Special Mining Lease, and thus is a fairly decent – if personal and intuitive – assessor of whether someone is a ‘true landowner’ or not.

Thus as far as royalties go, ‘being a landowner’ amount to little more than ‘already being on the list’ and ‘knowing Morep’ and there is little overlap between the schedule of owners and the royalty list. The two different levels of checks are theoretically based on age, but in fact represent how well liked you are by the landowner sponsoring you – whether you are deserving of a large or small check. Often, these checks are collected by the landowner who retains a portion of it before giving the rest to his client.

Compensation

Finally, landowners have relationships with the company in which they receive compensation for land of theirs which are damaged by mining operation. Banks (1997) has discussed compensation payments at length in previously published work, and his writings draw on financial records held by the mine and to which I have not had access. For these reasons I refer readers interested in a detailed discussion of compensation payments to Banks’s work and will make only a few remarks here.

As we have seen, large-scale dealings with the mine, such as the issuance of the Special Mining Lease or the creation of new and unscheduled works within it, are dealt with by the Landowner Negotiating Committee. However for most of the time Porgerans interact with the company at an individual level. Because Porgera landowners actually live *within* the Special Mining Lease, their houses and gardens are technically located on land which the mine has the right to use. The mine can work on this land and destroy

improvements on it without the permission of the person living there. Or rather, technically that person has already given permission to the mine via their representative on the Landowner Negotiating Committee who signed the agreements of the late eighties – technically, this land has already been leased from them.

Landowners must, however, be compensated for their lost land and damages to the improvements that they have made upon it. However the amount that they are compensated is not negotiable – the rates, including the construction of new houses, are set by the original agreements negotiated in 1989. Typically, though, the mine does not actively seek any additional land that it does not already using. While compensation claims took the form of massive pay-outs during construction, today they are paid out mostly for occasions when mine-related activities cause inadvertent destruction of landowner properties – for instance, when a landslide is caused by explosions at the mine site, or a waste dump creeps over gardens. The result, obviously, is a strong incentive for landowners to built houses and plant crops in areas that are likely to be disrupted by mining.

Additionally, landowners are entitled to an annual rental fee for their land. This is considerably less money than royalties and less frequently paid. As a result, it is not as highly thematized in the landowner imagination. In fact, this payment is referred to by landowners as *monge muni* (literally: frog money) and the popular conception is that this money is paid to them for the disappearance of wildlife from their areas as a result of mining. In the case of annual rental fees as well as compensation payments, the key thing to note is that being ‘Ipili’ is a result of residence rather than descent – the opposite of what we see at the government station.

Employment

Employment in the mine is highly sought after in Porgera. Jobs are rare in Papua New Guinea, the mine pays well, and there are often benefits associated with it such as durable, high-prestige free clothing in the form of mine uniforms and boots. It also has the potential to lead-on to further employment. However, there are not many openings at the mine. Furthermore, given the nature of the highly mechanized mining that goes on in Porgera, many applicants are not fully qualified for technical positions inside the plant itself. As a result, competition for jobs is fierce.

The Porgera agreements have obliged the mine to hire according to a strict standard. Given equal skills, Ipili are hired preferentially over Engans, Engans over Papua New Guinean nationals, and Papua New Guinean nationals over expatriates. The mine in turn seeks to demonstrate its compliance and standing as a good neighbor to the valley by hiring as many local Porgerans as possible. Doing so is also in the mine's best interests. First, doing so is cheaper as they do not require housing. Second, local hires increase the percentage of national hires and thus decrease the mine's costs of adhering to the Fly-in-Fly-Out agreement which requires it to maximize local hires. Finally, local employment is seen by the mine as a social benefit and can be portrayed as part of its 'positive social impact' and commitment to 'sustainability' and positive outcomes for all stakeholders in the mine. Employment in Porgera thus offers a situation in which someone who is vetted as Ipili has a distinct advantage and in which the mine has an interest in increasing.

How, then, is this identity vetted? The mine has a long-standing policy of refusing to engage in the business of identifying landowners. All such identifications, they insist, must come from within the community. This minimizes entanglements in landowner politics and presents the mine as an institution concerned with supporting the autonomy

and self-determination of indigenous peoples. The result, on paper, is a system that works on something like the following principle: inhabitants of areas within the Special Mining Lease – in my case Apalaka – appoint by popular acclamation a member of the ‘hiring committee.’ They then bring this decision to the mine, which grants that member a small stipend. In return, he is responsible for distributing employment forms to people within his area and vetting them to the mine by – I believe – including a statement of his recognition of them with the completed application. The system thus applies a choke point to the interpretation of identity in Porgera. A single local gate-keeper simplifies the process by which the identity of a person as agreed to by the consensus of their consociates is vetted by a single person.

It is quite difficult for a community to remove a member of the hiring committee. Convincing the mine of a community’s change of heart requires a fair amount of persuasion. Even more difficult, it requires the consensus of the local community as to what course of action to take – something rarely achieved in Ipili social life. Finally, it takes overcoming the active opposition of the current office holder, who is by virtue of that fact (and also probably for other reasons as well) able to exert at least some influence in the community.

The structural situation of a member of the hiring committee is a plush one. Their sinecure nets them a small income which requires no work in return. In addition, their position is ripe for exploitation. In the case of Apalaka (and, by hearsay, elsewhere in the valley) people seeking employment in the mine have to purchase the application forms from their local committeeman simply to fill them out, and pay him again to submit them to the mine. Obtaining the consent of one’s local committeeman and their action to push your application through meant the expenditure of more money or, more likely, the

creation of some sort of relationship through which they would both plan to benefit in the future. The situation is structured, in other words, to provide members of the hiring committee many reasons not to be honest, and to put them in yet another situation of 'rentier leadership' where they become more powerful than other residents.

What sort of incentive scheme exists for Tuandans and Waiwandans to work for the mine? Technically they are the people who the mine most seeks to employ, they are also least likely to apply. Not only are less educated than Engans on the whole (given the short history of formal education in the valley), but they have little reason to seek work. The hours are long and while wages are welcome, most Special Mining Lease landowners can rely on revenue streams based on their status as landlords. In addition, other sources of income are available. Being compensated for damaged ground, for instance, or successfully bringing legal action against the mine. Finally, as far as Ipili are concerned, the whole point of having the mine in the first place is that they won't *have* to work at all. This while jobs are desirable, the costs to acquire them and the amount of work performed at them combine with Ipili concerns to escape from the wealth-work equation to make employment more appetizing to outsiders than to landowners themselves.

The result of all of these states of affairs is thus a radical disjuncture between the state of local employment as documented in internal mine reports and the status of the inhabitants of Apalaka. Mine documents provided to me by an anonymous source report the number of people in Porgera employed by the mine whose point of hire is Apalaka. The claims did not, to put it diplomatically, mesh with my intuitions regarding employment in Apalaka. I then took the list to someone qualified to examine it and remark on its accuracy. He was a close friend of mine who was both a long-time resident

of Apalaka (although *wana* to the village) and thus eligible to speak to individual's biographies in the community and a long-time employee of the Porgera gold mine. He began work during the construction of the mine, and during my time in the field he received his ten year service watch.

The results of our working through the list indicated that there was one 'true' Apalakan – one person with a family which had lived in Apalaka for some time – on the list: him. It was true that there were exceptions – another Tuanda who was *tene* to Apalaka had been suspended for misbehavior and did not appear on the list but would probably work there again in the future. Another well-known local mine employee also lived in Waiwanda, but he was a Huli man who had married into a Waiwa family. Other Tuanda and Waiwa had been employed in the mine – shortly after I did this study a Waiwa man was hired as a security guard – but very few stayed with the company very long. Lack of familiarity with industrial discipline, access to other revenues, and the strong temptation to steal from the mine meant that people tended not to be employed with it for very long.

Who did appear, then, on the list of names? There was one strong trend – Engans and (less frequently) Huli who had moved to Apalaka, befriended local people, and managed to get work at the company. After getting work, they inevitably moved out again – frequently to the Government station, where they lived, often with communities of fellow clansman.

In sum, there was a strong disjuncture between the state of affairs represented on paper inside the mine and the situation in Apalaka that it purported to represent. The structures in place worked to mitigate both the hiring of Apalakans as well as accurate representation of the true origin of the work force hired as Apalakans. Being a 'real

landowners' in this case is focused on residence – 'point of hire' – rather than descent. The way the mine structured its hiring committee – although in theory a noble attempt to 'allow the Ipili to determine for themselves' who true Ipili are -- merely provided an incentive for local people to use this as a mechanism to accumulate power and money for themselves.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined life in Porgera and how 'being Ipili' can mean very different things in different contexts. Overall, I have attempted not to contrast one or more of these arenas as 'accurate' and the others as 'inaccurate.' Instead, I have attempted to make an argument about how narratives of identity and kinship are told and retold as their institutional contexts changes. 'Landowners' exist in Porgera today as a group whose existence has been elicited by Porgera's wider institutional context, despite the belief of people that there is such a native category. Ipili social organization's emphasis on affiliation via residence does not map well to the descent-based criteria the mine and government think that they use. In fact, as we have seen, the standards used by the mine and government to subsuming individual people under the title of 'landowner' are themselves incoherent for reasons other than Ipili 'corruption.'

To a certain extent, this is not often noticed in the valley, or particularly minded. The unruliness of institutions such as preferential hiring, royalty payments, and standards for receiving relocation housing demonstrate that 'landowner' identity is only tenuously related to how life is lived in the village, however much this may be the idiom in which the delivery of these benefits may be articulated. For those at a remove from the valley, however, these identities often harden into stereotypical form in a way that has serious implications. We shall pursue these implications in the final chapter of this dissertation,

in which we examine what happens when these narratives of landowner identity circulate outside of the valley to the metropole -- Papua New Guinea's capital, Port Moresby.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: POLICY AND AMBIGUITY

This unceasing renewal, this inventive assuredness that guarantees success wherever it is applied, this scorn for the beaten track, bring about ever new improvisations which infallibly lead to dazzling results – to get any idea of them, our times had to await the exceptional destiny of a Picasso. With this difference, however: that the daring feats of a single man, which have been taking our breath away for the past thirty years, were already known and practiced by a whole indigenous culture for one hundred and fifty years or longer.

– Claude Levi-Strauss, *Way of the Masks*

In 1996 the Porgera Social Monitoring Program – an in-house report written for the Porgera Joint Venture as part of its attempts to be a good neighbor to the valley – noted many things with alarm. The breakdown of law and order, inequality in the distribution of money within the valley, the shortage of arable land within the Special Mining Lease, and other factors were addressed. The first item covered in the report, however, was the government administration in Porgera. “The quality of government services in Porgera continued to decline in 1996,” noted the report (Banks and Bonnell 1997:5). Even more glumly, it pointed out that

It is hard to imagine how government services could get worse. Not only was there inadequate funding for the designated tasks of the various divisions, but budgeted funds (including salaries) did not get to the district in a timely fashion and sometimes not at all.

Senior staff were continuously going to Wabag [the provincial capital] in an attempt to obtain budgeted funds. Transport was also a critical problem. At one point 6 of the 8 district vehicles were off the road and unserviceable. There was a lack of houses for staff for the existing positions and a lack of maintenance on houses which did exist. As if this were not enough there were no typewriters, computers, fax machines, telephones... even paper and pens. (Banks and Bonnell 1997:5)

But even more remarkable for the purposes of this chapter is that the exact status of Porgera *as an administrative unit* was itself unclear.

The interim arrangements for the new Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments... have added another element to the confusion. This centers around Porgera's status as a district. According to the OLPG&LLG Porgera is part of the Porgera Lagaip District. However most, if not all, Porgera public servants believe that Porgera is a separate district. It is possible that this is also the viewpoint of senior Enga District Administration staff. In early 1997 Enga Provincial Administration advertised a long list of positions for both Porgera District and Laiagam District. (Banks and Bonnell 1997:5)

The report noted that "cynics would argue that since government services are so bad in Porgera it is hardly likely for them to get any worse if administered from Laiagam" (Banks and Bonnell 1997:5) but still insisted that "Porgera's status as a District in Enga Province needs to be clarified" (Banks and Bonnell 1997:5). This issue was still in the air in 1998 at a meeting of the monitoring committee which I attended, where members were finally and definitively assured that Porgera was in fact a separate district from Laiagam.

This absence of definitive information about one of the most basic facts regarding Porgera's place in Papua New Guinea's government is indicative of two facts that are central to the concerns of this final chapter of the dissertation. First, the inability to delineate Porgera's political boundaries indicates the haphazard and tenuous grip the cosmopolitan elite in Port Moresby has on Porgera's local realities. Second, this inability of the government to provide district boundaries indicates the extent to which the government itself was a tenuous and haphazard phenomenon.

The third chapter of this dissertation discussed the history of representations of 'the Ipili'. In the last section of chapter five, I discussed the way that the Ipili living in

Porgera interface with representatives of distant organizations. In this chapter I step back from the immediate context of government representation in Porgera and examine the larger issue of how ‘the Ipili’ are perceived in places outside of the valley, and in particular how they are perceived by the national elite who dwell, more or less, in Port Moresby. In this chapter I also want to approach the circulation of knowledge of land owners in a slightly different way. In the second chapter I focused mostly on the means by which information in the valley flowed outside of it to people in Port Moresby. In this chapter, I expand my scope beyond Porgera and examine not just the way ‘the Ipili’ are imagined in the metropole, but the way in which this imagining is part of a larger way of understanding land owners and land ownership across the country. I will argue that there is a fundamental contradiction between how local people cope with resource developments and how the national elite think they cope – or at least, how these elites imagine how they *ought* to cope with resource development. Ipili and other land owning groups are themselves innovative in their relations with the mine and readily cope in novel ways with new circumstances. In distinction to this, metropolitans and the policies they make are fixated on a view of land owners as timeless and unchanging and see the act of registering the ‘true customary landowners’ as simply one translating coherent agreements on the ground into legal policy and property regimes. Getting, as it were, the ‘state simplifications’ right.

The attempts of national elites to discover ‘the true landowners,’ I will argue, has gone remarkably awry in a very enlightening way. It rests on a sort of optical metaphor by which their task as representatives of institutions is simply to accurately discern the ‘local’ state of affairs in areas where resource development will occur. In doing so, they imagine themselves to be the conduits through which global and national currents of

finance and power flow. As such they are separate and distinct from the ‘local’ communities that they observe. But in fact this is hardly the case. Indeed, it is the semiotic bad faith of national elites – their tendency to see themselves as observers, rather than participants, in the formulation of indigenous identity – that allows them to imagine themselves as separate from the ‘local scene’ at mines and hence as ‘global’ agents, personators of big actors. They imagine themselves at a remove, observing local politics, when in fact local politics consists of nothing else but the activity elicited by their observation.

Here I argue that, *pace* the government of Papua New Guinea, the process of land registration is not a simple exercise of ‘translating’ a set rights out of an indigenous context and into a western legal framework. Landowners are not merely identified, they are *elicited*. Identifying landowners and registering land includes a moment of novelty or newness inherent in the translation process itself. And while a ‘translation’ view of land registration sees this ‘contamination’ or ‘corruption’ of ‘authentic’ Papua New Guinean culture as pathological, I argue that this moment of novelty and innovation provides an opportunity to develop institutions that are more capable of bearing the stress and strain that a mine puts on life in the place where it is located. Thus I argue for the value of *novelty* in the registration process and the *ambiguity* of ‘customary’ land regimes.

Specifically, I set forth the modest proposal that in many areas of the country, Papua New Guineans deal with land in a way that is characterized by a lack of clear cut claim to land, regardless of how widely or narrowly you seek to understand this term. In these areas – and they include those where most of the mining and hydrocarbon developments are located – myths about land, precedents for its disposal and transfer, systems of kinship, leadership, and public speech (all of which we might gloss as

something like ‘custom’) do *not* operate to create “a system of social control operated in accordance with norms of disinterestedness and predictability” (Posner 1995:20) (something that we can gloss more or less as ‘the rule of law’). In other words, it is just as well that land registration involves a moment of novelty since even if it did not, Papua New Guinean ways of dealing ‘who’ owned ‘what’ land would be insufficient to provide the security and clarity of tenure necessary to keep resource developments open and functioning. The cultural patrimony of Papua New Guinean societies, I argue, is not an unchanged and unchangeable body of ideas which unproblematically regiments local society in accordance with its ‘custom’. On the contrary, I argue that it is a set of tools or instruments or tropes which are deployed in the ongoing generation of indigenous lifeworlds. This generation is creative. In a world where community itself is an achievement rather than something taken-for-granted, who owns which land may reflect the need to integrate the community, and the best way to do that may be to keep land disputes alive rather than settling on a final answer regarding who owns what.

In sum, novelty in the land registration process is not only inevitable, it might not necessarily be such a bad thing. In what follows, I claim that a stable social context for resource development does *not* necessarily follow from the accurate act of translation of the content of land beliefs. In fact, I argue that it is difficult, if not impossible, exactly to translate the content of indigenous beliefs about land. I argue that there is always an element of creativity in translation and that this fact does not make translation illegitimate, bad, or corrupt. Recognition of this fact, I argue, is not only very Melanesian, it is also very modern. I thus argue that the strength of the social contexts of resource developments is best based on the *method* and control of processes of translation, and *not* on the adequacy or accuracy of translating some sort of coherent

contents about land beliefs.

The goal in this chapter is thus to present a picture of policy making in Papua New Guinea itself, rather merely in Porgera. By presenting this picture, I hope to move away from a hypostasized view in which local actors and ‘locality’ are seen as something constructed while ‘globalization’ and ‘the nation’ are presented in analysis as unproblematically big actors.

Registering Land and Landowners in Papua New Guinea

One of the most common topics of discussion when addressing the economic aspects of globalization are neoliberal economic policies, and particularly the ‘structural adjustments’ imposed by International Financial Organizations (IFOs) on Southern countries as a condition for receiving loans and other forms of aid. Across the globe, it is argued, many indigenous and traditional peoples face the privatization of land that was formerly held as a common resource.

Given this fact it is hardly surprising to see these sorts of calls being made in the Pacific. Authors such as Helen Hughes, for instance, have argued that “communal landownership has held back indigenous entrepreneurship in the Pacific as it has elsewhere in the world” (Hughes 2003:11) and insisted that “clan loyalty, admirable in traditional societies, is inappropriate for a high-income modern society” (Hughes 2003:12). From this one might suspect that the biggest problem in contemporary Papua New Guinea is the threat neoliberal economic models pose to traditional land rights. In fact this is not the case.

The politics of representing indigenous interests and the construal of ‘the local’ has been a source of considerable interest in the past fifteen years. In South America, new

and uneasy coalitions of allies have formed relationships with indigenous people seeking to increase their political autonomy (da Cunha 2000; Conklin and Graham 1995). In Indonesia, presentations of authentic indigenous status are contested (Li 2001, Tsing 1999), and in Australia several scholars have examined the way that settler governments demand that aboriginal people perform their aboriginality in a particular way (Povinelli 2002, Merlan 1998, Weiner 2003). In general, 'locality' and its construction has been examined in several, more theoretical works (Appadurai 1996, Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, Gupta and Ferguson 1997b).

As the preceding analysis of Porgera suggests, Papua New Guinea as a whole differs from other countries in which indigenous people seek recognition. Not only does Papua New Guinea lack a settler population or dominant ethnic minority, it also lacks a highly organized and efficacious state. As a result, the situation is differently configured than in Indonesia, Latin America, or Australia. Even in comparison with former African colonies, Papua New Guinea's situation is odd due to the extreme diversity of ethnic groups and lack of precolonial regional integration (beyond trade networks) such as existed in much Africa. Papua New Guinea's enormous size vis-a-vis its other Pacific neighbors also makes it difficult to compare with other states in the region. Problems of land law and land registration in Papua New Guinea have been dealt with in great deal elsewhere (Sack 1974; Rynkiewich 2001; Larmour 1991; Curtin, Holzknicht, and Larmour 2003). Here I will focus briefly on the general configuration of land registration in Papua New Guinea and its relation to resource development.

While the future country of Papua New Guinea was annexed by imperial powers in 1884, the height of the Scramble for Africa (Pakenham 1991), this action was not proceeded by a long history of trading and missionization in the region as was the case in

Africa. From the beginning, policy regarding native land tenure was paternalistic and protective. There were several reasons for this. The zeitgeist of the late 19th century tended towards paternalism, particularly in Australia, where the colonization of Papua New Guinea was seen by many as a chance to make up for the mistakes they had previously made in their treatment of aboriginal Australians (Nelson 1989:21-22). Settler and other whites did not seek to exploit the land, and so clashes with locals and immigrants along a frontier (as in, for instance, North America) there were no clashes between them and locals. And finally, the colonial administration of Papua New Guinea suffered from, as we might now say, a lack of ‘capacity’ – they simply lacked the ability to enforce any more than the most cursory of laws in areas outside of Port Moresby proper. Historically, then, Papua New Guinea has not been subject to enclosures, privatization, or land seizure by settlers. It is not and never has been a place where Hughes’s intellectual predecessors have ever formulated policy.

As mentioned in chapter one, mining and hydrocarbon resources are central to Papua New Guinea’s fiscal stability. Papua New Guinea’s independence in 1975 was originally bankrolled by royalties and other revenues from the Bougainville copper mine. The next twenty years of independence, and particularly the late 1980s, after Bougainville ceased production, saw the creation of other mining and hydrocarbon projects and by the time of my fieldwork seven were active: Ok Tedi (gold and copper, 1985), Misima (gold, 1987), Porgera (gold, 1988), and Hides (1988), Gobe and Kutubu (a single operation spread across two leases, 1990), Tolukuma (gold, 1993), and Lihir (1995). Revenue from these mines was meant to be help spur development in Papua New Guinea (for more on the history of mining in Papua New Guinea see Nelson 1976).

However, many of these projects have led to problems. In fact, one of the biggest

problems facing the mining industry in Papua New Guinea today is ‘landowner problems’ – the disruptive actions of locals who are protesting not the presence of the mine, but the size of their slice of the action. Professional ‘landowners’ live permanently in hotels in Port Moresby, pushing their claims and their identities to anybody who will listen. The minister of mining makes unofficial visits to cities only to be met as he steps off the airplane by ‘landowners’. On one occasion, he woke up one morning to find a letter on government letterhead committing the state to certain concessions to landowners sitting on his desk awaiting only his signature! In sum, the situation we examined in Porgera of agitative and proactive landowners seems to be widespread. On the one hand, we have seen in Porgera that landowners are ‘hot’ and not ‘cold’ -- that it is they, rather than the mine which tends toward innovation and disruption. Hughes’s account, on the other hand, is a familiar appraisal of indigenous people being ‘cold.’ Their inflexibility and adherence to tradition prevents development by reigning entrepreneurial impulses within the structure of a static and traditional society. As the scope of this dissertation expands beyond Porgera, we must examine how well the model I have developed for one resource organization applies to another.

Finding True Land Owners – the View from Port Moresby

As Geoff White has pointed out, countries in postcolonial Melanesia often draw on the same essentialized view of their ‘culture’ as part of their nation-building project that their colonial rulers created in order to justify imperialism (White 2001). In the case of Papua New Guinea, Australian images of ‘lost Papua’ or ‘islands out of time’ served to reassure Australians that ‘culture in Papua New Guinea’ was still intact, and hence suitable for a conscience-salving exercise in benevolent preservation designed to make up for the ‘extermination’ of aboriginal peoples who were, presumably, on their way out.

This view of “inflexible tradition,” as Errington and Gewertz call it (1995) is widespread in Melanesia today, and as both they and White (2001) point out, ‘timeless tradition’ can easily be equated with ‘savagery’ or ‘underdevelopment’ when judged negatively. This is in fact what appears to have occurred in the case of Hughes, who sees the inflexible tradition of customary land tenure to be inefficient and uneconomical

In contemporary Papua New Guinea itself, however, the moral valence on traditional culture has been reversed. Contemporary Papua New Guinean views of traditional culture are deeply romantic. Old ways of life are valorized against the corrosive forces of modernity, with the exception being Christianity, which is eagerly embraced as being in tune with valued ‘traditional’ practices of reciprocity and, as it were, agape for one’s wantoks. This nostalgia for ‘the village’ is everywhere in Papua New Guinea, ranging from idealized images of extended families in television commercials (Foster 2002) to the Papua New Guinea music video, where adorned dancers performing heritage dances from the musician’s home village are almost mandatory. This sense of the lost innocence of rural life is reinforced in urban areas, where Papua New Guinea’s thin middle class grows up with the experience of urban violence and crime, and without the experience of drudgery and claustrophobia that can sometimes accompany village life.

This wider tendency to celebrate rather than denigrate ‘traditional culture’ has serious impacts for law and policy surrounding land tenure and mining in Papua New Guinea. In Port Moresby, the national and expatriate elite agree that Papua New Guineans have a ‘traditional culture,’ that it is an appropriate basis for land registration, and that it is ancient, unchanging, benign, and stationary. John Burton calls this the ‘Melanesian paradigm’:

It is the dominant national ideology in modern Papua New Guinea that its village societies include (a) a division of people into clans based on descent from an ancestral founder, (b) exclusively owned clan territories, and (c) 'true' leaders who capture the consensus of their community. This is notably seen in the ideological formation of people known as 'landowners' who have rights to certain things, usually in heroic opposition to some other groups or institutions of government (Burton 1996:1)

Michael Rynkiewich sketches out a similar viewpoint in an article criticizing in the "myths we live by" in Papua New Guinea. Among them is the story that "the landowners have held this land since time immemorial; and the landowners hold their land communally in clans; therefore, we just need to discover who the real landowners are and register the clans as a land holding group" (Rynkiewich 2001:62). Years earlier, in an influential article on mining and social disintegration on Bougainville, Filer also attacked this "myth of Melanesian communism" (Filer 1990: 9) making a similar argument. The result is a set of policies that are if anything the inversion of neoliberal privatization models.

My own fieldwork confirmed this. Consider, for instance, two conferences I attended while away from Porgera. The first was the Seventh Annual Biennial Community Affairs Conference held in Lae in 2001. Sponsored by the Papua New Guinea Chamber of Mining and Petroleum, the conference was an occasion where the community relations staff of different mines could meet and exchange information and ideas about how best to be the official interface between the company that they work for and the local people to whom they are paid to represent it. The second was a conference hosted at the University of Queensland by two anthropologists and a entitled "Customary Land Tenure and Land Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea." Because the conference was scheduled at the same time as the Australian Anthropological Meeting in Perth, the meeting was largely a Papua New Guinea affair and several prominent Papua

New Guineans, including the Secretary for Energy and Petroleum, flew in to attend.

At the Lae conference one Engan executive working for Chevron claimed that “PNG land is considered the mother land, the first motherland, the second is the human mother... land ownership, despite the mission influence, is woven into the fabric of society. It is in the blood of Papua New Guineans... their traditions are still intact, even after civilization.” In light of this, he proposed that the solution to landowner problems and land registration was “the Melanesian way of sitting and sharing and giving and talking” and that “we need to ask people to sit down, use their traditional Melanesian approach and decide what is best for the village.” Later on in this talk the same executive claimed that one pan-Melanesian universal was that all Papua New Guineans sought to be buried on their father’s ground. This assertion elicited a startled gasp from Martha Macintyre, an anthropologist who was present at the time, and whose long career studying classically matrilineal societies in Milne Bay and New Ireland had led her to hold a rather different view of the well-known mortuary rituals of those provinces.

A similar sense of positively-valued inflexible nature of tradition held at the conference in Brisbane. There, another businessman insisted that “we’re talking about land rights that have been existing for years, even before the explorers came.” A man who considered himself one of the ‘true landowners’ of the Gobe gas project said that “they’ve [Melanesians] been living there forever... they know all of that land identification in their heart.” Yet another man said “In Melanesia, there is this cooperative sharing thing.” References to “customary sharing practices” and “the Papua New Guinea ethos” were also common.

This view is particularly prominent in the writing and policy work of one person at the Brisbane conferece, Anthony Powers. Powers is notable not only for being an

exemplary example of a ‘translation’ or ‘optical’ understanding of land registration, but also for being particularly instrumental in transforming that view into law and policy. As a former lecturer at the UPNG he has influenced many of the country’s elite. Later in his career he served as the First Assistant Secretary (Economic Affairs) for the East Sepik Provincial Government, during which time he undertook a precedent-setting land registration program (Power 1991, Weiner 20001b). In addition he has served as the Manager of Lands and Community Relations for Chevron Niugini and authored an important book on community relations (Power 2000). Most importantly, he was the motive force behind the new Petroleum act which states that all land registration surrounding hydrocarbon projects must be made using the Land Group Incorporation Act of 1974. For these reasons it is useful to pause for a moment and consider in depth Powers’s views of land registration.

As Power’s puts it, the Land Group Incorporation Act act was designed to recognize the fact that “landowners will not suddenly become well organized in a manner that equips them to relate to a multinational company and the provincial and national government” (2000: 136). To compensate, the act allows for the creation of Incorporated Land Groups which will be both modern organizations and agent of custom. The idea is essentially to have a management committee composed of ‘traditional elders’:

Associations should have an executive committee based on traditional political grounds. The “Big-men” – leaders who are recognized by their group as having knowledge of the group’s history and are given the authority by the group to speak its name – should be on the executive committees which should be constituted to represent a all major groupings in the project area...**No pressure should ever be applied that would deny or fail to recognize the ethnic divisions that have existed for millennia.**” (2000:138, emphasis in the original).

On his account, members of these groups have a clear and unambiguous understanding of traditional land ownership and its obligations: “PNG has 10,000 years of settled agricultural tradition and land management was and is an integral part of the

Papua New Guinea community management. People know who owns what land” (2000: 136-137) and as a result “The Incorporated Land Group know their customary obligations and then should be encouraged to meet them in a customary manner” (2000: 140). As a result, “Incorporation of land groups provides a sound foundation based on custom for distribution of compensation payments, royalty payments, holding of shares in landowner companies and distributions of dividends, and membership in landowner associations. From the developer’s point of view the ILG Management Committees provide the authentic leaders with the power to make binding decisions” (2000: 138).

Proponents of this translation theory of land registration such as Powers must face one major fact – despite what they expect, attempts to register land in Papua New Guinea have proved extremely problematic. In fact in Porgera (and, as we shall see, in other places around the country) landowners did in fact “become well organized in a manner that equips them to relate to a multinational company and the provincial and national government.” Despite presumptions of the transparency of social structure, universal knowledge of land boundaries, and ancient rules of conflict resolution, landowners fight constantly over land in development areas. Translation theorists see the failure of the Melanesianist Paradigm not as a result of its inherent misunderstanding of land tenure in Papua New Guinea but due to ‘corrupt landowners.’ When confronted at the Brisbane conference with the fact that ILGs had to date been an enormous failure, Power replied that this was due not to the fact that the act was badly made or land tenure in Papua New Guinea was understood, but rather because of a failure of political will on the part of the government and the corruption of local people.

On this account, the problem is not the concept of seamless translation itself, but rather that the job of translation has been botched – or, more frequently, interfered with.

Greedy landowners have been corrupted from their former pristine state into one of moral torpor because of the impact that money from mining projects has or could have on them. ‘Corrupt landowners’ foul up the process of accurate translation by making untrue claims about traditional custom.

This was certainly true of the attendants of the first conference I attended. As the president of the chamber put it in his opening speech, “people issues are at the forefront of the mining and petroleum industries.” At issue, he claimed, were “community problems that could have been avoided” and that were caused by “so called ‘landowners’” who ripped off the government. “The rip off is so blatant,” he said, “[that] it penetrates into the fabric of the government.”

Other speakers were more blunt. “Community affairs issues will shut down this country,” said another Papua New Guinean executive. He claimed that landowners were “merely going in for greed and not land ownership” and compared the process of community affairs to fighting malaria. In a striking image in which landowners were equated simultaneously as both sufferers and vectors of the disease, he said that “like my malaria case, the proper medicine needs to be given to landowners.” Continuing, he linked resource developments to the development of the country, arguing that “if a lot of freedom is given to the landowners, then the landowners will continue to hold major developments at hostage in the guise of landownership and we will be going backwards.”

Thus we can see that while current thought on landowner registration represents an inverted form of Hughes’s neoliberalism, the basic dynamic of land registration here is similar to that described by Scott, who argues the complexity of local conditions escape the narrow point of view of these ‘state simplifications’. Unable to accurately assess the situation on the ground, the state’s large scale schemes collapse in disaster. A similar

argument for accurate discernment of local states of affairs can be found in Hernando de Soto's *The Mystery of Capitalism* (2000), which circulated in Port Moresby when I was there. De Soto argues the failure of third world countries to 'escape the bell jar' of economic stagnation and partake of first world economic prosperity can be traced to the government's inability to recognize people's grass-roots economic activity and the 'extralegal social contracts' they generate. While de Soto's neoliberal approach is politically orthogonal to Powers's and Scott's left-populism and aligned more with Hughes, both Scott and De Soto share a similar vision: governmental dysfunction is the result of the state's inability to accurately comprehend complex local conditions which, on the ground, function quite well. This view is typical not just Scott and de Soto, but of development discourses as well which, as Duffield has noted (2001: 82-85), espouse a 'Newtonian' view in which "development discourse present[s] itself as a detached center of rationality and intelligence; it [is] a matter of analysis and judgment for the development professional" (2001:83).

We have seen how these issues play out in Porgera – but how does Porgera's case compare other resource developments in Papua New Guinea, and how do these in turn compare with elite expectations of traditional Papua New Guinea behavior?

Examples of Land Tenure Issues

A quick survey of some of the more prominent resource developments in Papua New Guinea will demonstrate that struggles over land registration are perfectly comprehensible in terms of the ambiguity and indeterminacy that characterizes Porgera. In some cases, ambiguity over land ownership is manifest even before the resource at issue is demonstrated to be feasible. In other cases, a feasible resource has not been developed because 'the landowners' themselves could not be made feasible. Even in

cases where mining and hydrocarbon projects proceed, we can see that that is less because of the accurate way in which translation has occurred and more because of the way in which people were willing to adopt themselves to the development.

Thus ‘landowner problems’ do not necessarily cripple a mine. Gerritson and MacIntyre pointed out in an early study of Misima that “land issues have continued to torment the mine... [and] the net of claimants was widening” in 1991 (1991:49). Nonetheless, Misima closed roughly fifteen years later because it was mined out, not because of feasibility-threatening instability from landowners. In fact, a consideration of the state of landowner issues across the mining and hydrocarbon industries reveals that the articulation of local social systems with government and industry is not simply a black-and-white dichotomy between ‘corrupted’ and ‘uncorrupted’ landowners, but a complex process with a variety of outcomes, ranging from shutting down mining (as at Bougainville) to actively creating social feasibility (as we shall see at Ramu). Anthropologists familiar with the areas where mining and hydrocarbon operations are located can explain this articulation far better than the translation theory.

Kutubu

In the case of Kutubu it seems clear that the translation view is incorrect. Petroleum was discovered on the land adjacent to Lake Kutubu in 1986, and production began in 1992. In that same year, Thomas Ernst conducted a study of the Fasu for the new Kutubu Oil Field under an Incorporated Land Group regime that Chevron undertook at the direction of Anthony Power. At that time, Chevron has censused just under 1200 Foi and had registered forty eight clans. These clans had genealogies of four generations – in other words, they reached back to the grandparents of the oldest living generation. Ernst reports that “seven (14 percent) have total populations of nine people or less,” and

that variability ranged between three to sixty-five, with twenty-five being the average number. (Ernst 1995: 6). The result was thus, on the ground, something like a series of extended families which then became ‘Incorporated Land Groups’ based on the presupposition of outsiders that they must be ‘clans.’ From this and other data concerning residence and patronage patterns, Ernst concluded that “clans, even in combinations of four or five, do not form the basis for stable patterns of local organization – that is, in terms of the composition of settlements – and cannot in themselves map people onto land – that is, in matters to do with territory – in an unproblematic fashion (Ernst 1995:7). Thus while “Land is owned... by the clans, *aporo*,” it is used in shared communities and “use and ownership are not in all cases easy to distinguish, especially after long-term usage.”

This meshes well with Langlas’s account of the neighboring (and culturally almost identical) Foi. Langlas recounts that although most activities are “conceived by Foi as patterned by relations of agnatic clanship” in fact “it is better... to describe these activities in terms of ego-focused recruitment than in terms of bounded patrilineal groups.” Langlas even uses the term ‘patron’ and ‘patronage’ that were so central to Burton’s analysis of rentier leadership described in chapter four. In sum, Lanlas points out that “Foi ‘descent’ categories are not, in fact, bounded social groups” (1974:260). James Weiner, who has a long involvement at Kutubu as both a researcher and consultant, has also argued at length that “the Land Group Incorporation Act is based on a quite erroneous assumption of the communal nature of land-holding and transmission within the Melanesian ‘clan,’ and of its essentially ‘collective’ interest” (Weiner 2000:6). After discussing at length forms of Foi sociality he concludes that “what anthropologists such as... myself have described as the ‘givenness’ of connection and obligation in Papua New Guinea sociality has been

mistaken by the architects of the Land Group Incorporation Act as evidence of communal, corporatist ownership and decision-making” (Weiner 2001b). Thus, as Sagir simply puts it, “The rationale of ILGs seems to go against these aspects of Foi and Fasu social organizations” (Sagir 2001:146).

It is, perhaps, not surprising then that legal wrangling within the landowning community at the Kutubu Oil Fields continues to paralyze the distribution of benefits to local people since, as Weiner writes, “the Incorporated Land Group is simply seen by the Foi as a strategic device whose primary purpose is primarily political-economic rather than one of customary land management per se” (Weiner 2001b:10). In 1992, 48 Incorporated Land Groups were registered at Kutubu. In 1995 the number had increased to 60. In that year a renegotiation of royalty rates between the government and landowners led to dissatisfaction with the distribution of royalties within the landowner community. As a result, two opposed groups were formed, the Foe Association and the Foe Landowners’ Association. Attempts to gain political leverage led to the formulation of new Incorporated Land Groups by each group, and by 1997 there were 84. By 2000 the number of Incorporated Land Groups submitted for approval to the government had overwhelmed the ability of land registrar to process them, and money meant for a Children’s Trust Fund meant to help landowner children was being used to pay off lawyers’ fees.

From the translation point of view, these developments are simply pathology, a corruption caused by the temptation of money which results in the destruction of an intact and inflexible traditional structure. Weiner, however, has argued exactly the opposite, that “these quarrels and departures and migrations are the visible form that *the normal state of affairs* [italics in original] takes in this part of the world. They are not aberrations

within the theoretically smooth functioning of a social organism, because there is no social organism as such” (Weiner 2001b:3).

Gobe

Problems of migration and warfare also plagued the nearby Gobe gas project, where four years of litigation were necessary before some sort of stable land ownership regime was established. Like many areas of the ‘mountain Papua’ (Weiner ed. 1988) region that fell between the coastal lowlands and the central highlands, the area covered by the Gobe Petroleum development lease has witnessed a complex history. At far as we know, the original area was inhabited by a group now called the ‘Polopa.’ Over time, aggressive immigrants from highly-populated highland areas around Mendi moved south into the Gobe area, displacing the Polopa. These newly arrived groups then ended up fighting amongst themselves, and some recruited Polopa as allies in the hostilities that followed, keeping their barely disguised disgust for them in check. Afterwards, in reward for their help, the Polopa who helped were given land – which was originally their own, remember – to live on (Marco 2000).

It was on this land that Gobe’s petroleum was discovered in 1991. However, while the resource was declared feasible in 1992, the social context for mining was not sufficiently stable until 1998 for production to begin. In the years after the discovery of petroleum wrangling between various factions continued until a Land Titles Commission hearing occurred in 1996 which produced a definitive conclusion on behalf of one of the parties regarding who were truly the inhabitants of that land. It was on this understanding that construction and production at Gobe took place in 1998. Shortly thereafter, land disputes continued and operations were interfered with several times. Finally, when the airstrip into the area was closed by landowners, a second Land Titles Commission

hearing was held and a new arrangement reached. Work continues at Gobe as community affairs staff there continues to juggle landowner issues.

It should not be surprising that dispute resolution has proved so difficult in this area. D.J.J. Brown, who conducted fieldwork in this area in the early 1970s, has suggested that even the flexible “bilateral networks of [J.A.] Barnes, generated by individual choices of affines and patri- or matrifiliatory allegiance” fail to capture the essence of Polopa kinship and affinity (Brown 1980). Instead, he has argued that Polopa sociality is structured by ‘asymmetric connubia’ – a flow of women between male networks that is part of the larger, agonistic system of prestations and violence which characterize people in this area of the world (Brown 1979). Thus the disputes that occurred when Gobe was being developed were not an aberration caused by ‘corrupt landowners’ but part and parcel of Polopa life. Brown rights that “the very language of dispute settlement, I came to believe, was inappropriate” because “disputes are not disruptive of the social life of the Polopa... but the very stuff of it. (Brown 1989:18). As a result “it is notoriously difficult to identify ‘mechanisms’ for settling disputes in the area: for the simple reason, to my mind, that the attempt is misconceived in the first place. They do not want to settle anything” (Brown 1989:18; for Brown’s memoir of conducting fieldwork in this area, see Brown 1973).

Hides

A similar situation arose at the Hides Gas Plant in Southern Highland province. Hides provides another example of the ways in which local peoples have reacted with alacrity to changing circumstances. Here we see again a situation where resolution of land disputes is less one of successful identification of ‘real land owners’ and more an ongoing management of disagreements over the ownership of land which is successful enough to

continue to allow the plant to operate and to create a feasible social context for it.

British Petroleum discovered natural gas in the Hides site (named after the former explorer Jack Hides) in 1987 and two years later the Porgera Joint Venture committed to using electricity generated at Hides to power the Porgera gold mine, a feat which required a line of guy-wired transmission towers up and out of the Tari basin and into the adjacent Porgera valley. With a buyer now committed to purchasing power the Hides Joint Venture began construction, and a socio-economic impact report and land study followed at roughly the same time as Porgera's. The Hides project resulted in "acrimonious debate over land ownership, compensation and benefit distribution," which "led nowhere" (Filer, Henton, and Jackson 2000: 66). The primary disagreement – to make a long story short – occurred between two factions which had assumed the ethnonyms "Hiwa" and "Tugupa." While the Tugupa claimed to be the original inhabitants of the land on which the project was located – and had genealogies and myths to back up their claims – the Hiwa were in fact that actual occupants, had been for some times, and were also able to muster genealogical proof of their long history of occupation.

In March of 1990 a memorandum of understanding was signed in Goroka (in Eastern Highlands Province, away from the action of the Hides area itself) between a set of 'landowners' and the Hides Joint Venture, which then moved forward with its operations thinking it was on the way to settling landowner issues. However, litigation under the Land Dispute Settlement Act paralyzed the process again, and in August the national government – concerned that Porgera could not start on schedule until Hides was operational – summarily acquired the land necessary, issued a lease, and established trust accounts into which compensation payments could be made until the 'true land owners' were identified (Filer, Henton, and Jackson 2000: 66-67). In 1991 a Land Title

Commission was convened in which found in favor of the “Tugupa” faction. This decision was immediately appealed, and the two factions eventually settled out of court: in exchange for half of the royalty payments received by the Tugupa, the Hiwa would take no further action to jeopardize their claim to ownership (Weiner 2001b:4-5). Land owner dissatisfaction with Hides – and the state of things in Southern Highlands more generally – continues to make itself felt as late as a decade later, when local people disrupted the operation of the Porgera gold mine by felling transmission towers located on their land to gain attention and concessions from the Porgera Joint Venture.

Why all this wrangling? These difficulties are not surprising when one is familiar with the ethnography of this area. The social organization of the Huli who are hosts to the project is well known in the literature for having a particularly complex system of residence and descent. While anthropologists differ as to whether Huli kinship can be classified as ‘cognatic’ (Glasse 1968) or some form of weak patrilineal secession (Goldman 1983, Ballard 1995), all would agree that Huli maintain multiple ties to multiple pieces of territory and often practice multilocal residence. Studying Huli residence, as Allen has remarked, is something that ethnographers do “at their own peril” (Allen 1995). Huli have long proved intractable when it comes to even the most basic of census data. During the colonial period, Allen recounts,

The government and the Huli... eventually came to an understanding about censusing. The Huli had learned that when a census was called, they should appear at only one of up to fifty census points... that had been set up by the government, preferably the one at which they had first been censused. Even if they had changed their residence, they should trudge back to that original census point to be counted when a new census was called. For their part the government officers had stopped asking questions about residence. (Allen 1995:150)

This complex pattern of residence – clearly different from the static patterns suggested by the translation view – has long interacted with traditional patterns of conflict. In the case of resource developments such as Hides, Laurence Goldman has

argued that Incorporated Land Groups have “been colonized by Huli custom” and have been transformed into “new forums for pursuing politico-economic strategies” (Goldman 2003:9). Thus conflict regarding land ownership does not mark the disintegration of an Edenic, conflict-free Huli lifestyle, but rather the continuation, in another arena, of a jockeying for power and position that is part and parcel of Huli culture.

Mt. Kare

The adventures in Huli amorphism that occurred during the creation of the Porgera mine and the Hides gas plant continued at Mt. Kare prospect. Located in the high, uninhabited mountain ranges between the Tari basin and Paiela, Mt. Kare was originally a CRA prospect. In late 1987, Ipili and Huli men employed by CRA discovered a rich patch of colluvial gold within the prospecting lease. Over Christmas, as the European geologists returned home for Christmas, a massive gold rush was occurred in Mt. Kare, resulting in roughly 8,000 people flooding into the area and literally hundreds of millions of US dollars worth of gold coming out (Ryan 1991, Vail 1995). By March CRA had established a base camp at Kare and conducted a land investigation report showing 196 land owners (Vail 1995: 368) – not surprising since this land was too high to be settled or to grow food crops or even for hunting and pandanus cultivation. By November 1988, fights between groups working gold had spread to the CRA basecamp, which was breached and used as a defensive position for one faction of alluvial miners. A shaky joint venture was put together between CRA and the now 60 ‘subclans’ who were said to be the true landowners of the Mt. Kare prospect. Work continued on identifying landowners, and examining the possibilities of large scale mining. In August of 1991 CRA’s prospecting license lapsed and legal challenges contesting the fact that it was renewed were brought by a faction of the ‘Mt. Kare Land Owners’ with the backing of

another mining company, which planned to replace CRA. Legal actions were pending when people living at Kare decided to take action directly in January 1992. The camp of the CRA joint venture was raided with damages totaling roughly K1,000,000. This happened again in March and CRA pulled out of its lease and suspended operations in Papua New Guinea. The anti-CRA landowners quickly split into three factions and found corporate backers, each of whom applied for the newly-vacant prospecting authority. Over the next six years or so legal and military wrangling at Mt. Kare forced various corporate groups out of the market until only one was left, but it was so underfunded and the situation in Kare so volatile that it maintained nothing more than a token presence at the valley in order to ensure its continued holding of the prospecting authority as it tried to wait for better times. By 1999, when I arrived in Porgera for my fieldwork, development of the resource had stopped, all the easy gold from the Kare fields had been won, and the government land report had identified over 40,000 'true landowners' for a patch of a high-mountain pass that was previously uninhabited. Kare had become, as Colin Filer put it, "the mine that got away" (1998:161).

Lihir

At Lihir in New Ireland, twenty years of company operations have been predicated on a 'clan-system' which has allowed the creation of a large and profitable gold mine which matches Porgera in size and profitability. However, as Macintyre and Foale point out, this clan-system is something that developed alongside mining, rather than existing before it. At Lihir, they claim, "arguments about customary rights to land, the nature of these rights over distinct areas of land and the definitions of the group claiming rights appear only to have gained legitimacy in the context of an externally imposed legal system" (Macintyre and Foale 2005:4). As they point out, as early as 1989

Filer and Jackson had in their social impact study argued that it was “a mistake to think of customary land rights in Lihir as things which are literally parcelled out between a number of corporate bodies called ‘clans’” (in Macintyre and Foale 2005:7). Instead, there was a complex relationship between matrilineages around which much of social life was reproduced and a highly optative system of residence. Thus while there were some sort of notionally corporate groups and some sense of there being bounded pieces of territory on the island, “the areas were loosely defined and so were the clans” (Macintyre and Foale 2005:7). This did not stop the mine from using a clan-based system. In fact, it appears that there are several such systems at work on Lihir:

Every anthropologist who has attempted to describe the ‘clan system’ on Lihir has been faced with conundrums. Filer and Jackson set down four versions of the clan system and in 1992 decided on another. The description of the ‘clan system’ that appeared to be generally accepted by Lihirian leaders in 1994-95 is different from that which is given in 2004 (Macintyre and Foale 2005:15).

Lihir, Like Porgera, is a place where prospecting took roughly a decade. Now, after ten years of operation, it appears that some sort of stable social context has been established. But, as Macintyre and Foale emphasize, this has not been due to the accurate recognition of authentic indigenous kinship. Rather, it seems that the lengthy period of exploration that occurred on the island allowed the crystallization of a system of ‘essentialized tenure’ (Foale and Macintyre 2000) which would bear the burden of social change brought about by mining. Feasibility, in other words, was achieved, but *not* because of an accurate process of translation of an indigenous regime of land tenure. On the contrary, Lihirians appear to have been willing to innovate their own traditions, sometimes in extreme ways. As Filer remembers, “When I had occasion to ask a committee of Lihirians why they had included a Council of Chiefs within the structure of their Society Reform Program, when ‘we’ all knew that Lihir has no customary institution of hereditary chieftanship, they just said they were following the ‘Fiji model’”

(Filer 1994:176-177, cf. White and Lindstrom 1998, May 2004).

Tolukuma

While Lihirians were enthusiastic about using a ‘Fijian’ model, Filer was disappointed to find that landowners of the land around the Tolukuma gold project were not, despite the fact that “Goilala custom, unlike that of Lihir, does contain hereditary chieftanship.” Nevertheless, the local people surrounding Tolukuma rejected the idea of gronding management of a resource development in traditional forms

on the grounds that chiefs do not have councils and are not responsible for managing the local social impact of things such as gold mines. Instead the Yulai chose to fabricate three ‘clans’ for their community -- where ‘clans’ were no more recognizable in Yulai custom than ‘chiefs’ in that of Lihir -- and then proceeded to demand that each new ‘clan’ should play an equal part in the negotiation of ‘development’ and distribution of its economic benefits, despite the fact that many individuals were still unable to decide which ‘clan’ was theirs or how to make their choice of membership. (Filer 1994:177).

In the published version of his socio-economic impact assessment of the Tolukuma gold mine (originally conducted in 1993), Filer elaborates on the complex ways in which residence and descent work in these communities and the creation of Tolukuma’s three clan system came about. Rather than emphasize the primacy of descent, Filer points to residence as the key to sociality:

By far the most significant form of association amongst the people of the Auga valley... is that which is based upon a person’s place of residence... Although local people recognize the existence of lines (or lineages) whose members share descent from a common male ancestor (usually a grandfather or great-grandfather), they do not think that there is any particular reason why male members of a single line should either live together or cooperate in any other way. Such cooperation does occur in practice but is understood as a matter of personal preference (Filer 1994:17).

Thus in 1994 Filer was reporting claims made in the Post-Courier that the ‘Hameng clan’ who were the ‘rightful landowners’ of the Tolukuma field were not receiving their share of compensation from the mine. The spokesman for this group, Ajax Bia, was threatening to challenge the legitimacy of the agreement signed to lease land to

Dome Inc, Tolukuma's developer. As it turns out, Bix was not himself from that area, but rather seeking to harness resentment about the mine for his own run for political office, and in doing so had partnered with Holim Aida, a man with aspirations to local leadership in the area surrounding the mine site. "There is little doubt," writes Filer, "that the identity of the 'Hameng Clan' was initially forged from their mutual interaction" (1994:77).

Returning to the Tolukuma area, Filer discovered "evidence of a recent public meeting at which there had been general agreement to divide the community into three 'clans' – Hameng, Yaulo, and Yangam – on the understanding that each would receive an equal share of the mineral royalties due to local landowners." (Filer 1994:78) which resulted from the renegotiation that year of the original compensation agreement." This agreement reflected the balance of power between Fabian Aia – the original signer – and an opponent from a similar clubhouse (similar to a men's house). As a result, Filer wrote, "the division now being made between two 'clans' may seem to reflect the ancient opposition of these two clubhouses *within* Yaulo village" -- itself one group out of many.

Thus what occurred at Tolukuma certainly counts as 'entification' in Ernst's sense (1999) but the question, as Eric Hirsch, an ethnographer of the Fuyuge people who live near the mine, is whether entification is 'new.' "Is the process new, as Ernst describes it," he asks, "or rather, are the circumstances in which it occurs 'new' and striking?" (Hirsch 2001:20). For Hirsch, familiar with the literature of this area, feels comfortable describing Fuyuge attempts to demonstrate their status as 'landowners' as indicative of the fact that "entification is not a new development or emergent form in itself, but an intermittent local process whereby the persons present themselves as visible and powerful" (Hirsch 2001:20). Thus once again anthropologists would emphasize that elites

in Port Moresby should not be surprised if landowners use the opportunity of a gold mine to ‘present themselves as visible and powerful’ since this is in fact a recurrent feature of social life. The formation of Tolukuma’s ‘clan system’ should be understood in this light.

Frieda

While Lihir demonstrates the way that a ‘clan-system’ may become ascendant in areas where it never existed before, strategies to claim ‘landowner’ identity at the Frieda prospect – a mixed gold and copper resource – in Sandaun province demonstrates the way in which clan systems can be created in areas where migration, and warfare give the lie to anyone seeking stationary, conflict-free clans and where, in fact, no mine even yet exists.

In his excellent – indeed, seminal – paper on who and what is a landowner (2001), Jorgensen recounts various attempts to achieve ‘true landowner’ status by Telefol people concerned with Nenataman, the area where the Frieda prospect is located. Since the people of this area tend to organize themselves into endogamous cognatic stocks, there are no corporate groups suitable for categorization as ‘clans’ in the first place. This situation is only complicated by the political and military history of Nenataman itself. The area was originally inhabited by the Untou in the late nineteenth century, who found themselves on the losing end of a war with Telefol-speaking Iligimin people. The Iligimin drove the Untou to the edge of extinction and began establishing settlements on their land, only to find themselves attacked by the Telefol proper. The Telefol in turn decimated the Iligimin, killing most of them and incorporating captives – typically women and children, but some men – into their own groups. The Telefol and their now-incorporated Iligimin clients then proceeded to finish the work the Iligimin started and began raiding the Untou again. This, combined with disease and raids from the Miyanmin

further north, resulted in the extinction of the Untou. The adults were killed and eaten, and the children were adopted by Telefol and Miyanmin families and raised as members of these new groups (Jorgensen 2001:76-77).

How, then, could Telefol make claims to the Frieda deposit, given their status as newcomers? A mythic charter was produced which explained the gold under Nenataman as the result of Telefol ancestral spirits and – for good measure – also incorporated elements of Christian origin stories, something which made the myth particularly compelling for the now-Baptist Telefol despite the fact that it took away from the primordial flavor of the myth which metropolitan elites so crave. The myth essentially served to legitimate a deep genealogical claim and emphasized Telefol descent and ethnicity over the claims to people in residence near the resource itself. In doing so, however, it also expanded the possible claimants of Frieda to ethnic Telefols more generally, including the allies who aided the Telefol against the Untou and hence now felt they wanted a piece of any action that resulted from mining on that land.

Shortly thereafter, a new group calling itself the “Untou clan” also formed. This group was made up of the descendants of the captives taken in the wake of the Untou genocide. Raised without knowledge of the language or custom of the Untou (their biological parents were killed when they were infants) and unfamiliar not only with each other or, indeed, of the names and identities of their birth parents – this group attempted to resurrect a clan identity which had no formal existence and consisted of people from various conquering ethnic groups. Here identity as a ‘true landowner’ is premised essentially on an abstract relationship of descent with absolutely no consocial or cultural ties (Jorgensen 2001:94-95).

Other factors – including Miyanmin claims to the country (Gardiner 2001) and the

claims made by people resident on the land – continue to intrude on the process of identifying ‘true landowners’ in Frieda. From Jorgensen’s account, it may be that the most authentic and ‘grassroots’ form of social organization in this area is in fact the Frieda Baptist Association. But this, obviously, is not likely to be recognized as sufficiently primordial to be identified as a landowner association no matter how well it captures the consensus of the residents at Frieda. In sum, even though there is currently no plan to develop a mine in Frieda (due to cost and demand on the world market), it is clear that when a decision as to who the ‘real landowners’ is reached, it will not only be made in Port Moresby, it will be made using terms developed in that city, rather than in Sandaun province.

Ramu

While Frieda demonstrates the way that landowner politics can erupt before there is even a feasible resource for which local people can claim ownership, the Ramu nickel project provides an excellent example of Melanesian flexibility that might aid the development of a project. The Ramu nickel project, located in the plains behind Madang, has been highly prospective for several years, but has not yet been developed because of the low demand for nickel on the world market and the existence of larger and cheaper deposits in Canada and New Caledonia (on the latter see Horowitz 2003). During the Community Relations meeting in Lae discussed earlier in this chapter, I heard the managing director of the project describe it in glowing terms as the next generation of mine that would, having learned from the mistakes of the industry, become a model for mining world-wide. Environmental considerations had been ingeniously solved, sustainability plans were in place, and the landowners – of whom there were only four groups – had given their approval and there was no haggling about land. At the time I

was incredibly skeptical and assumed that there must be some landowner politicking happening under the surface of which he was not aware.

As it turns out I was both right and wrong. I was right in that Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, an anthropologist who has worked in the area of Ramu prospect for over a decade and was involved in a genealogical survey of the landowners, has argued that the Ramu project has resulted in “ancestral gerrymandering” (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997, 2001) among its Gende hosts so intense and thoroughgoing that it amounts to a “recreation of Gende society” (2001:2). However, I was wrong to be cynical that this would lead to landowner troubles. As Zimmer-Tamakoshi reports,

the Gende... wanted my genealogical report to reflect a Western view of kinship. Certainly the company would have preferred a solid, familiar ground on which to judge who should or should not receive compensation payments. And, as is obvious now, the Gende wanted to give the company something they could work with. (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 2001:192)

The company’s desire to find ‘true landowners’ was in this case met by the Gende who, Zimmer-Tamakoshi reports, have

work[ed] out a genealogical picture that would include the largest number of claimants, thereby reducing conflicts over who will receive compensation and giving the company a conceptual system that it could handle. The Gende and others at Kurmbukare are well aware that foreign companies have withdrawn from Papua New Guinea because of landowner conflicts, and they wanted to ensure that they did not drive the company away (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 2001:194).

The Gende are a people with histories of migration and a kinship system that is “frustrating in its fluid creativity” (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997:650). As a result, Zimmer-Tamakoshi claims, “discovering who today’s ‘real landowners’ are, even if one could capture the past in movies or in written documents, would prove to be a difficult if not an impossible task” (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 2001:193). Like Garia of the nearby Rai coast described by Lawrence, Gende kinship has little to do with descent. According to

Zimmer-Tamakoshi, Gende “exhibit an extraordinary precision and individuality in their land tenure system” in which individuals obtain title to land by clearing and maintaining it. This title is not automatically passed on to their children, and claimants to land must make their claims on the basis of post-mortuary prestations called *kwiangi*. Although the area where Gende live has been highly prospective since the mid 1960s (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997:656), it was only after Ramu developed that people began actively manipulating *kwiangi* exchange in order to realign their claims to land.

In this case, then, ‘ancestral gerrymandering’ appear not as a way to ‘menace’ the mining industry (as Filer would have it), but a method to ensure that a peripheral people gain the benefits that hosting a mine will provide. While mining executives might be heartened by this, the awkward fact remains that Ramu fails to demonstrate the transparent translation of traditional beliefs into a new form. “From an outsider’s perspective, it would seem that some or all of the claims being made to Kurumbukare are false,” Zimmer- Tamakoshi writes, “but, given the Gende’s traditional way of settling land matters, I do not think so” (1997:659). After all, she concludes, “what the Gende are doing is what they’ve always done – they are building alliances and community through exchange, and in the process they are flushing out ‘false’ or ‘greedy’ claimants who do not know how to play the game properly” (1997:660).

Conclusion: Hot Societies, Weak States

Throughout this chapter I have argued that the dynamics of life in Porgera that examined earlier in the dissertation are typical of resource development in Papua New Guinea more generally. Could the conclusions reached in the previous pages also play out into the wider life of Papua New Guinea as a nation? And could they even shed light on the dynamics of the region as a whole? To fully answer these questions would take us

beyond the scope of this dissertation – indeed, it would take several volumes to give these issues their full due. In the closing section of this dissertation I will attempt merely to sketch out some of the wider implications this dissertation may have by returning to some of the theoretical and ethnographic issues raised in the first chapter of this dissertation.

In the first chapter of this dissertation I suggested that Levi-Strauss's distinction between 'hot' Western societies and 'cold' non-Western ones ought to be inverted – it is the Ipili, I have argued, rather than the mine, who are "hot." Throughout this chapter we have seen that this appears to be the case not only in Porgera, but throughout areas in Papua New Guinea where resource developments seek to make themselves socially feasible.

As a result the Port Moresby elite's adherence to the Melanesian paradigm and a translation theory of land registration seem incongruous to Melanesianists. This incongruity goes beyond the unusual role reversal that anthropologists experience. Our stock in trade, after all, is explaining to white, first world audiences that Melanesians are not stone-age primitives lost in time. We've argued that Melanesians are not 'people without history' (Wolf 1982) but peoples with complex histories of trade and migration. We argue that they are agentive makers of history rather than passive victims of a 'Fatal Impact' (Moorehead 1966). We argue that Melanesians reshape global culture to suit their own ends (Sahlins 1993) rather than be steamrolled by the juggernaut of Western cultural imperialism. Making these arguments to Melanesians elites themselves is an unusual and often uncomfortable situation where the epistemic authority presupposed by the license to critique everyday notions can take on a colonial or paternal tone.

This puts Melanesianists in the unenviable position of telling Papua New Guinean elites that they are 'wrong' about 'their' culture (meaning 'national' PNG culture, since

the PNG elite is typically not drawn from ethnic groups which host mining developments). Even worse, we sometimes ends up making arguments about historical migrations and cultural change which work against the political interests of their host communities, which must appear timeless if they are to become the ‘true landowners’ which the Melanesian paradigm and Papua New Guinea land law demands. But there is more at work here than a novel and uncomfortable subject position. Anthropologists do not merely critique presumptions of Melanesian primordality – they have their own positive account of Melanesian society which is profoundly at odds with a translation theory of land registration.

Colin Filer, for instance, has argued that the ‘Melanesian way of menacing the mining industry’ has less to do with Melanesians’ status as ecologically noble savages fiercely resistant to evil multinational corporations and more to do with the fluidity of their social organization. “Papua New Guineans make life unusually difficult for multinational companies,” he writes, “because of the characteristic diversity and instability of political relationships between Melanesian person, institutions, and communities which constitute their national policy process.” (1998:150) Indeed, his attempts to debunk utopic notions of ‘inflexible Edens’ are so archly written that at time they seem almost to reinstate an older view of Melanesians as unstable savages. Earlier he has argued

That Melanesian communities have always been on the verge of disintegration, even in pre-colonial times, and it has always taken special qualities of leadership, in each succeeding generation, to prevent them from splitting apart at the seams. In pre-colonial times, such efforts were directed to the pursuit of warfare, the practice of initiation, and the organization of large-scale gift-exchange, but the rules of the game were no more permanent than the social groups whose continuity depended on the outcome (Filer 1990: 9-10).

Like most things that Filer writes, these arguments are persuasive and yet written in a tone that guarantees that the executives and policy makers who need to read them the

most will reject them out of hand. But Filer is not alone in making this argument, nor need any attempt to account for the dynamism of Melanesian society founder on the rocks of a reactionary diagnosis of savagery. Anthropologists have long been of the opinion that social organization in Papua New Guinea is remarkably 'loose' (Pouwer 1960). Indeed, in many ways it was the highlands of Papua New Guinea that proved to be the grave for African segmentary models (Barnes 1962).

The relationship between individual and group affiliation is also a classic problem in the ethnography of Papua New Guinea. In a classic article, Roy Wagner asks if there are any 'groups' in Papua New Guinea at all. Wagner argues that groups change and are created every time the *stakes* change. "Even though one does not start out with groups, one always ends up with specific bunches of people... it is an 'automatic society' one that suddenly appears in concrete form wherever the right distinctions are made. What we might want to call the 'permanent' sociality exists as an associational context flowing from one such *ad hoc* occasion to another" (Wagner 1979:111). "Sociality," Wagner concludes, "is a 'becoming' not a 'become,' thing" (1979: 112).

Merlan and Rumsey, building on the work of Rena Lederman (1986) and Marilyn Strathern (1988), have made a similar point, arguing that "a crucial part of what goes on at public exchange events is the struggle for control of the attribution of relevant agency, and of the significance of the even for various spheres of social relations" (1991:14) because "the nature of the social identities involved in the transactions is under-determined... these identities cannot be established without careful study of the way in which the exchange events are 'represented,' both at the moment of transaction and in the ongoing social life of the people concerned" (1991:16). In other words, what is at issue for the Melanesian participants of the events that anthropologists witness is in fact the

identity of the transactors – who the ‘collective subjects’ in question are. This accords with Myers and Brenneis’s discussion of egalitarian communities across the Pacific.

There, they point out that

Speech events in situations where egalitarian relations prevail seem strikingly concerned with the construction and maintenance of a polity, with the constitution of a *context* within which interaction can occur... When one examines the evidence of these types of situations, one is struck by the extent to which a political arena is an *achievement*, rather than a category of analysis to be taken for granted. (Myers and Brenneis 1984)

Thus they would insist that “the broader frame, the meaning or context established, is the polity in egalitarian orders, defining actors as political persons and specifying the sorts of relations that should obtain between them” (Myers and Brenneis 1984:20). In her study of the Sepik, Brisson, for instance, has argued that it is just this fear of the potential social disintegration that leads large communal meetings to be so inconsequential lest something might actually *happen* at them (Brisson 1992). We are back, then to the topic of feasibility. But in this case the issue is not the creation of a stable social context for mining, but a more general attempt to purify big actors and make them appear visible in all aspects of social life.

On this account, then, it is not the case that pre-existing ‘clans’ are translated into modern legal corporations. It is rather that Melanesians take an existing ambiguous set of practices and social arrangements, and then do their best to competitively transform them to meet the requirements of state and government. And this transformation is something that occurs constantly in the course of social life in Melanesia (and to some degree everywhere, I imagine). This is not to say that Papua New Guineans lack distinctive cultural orders by which they organize themselves, nor does it imply that they are airy-fairy postmoderns who wander the landscape ‘fluidly’ and ‘ambiguously.’ I mean merely to suggest here that reproduction of those cultural orders tend not to be ‘stereotypical’ in

Papua New Guinea.

As should be clear by now, land tenure in Papua New Guinea is characterized more by ambiguity and a generative conflict than it is routine implementation of structural order. Mining executives might protest that in fact ‘everyone knows where the boundaries are’ but, as I hope to have shown, It is not the ‘structure’ that is the problem – all of these groups have culturally unique methods of organizing social life -- but its crystallization in practice. Nothing could be further from the picture of land as a ‘common pool resource’ (CPR) painted by Elinor Ostrom (1990) in her work on the commons. She writes that “individuals who have rights to withdraw resource units from the CPR must be clearly defined, as must the boundaries of the CPR itself” (1990:91). Similarly, landowner communities lack the sort of monitoring that Ostrom describes in the Philippines and Switzerland and which she considers essential to managing common property. In fact, all of the common pool resource systems that Ostrom describes rely on institutions organized through elections and – regimentation by reference to rules and schedules laid down in books. They are, then, very different from societies in Papua New Guinea which lack clear recruitment to institutionalized role through regular and structured procedures such as elections, much less written documents. Land ownership in Melanesia, in other words, cannot be captured with truisms of ‘communal ownership’.

If anything, the situation in Papua New Guinea today is more of an ‘anticommons’ as defined by Michael Heller, “a property regime in which multiple owners hold effective rights of exclusion in a scarce resource” (Heller 2000:191). The situation in Papua New Guinea is thus the inversion of the Hardin’s (Hardin 1968) ‘tragedy of the commons’:

The tragedy of the commons is that rational individuals, acting separately, may collectively over-consume scarce resources... A tragedy of the anticommons can occur when too many individuals may exclude each other from a scarce resource. The right to exclude is valuable precisely because others want to use the resource and will pay something to collect the right. The tragedy is that rational individuals, acting separately, may collectively waste resources by under-consuming them (Heller 2000:192).

Heller's original and more detailed presentation of the anticommons concept comes from Heller 1998). Even anthropologists with knee-jerk reactions against 'rational actors' working to 'maximize' things will recognize that such an account makes sense of situations in Papua New Guinea where resource developments – which all stake holders seek – fail to establish themselves due to the instability of Melanesian sociality.

In sum, people in Port Moresby have consistently misunderstood the nature of Papua New Guinean social organization and as a result have instituted a set of policies for the registration of land which are suboptimal for achieving the goal set out for them – the creation of a stable social context within which mining becomes feasible. In doing so, I have repeatedly made claims about the relationship of unstable local social dynamics and their relationship to 'the national government' and this or that 'joint venture.' And yet it is also important to point out this analysis is not only about 'hot societies' but also about 'weak states' or, to make the point more broadly, about the way that 'global' or 'big' actors make themselves feasible. 'The state' and other global actors exist only by contrast with local groupings. By imagining themselves as separate from the local politics which their gaze elicits, the personators of big actors imagine themselves separate from local politics, when in fact it is just their interest that elicits so much of the political dynamics in local communities in Papua New Guinea today. Thus we can also flip the equation around and ask not only who gets to be 'the true land owner' but also 'who gets to be the government.'

Summing up a good deal of the literature on what is called 'Papua New Guinea's

weak state' Robert Foster writes that Papua New Guineans "refuse to accept the idea of the state, to grant it the status of an expert system, a transcendent abstraction... Instead, they imagine the state as the particular officials who actually compose it." (Foster 2002: 69). As a result "the institutions of the national state itself have been effectively colonized and subverted by the homegrown interests and agents of numerous localized societies" (Foster 2002:3). To a certain extent this is true. Consider, for instance, the Enga provincial government. As Derkley has written,

Gordon and Meggitt... maintain that the provincial administration is seen as a 'super-line' – that is 'super-clan.' However, this argument misses the point: it attributes far too great an autonomy to provincial government. Provincial government, and the apparatus of national government of which it is a function, does not function so much as a 'clan among clans' but as an arena where the furious contest between clans for the spoils of government – jobs, cash, houses, vehicles -- continues unabated. (Derkley 1997:141-142).

This is not a 'weak state' versus a 'strong society' as Migdal describes it (2001) – it is a clash in which 'the state' fails to be feasible at all. The structural mechanisms meant to amplify the agency of those who personate the state simply fail to function at all. But is this because "the state (as 'system') – and, to a lesser extent, the resource-rich business system – has been colonized by the Melanesian 'lifeworld'" (Dinnen 2001:188)?

One need not take issue with Dinnen's rather loose interpretation of Habermas to suggest an alternate reading. All one needs is to consider the ethnography of expatriates that has run through much of this dissertation. Let us return, for a moment, to the career of 'Harry Ulin,' the Porgera Mining Coordinator we encountered in chapters two and three of this dissertation.

Ulin is not unfamiliar with Porgera or the highlands. He first came to Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s as an officer with the Australian administration. In 1974, he

was put in charge of managing the newly created 'area authorities' of Southern Highlands Province – the embryonic organizations that would, at independence, become provincial governments. In 1977 he wrote the constitution for the province, and he stayed on as the interim provincial governor, provincial financial officer, and first assistant secretary until elections could be held in 1980, after which he served as the provincial deputy secretary.

In 1984, the government of Enga, the province next door to Southern Highlands, was suspended for gross financial mismanagement. As a result, Ulin was asked to step in as interim provincial administrator. "I was everything" he remembered of the two years he spent reforming the government, "adviser, governor, administrator, secretary." He was remarkably unpopular. "All of those people in the old provincial government, I put in jail," he said – a move that caused public uproar and traditional displays of mourning: "there was great consternation about that, they were cutting off their fingers in the streets."

Ulin finished off the remaining two years of the electoral term and pulled the government back into shape, and resigned his commission in early 1986, calling for elections. The race was contentious, and resulted in the provincial headquarters building and eight cars being burned to the ground by supporters of the runner-up. The damage totaled over K500,000. Taylor stayed on in Enga in various capacities, during which time he was an instrumental part of the provincial negotiating team that created the agreements necessary for the opening of the Porgera gold mine. In February 1990, the former premier of the province he had jailed was released, and in May he was reelected to the position from which he had previously been removed. Ulin and the premier were not particularly pleased to be working with each other again, and so Ulin was made the first assistant secretary of the province's Western Zone, which included Porgera. "I'll set up Porgera"

said Harry, "I'll just run the western half of the project."

Ulin served in this function for several years, and then, after stints as Porgera mining coordinator and, later, head of the Porgera Development Authority, he was recalled to Wabag, where the provincial government had been suspended again – an act which prompted the repeat-burning of the provincial headquarters, which had after its previous conflagration been rebuilt to the tune of K5 million. Ulin returned as interim provincial administrator, a position that he left when he took up his current position in the Department of mines.

On the one hand, it could be said that the articulation of imported forms of governmentality and indigenous sociality creates a hybrid form of sovereignty which is typical not only of postcolonial governance, but of postcolonial modernity in general when inscribed within an age of encompassment (LiPuma 2001). On the other hand, we could say that Harry *is* the government when it comes to mining in Porgera. I think in all honesty the second option is more true to the data.

Is it really the case that Australian rule and corporate governance are marked by nomothetic forms of bureaucratic rationality and procedural regularity while Melanesian forms of sociality tend towards the personalistic and the idiographic? We have seen again and again in this dissertation a mode of governance – the kiap and the community affairs officer -- on the part of whites that was perhaps just as personalistic and inventive as the communities which they imagine to be their opposite. Partially this was due to how under-resourced both the colonial regime and community affairs offices are. But it is also due to the biographies of the kiaps and community affairs officers themselves, who come from a culture that admires an ingenious frugality, spurns needless bureaucracy, and focuses on practicality. Often times, the personators of big actors are less implacable

modernist automatons more often hard-headed men more concerned with doing what's right than dotting their i's and crossing their t's. It's no wonder that one of the most popular vignettes circulating on exkiap.net – called “How Papua New Guinea Was Really Developed” -- revolves around deliberately misappropriating funds and cooking the books in order to build a community school that would not otherwise exist.

Not every place in the world is as tumultuous of Enga. But this lesson to take away from this brief anecdote about Enga province is not that governance in Enga is pathological beyond redemption. Indeed, given the remarkably personalistic nature of rule under the Kiap system, we might well ask where, exactly, Papua New Guineans were supposed to have learned bureaucratic rationality in the first place.

Ever since Millgram (1967) and Granovetter's (1973) and initial work on small worlds, sociologists studying network theory have demonstrated that scale-free networks predominate everything from boards of directors (Davis et. al. 2002) to Germany (Kogut and Walker 2001) to global financial markets (Knorr-Cetina 2002) – have emphasized the way that both big and small networks of people tend to organize around a few major hubs. And while our current condition of globality may mean that the individual nodes network may be geographically dispersed (this seems to me to be an open question), we should not assume that the network of civil servants tying Porgera to Port Moresby operate in a radically more ‘fractal’ way than simply because they rely on the telephone, rather than face to face interaction, to hold themselves together. And neither should we assume that, representational pretensions to one side, ‘the Department of Mines’ is anything over than a network of people who anthropologists can meet and study like anyone else. It is perhaps a tragedy that this is a lesson that landowners learned too early on in the course of their experience of western governance. They have learned to see

always the makers of ‘heroic history,’ (Sahlins 1985) and never the leviathans.

What Landowners Know

In the age of industrialization, Marx once remarked that workers came to the market with only their hides to offer, and received the expecting hiding. In the age of globalization, grassroots Papua New Guineans come to Port Moresby with only their identities, but find corporate and government interests are less willing than Moneybags to do the needful. Contemporary neoliberals such as Helen Hughes have argued that landownership in places like Papua New Guinea to be stifling in its traditionalness. By now it should be clear, however, that the situation in Papua New Guinea is much more tragic than this. In fact, grassroots Papua New Guineans are innovative thinkers with a traditional culture ready to handle new regimes of land tenure while analysts like Hughes, confused as to the nature of Melanesian sociality, remain under the mystifying influence of tradition – or at least, how they imagine tradition. Ironically enough, the supposedly modern forces of globalization seek out ancient and unchanging custom, while grassroots Papua New Guineans seek to “generate normativity out of themselves” (Habermas 1987) in a distinctively modern way.

all societies are in history and change... [but] human societies react to this common condition in very different fashions. Some accept it and its consequences... assume immense proportions through their attention to it. Others (which we call primitive for this reason) want to deny it and try to make the states of their development which they consider ‘prior’ as permanent as possible. (Levi-Strauss 1966:234)

Given the argument of this dissertation, who belongs in the savage slot? The transnational mining companies who search for an uncorrupted past, or the grassroots Papua New Guineans busily bending their security circles to accommodate new circumstances? Which of the two exhibit Levi-Strauss’s “obstinate fidelity to a past conceived as a timeless model,” and operate in a mindset in which “antiquity and

continuance are the foundations of legitimacy” (1966:236)?

As far as the mining industry is concerned, Papua New Guineans are not just hot, they are too hot to handle, and the industry’s attempt to cool them down takes the form of legal documents. Levi-Strauss once called myths ‘machines for stopping time’, but the ‘machines for stopping time’ in contemporary Papua New Guinea are agency agreements, Land Group Incorporation Acts, Memorandums of Understanding, and consultancy reports. What people in industry and the government see as ‘finding the *real* landowners’ seems to grass roots Papua New Guineans as an arbitrary exercise in which one group of people are given priority as ‘landowners’ while other people with similar ties to a place are left to languish. Land registration imposes an arbitrary and final division between the haves and have-nots in a situation where compromise and a diffuseness of entitlement were common place.

Meanwhile, the government and industry pursue an illusory ‘truth’ about land ownership which is both unambiguous and complete, only to be denied again and again by the situation on the ground. When faced with this situation they push on, convinced that the problem lies not with their preconceptions about their project, but in the ‘corrupt’ nature of the particular landowners they encounter, and banking that over the ranges lie a group with a pure and untouched traditional culture. When looked at in light of this discussion, the multiplication of Incorporated Land Groups, ‘traditional leaders,’ associations and other groups that spring up around resource developments becomes intelligible. They continue to push the wide varieties of claims to land even after the official study is done. In a market where the commodity is identity, these people are simply pursuing their own best interest. Given the fact that many of these groups, like the Ipili, had a social organization in which they exercised their agency through multiple ties,

it is not surprising that they should continue to act in the same agentive way that they always have in the new, globalized contexts of resource development.

In trying to become the people cosmopolitans imagine them to be, grass roots Papua New Guineans are labeled ‘inauthentic’ and ‘corrupt.’ But in fact their willingness to innovate is one of their greatest strengths. All of which is to say that ‘corrupt landowners’ are not opposed to the Melanesian Way (Narakobi 1980), but its purest incarnation – provided we understand the Melanesian Way more as a method of approaching the new than a fixed set of Things Melanesian Used to Do. It is *a hot way of translating* which is proactive, dynamic, and innovative, and not a cold fixed *content*, ‘The Way We Were Before,’ an idyllic traditional past in which everyone lived from time immemorial in peace and harmony in coherent groups with clearly delineated territories without ever going anywhere.

While some in Port Moresby think land registration is about Papua New Guinea’s past, rural Papua New Guineans realize it is about the country’s future. One must pay close attention to the contents of traditional land belief, but mining introduces a moment of novelty that cannot be eradicated. A narrow focus on accurately translating the content of traditional land beliefs must be supplemented by a more encompassing consideration of the social context that will be created and the processes of translation that will create it. Translating the content of traditional land beliefs is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a stable social context. Traditional society was *itself* flexible, and flexibility was built into its very core. Just as the gold in a mountain requires refining if it is to take a form suitable for circulation in national and international financial markets, so too the identities of landowners must be refined and transformed – on their *own* terms, and in their *own* ways - if these identities are to circulate in the national and international

circuits of law, policy, and ideas that accompany and buttress transnational capitalism.

But lest I end the paper with the sort of self-congratulatory denouncement of global capital that too often becomes anthropology's knee-jerk response to having to share the Fourth World with other interlopers from the First, I'd also like close by noting that Papua New Guineans are much further along the road to understanding how 'globalization' works than most anthropologists. Where we see a dizzying flow of transnational entities and fractal, hybrid postmodern geographies, they see 'Harry.' Could it be we have something to learn from them rather than the other way around? 'Landowners' ability to sniff out the small knot of people behind stories of globalization is an incisive analytic move from which anthropologists who study "globalization" could learn.

In sum, it could be that studying globalization would require a very particular kind of academic discipline. A discipline which delivers a richly detailed account of the lifeways of a small network of people as it is actually lived. A discipline attentive to the stories these people tell of themselves without uncritically accepting them as true. A discipline willing to recognize its entanglement in their lives without lapsing into either epistemological paralysis or the easy lie of a comfortable objectivity. In a world where our discipline is beset with doubts about its relevance, ethics, and epistemology, it may be that an anthropology which seeks to make *itself* feasible may have more to learn from Papua New Guineans than the other way around.

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