

**Simbu Paths to Power:
Political Change and Cultural Continuity
in the Papua New Guinea Highlands**

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June 1992



Revised version of 1991 PhD thesis for Australian National University.

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Abstract

This study examines the interaction between the politics of a Papua New Guinea Highlands society, the Simbu, and the colonially introduced state. It does so by analysing patterns of political competition in a study of dynamic change in four major stages, the precolonial, the colonial, decolonizing and post-colonial periods. In order to analyse this interaction, it seeks to answer the basic questions about politics - how people gain power and become politicians, how they maintain power once they have it, and whether the answers to these questions have differed in these time periods.

In particular, it examines the extent to which indigenous social structures, ideologies and political techniques are used in the new state structures, and thus the degree to which the introduced institutions have been adapted by the Simbu. The interaction between indigenous, precolonial institutions and the state and its conventions are revealed by a study of the ideologies used in the Simbu political world.

In the different political arenas which existed in the different time periods quite distinct talents have been displayed and appeals made. The Simbu ideologies of the solidarity of clans which have strong, hereditary leaders are used selectively according to the context. The aggressive battlefield leader of precolonial times was not appropriate in the enforced peace of the colonial era, but was revived in the insecure period of decolonization. Ideologies of the manipulation of wealth being the basis for prestige, power and influence were expanded upon in the colonial context, and have been further adapted in the post-colonial context to justify the use of massive financial and other resources in attempting to build personalised followings on a large scale. The ideology of the leader as a man of knowledge is also claimed by some. All these claims have at different times had some appeal and contributed to the search for bases of power, but no single model of Simbu leadership and society is applicable. The elements of this variety of political models can be found in the adaptivity of Simbu tradition.

Simbu ideologies of solidarity are regularly expressed in bloc voting patterns by clans, tribes and sometimes whole language groups, and in the clan warfare which resumed in the late colonial period. The techniques and strategies of precolonial leadership, of the leader using resources from one sphere in another and gaining prestige from this interstitial role, are reinvented in many contexts in the contemporary state of PNG.

These processes are demonstrated in numerous case studies of the transitional politics from precolonial Simbu to the contemporary period, with particular focus on the decade straddling the Independence of Papua New Guinea, and the creation of an elected provincial government. Political competition and voter responses are analysed in the context of three national^{elections} and one provincial election, and the struggles for control of the area's coffee industry.

Despite the different scale of the political arenas explored in different time periods, and the rapid increases in the political resources available, the political techniques and strategies of Simbu remained essentially the same. There are also continuities in political beliefs and the range of concepts found within Simbu's variegated political models. Despite the political changes, there has been continuity in Simbu's political culture.

Simbu values have been used within the introduced state, just as resources from the state have been used within indigenous structures competition and conflicts. The process is thus one of interpenetration, with the state co-opted into Simbu political competition.

Abbreviations

AA	Area Authority
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission/Corporation
AEC	Administrators' Executive Committee
ANGAU	Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit
ANU	Australian National University
APSA	Australian Political Studies Association
CCC	Chimbu Coffee Cooperative Ltd.
CCL	Chimbu Coffee Ltd.
CCSU	Chimbu Councils Services Unit
CD	Census Division
CHE	Chimbu Holdings Enterprises
CIB	Coffee Industry Board
CMB	Coffee Marketing Board
CPC	Constitutional Planning Committee
CPO	Central Planning Office
DASF	Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries
DC	District Commissioner
DDC	Deputy District Commissioner
DOIC	District Officers-in-Charge
E	English
ECL	Economic Consultants Limited
FUC	Follow-Up Committee
HAD	House of Assembly Debates
IASER	Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
IPG	Interim Provincial Government
K	Kuman language
MA	Melanesian Alliance
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MHA	Member of the House of Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MUG	Minimum Unconditional Grant
NBC	National Broadcasting Commission, PNG
NLGC	Native Local Government Council
NPG	National Pressure Group
NSO	National Statistics Office
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire

OUP	Oxford University Press
P	Pidgin (Tokpisin)
PANGU	Papua and New Guinea Union
PC	Provincial Commissioner
P-C	<i>Post-Courier</i>
PG	Provincial Government
PMB	Pacific Manuscripts Bureau microform
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPP	Peoples Progress Party
PR	Patrol Report
RIP	Rural Improvement Program
SIPG	Simbu Interim Provincial Government
SLUP	Simbu Land Use Project
SMH	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
SR	Situation Report
SVD	<i>Societas Verbi Divini</i> , Society of the Divine Word
T	Tokpisin
TANU	Tanzanian African National Union
UP	United Party
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
VEDF	Village Economic Development Fund
WS	William Standish

Currency

Papua New Guinea (PNG) used the Australian Pound, Shilling and Pence until January 1966 when PNG decimalized in tandem with Australia. One pound became two dollars (\$A2.00) and one shilling (twelve pence) became ten cents (\$A0.10).

In January 1975 Papua New Guinea introduced its own currency at parity with the Australian dollar, so that one Kina (K1.00) replaced \$A1.00, and one Toea (1t.) replaced one cent (\$A0.01).

After Independence, the PNG Kina appreciated against the Australian dollar. From November 1976 K1.00 equalled \$A1.15, and from August 1979 and until 1984 K1.00 equalled \$A1.25.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people assisted in myriad ways while I experienced the pleasures and pain of researching and writing this study. Many more fed me information and ideas, and particularly the Simbu politicians who were so open. They not only accepted my presence in their midst and tolerated my questions, but freely conveyed and displayed so many of their feelings and insights.

I am especially grateful to the Honourable Siwi Kurondo, OBE, former Premier of the Simbu Interim Provincial Government, to Kuman Dai, former Speaker of the Simbu Provincial Assembly, to former Simbu Premiers Mathew Siune and Peter Gul for access provided, and to the members of that Assembly. The late Sir Ignatius Kilage, Governor-General of Papua New Guinea at the time of his death, Barunke Kaman, former Provincial Secretary, the late Honourable Sir Iambakey Okuk, former Deputy Prime Minister and Provincial Member for Chimbu, and the Honourable John Nilkare, former Minister for Provincial Affairs, and their wives, opened their minds and their homes to me. Despite their occasionally negative reaction to my writing, I think they understood the role of a scholarly observer. I formally repeat here my gratitude to them and to the other Simbu politicians who are too many to name here.

Simbu people have been kind to me. Their mountains are beautiful, the climate comfortable and the food good, all of which drew me to return. At Bamugl hamlet of Mintima Village the Burukngaumo people have long tolerated the probings of ANU and other researchers. The friendship of Wena Peter and his wife Rita, of John and Ellen Wambu, and of Waine Gabriel and Gunua remains a source of support. Interpretation and multi-faceted assistance were provided by former Village Court magistrate Waine Gabriel, by Wambu John and Witne Michael, and the late Gendua Nicholas, James Waine and John Waine. The late *Komiti* Kawage Joseph and his brothers Gendua and Witne provided valuable land for the ANU field station, and the late Petrus Bokunambane and his son Thomas provided warm hospitality. Church leader Ninmongo Juliana and Mrs Clara Geregi demonstrated the influence of Simbu women within their sub-clan. From Yuage in the Kombaku clan the late Councillor Wamugl Baglme was a kind host and generous informant, and Bernard Giglmai provided expert mechanical assistance. These are but few of the Simbu men and women who made field work a constant celebration of the human condition. I am grateful to them all.

Former UPNG students, Leo Kuabaal, Frank Mondo, Anna Minggu, Keringa Wamugl, Theodore Banda, Peter Karnis and Joe MacTeine at times all assisted invaluablely

with interpretation and/or advice, or administered questionnaires. Peter and Anna Kama Kerpi of Kuk provided friendship, insight and hospitality.

Public servants who assisted me beyond official requirements include former District and Provincial Commissioners Laurie Doolan, Jerry Nalau and Jack Bagita, Administrative Secretary John Wauwe, Provincial Secretaries Arnold Daugl Kamayagl and Henry Tokam, and Deputy Provincial Commissioners John Frew, Dick Kelly, John Corrigan, Mathew Towa and Kimin Poka. District Officers who helped with information and their interpretations include Noel Walters, Neil Grant, Morrie Brown, Geoff Laphorne, Bob Cleland, Bernie Maume, Alan Maclay, Tom Makindoe, John Dagge, Rod Saker, Rod Morrison, Dick Olive, Frank Cotton, Graeme Black, Bevan Stott, Maldead Kunsei, Joe Kauga Kua, Gerson Amen and Bob Matbob. Provincial Planner, Frank Binkley, assisted enormously. His successor and more recently Premier, David Mai, and other interim provincial government secretariat members also assisted. Paul Barker, Area Economist, Department of Primary Industry, commented on a complex draft paper. Many electoral officials led by Alwyn Jimmy and Trevor Downes helped at particular times. In Port Moresby, Reuben Kaiulu, now Electoral Commissioner, provided every assistance. In Goroka, Ric Giddings and Norma Wilson, and in Mount Hagen, Ron Hiatt, and their spouses, were also free with their knowledge, insights and hospitality.

Several organizations provided access to their files, and in particular I wish to thank the staff at the National Archives of Papua New Guinea, Sir John Yocklunn and his staff at the National Library of Papua New Guinea, successive chairmen and general managers of Chimbu Coffee Cooperative Limited for access to their files and meetings, and Executive Officers at the Coffee Marketing Board, Goroka, Barry Biel, Ian McCleary and Ricky Mitio.

In the PNG Highlands I am privileged to have supped with and interviewed the late Jim Taylor, the late Stan Christian, Father John Nilles, SVD, Sr Erminberg and the Reverend Bob Heuter and his late wife Ruth. In Australia I was welcomed and informed by Dr Ian Downs, and the late John Black, Reverend Willie Bergmann and Sir John Gunther in their households. I am grateful to them all.

Many other people in Chimbu gave freely of their time, information, views, hospitality and support. These friends and co-workers include Esme and Adrian Hobba, Miggie Dickson, Mike Manhire, Mary Walker, Carolyn Hide, Catherine Baker, Robin Dagge and George Leahy, and in Port Moresby Rindy and Dr Rob Gordon, and Dr Friedegard and Bill Tomasetti. In Canberra and Port Moresby, Dr Jenny Corbett, Jan

Donovan, Libby Smith, Trish and Dr Rolf Gerritsen, Dr Ian Hughes, Dr Gary Simpson and Noel Ridgway were generous with critical comment and encouragement. In Melbourne, my late parents and my brothers and sisters-in-law all kindly provided backstop to the project. Susan Andrews gave critical comment and essential support through the writing of this volume, for which my gratitude is heartfelt.

I owe an immense personal debt for intellectual stimulation and company during a period of intense pressure in late 1975 to members of the ANU/CPO Chimbu Study Team, Professor Diana Howlett, Dr Robin Hide, Dr Elspeth Young, James Arba, Henry Bi and Barunke Kaman.

Funding for this project has been provided in part by the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), the Australian National University (ANU), the PNG Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research (IASER) and La Trobe University, for which I am indebted. In the last weeks, study support from the Department of the Parliamentary Library and backstopping from my colleagues in the Parliamentary Research Service proved invaluable. My supervisors, Professor Emeritus Robert Parker, Dr Marie Reay and Dr John Ballard were critical and stimulating when appropriate, generous with their expertise and extraordinarily patient.

The late Professor Charles Rowley of UPNG first encouraged my Simbu work, and was followed in this role by Professors David Lea and Andrew Strathern, then of UPNG. Probing questions came in the field from the late Peter Hastings, then of the ANU, the late Professor Rex Mortimer of UPNG and from Dr Peter King of the University of Sydney and Dr Herb Feith of Monash University. Pointed questions and critical comments have come from Professor Yaw Saffu of UPNG, Dr Ulf Sundhaussen and Dr Randal Stewart of the University of Queensland, Dr Bill Gammage of the University of Adelaide, Associate Professor Richard Curtain of Monash University and Dr Hank Nelson of ANU. Professor Paula Brown Glick of the City University of New York at Stony Brook provided invaluable introductory material, and salutary scepticism. Fellow students, Dr Marion Christie and Dr Wayne Warry, commented discerningly on some interim writings. In Canberra, Dr Barry Shaw, and Professor Cherry Gertzel of Flinders University, helped me clarify approaches to writing, and Dr Brian Fegan of Macquarie University provoked me into shaping written material into this thesis. Dr Ron May has prodded gently and read drafts with a sharp eye, Dr William Sutherland prompted me to tighten several arguments, and Gillian Vale encouraged me to free up my prose. Greg Fry of the ANU generously provided time and insights without which this project would not have been completed.

Early drafts of this material have been typed patiently by Reay Sampson, Kath Bourke, Margrit Sedlacek, Mary Pearson, Debbie Hill, Susan Westwood, Hilary Bek, Claire Smith, Marlene Arney and Norma Chin. Corrections and the formatting were done expertly by Bev Fraser. Helen Fraser and Jean Bourke kindly proof read the final version.

I am grateful to Professors Harold Brookfield and Diana Howlett of the ANU and to David Hegarty of Canberra, for permission to reproduce maps.

All these people, and many more whom I have not mentioned, have my thanks. The responsibility for the final product, of course, is my own.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The image of 'finding the way' is commonly used in Melanesia in all spheres of activity and is an appropriate phrase to describe the process by which traditional society has adapted, and been adapted by, Western political processes and structures. This work is an analysis of the 'search for empowerment' (Chazan *et al.* 1988:21) through the study of public political activity among one group of Melanesian people, the Simbu, who live in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG).¹ It examines patterns of political competition in a study of dynamic change over time - from the precolonial era through colonization, decolonization and into the present, post-colonial, period. An analysis of local politics, particularly in a time of major transition, increases our knowledge not only of national politics in PNG but also the processes which take place when any existing social group is forced to cope with structures and systems imposed by outsiders.

The Simbu people's universe was changed dramatically less than 60 years ago with the arrival of representatives of the modern Western world: initially the Australian colonial service and those wishing to exploit the mineral resources of the Highlands and, shortly afterwards, members of the Christian churches seeking a harvest of souls. It should be pointed out that this early contact was with groups who had widely differing interpretations of the appropriate path for the Simbu people. Since then, willy-nilly, the Simbu have been incorporated into the colonial and post-colonial state, and, through the emergence of the independent country of PNG, into the modern world economy. During this period their political spheres of activity have been expanded rapidly as new resources and demands have come from the world outside. This study examines the extent to which indigenous social structures, ideologies and political techniques have been used in the new state structures and thus the degree to which the introduced institutions have been adapted by the Simbu.

The central argument is that despite the many political and socio-economic changes in Simbu life there remain substantial continuities of traditional political institutions and

1 Created from the administrative union in 1946 of the Australian Territory of Papua and the United Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea, PNG is a Melanesian island state of 3.6m people which became formally independent of Australia on 16 September 1975.

culture. Continuity is manifest in the use of kinship structures; in the styles and mechanisms of practical politics, both in ideological appeals and expressive behaviour; in voting within state institutions; and in the resurgence of clan warfare outside those institutions. Just as the Simbu people retain the knowledge of their complex clan and tribal relationships so the Simbu politician has to be aware of the subtle layers of allegiance and obligation which can be used in the new domains. Ideological appeals which seek legitimation from aspects of the past are of great importance in a political landscape which is changing. It is these 'discrepancies between ideology and social reality' (Moore 1975:210) which are being explored in this study as the Simbu people, and particularly their aspirants to leadership, have sought, and continue to seek, new ways to empowerment.

The core activities of politics are to gain and maintain influence, power and position, and the actors' perceptions of how these processes work are of crucial importance. In one sense the interaction between the old forms and the new means of practical politics is embodied in those Simbu who have contested and won positions in the new state; in doing so they have, consciously or unconsciously, judged the degree to which the new state can accommodate itself to traditional loyalties, and how they can use those loyalties in state structures. Throughout the text this is analysed by exploring the backgrounds of succeeding waves of politically prominent Simbu, focussing on the life trajectories of a small group of Simbu politicians, and the techniques they have used in their widening domains. The interaction between indigenous, precolonial institutions and the introduced state and its conventions is revealed by a study of the changing personnel and the methods and ideologies used in the political world of the Simbu people.

Colonial contact and colonization have been seen as the commencement of the process labelled 'penetration' in the South Pacific (Moorhead, 1968:13). 'Penetration' is also used to describe the outreach of the state and its extension activities in the comparative politics literature (La Palombara, 1971) and in East African public administration studies (Coleman, 1977). More recently the term has been used by Neo-Marxist dependency theorists to describe the process whereby capitalism incorporates the traditional mode of production among social formations at the periphery, through the agents of the colonial state on behalf of the metropolitan bourgeoisie (Fitzpatrick, 1980:14). The notion of penetration reflects the processes under way as seen by early colonial patrol officers and colonizing politicians alike. Such political actors and commentators have mostly used a state-centred perspective, viewing political, social and economic change as a one-way process initiated by the colonial state (Hasluck, 1958 and 1976; Downs, 1980).

According to the conventional wisdom, there was either no state before colonial contact or, if there were, any pre-existing statelike structure has been drastically changed. The administering powers brought a police force and hence imposed peace, and built schools, hospitals, roads and an economic infrastructure for new export crops and imports. The concept of colonial intrusion and state initiative is often echoed by the colonized peoples themselves and has been adopted by many political scientists, who tend to imply that the state is the principal agent of change.

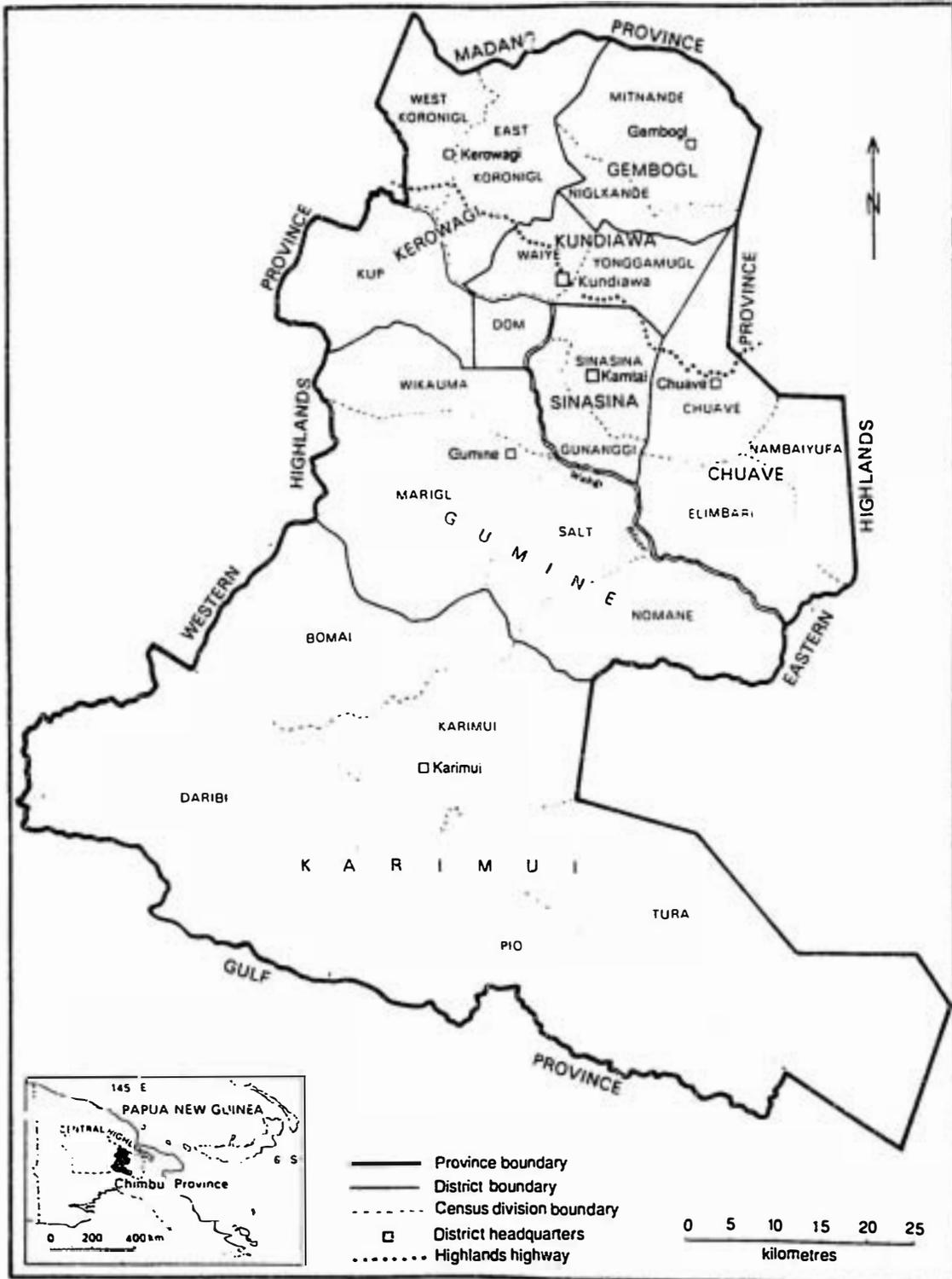
This view has come under increasing challenge, and in recent histories of the South Pacific the indigenous people are not always seen as having been 'passive, helpless, and always suffering at the hands of Europeans. When faced with Western contact they took a remarkable range of social, economic, political and intellectual initiatives designed to exploit new opportunities and cope with new challenges' (Howe, 1984:351, 352). In this general vein, Bennett has documented the 'resilience of Melanesian values' for the Solomon Islands (1987:xvii) and Mamak and Ali (1979) catalogued indigenous resistance and rebellion in the South Pacific. The present study falls within this genre in its examination of the politics of one indigenous people in their interaction with the modern Western state in the precolonial, colonial and early post-colonial eras.

The area of study is the Chimbu² Province in the central Highlands, among the Simbu people. The people here called Simbu comprised numerous, largely autonomous, societies, until 1933, when the first colonial contact took place. The name 'Simbu' was adopted by local leaders for the provincial government and approximates the Kuman (K) language cry of greeting 'Tsimbuuu', which can be translated into English (E) as 'thank you'. I use the term 'Simbu' for the ecological zone/culture area in that part of the province north of the Bomai-Gumine divide, as shown by the census division boundary (see Map I:1). This broadly approximates the area where people speak related languages described by Wurm (1975:468) and covers about 95 per cent of the approximately 200,000 people of Chimbu Province. About 10 per cent of the people in this northern sector, namely those in the eastern and western peripheral areas of Nambaiyufa (Siane) census division, and some clans in Kup, speak languages which belong to different linguistic families from Simbu languages. However, the general environments of these

² 'Chimbu' remains the correct legal spelling for the province, and the national parliament's Provincial (previously Regional) electorate, which encompasses the land and people administered under the colonial district of Chimbu. I will use the spelling 'Chimbu' in that sense, although a long-planned amendment to the (constitutional) Organic Law on Provincial Boundaries is intended, which would change the province's name to 'Simbu'.

Map I.1

CHIMBU PROVINCE



Source: Adapted from Howlett et al., 1976.

people and their cultures are similar. In the sparsely settled southern (Karimui-Bomai) ecological zone of the province, which is at a lower altitude and supports only 5 per cent of the population, quite distinct social structures, languages and political cultures are found. This study does not explore politics within the Karimui and Bomai societies.

Why Chimbu?

After visiting PNG in 1966 and 1970, I went there in 1971 to observe the process of decolonisation which by then was well under way. I had an interest in Third World politics, especially in factors such as ethnicity which I had examined in Southeast Asia. While teaching at the University of PNG (UPNG), in the capital, Port Moresby, I could observe PNG's national politics. At that time 90 per cent of the population lived in the rural areas, and any major nationalist movement or political party would need a substantial rural base. The study of a significant rural group could help me understand the ideologies, norms and practices of politics elsewhere in PNG and wider Melanesia. An understanding of local-level politics is needed in order to contribute effectively to social and economic development, as Goldsworthy (1988:59) argues in discussing the transition in Western political science from the study of 'political development' to that of the politics of development. Furthermore, those with normative concerns for fostering the requirements of democracy, namely competition, the preservation of civil and political liberties and political participation (Diamond *et al.* 1988), would benefit from a comprehension of the operative political cultures.

Chimbu was chosen as fieldwork location for both academic, pragmatic and political reasons. Major concentrations of people live in the Highlands, which contains about 40 per cent of the national population. From colonial contact Simbu people have been renowned for assertiveness, vigour, mobility and ambition. My Highlands students at UPNG, especially the Simbu, were open and vocal. Their challenges to existing models of Highlands leadership, which are discussed in Chapter III, suggested that Highlanders could make a substantial but potentially authoritarian and potentially destabilizing contribution to PNG politics. Chimbu is a compact unit with well established internal communications. Centrally located in the Highlands, it also has the largest concentrations of population in the country.

In Chimbu I planned to examine local responses to constitutional change, which was being hastened by the Australian government. In the late 1960s Highlands people were often thought to have a 'natural conservatism' on matters of decolonization (Hastings 1969:170). Thousands of Highlanders showed opposition to rapid decolonization when the Australian Prime Minister John Gorton visited in July 1970. Some officials argued

that older Highlanders sought to delay change until they could gain control of the emergent state (Max Orken, pers. comm. 1970).

While visiting Chimbu that month, I noticed anti-colonial resentment among the young, and later learnt that two potentially strong candidates for the 1972 national elections were nationalists (David Hegarty and Hal Colebatch, pers. comm. 1970 and 1971), so there was the possibility of a major clash of policies in the campaign. I also hoped that Chimbu might indicate the nature of post-colonial politics when Australian rule was no longer the central focus of debate. I expected that future political conflict there would be primarily among competing Simbu interests and individuals, rather than nationalist reaction to the colonial situation, given that expatriate and business involvement in the district were minimal when compared to more developed parts of the Highlands and coastal and island areas of PNG.

Once in Chimbu in early 1972 I found that the role of a researcher was accepted by politicians and officials alike. This proved to be an area of dramatic political change. From 1972 Chimbu produced some of PNG's most prominent national leaders. The political techniques and innovations of Simbu politics, while frequently disparaged by national and foreign observers and participants alike, were soon replicated elsewhere in PNG. Along with analysing the rapid change under way in Simbu society, I also found a welcome from rural people.

PNG studies

There have been many studies of traditional and local-level politics in the rural areas of Papua New Guinea and other Third World countries by anthropologists (such as Berndt and Lawrence 1971, and Swartz, ed. 1969). In a 1960s article which still has considerable validity, Vincent (1969:57) argues that anthropologists often focus on the politics of the inter-relationships of local-level communities which are important to people's daily lives, but which often are not the processes of politics as power. In contrast, she says, political scientists are generally more concerned with politics in relation to the national government. They tend, therefore, to focus upon the state and to adopt a 'centre-based' viewpoint. They look at politics from the vantage point of the national capital, very often both physically and intellectually. As she put it, in the past, political scientists tended to work downwards, so to speak, dealing with vertical structures, [while] anthropologists have always been concerned to work outwards, from any point within an area, dealing with horizontal structures (1969: 43).

But some work of social anthropologists also has its shortcomings. Because many social anthropologists work on and in small (usually rural) communities, their coverage

of the extent to which the outside world, including the state, impinges upon people's lives can be quite limited. Because of the disciplinary nature of much academic research, local politics and local expressions of national politics have generally been ignored. Local politicians straddle the two spheres. They occupy the nexus between state and clan, and are 'mediators' (Brown 1974). Their politics are precisely the phenomena that this study is centrally concerned with. Accordingly, I worked in what might be called the interstitial area between anthropology and political science, in order to explore the dynamics of political behaviour in a terrain which provides instances of politics which go beyond the notions of power politics in formal state institutions.

The major efforts of political scientists in PNG have been election studies, with many valuable contributions from anthropological observers (Bettison, *et al.* eds 1965; Epstein, *et al.* eds 1971; Stone, ed. 1976; Hegarty ed. 1984; King, ed. 1989; Oliver, ed. 1989). Rowley (1965), in an important pioneer political study, analysed the responses of villagers to the state, including villagers in town, as did Nelson's (1974) history.³ The election and provincial development/administration studies of two political scientists span well over a decade (J.A. Ballard in the Southern Highlands, R.J. May in the East Sepik). Neo-Marxist analysts such as Fitzpatrick (1980) have argued that the state, while preserving the traditional mode of production (in villages) so as to prevent the formation of a large proletariat, has strongly influenced indigenous society. Donaldson and Good (for example, 1988) and Stewart (1986) emphasize the impact of the centre on the periphery. Amarshi *et al.* (1979) and Stewart (1989) apply a class perspective to contemporary politics. General books by journalists (such as Dorney 1990) have now been joined by the sociologist Turner's (1990) national study of development problems. The secession crisis on Bougainville Island from 1988 has prompted a new interdisciplinary sub-field. As problems have been identified in PNG social science they have been described and analysed according to the most useful concept, regardless of its discipline of origin. I seek to follow the same eclectic course, probing the 'limits of my naivete' (Devons and Gluckman 1964:19) with some guidance from other disciplines.

Political science, as my survey in Appendix 2 on Modernization and Neo-Marxist approaches indicates, has had difficulty coming to grips with rural politics in the Third World. However, there are some useful insights in the extensive African literature, and I draw on some of these. In PNG political studies literature this is the first long term study of district and provincial politics by a political scientist which covers a substantial period of time. Politics is a major focus for several anthropologists who have worked on PNG

3. The term 'village' and 'villager' are, to a degree, abstractions and will be discussed briefly in Chapter II.

(Marie Reay [1959, 1963, 1970], A.J. [Andrew] Strathern [1984]), and - less consistently - Douglas Oliver (1955), A.M. (Marilyn) Strathern (1972a). Healy's (1962) history of early local administration in Papua almost a century ago describes processes I had seen at work in Simbu. Oram (1973a; 1973b) raises the links between local politics and public order questions. Historians, such as Stephen in her study of Mekeo in the colonial era (1974; 1979), and some anthropologists, such as A.J. Strathern (1970) and A.M. Strathern (1972a) for Mount Hagen, have described adoptions by indigenous peoples of role models from the colonial state. For Simbu, Criper (1967) explores the politics of traditional exchange, and Brown has frequently discussed contemporary politics (for example 1963, 1979). Her student Podolevsky (1979) explored dispute handling in the Mul area of Gumine. A recent historical study of Simbu (J. Hughes 1985) examines continuity of values in areas scattered throughout the province, reaching some conclusions regarding politics which replicate some of my own (especially Standish 1973c; 1981b), while Warry (1987) provides a detailed study of the contemporary politics of a tribe in Chuave, within Chimbu.

There are confusions inherent in the methodology of some of the anthropological literature, especially those studies written within the convention known as the 'ethnographic present', which are set at that moment just before colonial contact when the societies are depicted as pristine. Some of the earliest anthropological work was done on the fringes of 'pacified' areas, which partly justifies the convention, but there is anthropological work which analyses societies without an integrated historical dimension or discussion of change (for example, Sillitoe 1979). Societies and their politics are often described as 'traditional', meaning precolonial, even though tradition is what people accept as customary, and is used selectively according to local political circumstances and individual motivations (Moore 1975). However, there are anthropological studies which have a historical dimension (such as McSwain 1977), and at least two with a political perspective based in, but looking out from, the village (Morauta 1974; A.J. Strathern 1984). Several anthropological students of PNG who have revisited their field areas frequently (such as Meggitt 1979; Gordon and Meggitt 1985) incorporate perspectives of change, and some fine studies have resulted from return visits after absences of decades (Read 1986, Hogbin 1978).

Political science 'grand theory'

When I started this project the dominant political science literature on Third World was concerned with 'political development' and 'modernization'. Much of it was located at a

very abstract level⁴ and gave few guidelines as to how to approach a local-level field study (see Appendix 2). Such high theory does not point to how to conceptualize concrete political situations as found in the Simbu in all their complexity and nuance. But the same was true of the Neo-Marxist work which followed later. I found few if any signs of class politics in action in Simbu.

Despite my scepticism, I initially tried to use the political development approach in studying the 1972 national House of Assembly election (Standish 1976a) and the varying attitudes of differing tribes to issues such as decolonization (Standish 1973b). In particular, I sought to test concepts of political development and modernization, and the spread of 'radical' (which then meant 'nationalist') ideas and sentiment. Little political development was identifiable, despite the commencement of those socio-economic changes which collectively are called modernization. The solidarity of clan voting in that election and the resurgence of clan warfare (popularly known as 'tribal fighting'), demonstrated for me the irrelevance of political development theory. Modernization theories having been unenlightening, and contradicted by the events, I investigated the political expressions of social structure and ethnicity in general (Standish 1973b; 1973c; 1976a; 1979b and 1982), and began to engage the Neo-Marxist literature.

Class theories alert observers to social change in the broad politico-economic context. There are signs of increasing social stratification in Simbu, as noted in Appendix 4, and from the mid-1970s these factors and the emergence of class relationships began to be examined in PNG studies. But objectively defined and described classes, or classes in formation or 'class fractions', need not have class consciousness, or act in their class interest, as defined in Marxist terms. People may move from one objectively defined class to another, and back again. Howlett (1980) discusses land-short peasants who are seasonal wage earners and thus temporary proletarians. In their rush to identify a few individuals, sometimes backed by their clans, as classes or as class fractions, the Neo-Marxist theorists of PNG, for example, had not learnt the lesson of the slow process of the making of the English working class (Thompson 1968). With the exception of the work of Stewart (1986; 1989) and Fahey (for example, 1984) they have not done extensive fieldwork, but rather remodelled earlier studies using a new theoretical framework. I found few if any signs of embryonic or even nascent class politics in action in Simbu, and Neo-Marxist theories of dependency did not help explore the historical, cultural, individual and group factors which were salient in Simbu politics. The available

⁴ Hyden (1969) and Leys (1969) were among the exceptions.

'grand theory' thus did not address the issues I faced in analysing local-level politics in 1970s Simbu.

Having thus innocently employed Popper's (1976) methodology of 'falsification', I concluded that in seeking to verify theory I had to a degree, albeit crudely, disproved for Simbu the existing major theoretical approaches (or paradigms in Kuhn's [1970] sense) in political science. This early testing of theory, which is discussed further in Appendix 2 on Modernization and Neo-Marxism, determined my subsequent fieldwork for this dissertation. My rather eclectic approach to local level political studies (with analytical inputs relating to social structures, history, culture, class, the economy, the national and international contexts and ideology) has some similarities with the empirically diverse 'political choice' approach advocated by Chazan *et al.* (1988) and the wide range of evidence used by the now broadened modernization school of Diamond, *et al.* (1988).

Accordingly, the analysis here uses unambitious, but apt, 'theories of the middle range' (Merton 1967), drawn in part from my empirical observations, developing what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call 'grounded theory', that is theory which is based ('grounded') in the data and which fits the data. My theory thus emerged from the research method, which, inevitably and properly, was dictated by the field situation.

Questions and concepts

The political events and processes under way in Simbu themselves created the issues to be analysed. The broadest issue in this study concerns the interaction of state and society, as expressed in political competition. Thus in the Simbu context, the key questions for this study are the following 'How do the politically ambitious gain power?', 'How do men become politicians?', 'How do politicians maintain power?', and 'Are the answers to these questions different for the four major phases - precontact, colonial, decolonizing and post-colonial?'

In a fundamental way, these questions have to do with the relationship between the individual and group and also with the use of ideologies of leadership and group identity. In particular, they turn very critically on the issue of cultural continuity in PNG politics - precisely the issue which lies at the centre of my argument.

In order to answer these central questions, the study relies both on broad historical evidence and on longitudinal investigation of sets of key Simbu political actors. In tracing the political trajectories of these actors, much attention is given to electoral campaign behaviour and voting patterns. Elections are striking events which not only reveal political activity at its most intense. They also illuminate, often with singular clarity, the

dynamics of state/local level interactions. It is precisely within this interstitial terrain of PNG politics that this study is located and where my argument about cultural continuity confronts its sternest test.

Brown states of the Simbu that 'The dynamics of the political system before contact was [sic] based on competition between leaders and groups', and in 1976, in the early post-colonial period, 'competition is the active binding force of Chimbu society' (1979:100). After noting the trends in Simbu towards social differentiation and stratification, which I discuss in Appendix 4, she concludes that 'The elected members of provincial and national government bodies, the government officials, the businessmen, and the local big men are beginning to hold different views of prestige and power' (1979:117). In the next section, I explore some of the range of Simbu concepts of politics which I have seen utilized. These sometimes conflicting strands of Simbu thought concerning the nature of politics, influence, power and the state are readily identifiable with concepts used in the Western social sciences, especially politics and anthropology.

Within the clan and tribe most anthropologists have identified political competition as leading to influence, the generalized political capacity to sway people and, through them, events. The broad definitions given by Chazan *et al.* are appropriate for this study:

Political competition encompasses struggles over material and normative resources, over identified interests, over institutions and symbols. Power - the capacity to control these valued goods - and authority - the right to do so - may legitimately be vested in a variety of structures. (1988:10)

For Simbu there are a variety of spheres of politics, within the indigenous social structure and beyond it in state and other introduced institutions, and there are people whose claims to political roles are denied. It is the art of politics to achieve acceptance for the claim to political roles, and thus to gain authority in order to maintain influence and perhaps power.

One Simbu way of seeing politics matches Samuel Johnson's aphorism that 'Politics are now nothing more than a means of rising in the world'.⁵ This resonates with the emphasis laid in Simbu culture upon prestige and reputation, literally making a 'name'⁶ (*T = nem*), and working to preserve that name against derogatory talk,⁷ especially

5 'On the Scots', 18 April 1775, J. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, p369 (quoted in OUP 1980:p276).

6 *Nem* in the Tokpisin *lingua franca*.

7 *Tok bilas* in Tokpisin.

criticism behind one's back.⁸ Prestige can accrue from the range of capacities which are demonstrated at different times in different political contexts by successful political contestants, namely energy, hard work and wealth, generosity, skill in manipulating credit and relationships with people, a capacity for oratory and wisdom, ritual knowledge, intellectual assertiveness, diplomacy and physical bravery. A man with some of these attributes will have a name among at least his kinship group, and if he has several he is likely to have a reputation beyond his clan. At different stages of his life some qualities may be more prominent than others. Thus precolonial warriors and contemporary footballers are younger men, and, although young men can be smooth orators, these skills usually take time to develop. Yet some men do not seek to convert their prestige into political power. Indeed, as we shall see, political office is often used in an attempt to build reputations in the traditional sphere. Clearly, for some Simbu, the ultimate goal of political competition is not power or influence, but prestige.

However, there is another, narrower and harsher view of politics which is similar to that defined by Key:

Politics as power consists fundamentally of relationships of superordination and subordination, of dominance and submission, of the governors and the governed. The study of politics is the study of these relationships. (1969:12-13)

This command view of politics is close to the concept used by Simbu politicians and officials in state institutions, although the Tokpisin word *politik* can also imply knavery, as in English. Precolonial leaders, as discussed in Chapter III, were at times of crisis required to make authoritative commands within their clans, and they had the authority to control the timing of certain major group activities, and hence Key's notion of politics as power matches that strand in Simbu politics. Power, so defined, is a subset of influence. It complements Russell's definition of power as 'the production of intended effects' (1938:25), which does not require legally-sanctioned authority to issue commands.

In contemporary and colonial Simbu the legal basis of such commands and the crude force to impose them lies in the state, 'a set of administrative, policing and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated, by an executive authority' (Skocpol, quoted in Halliday, 1987:218). Skocpol's concept is grounded in society rather than based in the requirements of the international system of sovereignty. Although in the tradition of Weber, it does not specify that the state can claim the monopoly of the

8 *Tok beksait* in Tokpisin.

right to utilize force,⁹ which is an issue that became important in Simbu in the 1970s. Skocpol's definition is an ideal type construct, and as such we must heed Weber's warning that 'it is probably seldom if ever that a real phenomenon can be found which corresponds exactly to one of these ideally constructed types' (quoted in Moore 1965:213). Nonetheless it is one which is like that utilized, in certain spheres and times, especially by Simbu political leaders whose power base is the state.

The colonial state in PNG demanded the monopoly on the right to use organized force, thus following a Weberian model. Where the state arrived in the person of a patrol officer and his police, the relationships which comprized the state and the assertion of state power were readily apparent. State office does not necessarily endow people with political power, and not all those with power hold state office. The holding of office in the state in PNG is frequently identified with 'power' (the English word, used untranslated), although in this study power is not confined to state power. Such views of the state as the authoritative, commanding body can be linked conceptually into those dimensions of Simbu models which show precolonial leaders as domineering and even despotic. Furthermore, at certain phases of the colonial era, especially during and just after the Pacific War, role models of such behaviour were also provided by some colonial officials in Simbu and other provinces.

The 'state' remains a 'messy concept', with no single definition matching the range of Simbu concepts. For them, effectively, the state contains both 'institutional' and 'functional' aspects (Mann 1986:112). Mann draws attention, especially in today's capitalist democracies, to '*the infrastructural power*' of the state, namely 'the capacity of the state to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm' (1986:113, his italics). This work will assess the fluctuating capacity and power of the state in Chimbu. A recent study of Third World state capabilities re-emphasizes that 'real states ... vary considerably in how closely they fit the ideal type' (Migdal 1988:19). States frequently only claim ability and authority, rather than have the capacity to assert a presence or deliver services in much of their claimed territory. If the state fails in its two main claims to monopolize power and keep the peace, and to deliver values such as health and educational services, economic development and employment, then people's actions can demonstrate whether they accept the assertion of

⁹ Mann summarizes four main elements in Weber's largely institutional concept: 1) a *differentiated* set of institutions and personnel, embodying 2) *centrality*, in the sense that political relations radiate outwards from a centre to cover a 3) *territorially demarcated area*, over which it exercises a monopoly of *authoritative binding [sic] rule-making*, backed up by a monopoly of the means of violence (1986:112, citing, *inter alia*, Weber 1968 I:64. Mann's italics).

the centrality of the state in Simbu. It will then be possible to ascertain whether the state has only ever been accepted by them on a conditional basis, dependent upon performance. If the institutional view of the state is not accepted, and it is perceived to have failed them on instrumental grounds, then the state is outside the moral sphere of the indigenous social world.

No matter what the claims of the politicians, at certain times villagers may not accept Weberian type concepts of the state and its roles. If leaders whose positions are based primarily in the state happen to lose their state office, then they become as nothing. By exploring the interplay of these ideas on the ground it becomes possible to answer the central questions of this study. How at different times Simbu people play politics in seeking to enter state institutions, and what they do if they enter the state sphere and then transfer values between the state sphere and the indigenous sphere can all, for present purposes, be broadly defined as how they seek political power, how they seek to become politicians and how politicians seek to maintain their power, noting any differences between the four major phases of recent Simbu history, precontact, colonial, decolonizing and post-colonial.

The analytical 'tools' outlined in Bailey's *Stratagems and Spoils* (1969: xiv) have been particularly productive in seeking to answer these questions. When I read the book just before commencing fieldwork I was already experienced at observing political competition,¹⁰ which is Bailey's principal focus. Bailey seeks to identify the 'rules of the game' and 'structural regularities' of political behaviour (1969: viii, ix, xi). His approach drew criticism (Brass 1970: 70-72) for its hard-headed framework which looks at the expediencies of politics but not at the character of the process or the outcome. Bailey does not give readers the material on which to assess issues and to examine in whose interests political activity takes place. Perhaps in anticipation, Bailey (1969:12) justifies his project as follows:

No statesman is effective unless he knows the rules of attack and defence in the political ring. His interest is in finding out what these rules are, both in particular cultures and cross-culturally; the moral evaluation of the participants' motives is beside the point...Only after we understand the rules can we start evaluating the behaviour and so in the end come to a judgment on the men, if we wish to do so.

Such understanding, it would seem to me, is a precondition for any evaluation of the political process and its outcome anywhere. To use Bailey's analytical approach does not preclude the reader from taking what he calls 'the luxury' of 'the judgement of good and

¹⁰ From working in the Australian federal parliament.

bad' (1969:10), or even analysing in whose class interest political leaders are acting. Brass also criticized Bailey's work because he 'might have shown us how leaders overcome environmental constraints, how they act upon - rather than simply cope with or adjust to - their environment' (1970:71). Here I provide such a description for Simbu.

Among the working concepts used throughout this study are **arena**, **political time**, **political space**, **political resources**, **political culture** and **continuity**. Bailey uses the political term 'arena' 'in a general way' to encompass 'competitive interaction' (1969:88), My usage of 'arena' differs. Here **arena** is used in a sense closer to its sporting and historical use, the setting for competition and conflict. Arenas here include precolonial clans and tribes, and many non-official contexts as well as the new institutions created by the colonial administration, such as native and local government councils, district advisory councils and area authorities, the provincial governments set up by the post-colonial state, and the parliamentary electorates and the territorial (later national) legislature. It took five decades for the new arenas to develop. With **political time** there was an increase in **political space**.¹¹

The political arenas can be conceptualized in geographical terms, in that there are usually several, and there can be many smaller arenas within one of the larger ones, but there is no hierarchy or sequence among them, in that they can all interact directly. Starting from the clan, these arenas cover ever larger geographical areas with a change in the nature of the **political resources** they provide. The term 'political resource' is not used explicitly by Bailey, but usefully conflates a number of elements used in political competition as he describes it. The concept is discussed by Epstein, Parker and Reay (1971) in their introduction to the 1968 PNG election study. As used here, 'resources' include family funds and obligations, the support of a leader's clan and that of allied clans, and also the political skills and credit obtainable from work in schools, sporting clubs, churches and business. The many arms of the state can be used as resources, in different ways at different times, quite apart from any support from explicitly political bodies such as political parties. One unquantifiable but highly significant resource is ideology, and the ability through rhetoric and action to make symbolic appeals for support within a changing political culture.

In this work I assess whether there is change in the ways in which such political resources are used at different times in different arenas, and in which resources from one

11 I benefited greatly from 1981 discussions with Brian Fegan, in which he developed the idea of a matrix of 'political space' and 'political time'.

arena are used in another. The complex of political values appealed to and the political practices utilized within a society are here described as that society's **political culture**. If, despite the changes in the political arenas and resources available to political actors, the political beliefs and practices are essentially the same, then that is evidence of continuity in political culture as defined.

Methodology

In order to analyse change in Simbu politics during and after the colonial period, this study explores what is known and perceived of precolonial politics. Its approach is diachronic rather than using a static system model (cf. Swartz *et al.* 1966). Although it describes the politics of a local elite during decolonization, it uses a wide time-frame in its analysis of Simbu use of political structures and arenas, resources and roles. Its overall structure is largely determined by events; it identifies and analyses a series of processes, in which successive cohorts or generations of Simbu leaders sought out, created and seized new opportunities of gaining influence and power in an ever-widening context. Using a common analytical framework for each of these stages, the study goes beyond chronology to analyse the sequence of changes in the political world of the changing Simbu elite. The chapters outline successive changes in the Chimbu political environment, each involving the creation of new political arenas and making new political resources available for use by men of ambition. In simplified terms, the work describes the widening of political space (arenas and available resources) through time.

The relationships of individual political actors are many and varied: they may simultaneously be members of a clan and tribe, an ethnic group and a football team, a political faction and a political party. To spell out all the relationships of leaders and their followers would require a narrow focus on a few leaders only. To study closely the processes of discussion and consensus, of consultation or command within groups, of exchange and exploitation, of inequality or differentiation, of communal and individual wealth and redistribution, and details on the extent to which leaders, when in wider arenas, act in their own or collective interest, would require a village-centred project. Such a study would have a clan or tribe as its focus, such as Warry (1987), whereas my concern is with the changing political activity in a whole province. To study provincial politics required me to concentrate my observations upon provincial politicians and officials, rather than villagers. Since local politicians operate in the public domain which is interstitial between clan and state, that is the nexus within which I, too, worked. While I lived in a village during my fieldwork, my choice of topic required me to largely ignore Thoden van Velzen's strictures to concentrate more upon little men than the 'big-men' (1973).

'Public political activity', the primary topic of this study, has several dimensions. Virtually all the events it records occurred in open access forums, and no confidential information is used. Its key focus is not clan politics, although it analyses their interaction with politics in state institutions, which Brown calls 'government or "politics proper"' (1979:108). Its primary focus is political activity at the provincial level, which included inputs from councillors, provincial government members and national parliamentarians. In addition, biographical data on hundreds of political candidates indicate the backgrounds of people who seek to enter state political arenas and of those who succeeded. A series of leaders were interviewed in an investigation of perceptions of changing leadership and of attitudes to coming self-government. (My actual field methods are described in Appendix 3.)

Of necessity, my focus is on those leaders who were prominent during my fieldwork for this study, which lasted 27 months spread over 10 years. For purposes of exposition, there are fewer than ten individual Simbu political figures whose careers are followed in any sustained way in this work. The question arises as to whether these men were 'typical', and whether the individual personalities and personal perceptions of the actors described invalidate any generalized conclusions about how Simbu people do their politics. They are selected both because they were central to the events and because as individuals they embody the broad characteristics of the different generational cohorts discussed below. I return to this issue in the concluding chapter, but point out now that throughout the study I analyse the processes at work and seek to explain the reasons for the success or otherwise of the individuals described and the political stratagems they used and continue to use. The operation of a political culture is the combined effect of the actions of individuals.

Inevitably, it is my personal interpretation of Simbu politics which emerges. Objectivity I believe to be impossible, despite my search for accuracy. This is the work of an expatriate - a white, middle-class, liberal, male Australian - observing Simbu leaders and their inter-relationships with each other and to a much lesser extent with their kinship groups. Where relevant I report some of the perspectives of resident expatriates, but I seek primarily to reflect the points of view and interests of ordinary Simbu villagers among whom I lived, although clearly this work uses knowledge and concepts not available to them.

Outline of the study

Chapter II commences the argument by sketching the physical and human context in which the politics occurred, particularly the social structure which remains as important in contemporary as it was in precolonial politics.

Chapter III analyses a range of contemporary perceptions of precolonial Simbu politics, from oral materials and available documentary evidence. Models of precolonial leadership are utilized in contemporary Simbu politics.

Chapter IV examines the transition of Simbu leaders from their precolonial autonomy to dependent positions as village officials under the colonial state, again using oral and documentary sources. A 'generation change' occurred among village officials throughout the colonial period, in which the first group of officials who had been established leaders during the years of colonial consolidation were replaced by younger men who lacked autonomous authority and were dependent upon the state.

Chapter V describes the commencement of the decolonization process when local government councils, the first democratically elected institutions, were introduced in Simbu. These opened new roles for new generations of leaders, who appealed to clan loyalty while supporting development. In 1964 an elected national legislature expanded the arenas for these roles, which continued through the 1968 legislature. By the 1972 national elections young aspirants were partially successful in using wider arenas. Well-educated young Simbu rapidly rose to positions of power in national politics, and then attempted to gain control of the coffee industry within Chimbu. Sometimes mobilized by younger men, older Simbu sought to reassert their leadership, both within their clans, in inter-clan conflicts and occasionally in the recently created and wider arenas.

Chapter VI analyses the move by Chimbu leaders, young and old, to regain power from the central government by pulling substantial power over the state into a new arena - a provincial government for Chimbu - and their attempts to expand control over local business activities.

Chapter VII describes the 1977 national election, in which clan, provincial and national politics interacted sharply. One Simbu national politician created alliances with many of the older generation of local leaders. With enormous energy, political skills and ideological resources, and material wealth, he overwhelmed the electoral machinery of political parties in the province and challenged the new provincial government.

Chapter VIII describes how a new generation of young tertiary-educated political actors entered alliances with the older provincial politicians and continued the struggle to control government and business in Chimbu. Central government resources were used within provincial politics, enabling a Simbu national leader to apparently control the provincial government. Conflict broke out in the provincial arena in 1981, leading to the mobilization of a large-scale voting bloc for the 1982 national parliament election.

Despite the massive use of resources in pseudo-traditional distributions of luxury goods, this quasi-ethnic bloc determined the electoral outcome.

Chapter IX evaluates these transformations in Simbu political arenas, summarizes the changing career paths of the candidates and the political resources they brought to bear in their drive for power. It then examines the cultural continuities in Simbu politics, especially the use of kinship groupings and models of appropriate leadership. After discussing the significance of the processes described for Papua New Guinea and for the analysis of Third World politics, the study concludes by briefly examining some options for Simbu people.

CHAPTER II

CROWDED VALLEYS AND STRUGGLING CLANS: THE CHIMBU CONTEXT

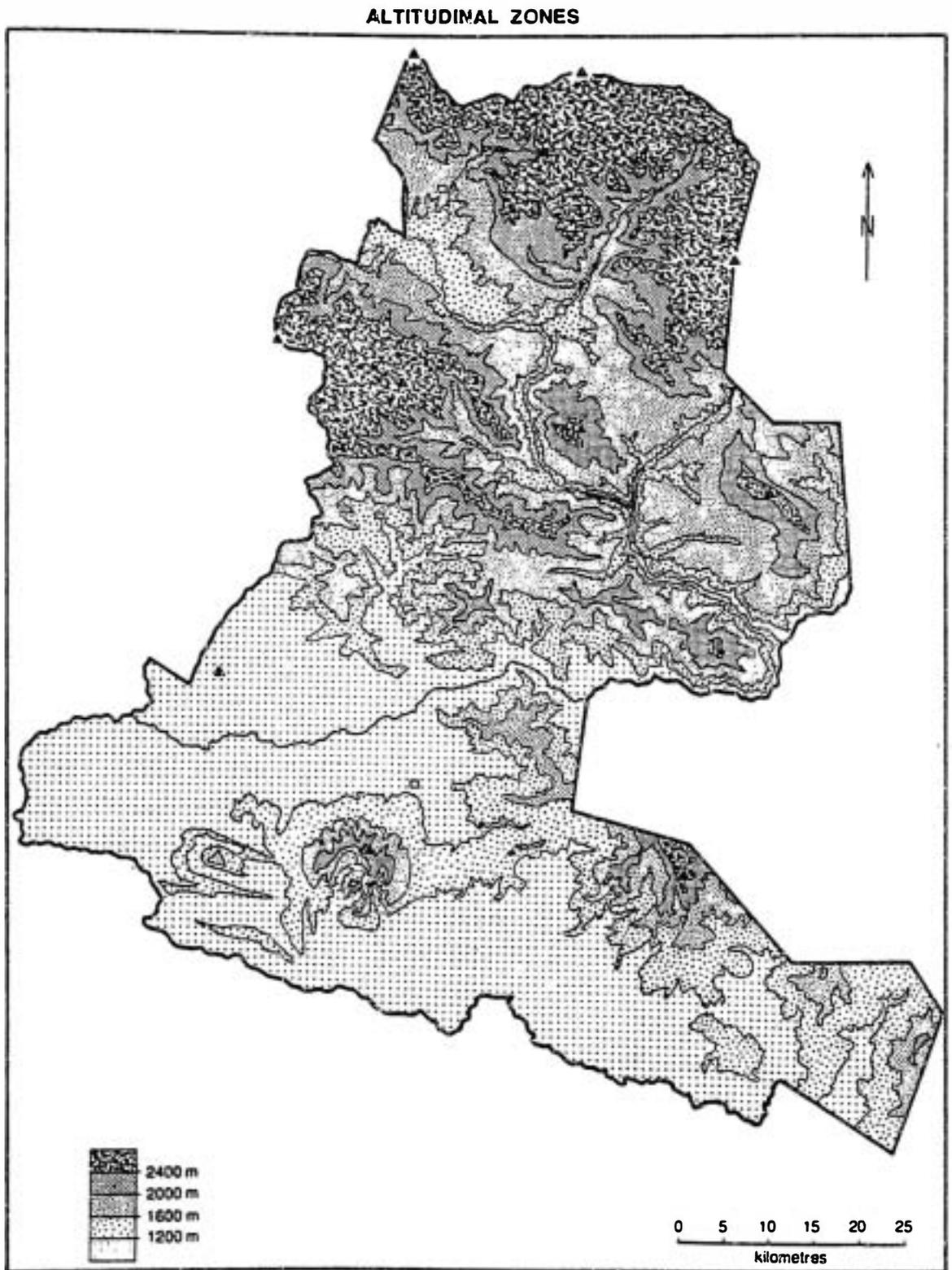
The human geography of Chimbu daily influences the lives of Simbu people. Shortage of land, especially, contributes to social stress and intensifies competition between groups and individuals. Social and linguistic divisions which are reinforced by the barriers of topography are manifest in contemporary political competition, which matches the ruggedness of the countryside. Yet neighbouring groups who have competed for resources in the past are now subsumed in similar geographic and economic situations in the changing broader Chimbu political economy, and are subject to calls for unity and cooperation on wider bases than previously.

Chimbu lies in the central *cordillera* of New Guinea island, with its highest mountain, Mount Wilhelm (4,509 m above sea level), on the northern border. The steep but densely populated Koro and Chimbu River valleys run south from Mount Wilhelm, reaching the Wahgi River flowing in from the Western Highlands after 40 km. The Wahgi runs southeast through a wide valley corridor and then, after the Chimbu junction, cuts south for 25 km through the eastern end of the 3,600 m Kubor Range. After being met by the Marigl River, which drains the southern fall of Mount Kubor, the Wahgi turns southeast and meets the Asaro River flowing in from the Eastern Highlands. Renamed the Tua, this fast-moving snake of water then cuts southwest through the sparsely populated plateau areas of Karimui and Bomai to the Gulf Province and the ocean.

In the north, in the Wahgi tributaries, good rainfall (c.2,000 mm pa), mostly good soils, a cool climate and low levels of malaria except in the valley floors (c.1,500 m) have enabled the population to reach high levels. Sweet potato (*T = kaukau*) is grown in small family gardens, which may be part of a clan garden, under a rotating fallow system. *Kaukau* is the staple food for Highlanders and their principal livestock, pigs, and grows up to 2,750 m in Chimbu. Above this middle zone there is mossy alpine cloud forest, and then very few trees above 3,000 m on the frosty higher mountains (Map II.1).

At the lower altitudes (up to 1200 m) in the warmer Karimui and Bomai areas bestriding the Tua River gorge, there is tropical rain forest (Hide 1984). The rainfall is enormous (3,386 mm pa at Karimui, 4,855 m pa at Bomai) (Howlett *et al.* 1976:80) and the climate so warm that the thin soils, although initially fertile, break down quickly once

Map II.1



gardens are cleared. The Karimui people are shifting horticulturalists, and the southernmost ones are semi-nomadic. In the north, 'Simbu' proper in the sense used here, the people are vigorous and proudly fatten their pigs. In the south, malaria saps people's energy and contributes to infant and maternal deaths, leprosy has been common, and even the pigs can appear sickly. In 1980 there were 178,290 Chimbu residents, including 277 non-citizens (NSO 1982), plus (a crudely estimated) 35,073 rural Chimbu who were absentees (SIPG 1980), often as migrant labour. Thus there were about 213,363 people for whom this 6,153 sq km area is home. The density of settlement in central Chimbu remains as striking today as to the first European visitors in 1933. Chimbu's overall crude density at 32 per sq km (Howlett *et al.* 1976: 93) is the highest of any province in PNG. Densities reach 251 per sq km below the 2,400 m altitude 'ceiling' of horticulture and settlement in the north, but only 3 per sq km in the south (Map II.2). The Karimui-Bomai sector, some 46 per cent of the area, holds only 9,931, or 5.6 per cent of the resident population. Oral traditions, and blood tests, indicate that the north and central (Simbu) people migrated from the north, whereas the southerners moved north from south coast areas. Their languages, material culture and customs differ markedly (Wagner 1971; Hide 1984).

Land and people

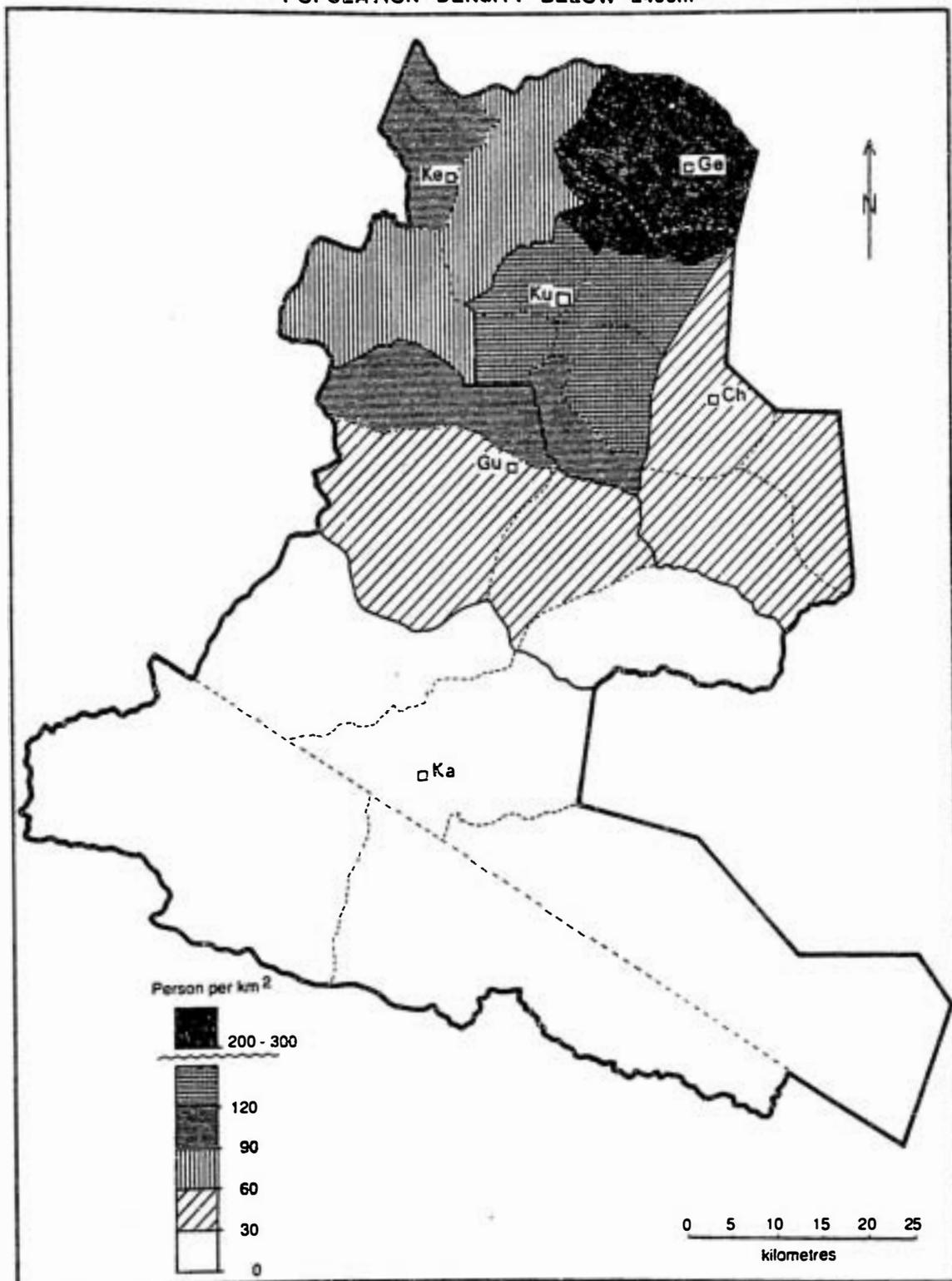
Simbu people are acutely conscious of pressure on land.¹ Chimbu's future depends largely on the rate of growth of the population. Using data from the 1966 and 1971 national censuses, Howlett's team calculated the population growth at 1.6 per cent per annum, which is low by Papua New Guinea standards (Howlett *et al.* 1976:38-40), but that figure excludes the offspring of absentees who have (temporarily?) migrated to other provinces. Hide's study of the Nimai clan in north-central Chimbu indicates that the low growth rate in the 1950s and 1960s may have been atypical, resulting from the influenza epidemic in 1930 (just before colonial contact) and the dysentery epidemic early in the Pacific War 1942-45, which each caused many deaths, especially among children. Hide argues that the population henceforth may well rise significantly (1981:69-79). The population:age pyramid shows fewer people survived from those born in the 1930s and 1940s than earlier decades, and an increase in later age groups (Howlett *et al.* 1976).

The 1979-80 *kiap* census shows a population growth of 2.6 per cent in the years 1971 to 1979 (SIPG 1980). The many bouncing babies and thronging village children in the 1970s reinforce the statistics. For Koge village, Sinasina, Hide found that 'Crude

¹ There are several studies on the use of cultivable land (see Brown and Brookfield 1959; Brookfield and Brown 1963; Criper 1967; Smith 1971 and 1975; Hide 1981, SLUP).

Map II.2

POPULATION DENSITY BELOW 2400m

Source: Howlett *et al.* 1976

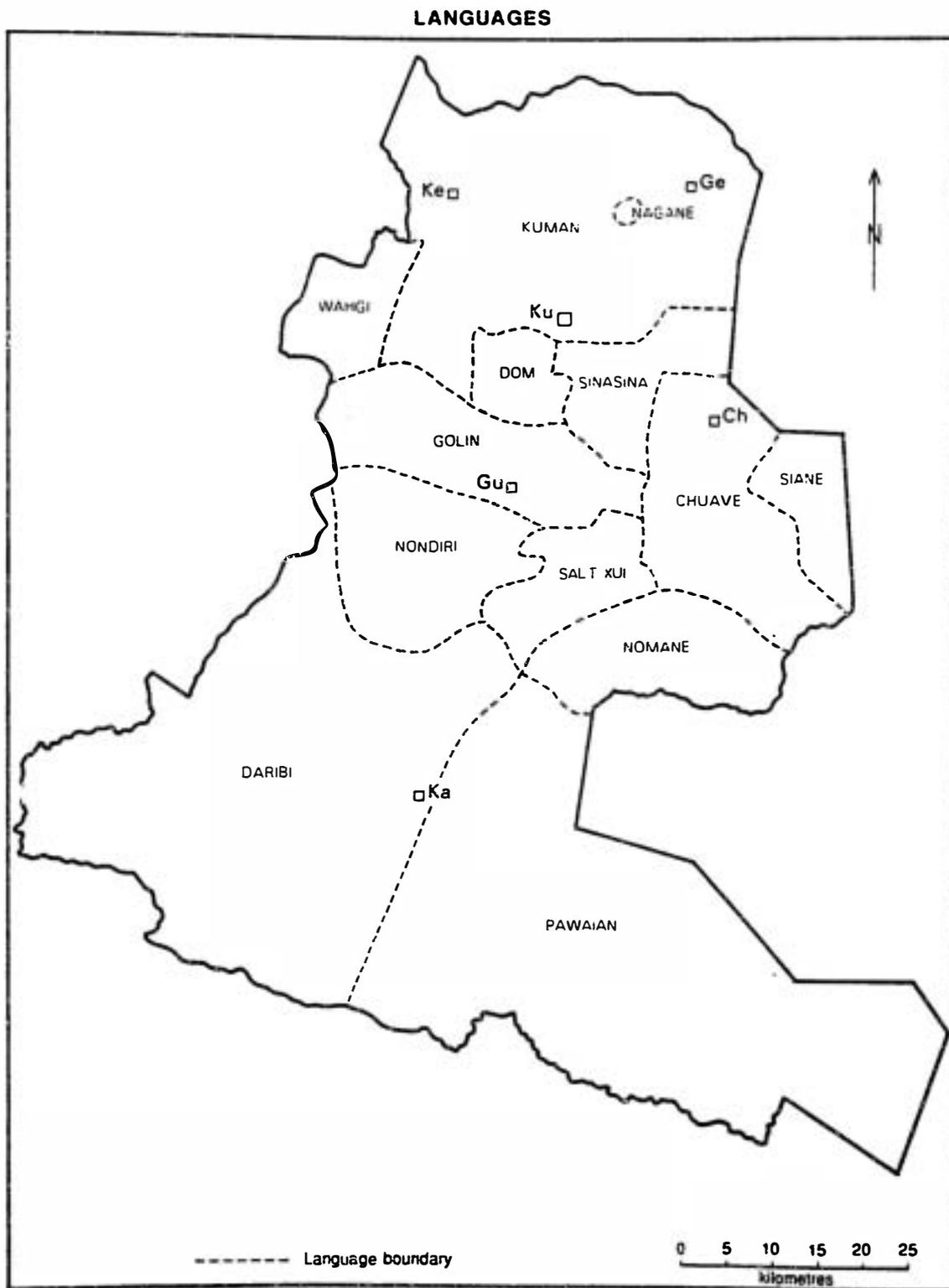
household size, including pigs, is a good predictor of cultivated area' (1981:313). Land is essential to the survival of all Simbu, a fact which is reflected in their politics.

Languages and culture

Language both unifies people and divides groups, especially in societies which, like Simbu, are largely non-literate. There are some thirteen vernacular languages spoken among the peoples of Chimbu (Map II.3). Kuman (K), which means 'west' (of the Chimbu River), is the most widely spoken. It was used by some 80,000 or more people in the north and west of the province in 1975. Other major vernaculars are Golin (spoken around Gumine by 26,700 people), Chuave (24,000), Siane, now officially 'Siani', (8,000) (Howlett *et al.* 1976:20). By PNG standards these are large populations of co-linguists, but a *lingua franca* is essential. This is Tokpisin, introduced in the 1930s by government and Christian missions. In the 1971 census Tokpisin was understood by 28,000 people of Chimbu over ten years old, a figure which has since probably doubled. Except in the remotest areas, virtually all men above puberty and below 60 years speak Tokpisin and many women under forty. Although Radio Kundiawa frequently uses Kuman, Tokpisin is the operative language of government extension work, commerce, and the Christian missions, and for politics within the new state institutions. English is used in most government working documents. Tokpisin can lack some of the precision of the vernaculars or English when interpreted without translation of concepts, but properly used is effective, even for technical discussions (Hull 1968). Chimbu speakers of Tokpisin use it creatively, and transfer poetic imagery and metaphor shared in their vernaculars with clarity. It is because of the spread of Tokpisin that it is possible for the people of Chimbu to talk to each other across their vernacular language boundaries, indeed for the category 'Simbu' to be a political reality.

Amongst themselves, people from the same language area use their vernacular, that is they are literally *wantok* (E = 'one talk', co-linguists). People in a different language area tend not to differentiate such co-linguists, who generally are given the same 'big name' regardless of any divisions and conflicts within that label. Thus people from different parts of Gumine district, who might be fighting at home, are labelled simply 'Gumines' when in Kundiawa. All people of Chimbu when outside the province are usually seen as *wantok*, and outside the Highlands all Highlanders are stereotyped as one group, often called 'Chimbu' - perhaps because the first central Highlanders taken to the coast in the 1930s came from around Kundiawa where Australian officials named the main permanent Highlands patrol post 'Chimbu'. Ethnicity is contextual, and men who may be enemies in domestic conflicts will become *wantok* elsewhere.

Map II.3



Source: Howlett *et al.*, 1976

The Simbu peoples have a quite homogeneous lifestyle, compared with the variety found in many PNG provinces. The obvious exceptions are the small groups in the Karimui-Bomai areas. There is much in common in Simbu people's cultures - in their dress, dances, music, stories and songs, in courtship, marriage and child-rearing, as well as house-building, gardening, cooking and pig husbandry. In 1933 the Simbu men and boys slept in large men's houses, often twenty to thirty per house, and many still do. There is now no taboo on women entering these strategically placed houses, which served as meeting places as much as defensive barracks and store-places for weapons and ritual objects. The women, girls and infant boys live in women's houses, one house per wife, with a separate section for the family pigs.

From the Chimbu River eastwards these thatch roofed and wood and bamboo walled houses were clustered in villages holding a few hundred to a thousand people, while westwards they were scattered throughout the clan land in isolated homesteads and hamlets. More recently many people have moved from the more easily defended mountain sides down to the roads along the valley sides to gain better access, forming long ribbons of dispersed settlement. In this study the terms 'village' and 'villagers' imply rural settlements and their residents respectively, terms which are more apt each year. Fewer men sleep in men's houses than before and women do take part in (and even lead) social and political discussions and Christian religious activities, yet the men's house has survived (by contrast to Donaldson's 1984 report for the Eastern Highlands), adapted and even strengthened as an important institution in recent decades (Standish 1973c; J. Hughes 1985).

There is still, however, strong sex separation and antagonism in Chimbu as elsewhere in the Highlands (Meggitt 1964; Brown and Buchbinder 1976). Men regard women as inferior and as polluting when menstruating; sex roles were and are quite clearly demarcated. The introduction of steel axes, bush knives and spades to a stone-age culture greatly reduced the men's heavy occasional work of clearing trees and initially tilling and ditching the food gardens (Salisbury 1962). Meanwhile, women's daily work of pig-rearing, food production and cooking has not been reduced (Barnes 1981). In keeping their formerly valued economic roles (Howlett 1973a) women have suffered a decline in relative status. Harris (1973:52) estimates that clan warfare previously took one or two days of men's time per week, if preparation is also taken into account. Women, like men, were happy to be relieved of the constant tension and watchfulness of old, but the *pax Australiana* gave men more time for politics, especially competitive exchange, which increased the food production demands on women.

Warfare was not the only arena for the highly competitive Simbu; the various life-crisis feasts all involve ceremonial exchange and displays of competitive generosity (Criper 1967). In the past special vegetable foods grown in particular local environments were presented to people from different ecological zones (Brown 1972; Brookfield and Brown 1963). The climactic expression of Simbu culture is the great pig festival, *bugla yunggu*² (also *bugla gende*), traditionally held at seven to fifteen year intervals, and involves thousands of people in co-ordinated activity. Members of a clan and often a whole tribe kill and cook many hundreds or even thousands of their laboriously fattened pigs and then present them to relatives and friends in neighbouring clans. These are religious festivals, sacrifices to the ancestral spirits designed to assure the continued welfare and fertility of the clan and its women, land, and pigs.³ They are spectacular, proud displays, simultaneously joyous and serious. Dance groups of visitors and hosts paint their faces, shine their bodies, preferably with valued tree oil, display fine aprons and animal skins, don their best and borrowed necklaces of gold lip pearl shell and wear dramatic head-dresses of bird-of-paradise plumage. For months before the main pig-kill, and at the climax for days and nights at end, the men dance - usually accompanied by a pre-pubescent girl or two in full women's regalia. Holding bows and arrows, axes and spears they form platoons in straight lines, rectangular and arrowhead formation, beating their hour-glass shaped drums, demonstrating their collective strength to their allies and rivals and their individual attractiveness to the watching women. If one word sums up the Simbu style, it is *machismo*.

Already we are discussing politics, because the Simbu organize themselves into groups, clans and tribes, which own clearly defined - but often disputed - territory. The segmented structure of Simbu society is central to Simbu politics and to my argument.

Social structure

The fundamental unit of Simbu social structure, as the people theorize it in an idealized model, is the named, exogamous, unilineal and indeed patrilineal clan.⁴ In other words,

2 Gary Kildea's film *Bugla Yunggu* (PNG Office of Information, 1972), shot at Mintima village in 1971-72, depicts a recent Simbu pig festival.

3 See Lutzbetak 1974 for a related area; for Simbu, J. Hughes 1985 and Nilles 1950; 1977.

4 This usage is different from that of pioneer missionary Fr John Nilles (1950). Although his discussion of clans and tribes lacks precision, Nilles initially (1943:104, 108, 118; 1944:11, 16 and 17) used the term *tribe* for the Chimbu political groups which had patrilineal clans within them (1943:108). In his subsequent thesis for the University of Sydney he used the term *clan* for the main group, labelling as clans those groups which are now known as tribes. Thus Nilles (1950:26) writes of clans as patrilineal and patrilocal: 'The larger clans are divided into sub-clans or lineages...The main clan is ideally and probably originally exogamous, but with regard to many sub-clans which intermarry, it is now exogamous...[and] has its own name'. If Nilles's 'sub-clans'

descent is agnatic and traced through the male line, and wives come from other clans outside that collectivity. To marry within one's father's clan, or one's mother's sub-clan, is classified as incest. Although there are men in Simbu clans who are not patrilineal descendants (that is, who are non-agnates, Brown 1962b), all male agnates (who are thus sons of fathers in the clan) are classified as clan brothers. Their clan sisters marry out to other clans. Simbu people thus define clans as groups within which they cannot marry, which follows common anthropological practice (*Notes and Queries in Anthropology* 1976). The clan is the main ceremonial and war-making unit. Within precolonial Simbu clans, scuffles were rare, and nowadays men do not use weapons, except sticks, within the clan or smaller groups. Delighting in the paradox, Simbu will often say 'We marry our enemies', but they might as well say 'We cannot marry those we cannot fight'.

Simbu marriage (Brown 1969) is the occasion for the two-way exchange of considerable wealth, with far more contributed by the groom's sub-clan or lineage than is reciprocated by the bride's. Marriage is solemnized with ritualized speeches which rehearse previous marriages and the fact that the union crosses boundaries of past conflicts, and then mention hoped-for children. Marriages directly involve mainly sub-clan members, yet, aside from the courtship of the principals, they are subject to interclan negotiation by clan leaders with the couple's parents. Fewer marriages are arranged nowadays than previously, yet marriages remain political contracts between groups. A potential divorce thus concerns people other than the two individuals involved or their minimal lineages and divorce settlement difficulties can lead to inter-group conflict.

The largest political unit in Simbu is the tribe, a grouping of up to about 5,000 people who share a common name and territory, and act together politically. Tribes often share a myth of origin and hence form a phratry, although not all clans in a tribe necessarily share the same origin myth, and so not all tribes are phratries. Here my use of 'tribe' differs slightly from common English usage in which the term describes a small-scale society which has a common language and culture but does not necessarily display political unity (compare Keesing 1976:570). In Simbu there are numerous tribes within the same language and culture area. Language groups lack overarching internal political alliances or cohesion, and so the use of term 'tribe' in Chimbu differs from that in Africa, for instance.

My usage also differs from that of Brown (1960:24-25), for whom 'the *tribe* is an alliance of neighbouring clans'. However, Brown (with Brookfield) later noted that

'sub-clans' could intermarry, they would usually be classified as 'clans'; Nilles's map clearly shows as clans groups now called tribes.

'Intra-tribal ties are strongest between those clans which are also linked by a tradition of common descent in the same phratry, and most tribes are composed of a phratry, or local part of a phratry' (Brookfield and Brown 1963:8). She added that a tribe 'combines descent with alliance and some tribes are also phratries... They form units for war and ceremony...' (Brown 1972:39). After noting Brookfield and Brown's distinction between 'alliance tribes' and 'phratry tribes', A.J. Strathern (1971:20) in discussing Hagen social structure says 'What I call a tribe corresponds to the Chimbu phratry tribe, except that it may have incorporated within it a number of small groups unconnected to it by origin myths'. Burton's (1989:256) usage, also for Hagen, is pithier: 'a politico-military alliance of territory-holding clans'. My use of 'tribe' is nearest to Strathern's and conforms to the more limited definition in *Notes and Queries in Anthropology* (1976:66): a 'politically or socially coherent or autonomous group claiming or occupying a particular territory'.

Simbu political ideologies use patrilineal models of descent, and Brown's definition (1960:24-25) of phratry as 'a group of clans linked by a tradition of common descent' follows general anthropological use. Simbu tend in Tokpisin to use the term *lain* (E = line or rope) for any group, including descent group, and do not distinguish tribes which are phratries. In the Simbu founding legends, the first family may have had several sons and these brothers in turn founded the separate clans that constitute the tribe. Fights have occurred between clans in the same tribe, but rarely major wars.⁵ While a tribe's degree of coherence varies over time, it will usually act together in war, although one clan may be the principal party and have to negotiate to bring in the others, in peacemaking and in large ceremonies such as the huge exchanges of rare vegetables and pig festivals. Not all Simbu people are grouped into tribes, however; many are members of clans which stand alone or pair with others in loose alliances. Small clans can ally, and occasionally fuse.

A clan can stand alone. Not all allied clans or clan-pairs are members of a coherent tribe, or share a common myth of origin, so the clan is the main unit in Simbu social structure. Clans are frequently 1,000 strong in northern Chimbu, but average around 700 people, and have as few as eighty in the south. Clans are generally divided into sub-clans, each named and with at least one men's house. If a clan has grown especially large these sub-clans may grow more autonomous and gradually it will be seen that two new clans have formed within the old. Then fission may occur and a *de facto* split be recognised, perhaps precipitated by a marriage. Thus a new clan is born. This dynamic segmentation probably slowed during the colonial era. Clan structures rigidified as patrol officers recorded existing power structures and clan relations and then used them for

⁵ For recent examples see J. Hughes (1985).

administrative and political purposes. Some fusions ('tribalisations') attempted by early patrol officers have not endured.

Viewed hierarchically, there are often sub-sub-clans below the sub-clan, each with a men's house again, which comprise the known descendants of particular men and their extended families three or four generations deep. Members of a Simbu sub-clan or sub-sub-clan often describe each other in Tokpisin as being of 'one blood' (T = *wan blud*), which implies a particularly close relationship traced here through the paternal line.⁶ Life is short in the Chimbu mountains, and often genealogical memories are too. Statements about clan fraternity can be often just that, statements, which do not necessarily conform to biological descent.

This raises a significant aspect of kinship structures. They are social artifacts and ideological statements which serve political purposes, a point emphasized by A.J. Strathern (1982a). Kinship defines the group and leaders demand group loyalty in the name of the ancestors as well as that of the present generation. Group membership, however, does not necessarily reflect biological descent. Genealogical censuses collected in the late 1950s and early 1960s show up to 30 per cent of Simbu men in particular sub-clans were not agnates of the sub-clan where they were then resident (Brown 1962b; Brown and Brookfield 1959; Criper 1967). This also means, of course, that 70 per cent did follow the agnatic rule. The relative unimportance of descent in the Highlands has frequently been argued, compared with models of unilineal descent groups in Africa (most recently A.J. Strathern 1982a).

This argument has political significance for the nature of leadership in Simbu and whether it has hereditary elements, discussed in Chapter III. It affects political behaviour such as expressions of clan solidarity in voting and the effect of kinship (biological and putative) in class formation. Statements of pride in paternity, or challenges to the legitimacy of rivals are a regular part of contemporary political debate in Simbu. Patrilineal descent can also determine who has access to clan land, participates in revived clan warfare and - a closely related issue - who drinks with whom (compare Reay 1982; A.J. Strathern 1982a).

The detailed nature of Highlands social structure has been the subject of a complex anthropological debate (Langness 1964; 1973; A.J. Strathern 1982a) which I do not wish to engage in here, except to echo John Barnes who says it appears at times to have been

⁶ A usage also recorded by Brown (1972:37ff). Note that in some other parts of the Highlands 'one-blood' refers to descent through the female line (A.M. Strathern 1972b), or to both (O'Hanlon 1989).

premised on rigid models and to ignore the neglect, simplification or manipulation of genealogies for pragmatic reasons which occurs in Africa (and elsewhere) while patrilineal dogmas are sustained. At times in Simbu some groups have been happy to recruit new men. Barnes (1971:100) concluded that the Highlands area as a whole 'appears to be characterized by cumulative patrification rather than by agnatic descent', which I am sure Simbu people would agree with - while maintaining their agnatic ideology.

Tribal land is usually consolidated territory, although sometimes the holdings of different clans maybe located in separate areas and intermingled at the edges. Clans ideally hold a variety of land suited to different activities (Brookfield and Brown 1963). In precolonial days, land ownership was won and held by the clan and tribe by might. Since then the state has tried to maintain the boundaries set when, like a referee, the colonial authorities 'stopped play' at pacification, thus rigidifying a system which allowed some adjustment (Hide 1973). An individual's rights to use clan land are determined by custom or paternal usage. Clan land could also be allocated to others such as the sons of daughters of the clan, who may have returned to their natal group after divorce (Brown and Brookfield 1959; Brookfield and Brown 1963; Hughes 1966; Cripser 1967). Such allocations are not automatic: one Naregu man who had spent his early adult years with his father's clan was denied access to land in his mother's natal clan when she returned after a divorce; I was told that this was not uncommon. As Barnes (1971) says, this will depend upon the levels of pressure upon land and of tension between the groups involved. Another factor is how much the individual has contributed to the group. Pressures are high today, with a growing population and demands on good land by coffee, the struggle for land is constant and remains one of the main roots of clan warfare.

People have been in Chimbu for a long time. The first hunter-gathering activity by humans commenced in Chimbu about 25,000 years ago.⁷ Whether these people were direct forebears of today's people is unclear. Simbu people have no legends concerning old stone mortars and pestles sometimes found throughout Chimbu. There are legends in the Highlands of events which can be dated by ash from datable volcanic eruptions over the last three centuries (Blong 1982), and knowledge of some groups who for various reasons disintegrated as social entities. Simbu clans and tribes were embroiled in dynamic

7 Human use of Nombi shelter at 1720 m asl, north of Chuave, commenced at least 25,000 years before the present (bp), as indicated by a waisted stone implement. Human activity in the area continued, with sporadic visits. At 15,000 years bp, in the pleistocene era, the cave was drained with a ditch. The first pig remains are found at 10,000 years bp, when permanent activity and probably clearing of land commenced, with the first villages at 5,000 years bp (M.-J. Mountain 1991 and pers. comm. 1991).

processes of expansion and contraction, of conquest and defeat, alliance and isolation, well before colonial 'contact' patrols 'discovered' them.

Not all warfare was total. Early colonial observers noted a ritual element to most battles (Nilles 1943-44; 1950), with what James Lindsay (Jim) Taylor described as having 'mediaeval European' formality and display. Until the 1980s,⁸ the weapons were bows and arrows, axes and spears, and wooden shields (pers. comm. 1977). One *kiap*, while noting the causes of war as disputes over land, women or pigs, concluded 'They fight for fun' (Vial 1942), which became colonial lore (Orken 1974). Early patrol officers noted that groups could fight one week, then work together the next - admittedly under the firm hand of the government police. An armed clash may temporarily satisfy group honour but the issue remained; peace was elusive once people were killed. Precolonial fighting was not usually for conquest. Groups humiliated in a battle slowly moved back onto the scene of their rout in an ebb and flow. Nonetheless, there was an overall push out from Womkana in the upper Chimbu, with stronger groups forcing others into lower altitude areas in the Wahgi Valley, where malaria partly sapped their strength.⁹

Although few Chimbu travelled far¹⁰ in the *taim bilong tumbuna* (E = days of the ancestors), certain valuables moved widely in a vigorous trading system. Seen as a system, the area near the confluence of the Chimbu and Wahgi Rivers was a meeting place of several trade routes. Ian Hughes (1977a:214) argues that it was basically goods that moved, not people: 'for them, integration was tenuous in the extreme and for most of them it extended no further than the horizon', or less, in the big valleys. These networks were frequently disrupted by political hostilities.

Long distance trade proceeded by a succession of individual trade partners in nearby groups. Sometimes goods were exchanged for pigs. A pig takes about four years of

⁸ Sheets of roofing iron were efficacious as shields in the 1970s. A few shotguns had long been available for hunting, but as prestigious income earners their ownership was common knowledge. Usually licensed, these guns were not used in fighting in the 1970s. By the mid-1980s firearms had become a feature of clan warfare, with illegal home-made shotguns in frequent use and in the 1990s some imported rifles.

⁹ Bulmer (1960) noted a similar process among the Kyaka people of the Baiyer Valley of the Western Highlands.

¹⁰ Taylor stated that men from the middle Chimbu had not travelled the ten miles to the Wahgi before colonial contact (pers. comm. 1977). A retired European medical assistant, Stan Christian, reported that Chimbu carriers would not cross clan boundaries in the early 1940s (pers. comm. 1980). Ian Hughes estimates that even armed parties rarely moved more than 8 to 10 miles in closely settled areas (Hughes 1977a:203). An exception he noted was the marriage and trading links established by the Gende people from the Bundi area of the Ramu (northern) fall of the Bismarck Range with the Waugla people of the Wahgi Valley near Mingende. Members of each group lived with the other at times, moving to and fro over 60 km (see also Nilles 1984).

hand-feeding to reach full size, and was and is a store of valuable protein and also of human labour. Wealthier communities were able to use the bridewealth system to attract a net flow of women, whose labour and fertility helped these groups to grow larger and stronger. In the cataclysmic changes to Simbu's economy caused by the arrival of steel, salt, shells, face-paint and other trade goods, the net marriage flow changed because those nearer the new source of wealth were economically favoured (Salisbury 1962; Hide 1975 pers. comm.), and so the clans closest to government and mission stations grew stronger. The Simbu political economy was not a *tabula rasa* before the white men came with their goods, guns, wealth and wide-spreading organization.

Colonial History¹¹

White men first visited Chimbu with the classic colonial motivations - gold, glory, and gospel. The prospectors Mick Leahy and Michael Dwyer travelled through the southern sector in 1930 when, on their trans-island journey, they followed the Dunantina River into the Tua and eventually reached the Papuan Gulf (Leahy and Crain 1937). Numerous corpses in the Tua convinced Leahy that there was a heavily populated valley beyond the Asaro (Daulo) Divide. In early 1933, Leahy climbed the Daulo Ridge and saw a wide corridor leading west. The Administration of mandated New Guinea was largely funded by revenues from gold, and Leahy's initiative virtually forced the government into action. After two reconnaissance flights over the Wahgi Valley, a joint Administration-private enterprise exploratory patrol was mounted under the leadership of Jim Taylor, a patrol officer of Morobe District. The state was no abstraction: it came in the form of 28 carriers and five other New Guineans plus seven armed police (Taylor 1934); Leahy took 50 carriers, twenty of them armed, his brother Danny and the surveyor Ken Spinks.

The patrol passed through central Chimbu in April 1933 on its way to Mount Hagen and beyond. Its members were greeted in my area of study as the returning spirits of ancestors with the drawn-out cry 'Tsimbuuuu' (Leahy and Crain 1937), an expression of joy and thanks. This was transcribed as 'Chimbu', which became the official spelling and the name of the river. In these first encounters the now legendary *kiap* Taylor showed himself a superb diplomat, and the Highlanders exchanged pigs and vegetables for salt and shell. The pigs were shot - which showed the power of the gun, but was seen by Simbu as a savage way to kill a pig (J. Hughes 1985) - and the advantages of steel over

11 This summary is based on my own reading of patrol reports, and some interviews with officials and missionaries. The period is also covered, enriched by Simbu oral testimony, by Jenny Hughes (1985). For a *kiap's* colonial history, see Dwyer (1963).

stone demonstrated. The visitors proved themselves to be humans with fleshly appetites, but they found negligible gold in the Wahgi and side valleys, except near Mount Hagen.

Simbu people acquired a name for belligerence early in the colonial encounter (PMB [Pacific Manuscripts Bureau microform] 607, 616; Australia 1937). Taylor's patrol on its return journey in September 1933 experienced some theft in the Chimbu area, and sustained harassment and attacks with spears, bows and arrows. Twice the travellers shot their way out, killing several attackers, events dramatized in the oral tradition,¹² again demonstrating the power of the gun. Twice, subsequently, attempts were made by fighting warriors to use Taylor's presence to their advantage, thereby catching his patrol in crossfire and he had to shoot his way out of trouble (pers. comm. 1978). Government records and missionary recollection indicate that between groups there was 'perpetual cold and often hot warfare with the destruction of lives and property' (Nilles [1976]:2; 1984); violent deaths were both common and not necessarily the cause for bitter resentment. In 1977 Taylor (pers. comm.) told me that an Upper Chimbu man whom he had just met had casually mentioned that Taylor had shot the man's father. 'He said it without rancour, as if we had played football together'.

Christian missions arrived soon after. In tandem with the Administration they commenced the process of contact, pacification and consolidation, moving further south for the next three decades, as shown in Table II.1 and II.2 (Map II.4).

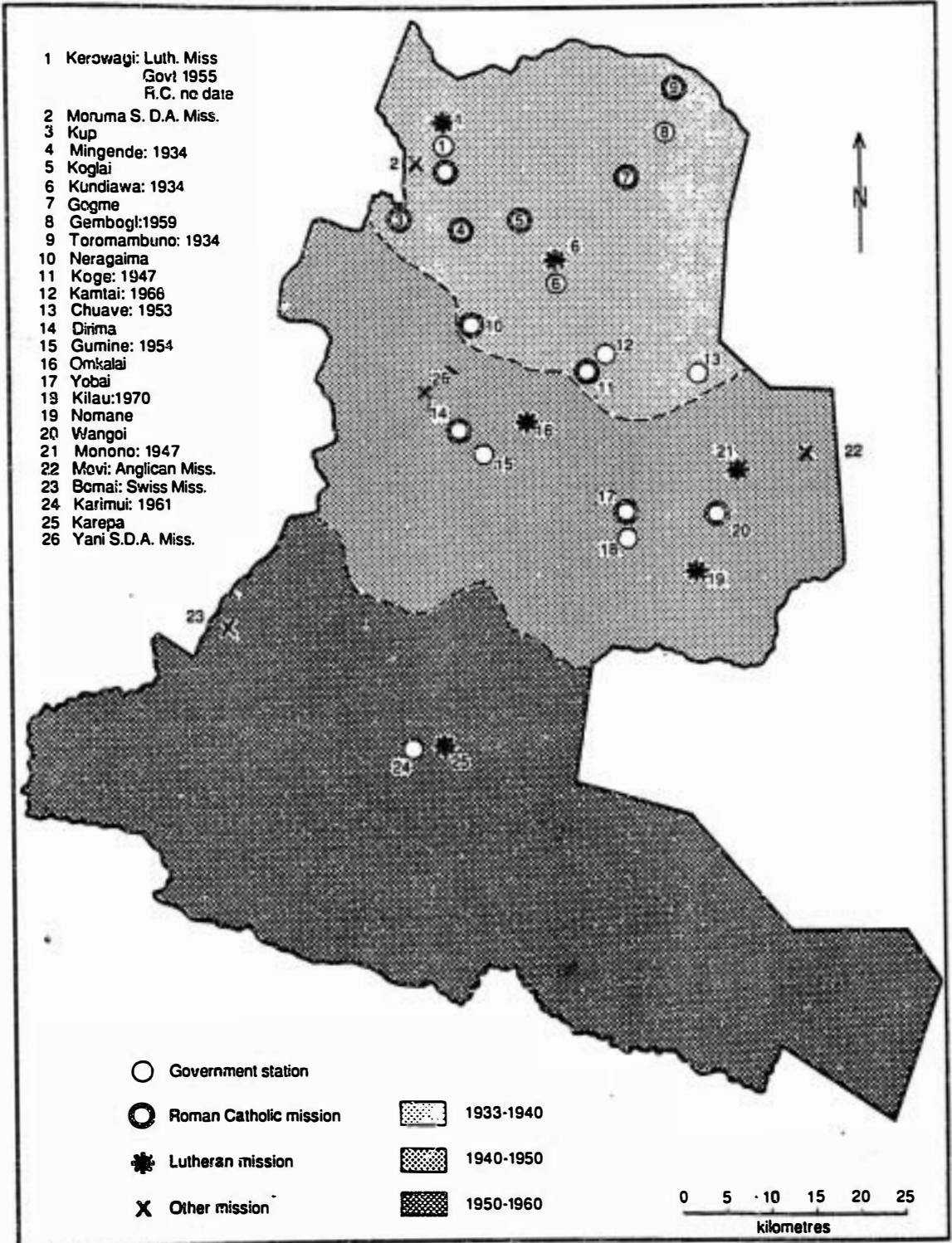
In 1934 the Roman Catholic (*Societas Verbi Divini*, SVD) and Lutheran (Neuendettelsau) missions, both German in origin, set up their first bases. After an argument with local people over land, during which mission houses were burnt and pigs shot in retaliation, two Catholic missionaries were killed and their cargo stolen near Goglme in the middle Chimbu area in December 1934 and January 1935 (Nilles 1984; Taylor 1935). Accordingly, the Highlands were closed to further non-official European penetration, and a government station was placed at Kundiawa above the Chimbu River which became the main Highlands centre for government activity in the 1930s (Howlett 1962). As often occurred, the station was sited on land disputed between two local groups, in this case the Kamanegu and Endugwa tribes (Map II.5).

Kundiawa overlooked the Lutheran mission site at Ega, at the head of a long spur which was soon turned into an airstrip. Another Lutheran station was soon built at Kerowagi on Siku group land beside the Koro River (K = Koronigl). The Catholics

¹² In Chimbu, as in other parts of the Highlands, the oral tradition blames Taylor ('the first *kiap*') for incidents which occurred when he was in other parts of the country (Bill Gammage, pers. comm. 1976).

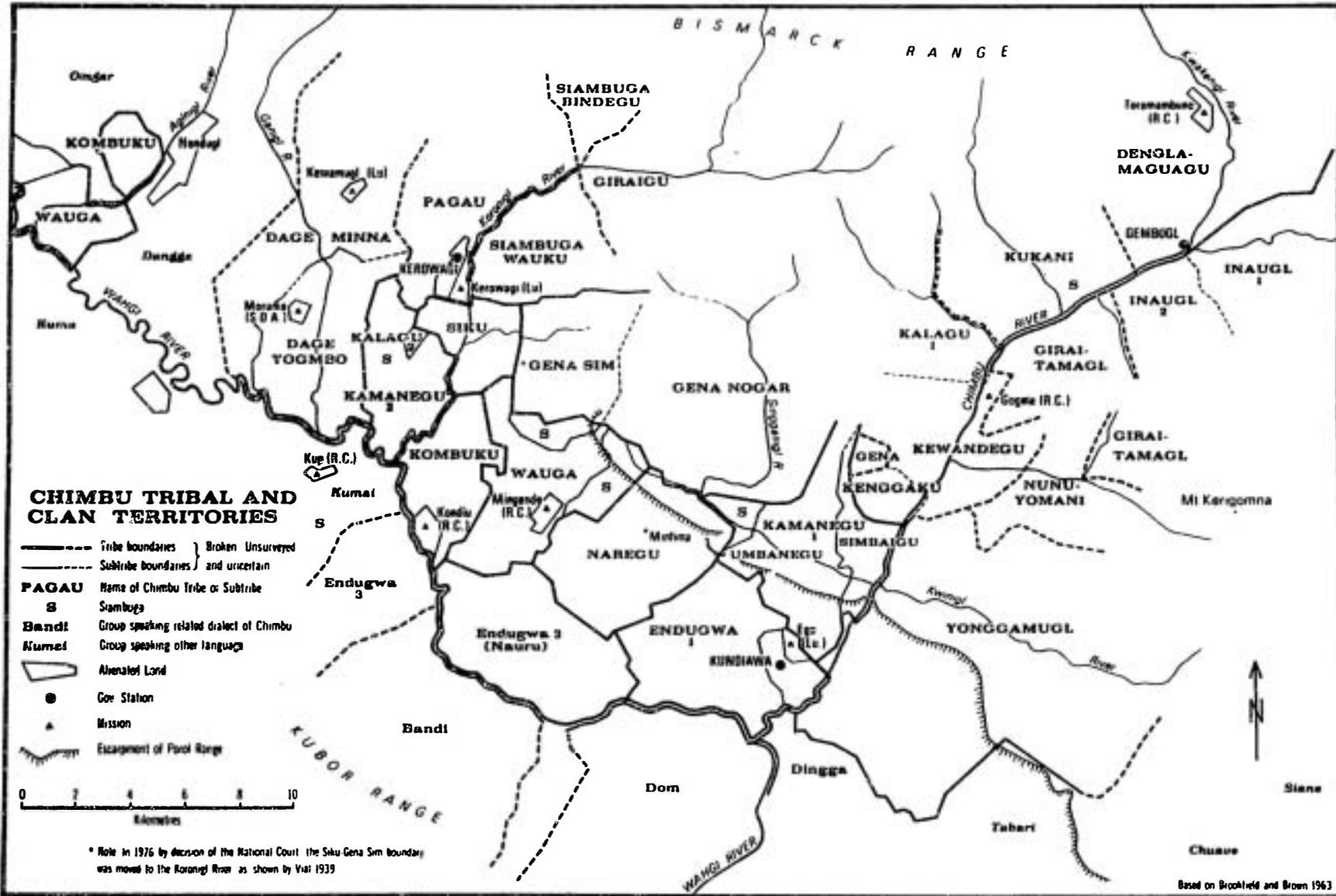
Map II.4

SPREAD OF GOVERNMENT AND MISSION INFLUENCE



Source: Howlett *et al*, 1976

Map II.5



CHIMBU TRIBAL AND CLAN TERRITORIES

established themselves at Denglagu (subsequently Toromambuno) in the upper Chimbu, and at Dimbi (later Mingende), midway between the Lutheran bases, and they too built airstrips. Competition was fierce between the missions, which *kiaps* separated using a *de facto* zoning policy (Nilles 1984). Health services were started, and village bible schools in order to train Simbu proselytizers. Catholics used Kuman language and Tokpisin and the Lutherans Kotte. The Government used Tokpisin. In 1937 the Administration began an experimental English language school, with 35 pupils by 1940 (Australia 1937; 1941). The missionaries were mostly German, the patrol officers Australian, the police coastal New Guinean, the interpreters Simbu.

Missionaries and officials alike commenced negotiations with Simbu leaders. Each with individual methods and style, the *kiap* resident at Kundiawa *pro tem* sought to stamp out fighting as it erupted. This was frequently beyond his capacity (PMB 616). On several occasions when seeking to break up fights patrols were fired upon with arrows, which are deadly at short range; they returned fire with rifles. Subsequent patrols were treated with greater deference, perhaps inspired by fear. West of Kerowagi and south of the Wahgi some police - unchecked by any *kiap* presence - abused the naked power of their rifles in bloody clashes in 'unpacified' or 'uncontacted' areas, and were later disciplined. Peace was the Administration's first priority. In some areas the *kiaps* or the police organized ceremonies at which the leaders of feuding groups burnt their weapons and pledged their groups to peace, as was occurring contemporaneously in other parts of the Highlands (Nilles 1984; Radford 1977).

To speed up travel, by foot or horse, for themselves and missionaries, the *kiaps* and police persuaded local leaders to organise unpaid Simbu men and women to dig a network of bridle paths (called 'roads' in the 1930s reports, and, in Tokpisin, *rot*). In theory the government road became a neutral zone, allowing safe passage, but villagers travelled little, fearing sorcery (J. Hughes 1985). To help keep the peace and organize labour, both missionaries and *kiaps* chose prominent men as their first *bosbois* (E = headmen) before the Pacific War reached New Guinea in early 1942; Downs appointed three hundred headmen (West 1978:224). These headmen also helped to physically line up their groups (P = *lain*) for census, and some 57,400 'Chimbu' people were counted before the War. Police posts were established on main routes and the occupants encouraged to link with local leaders and spread the word of the government. Downs recommended the appointment of twenty *luluais* (West 1978), which did not proceed, and his successor, F.N. Warner Shand, saw pleasing progress in Chimbu which he said was ready for

village councils.¹³ Thus began the process of political recruitment and incorporation to be analysed in the next chapter.

Contact and consolidation almost halted during the War, when the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) replaced the civil administration. Some ANGAU officials had been *kiaps*, but most not. Military conflict by-passed Chimbu except for Japanese bombing of Mingende mission, although a patrol had to recover the bodies of US airmen from a crashed aircraft on Mount Wilhelm. Over a thousand Simbu men were laboured at an American air base at Goroka. Briefly there was a police training centre at Kundiawa; mostly there were few ANGAU officials based there. Medical patrols, the placement of local medical orderlies and insistence on pit latrines brought the Wartime dysentery epidemic under control.

Late in the War there was something of a hiatus, and after ANGAU withdrew in early 1946 the Kundiawa station was temporarily unstaffed; local fighting re-erupted. Missionaries had been evacuated; German nationals were temporarily interned as 'enemy aliens' and were then kept in Australia for the duration (Nilles 1984). No new missions were permitted entry until 1950, when the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Mission established itself at Moruma in the Kerowagi area. One former *kiap* described the reopening of Chimbu to missionaries as like a 'gold rush' (G. Burfoot, interview 1978). Chimbu became part of the Central Highlands District from 1946, administered from Goroka.

In the late 1940s the government expanded its staff and patrolling. Pacification was fairly peaceful, with three known exceptions south of the Waihi, two of them in the Gumine area¹⁴ - some again involving police separated from the *kiap*. This is not to argue that firearms and wide-reaching organization were irrelevant, but the whites' wealth was also a significant factor. As in coastal areas, pacification was aided by the desire for goods and services (Reed 1943). In Chimbu there were always some groups desiring peace. On several occasions, as when the young leader Dai travelled from the Gumine area to Kundiawa, leaders asked the *kiaps* to come into their area to keep the peace. They sought protection from expanding enemies and/or to help regain homelands lost in battle,

¹³ F.N. Warner Shand, Chimbu Patrol Report 1941/42 in National Archives of Papua New Guinea.

¹⁴ The report of one early post-War patrol near Gumine was missing both from the District Administration collection in Kundiawa in 1967 and the publicly available set in the Archives in Port Moresby in 1975. As Ian Hughes noted from subsequent reports (pers. comm. 1976), the patrol's progress appeared to have been very bloody. This interpretation was confirmed by Rev. Bergmann (interview, 1978). Although reluctant to discuss the matter, he said that people at Dirima, just north of Gumine, had placed 100 notches on a tree stump to record each of those killed by a patrol led by a particular *kiap* whose name I had mentioned.

or even to consolidate their local political dominance in Chimbu (and Minj, Reay 1964). The main east-west vehicular roads were started in the 1940s and regular censuses started. In the late 1940s the Administration first paid for goods and services in cash, rather than shell and trade goods, a step some *kiaps* regretted, and made formal appointments of *luluais* for clans and *tululs* for sub-clans.

In the 1950s the colonial system was consolidated, and Chimbu's incorporation into the modern world economic system begun. In September 1951 Chimbu came under the new Eastern Highlands District as a sub-district under a district officer who reported to the District Commissioner (DC), Goroka. The barely contacted Karimui-Bomai areas were under Goroka, rather than Kundiawa, until Chimbu became a separate district in its own right in 1966. The frontier days were ending in Simbu. The *kiaps* used roadwork, and organised vigorous grudge football matches between disputing clans (Salisbury 1954), sometimes known as 'kick cross' (Nilles 1953:12) translatable as 'angry football', to channel Simbu 'former' warriors' excess competitive energy. From the early 1950s, with sublimation intended, the Administration organized volunteer workers for the coastal plantations, to the benefit of the colonial economy and expatriate planters. Nilles (1953) indicates many Simbu leaders felt participation was obligatory and organized 'volunteers'. The Highlands Labour Scheme, however, increased villagers' workloads because it removed many of the most active and productive menfolk. Often ambitious, these men went away for negative reasons - to avoid pressures at home - and for positive ones - for cash (£6 a year in deferred wages) and for new experiences (adventure). For twenty years, thousands of Simbu - up to a third of men in the 20 to 45 year age group - were away for 18 months to 2 years. Some stayed on. Many more walked for several days to reach Goroka to work on coffee plantations.

In the 1950s and 1960s a spreading road network and new airfields (Map II. 6) radically changed Simbu social, economic and political life. Chimbu was rapidly integrated into modern communications networks. The Goroka-Mount Hagen road (the Highlands Highway) was first traversed by jeep in 1953. This reinforced the centrality which the Kundiawa area had had in the previous traditional exchange system by making it the source of the new valuables. Howlett *et al.* (1976) show that government services and agricultural credit were later concentrated in central Chimbu which had ready access to road transport for crops and tradestore goods. The Highlands Highway was upgraded twice in the early 1970s. Side roads, initially rough '*kiap* roads' with limited capacity, spanned the north-south axis in Simbu in the 1960s; by 1970 90 per cent of the people lived within a few hours drive of Kundiawa. Eleven more airstrips were constructed, initially by missions in most instances, although most have since closed as trunk roads improved in the 1970s. Karimui-Bomai remained beyond the road network, however.

Map II.6

ROADS AND AIRFIELDS



Source: Howlett *et al.* 1976

Following missionary plantings in the 1930s, the cash crop coffee was deliberately spread by the government in the early 1950s, and soon was taken up spontaneously with full Simbu zest by those with access to the roadhead. This profound change brought money to rural Simbu without the need for emigration (Brookfield 1968). In 1964 the Administration bought out a coffee processing factory owned by the Leahy family at Chimbu River and set up the Kundiawa Coffee Society Limited, later renamed the Chimbu Coffee Co-operative Limited (CCC) but generally called 'the Society'. Marketing and processing are the phases of the coffee industry most readily subject to government intervention. By the late 1960s there was some disillusionment with cash cropping since peasant coffee had not brought wealth on the scale of the whites (Brookfield 1973). However the coffee industry became central in Chimbu politics in the 1970s.

Six government outstations were established in the 1950s, and schools, with every effort made to recruit as pupils the sons of the leaders, with varied response.¹⁵ The fathers of many schoolchildren were not leaders in their groups, rather those who had ambition for their offspring. Schooling was initially free, and so schools widened the base for government recruitment and later leadership in clans. Primary and secondary education, both mission and government, grew apace in the 1960s.

From 1950 a process of nominal democratization had started in the New Guinea Islands and Coastal regions in the form of Native Local Government Councils (NLGCs), which from 1963 became multiracial Local Government Councils (LGCs). *Kiaps* in Simbu in the late 1950s organised public gatherings at new 'road meeting centres' to promote economic development and other issues, but Simbu leaders were keen to modernize and 'catch up' with coastal areas, and wanted the status of a council. In 1959 the first NLGC in the Highlands was elected in the Waiye Census Division, west of the Chimbu River around Kundiawa. Councils were progressively set up throughout Simbu in the 1960s, and Karimui-Bomai in 1973.¹⁶ The village official system ceased to exist wherever a council was established.

15 A prominent tribesman of Gena in East Koronigl, Siwi Kurondo (see Chapter IV, *et seq.*), in 1958 called for a school just like the Europeans' (Standish 1981a), and later sought a university for Chimbu.

16 Council areas were proclaimed as follows: (a) Waiye 1958, joined by Dom Census Division (CD) in 1960; Yonngamugl NLGC formed in 1961. These merged to form Kundiawa LGC in 1967; (b) Koronigl NLGC 1961, was joined by Kup CD to form Kerowagi LGC 1967; (c) Chuave NLGC 1961 was joined by Elimbari and Nambaiyufa CDs in 1965 to form Elimbari LGC; (d) Gumine LGC 1965; (e) Mt Wilhelm LGC 1965; (f) Sinasina LGC 1966; (g) Salt-Nomane LGC 1970; (h) Bomai-Mikaru 1973; and (i) Siani LGC (Nambaiyufa CD) broke away from Elimbari in 1974 (Howlett *et al.*, 1976:184).

Because of its population and administrative complexity, Chimbu was scheduled to become a separate administrative district; as a first step the Chimbu Sub-District became an administrative Division under a Deputy District Commissioner (DDC). In order to foster a sense of Chimbu political identity, from 1964 Combined Councils Conferences were held for this Division. Then on 1 July 1966 Chimbu became a separate District with its own DC. A District Advisory Council was set up with representatives from expatriate commercial interests and missions as well as the councils, under the chairmanship of the very influential DC.

The Lutheran mission surrendered land for Kundiawa township, which became a bustling, dusty, frontier outpost. Although legally allowed to drink alcohol from 1962, few Simbu had much cash in the 1960s. Kundiawa had several tradestores, a motel and a rough hotel, the latter by the 1970s 'a bit of a hellhouse' (Wheeler 1979:107) on government paydays when thousands of country cousins joined public servants in spending their fortnightly salaries.

Also in the 1960s, the first indigenous *kiaps*, police officers and magistrates served in Chimbu as part of preparation for self-government under the Trusteeship Agreement. Few Simbu accorded them much legitimacy, or recognized what some *kiaps* called their 'mystique' until, in rare instances, after decolonization. They were taken as lacking the formal neutrality sometimes attributed to expatriates, although Simbu had always sought to suborn any officials having discretionary powers. Formal decolonization and independence were not discussed in the mid 1960s by Australia or the Administration, because they had not yet been accepted in Canberra as immediate goals.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the arenas - both social and physical - in which Simbu people play out their lives and politics. Alongside a professed individualism, at the core of the Simbu world view is the clan, which has a strong basis in how people do organize their daily lives, as well as forming the ideological framework for much social, economic and political interaction. To the north and south of Simbu lie the Ramu Valley in Madang Province and the Karimui-Bomai. Possibly a little was known of them by hearsay before colonial contact (R. Hide, pers. comm. 1984), but these people are still feared for sorcery, and their social structure and indeed their differ. It was the colonial processes of pacification, consolidation, and missionization which opened up the Simbu universe and created the colonial edifice of Chimbu, and ultimately made social interaction and political activity, as well as trade, possible in ever-widening arenas.

By 1970 the time was ripe for a more rapid change. Secondary-educated Simbu entered business, the churches and the public service, and a few went on to tertiary education. As we shall see, these were to become paths to politics. Before this process can be discussed, however, it is necessary first to describe and analyse Simbu ideologies of precolonial leadership and then to explore the transition from precontact autonomy to the dependent politics of the late colonial era.

CHAPTER III

THE 'CENTRE POST': PRECOLONIAL LEADERSHIP

In the old days there was a leader like a centre post of a house. Leadership passed from father to son, until the Administration came in. The Administration is now the centre post. (Daugl of Tangeku clan, Endugwa tribe)

Political actors often follow models of how to gain and maintain power and influence, and use them frequently in appeals as to how the world has always been, as well as how it should be. Such ideological appeals become political resources. Some of the most successful leaders are innovators, who bring new resources to bear on political activity. Even while claiming a basis in custom they may be modifying it. Because of the contemporary use of rhetorical appeals to tradition, this chapter studies various perspectives of Simbu political practice in the precolonial era, that is, how men became leaders and what leaders did. Without seeking to construct a model of a society as it existed at the moment before colonial contact, known conventionally as 'the ethnographic present', this contributes to my analysis of subsequent phases in Simbu politics.

Simbu men have a clear concept of colonial contact, and models of precolonial society and leadership, and of change. In Tokpisin, *taim bilong tumbuna* means the time of the ancestors, and *pasin bilong tumbuna* their customs. Tradition and custom are what people do, usually legitimized by ancestral precedents even when very recent. Almost echoing modernization theory, Naregu tribespeople and Simbu politicians alike also use models of change, in particular mentioning the *nupela pasin* or new ways, which were linked in the late 1950s to decisions to cease the pig feast. Since their disappointment with coffee and the new ways, the recommencement of the pig feast cycle, and especially since the resurgence of clan warfare in the 1970s, interest in ancestral ways has renewed.¹

As elsewhere in the South Pacific (Keesing 1989), Simbu people speak of ancestral times as if discussing unchanging tradition. Custom is often glossed as *pasin bilong mipela* (E = our fashion), without a time dimension. This may be because Simbu people's remembered genealogies are shallow and myths of origin obviously telescope

¹ In 1980, when the Naregu tribe fought seriously for the first time for four decades, interest blossomed in aspects of precolonial custom such as war magic (J. Hughes 1985).

many generations. Yet precolonial Simbu political life was not static. Warfare aside, major changes occurred when sweet potatoes arrived only a few centuries ago. Intensive cultivation enabled the use of more types of land and altered people-land relationships and society generally. As in the Western Highlands (Kelly 1968), population growth was certainly rapid and hence led to further segmentation of clans, increased land pressures and warfare. Groups which controlled valuables were economically and politically powerful. The notion of tradition as unchangingly rigid is false. Although locked in their mountain valleys, at contact Simbu people wanted change, and asked the first Europeans for seeds of new plant foods.

New resources were valued for daily life and political struggles. Shells featured in major exchanges and in bridewealth payments, and hence had political value: he who controlled shells could incur debts and amass obligations. At contact some small cowrie shells and nassa (T = *girigiri* and *tambu*) were available, but the large goldlip pearlshell (T = *kina*) was a recent arrival and very rare. Andrew Strathern (1976) argues that in the Mount Hagen area this shell was virtually monopolised by big men. This had not occurred further west in the Enga area. Using data collected by the missionary Vicedom (Vicedom and Tischner 1943-48), Feil (1982) argues that Mount Hagen leaders used the newly arrived *kina* to strengthen their position in a stratified society. The *kina* traded into the Highlands was collected by Australians in the Torres Strait. Hence a new resource entered Highlands politics even before contact in 1933. There was an upsurge in warfare in Simbu in the decades before this (Criper 1967) which, like the phenomenon of the domineering leader Matoto in Tairoro in the Kainantu area (Watson 1971), may well have been a local ripple preceding the colonial wave. As around Goroka (Munster 1979), Naregu villagers report hearing a strange prophecy of new people coming, well before the white men arrived.

The big-man model

My interest in Simbu leadership arose at UPNG in 1971 when I used a model of Highland leadership in which Paula Brown (1963) contrasted precolonial leadership with that under Australian rule. Brown started fieldwork in 1958, and described 'Chimbu' (Kuman speakers, or my 'Simbu') in terms used for many coastal societies, saying 'leadership is not formalised and political units not fixed' (Brown 1963, 2). Her model (Brown 1961; 1962a and 1962b; Brown and Brookfield 1959) is not unlike the famous big-man stereotype, which was crystallized by Sahlins (1963) following Oliver (1955), that of a leader who not only achieves his position (rather than gaining it by ascribed criteria), but who also creates it, and in building up a personal following in effect creates a

polity. Similarly, Brown argues that in Chimbu power is personal, and 'traditional leaders... competed for adherents' (Brown 1963,3). In her model

Traditional Chimbu society lacked centralised organisation, and the smallest units were autonomous in most respects ... The stratification by rank or authority described in some coastal communities is unknown in the highlands ... (Brown 1963:4)

Although Brown has modified her position slightly (1979), for expository purposes I quote extensively from her 1963 article on politics, which has contributed most to the debate.

There are no traditional fixed office holders responsible for specified tasks. Both leaders and the activities they lead are variable ...

Chimbu leaders are *yomba pondo* or 'man big'² as in many other New Guinea societies. There were no titles or distinctions of prominence ...

We can recognise certain qualifications for leadership, but there is almost equal opportunity for every man to attain these qualifications. There are no hereditary positions, and few hereditary advantages ... Garden land and trees are inherited, but can also be obtained by gift ...

A big man needs not only access to resources, but also certain personality characteristics. Hard work, planning and organisation are required to produce pigs and food for exchange ... Intelligence and memory are necessary ... an effective speaker needs not only intelligence but fluency and the ability to make an appropriate analogy and drive home a point ...

There was pride in fighting success; the older ex-warriors told me that they were not like women and children, and that a man should be a fighter. Traditionally a big man participated in most of the activities of the group. There was no real specialisation in leadership functions ...

In some segmentary societies, the hierarchy of segments is given permanent form by a ranking of officials and a fixed method of choosing office holders such as by seniority, or by age within a particular lineage which has a hereditary right to the position. But in Chimbu leadership was a free-for-all. No offices can be recognised, few men were leaders throughout their adult lives, and the size of the following of a man varied throughout the period in which he can be recognised as a big man. Leadership for any

2 Brown appears to be using a literal translation of the English expression 'big man'. *Yomba* refers to a tree which signifies the strength of the clan, a branch of which is carried by prominent clan leaders on formal occasions. *Yomba* can also refer to the 'the people' or man; *pondo* means big (Nilles 1969). Without specifically mentioning the term, I could not elicit the term *yomba pondo* from Naregu villagers. Like Edward Bare (a Simbu educationist and subsequently a provincial government minister) they stated that *yomba pondo* means physically big, that is, fat. They all gave the example of a contemporary politician. Again like other Simbu, Bare says the Tokpisin expression *lida* (E= leader) is in common use, and that the Kuman expressions for leader are *yagl kande* and *yomba kande* (pers. comm. 1978). Rev. Bergmann was unfamiliar with the term *yomba pondo*, and said that *yagl kande* was the term for leader in Naregu and westwards, while *yomba singiongo* was used in Kamanegu (interview, May 1978). 'Yagl' means 'man' and 'kande' large. 'Kande' is also a term of deference, translated by Anwar Goye (a Simbu planner) as 'sir' (Pers. comm. 1983).

man is short-lived. A young man may take over his father's exchange relationships, but he must become a big man on his own; if he is not vigorous in participating, he does not attain the recognition his father had, and some other member of the group becomes its accepted leader ...

No leader can be sure that his opinion will be respected, that his orders will be obeyed, that he will be helped in avenging his wrongs, that his suggestions to hold a ceremony will be taken up, or that the points he makes in a bragging speech to another tribe will be supported by his fellow tribesmen. Thus the spokesmen are controlled by public opinion, which is not always predictable. (Brown 1963:5-6)

Brown states that 'Personal pride is asserted when men claim that their fathers had been big men, but in fact I saw little continuity of leadership'. She adds that 'as economic opportunities and differential property holdings develop, status differentiation may be inherited' (Brown 1972:44).

As for conflict, she writes:

Even within the local group there was no maintenance of law and order by headmen who could settle disputes and prevent violence, and there was no regular social unit which was the usual military force against outside aggressors. (Brown 1972:55)

At this stage some critical points are appropriate. Brown's description apparently pertains to precolonial leadership, but she sometimes uses both present and past tenses so the problem of 'the ethnographic present' is not resolved. We are not told whether Brown projected onto the past observed present-day (c.1960) behaviour, or repeated descriptions of the past as told by Simbu informants. She faced the methodological problem (which was more acute for me 15 years later) of describing social relations not personally observed, although the descriptions relate to processes through time.

Second, in defining what Simbu was *not*, Brown initially appears to be saying something about what Simbu *was*, yet her strong negative contrasts tell us little that is positive. Significant concepts (which I italicize here) are given without clarification, namely 'the absence of *fixed* authority', the lack of '*centralized* organization' and in her statements that '*stratification by rank or authority ... is unknown*'. She says there 'are no traditional *fixed* office holders' and 'were no *titles or distinctions* of prominence' and are 'no *hereditary* positions and *few* hereditary advantages.' Brown appears to be contrasting Simbu to African models, even though those models may have been just that, models or 'ideal types' which are themselves statements of principle rather than sociological description.

In other words, in describing 'traditional' Simbu leadership in order to contrast it with the colonial situation, Brown may have set up a false dichotomy or something of a

straw man. The danger of overstating her case is indicated by her mention of a number of political roles. In addition to generalized 'leadership', she indicates that there was a variety of specified 'leadership functions', including suggesting the holding of ceremonies, vigorously participating in exchanges, 'giving orders' (to members of his own group) and 'making speeches' as 'spokesman' for the tribe, and being 'accepted leader' of the group. Brown also allows for some advantages to the sons of big-men. Her view of Simbu leadership has largely been echoed by subsequent scholars (Cripser 1967; Hatanaka:1972).

Simbu models of leadership

I now sketch a historiographic investigation into Simbu leadership prompted in 1971 by a Simbu student.³ Not the son of a leader and making no claims to traditional leadership, he had no direct personal interest in contradicting Brown's interpretation. (Other UPNG students who made similar points were themselves the sons of big-men, and so had an interest in making similar arguments.) He said that in Simbu clan and tribal leadership was hereditary and precolonial Simbu leaders were powerful. They had henchmen or lieutenants to enforce their will, and could kill within the group to ensure compliance. This man publicly rejected the interpretation of Melanesian society which emphasises 'consensus' and the argument that the big-men must redistribute their wealth and hence are unable to rise far above their fellows, or to pass their position on to their sons. He argued that Simbu leaders (and those in other parts of the country where he has worked) are rapacious bullies, who exploit both their own clansmen and government officials for their own selfish ends, in a manner long part of Simbu culture.

These ideas found some support in Salisbury's work in 1953 and 1961 among Siane speakers in eastern Chimbu. Culturally, the Siane relate closely to the Goroka (Gahuku) people studied by Read (1959, 1966, 1986), but Salisbury used central Simbu examples in his argument. He said that 'although the indigenous ideology was one of democratic equality and competition', the empirical situation was one of 'serial despotism by powerful leaders', while the behaviour of 'lesser leaders involved competition and insecurity' (Salisbury 1964:225). He indicated cases of sons following fathers (as indeed Brown noted for the colonial period), and discussed Kavagl Kumugl, a Siambugla man described by the Catholic priests Schafer (1975) and Nilles (1984). Kavagl was an extremely violent man who laid about with a club or axe when angry, who killed two of his wives as well as injuring his own clansmen, who was not to be gainsayed by

3 He was then aged about thirty, a Kamanegu tribesman who had lived in his natal village until he was twelve.

members of his own group, and whose despotic career lasted twenty years. Salisbury argued that while 'public opinion' did temper arbitrariness, supporters often gained materially from theft and aggression by despots. Kavagl's power was such that before the mission had much sway in the area, he organised land and labour for the Mingende airstrip; Schafer felt Kavagl was protector of the mission, rather than its protege (Salisbury 1964:227-30). It is also true that Kavagl seized the chance to use the missionaries to return to territory where his people had been defeated in 1933. Salisbury (1964) distinguishes between 'directors', commanding men, who were real leaders, and less powerful 'executives' who were minor leaders in competition with each other and under the dominance of the directors. Executives, he said, could hold sway for a decade or more both before and during the colonial period.

As indicated, what follows is a reconstruction. It is difficult to separate out statements of principle from descriptions of paths actually taken to leadership, and the roles of precolonial leaders from those under, and part of, the colonial state. As Jenny Hughes also found (1985), Simbu statements tend to conflate what outsiders see as separate time periods. I also give comments of *kiaps* and missionaries in Simbu, before a tentative evaluation is presented.

I discussed precolonial leadership with older clan leaders in nine 'group' interviews or small meetings held in January-February 1973 amongst twelve different clans of three tribes of the north and west of Kundiawa (Kamanegu, Endugwa and Naregu) (see Map II.5). I had spent three months in the area, and arranged the interviews through established contacts. For the most part I used English, with translations to and from Kuman by two university student helpers,⁴ which helps explain the sophisticated terminology here taken from my notes on the spot. With hindsight, I see that some questions were too leading. Only general statements of principle were collected, but no detailed genealogies.⁵ Those interviewed were chosen because I was primarily seeking the opinions of older clan leaders on the issues of constitutional change (Standish 1973b and Chapter IV below). Serious clan warfare had recommenced in the preceding seven months.

As Andrew (A.J.) Strathern (1982a) points out, Highlanders' statements concerning group membership, rights and obligations, and leadership, are often adapted

4 Leo Kuabaal translated on all but one occasion; from the Dinga tribe in Sinasina, he was not allied to any of those interviewed. Frank Gagma Mondo from Kamanegu tribe interpreted in his own Orgondie clan. I am grateful for their help and expert advice.

5 Of course, as Oliver noted in Siuai, Bougainville, big-men can have *many* fathers (Oliver 1955: xix), and, as Reay noted in the neighbouring Wahgi area, social and biological paternity can differ (Reay 1959).

to suit their pragmatic needs at the moment, and may not necessarily describe actual social relations. Perhaps they should be called 'ideal types', but although adapted they have not died out. The leaders' responses may have been used to legitimize their prominence and to help their sons, and also to satisfy the often-noted Highlands compulsion to boast by exaggeration.

Yet in group discussions what is transmitted to the fieldworker is often a minimal consensus (Vansina 1973), and indeed on several occasions my elderly informants were interrupted by younger men, modifying their statements. What emerged among men from twelve clans was a remarkable unanimity of views concerning how leaders emerged or were chosen in the old days, what roles they performed and how strong they were.

At Korndo village on 4 February 1973 former *luluai* Daugl (D) of the Tangeku clan of Endugwa tribe gave me (WS) an image of a Simbu leader supporting a whole structure. (The English term 'lieutenant' had earlier been used by the interpreter.)

D: In the old days there was a leader like a centre post of a house.⁶ Leadership passed from father to son, until the Administration came in. The Administration is now the centre post.

WS: What were the powers of the older leaders?

D: When there was a fight, he brought together all the clan and subclans, and they would follow and go and fight on his command. He would stop the fights too. He bossed men like soldiers.

WS: What were his other activities?

D: He organized the pig feast: it was done on his command. We have valuables and crops, and we give them to other tribes. We were like this until the whites came. They saw we had leaders, and asked who they were, and made them *bosbois*.

WS: Did the leader ask for consensus?

D: No, he just told the people.

WS: Did he have lieutenants?

D: There was one leader but he had various lieutenants at various points who told people the leader's wishes. Others may disagree, but if the majority agreed all would go with him.

WS: Did he have men like police to enforce his will?

D: People in the leader's group may disagree with his thoughts, but they would follow. But if the lieutenants disagreed the lieutenant's *lain*

6 The same expression for political leader is used in New Caledonia (H. Fraser, pers. comm. 1991).

(E = group, clan or subclan) would follow their own minor leader [the lieutenant].

WS: Did he have more power after being recognized by the Administration?

D: Those were the days when I was young, the leader had lots of pigs, women and wealth. He would go fighting and raiding, but then the Administration came.

Daugl's clan brother Kiugl added:

Before the Administration was here, we Endugwa were in the centre. The leader here [Daugl] was leader of all Endugwa. But if the other groups were not wanting to follow we could not force them. If they want to wait, we wait.

A senior Lutheran evangelist called Gende (G) spoke on 11 February 1973 at a gathering at Ega of Kamanegu tribesmen from Orgondie, Endugwakane, Awakane and Simbaigu clans, using the word *luluai* for precolonial leaders.

G. The Kamanegu had a leader ('*luluai*') (sic) for each clan. Their function was that they were followed by ordinary people in organizing the big feasts with special crops such as pandanus, and pig kills. People had to get things ready and everything prepared, as directed.

WS: Were they the bosses in fights?

G: A particular leader looks at another tribe and says he doesn't like them: 'We'll declare war on them!' Everyone gets ready and we start the fight then.

WS: Did Kamanegu all co-operate together on these occasions?

G: There were big gatherings of the whole tribe, all gathered together. We fought together as a team. There might have been small fights, over a pig or something. But just after the whites came there was a fight [within Kamanegu]. This had never happened before.

WS: Did you hold courts?

G: If there was a row, leaders of two clans held court. Matters were settled by talking and compensation. If not then they came to fighting.

WS: Did a leader have a force - assistants - to enforce his will?

G: If there was a quarrel the leader had his lieutenants. He told them before the court case, and they told their people to be ready for discussions. Then there was the court case. If one leader declared disagreement then a fight would come up.

If there was a bully in the clan, he'd be beaten up by the lieutenants on the leader's command. Like a police force. *Luluai* families were more familiar with the problems of leadership, and so when he died one of his sons, elder sons, would get the leadership position.

WS: How did he get the leadership position?

G: He must be a strong warrior or fighter, and very rich, with five wives and many pigs and on very good terms with the rest of his people. When the *kiaps* came they selected who was prominent and strong to carry their commands (to become *luluai*).

Gende, not a member of the state power structure, had not mentioned inheritance as a factor in leadership, although it is possible he was discussing colonial leaders.

At Suar on 7 February 1973, the former *luluai* Ti Nau (T) of the Numambuku clan of Naregu tribe spoke.

T: Among all the Naregu in the old days I was the fight leader and when other people slept in the men's house I was guard and watchman. If the enemy came I would fight them and my *lain* would expel them, back to their home ground.

WS: Did you perform other roles, in charge of feasts and such?

T: I was so strong, I *raused* (E = expelled) other *lains*.

WS: Did you hold courts?

T: There was a sort of a court system then and I was the authority on this court. If we won a fight and expelled them, I would tell the others not to worry, we'll have a big food exchange festival. I would lead them in these things. Now you call this system a court. Before we had consensus of opinion (K = *katangina*). If there was a row, we would tell others to pay compensation. If he refused the injured party would start a fight again and then I'd go in and settle the dispute.

WS: Did he have a group or force to enforce rulings?

T: When I was leader, I had my number two and others under me. The leader's underneath me said to people they could not check [defy] the leaders talk ... If there was a fight then we could not fight inside our own group because we had to respond to the outside situation. So if there was a fight internally we needed to use compensation, and then would give pig, possum fur and feathers and other valuables to cool down the argument. We have lieutenants in other *lains*, who would listen to the leader and not argue with this talk.

WS: Before, did leadership pass from father to son?

T: I can recall about three generations. We passed on leadership from father to son and now I'm passing it on to Ambane [a councillor⁷] and my other son.

Similar statements were made at Kurumugl by other tribesmen of Kamanegu, at Wapiti by men of Naregu, and at Guo by men of Endugwa. All stressed the power of

7 Interestingly, but not uniquely, Ambane was not an agnate, having moved as a boy from Kamanegu.

clan leaders in warfare and in organizing the pig ceremonials, and also emphasised the 'hereditary' nature of leadership, giving examples of succession within key families (but sometimes mentioning that leadership would go to another brother rather than to a son, if the son was too young). At Wandí the Pentagu clan leader Kugame Kora, said on 2 February 1973 that he was the son of the brother of Kondom⁸ Agaundo, the famous Naregu leader of the colonial era (Brown 1967). Kugame said that their common 'grandfather' had led the people in fighting, and was the spokesman. People followed him, to fight or to kill. If they acted on their own initiative, then he would even kill members of his own group who had acted so independently. His close relatives always backed him up. A modern leader would only be listened to, said Kugame, if he had inherited authority from ancestors who were leaders.

In these and other statements by older leaders there is remarkable agreement as to the roles and strength of clan leaders, and their mode of accession to leadership. A composite picture emerges, similar to that drawn by Reay (1959; 1984) for the Kuma people, of a leader who comes from a family of leaders. While there is no statement of primogeniture, nor of direct succession, a candidate *should* be the son of a leader. However he also needed to achieve prominence by proving himself bold in battle, impressive in oratory and generous in economic transactions. The latter required many pigs, and several wives to tend the pigs. The wives increased his range of exchange partners and his potential sources of valuables. Some groups lacked manpower and strong leadership, but in others the leaders were very strong. Despite exaggeration, there was an element of truth when former Endugwa councillor Mondo said 'Our leaders were obeyed ... traditional leaders were just like kings' (interview, February 1973).

One leader prominent at contact is Dama of Womai, in Sinasina, whose statements in 1977 showed the oral tradition at work. By colonial contact he was a feared fighter in his twenties who could safely travel outside his Tabare tribal lands; he met and guided Taylor through hostile people from Chuave to the Tabare area. Dama spoke with some awe of his father, a great leader with many pigs and workers, and linked him directly with the clan's myth of origin (cf. A.J. Strathern 1971). He described a number of killings by his father within his own group. Dama prided himself on his wealth, generosity, and fearlessness in making both peace and war. He was the youngest of five sons, and his brothers had also been fighters. The clan assessed the brothers' performance after their father died and chose Dama as leader - despite his relative youth. By then he was helping the *kiap* and had attracted many women. Dama said:

⁸ Now spelt Kondam by his family.

I was a 'big-man' because my father was a 'big-man' before me. I also came up and proved myself to be a leader in my own right ... Each sub-clan has its own leaders. Ours came from the ancestors - it follows the bloodline directly, and we always choose the strongest of the sons.

From 1940 he was mentioned in patrol reports as a strong leader. One of the most prominent village officials in Chimbu, he kept his personal magnetism and physical strength. In 1977, when aged about seventy, he lifted me up and carried me around. Younger politicians in his tribe were deferential to Dama.

Kiap models

Early *kiap* reports reinforce much of the Simbu oral tradition about leadership. Taylor did not mention Dama on contact,⁹ yet gave the earliest documentary mention of prominent Simbu, noting styles of decoration: 'The light blue and dark blue of the dollar bird's feathers are to be seen on each man of importance' (Taylor 1934:53).¹⁰ Tribal territories were clearly demarcated; Taylor (1934:53) reported that men helping his carriers turned back as they 'were afraid to go beyond their tribal boundary'. In March 1935, after the deaths of the missionaries, an extended patrol was conducted among the Chimbu River people by Alan Roberts, who by then had had ten years' field experience and who later became departmental head. Roberts wrote of named patrilineal clans, of religion, land ownership, material culture, trade, courtship and ceremonials and, most importantly for my purposes, warfare and leadership.

The chieftainship of a group is shared by several influential men. In the direction of marriages, ceremonials and land and property ownership, it is usual to find that one or perhaps two ancients of the tribe have vested powers. Warfare is rightly left to the younger and more active leaders, and I find that these war-chiefs are usually mature men of perhaps twenty years fighting experience, who cannot be classed as old. Fighting-leaders do not participate in actual battle but direct the action from near-by. Only in extreme necessity do they enter the fray...

Fighting within a sub-group may occur between individuals but rarely goes beyond a settlement with club or axe. Inter-sub-group fighting is carried on with full equipment, but swiftly terminates when the necessity of the major group demands co-operation. Fighting would occasionally appear to be arranged by appointment ... [here he gave an example].

Owing to the dense population, fighting between major groups, along a well-defined boundary, is a matter of stern necessity, but within the group it is almost a form of recreation. One's friend today may be an enemy tomorrow and friend again the next day. By nature, these people are highly

9 On several occasions Taylor had heard of a leader before he reached his clan territory and so was able to greet him by name on first sight (pers. comm. 1981), which Dama says happened in his case (interview 1977).

10 See photographs in Connolly and Anderson (1987:10, 92).

emotional, quick to anger, easy to pacify, and extremely sensitive. Couple such characteristics with an impetuous tendency towards concerted action, and we have a primitive community ready to respond to the advance of civilization, and just as ready to resent it disastrously. (Roberts 1935:4-5)

The use of the word 'chief' is interesting. Although Roberts had studied some anthropology at Sydney University, he was writing before the first published analyses of big-men gained currency. Perhaps he followed the tendency of a newcomer to use preconceived models. Subsequent patrol officers in Chimbu in the 1930s used 'leader' (Bates), 'chief' and 'big man' (Kyle) (PMB 616) and 'fight leader' (Downs) (PMB 607).

Missionaries' models

Roberts had spoken extensively with missionaries already in the area. To be effective, missionaries needed close links with the leaders of the societies they worked among. Early missionaries soon learned the language and customs to understand the people with whom they lived, even as they sought to change them in a long-term conversion process. They included Fr Alphonse Schafer, SVD. Schafer had arrived in Simbu in November 1933 and came to settle in March 1934, and - apart from internment during the War - remained until just before his death in 1958 (Nilles 1984). His close ties with Kavagl Kumugl are mentioned above. Schafer said there were no real chiefs in Simbu, and that Kavagl - despite his violence - was no tyrant in that he discussed matters with his colleagues, but he also reported that Kavagl was able to inspire men from several tribes to work on the mission airstrip (Schafer 1975).

Another pioneer missionary was Rev. Wilhelm (Willy) Bergmann, a university-trained Lutheran, who came to Ega in June 1934 and - apart from wartime internment - stayed until 1968. In his four-volume study Bergmann summarized his lengthy observations of the Kamanegu and other groups, saying that the one or two real 'chieftains' or 'leading persons' of the clan were fairly old. He said particular individuals with special talents emerged for various functions, such as oratory, dispute settlement or trade. He argued that:

Leadership is not just inherited, so that it would go on from father to son, but is [*sic*] has of course certain influence, that means: Sons of influential men have a better prospect of becoming leading men than sons of mere common men. But it is not inheritance alone which makes them chieftains, etc. It is very well possible that sons of the present leading men will not be the leaders of the coming generation (Bergmann 1971-72: III:86).

He then mentioned the need for wisdom, bravery and skill in warfare, and luck (as in trading and hunting), oratory, judgment, skill in the accumulation and manipulation of wealth - especially valuables and wives - and finally experience.

In May 1978 Bergmann spoke with me in these terms about Simbu leadership:

- WB: In the old times, as far as I can see, the leadership was prominent in two ways: one was in wartime and one was in the festivals. There the leadership was really open and prominent. In the wartime the old people, the real leaders, sat together. Kamanegu is a tribe but there are clans in that, and a clan has a leader. Only there is no leader for Kamanegu the tribe. There is a committee of leaders or something like that on the big issues.
- WS: I have the feeling that the highest level for choosing the leader is the sub-clan.
- WB: They have a leading man, too. How did they come in that position? Inheritance is one way.
- WS: Did people say to you directly, 'We choose the son of a previous leader'?
- WB: They don't choose them, they grow into that. See, that depends upon when they are younger. These leaders have mostly been the fighting men, the leaders in the fights, too, when they were young.
- WS: Were they the 'spearheads' [a Kuman language expression]?
- WB: Yes. They killed the people and each one was a victory that added to their reputation. That was one thing. And then of course when they managed to get some riches, that counted too. And of course very often a son of a leading man has more chance to become a leading man than a commoner ... Quite a few things come together there.

Bergmann stated that clan leaders allocated cleared clan land for use as domestic gardens. Like Schafer, he gave instances of despotic leaders who arranged many killings within their own group¹¹ by henchmen, either to suppress dissent or on occasion to satisfy their desires such as taking over a clan member's wife (Bergmann 1971-72, I:195). Killings by leaders within their own group indicate considerable, if crude, power. Such despotic behaviour is very hard to reconcile with the notion of a 'big-man' courting popularity. Yet if unpopular with his group a leader could pay with his own life for his oppression. There were sanctions: Bergmann gives an example of the assassination of a tyrant which was arranged by his people, who then redistributed his wealth.

11 It is not known how many of these killings were inside the clan or tribe - they included murders and deaths inflicted in battle. Bergmann said that of 259 adults confessing before their baptism at Du, the men accounted for 867 killings, 474 having been committed by four men over several decades. He said that the names of those killed were given, and the tally collected by evangelists using broken sticks. Some exaggeration is possible; if several individuals speared a victim (as occurs today) it is possible that multiple claims would be made for the same killing. These figures are quoted by French (1969:60) from confessional records from Simasina area which have since been destroyed (Bergmann interview, 1978). If any of these killings were within the group, as both Bergmann and Dama claimed, then Chimu leaders were powerful indeed.

Another German Catholic missionary pioneer is Fr John Nilles, SVD, who worked in the upper Chimbu valley from 1937 and later at Mingende. During the War, Nilles studied anthropology at the University of Sydney, where he wrote a lengthy description of Simbu material culture and religious beliefs (Nilles 1943;1944). Later he reviewed political and social change under the colonial regime in the early 1950s (Nilles 1950;1953). Unlike Bergmann, Nilles does not mention hereditary elements of Simbu leadership. He does, however, indicate that in some 'sub-clans'¹² there was 'a degree of centralized authority invested in one or two leaders' (Nilles 1950:27). Nilles stressed the pride and solidarity in clan groups and said that they act as political units which were the largest bodies to hold pig ceremonies and make war. In general, he gives a picture of a fairly open political system:

Ordinarily they elect a leader to represent them in other groups; to him the members give allegiance, but not unlimited power. Internal matters are settled by the group as a body. (Nilles 1950:27)

But he then mentions three cases of a single leader having authority over a clan group, and a dispute-settling role within it.

Yet even this authority is far from absolute; these men do not regard themselves as dictators or leaders similar to those in a Polynesian society. They are careful in their decisions not to offend anyone, and their decision is as a rule based on the desires of the stronger party. Otherwise, they endanger their position and even risk their lives through black magic. Thus leadership is known. There are men with a natural gift for oratory who can hypnotise a crowd, stir the emotions and appease them (Nilles 1950:40)

Nilles mentioned bold warriors and killers, and those with wealth who through

lavish generosity can make numerous and influential friends. Thus on the basis of that tendency in human nature to idolize men of outstanding faculties, the leadership idea has its place in this primitive society, along with its democratic element. It is most conspicuous in times of war as a source of inspiration and courage: it unites all clansmen into one fighting unit. In case of defeat he is most often blamed for failure and dishonoured. (Nilles 1950:40)

A fourth perspective on Chimbu leadership was that of later colonial officials. Many *kiaps* were passing observers of (and important participants in) a rapidly changing scene, but nonetheless did travel on foot and at night talked with many people. Their prejudices and blind spots, observation skills and political sophistication all varied, and they probably followed then current intellectual fashions. Only three post-war reports up

12 I am using Nilles' terminology here. As mentioned in Chapter II, his 'sub-clans' and 'clans' are what Brown and I call 'clans' and 'tribes' respectively.

to 1955 speak of 'chiefs', most preferring 'headman' and 'leader' (terms also used in Tokpisin) to the then current anthropological concept, 'big-man'. However, *kiaps* reported hereditary leadership ten times before 1955, noting that leadership was hereditary in principle even if succession was not always direct.¹³ On one such report, the DC, Ian Downs, commented that some reservations were needed to these propositions: 'Fighting leaders frequently breed strong aggressive sons'.¹⁴

Evaluation

The emphases of different participants and observers can be analysed. Patrol officers, despite their individualism, were bureaucrats used to notions of hierarchy, discipline and command; it suited their purposes to perceive Simbu society in hierarchical terms. Simbu leaders were keen to impress the visiting *kiap* with their degree of control. Yet the *kiaps* recognized that the village officials' powers varied immensely, according to individual attributes and circumstances, as discussed below. Far from generalizing and finding either strong, hereditary chieftainships, or truly acephalous (literally, 'headless') societies, they assessed each language group separately.

The missionaries saw a variety of leadership roles, including ritual specialism, not often noted by *kiaps*.¹⁵ The missionaries were creating a non-governmental hierarchy of their own in Simbu, through mission helpers, teachers, pupils, catechists and evangelists, and ultimately ordained clergy. Variety of leadership roles in Simbu society gave a context or rationale for placing their religious organization alongside the secular one of government. Their long residence allowed subtle observation, but given the overlap of mission and government activities, it is not surprising that missionaries saw Simbu leadership as complex, and noted the operation of countervailing forces and mechanisms of consensus as well as those of dominance.

13 See, for example, Fowler (1952/53); Haywood 1954/55; Keogh 1952/53; Meller 1952/53 and Routley 1952/53. In 1952/53 alone there were four such references, which may indicate a heightened sensitivity to a particular model of leadership, improved observation and reporting, the spread of an ideology among Simbu, or all three.

14 I.F.G. Downs (DC) to Director of District Services and Native Affairs, 26 September 1952, file 30/16/60, Goroka.

15 While the Lutherans apparently sought to replace Simbu religion with their Christianity, the Catholic Schafer (1981) adapted it by putting a cross on the ceremonial ground used in the pig kill. Nilles (1977) has somewhat syncretically adapted Christianity in calling for the blessing of the ancestors. Ancestor worship, sorcery and witchcraft are rarely spontaneously discussed by Simbu with foreigners, but they are strong influences (J. Hughes 1985). The rather secular anthropological literature tends to ignore them, as have I, but these activities have relevance in contemporary clan politics and sometimes beyond.

The Simbu leaders I spoke to in 1973 were men who had succeeded under the colonial regime, and their close relatives. It was in their interest both to emphasize the strength of precolonial leadership and the hereditary element involved, as a form of ideological justification for their past and present status and hoped-for status for their sons. But many adult men made similar points to me in many parts of Chimbu between 1972 and 1987, and comprise a Simbu orthodoxy.

There is no single anthropological interpretation of Highlands leadership, but I believe that Brown's relates both to intellectual trends within the discipline at the time when her initial major fieldwork was undertaken.¹⁶ The then dominant 'model' of Melanesian leadership was that of the self-made big-man. Despite having read at least some patrol reports and noted some cases of succession, Brown explicitly denied hereditary leadership, without mentioning the *kiaps'* observations. In her 1979 article, Brown refers to inherited 'advantages' developing in the colonial era, such as opportunities for education, but again does not explicitly discuss concepts of inheritance of leadership. Nor has she rebutted Salisbury's (1964) arguments. The significance of warfare in the emergence of leaders and the occasional violence of leaders, receives little or no attention in her work, although it did receive more from her student Clive Cripser (1967), who worked in the upper Chimbu River in 1964. A.J. Strathern (1966) does not discuss warfare in the rise of Hagen leaders, but stresses the manipulation of exchange as the way to leadership. Although his data reveal many examples of sons succeeding their fathers (27 of 36 'major big-men' in 1964-65 and 31 per cent of 61 'minor big-men' [1971: 209], a total of 60 percent of all big-men), Strathern says a major big-man is not 'the incumbent of an office for which there is a rule of succession to which the facts have to be fitted' (1971:210). He notes 'fairly clear reasons the sons of big-men tend to be favoured, and there is more than chance association of fathers and sons who are or have become big-men in Hagen' (pers. comm. 30 September 1976). However, he plays down Hageners' claims of hereditary elements in leadership as being of the nature of debating points of political rhetoric rather than sociological generalisations, 'but they are not entirely off the mark'.¹⁷ He shows that not all sons of big-men are capable of leadership, and not all leaders have sons to rear to leadership roles (1982a).

16 Feil (1982) makes similar points to the following arguments, which I had made previously (Standish 1978).

17 Strathern is quite sceptical about a 'rule of succession indicating selection from a number of persons within a kinship network' (Pers. comm. 30 September 1976) but says that 'in practice there is a good deal of *de facto* succession to big-man status between fathers and sons' (Strathern 1979, xvii). His host and informant, Ongka, mentions a big-man being the son of a big-man, in a descriptive - rather than prescriptive - way (Strathern 1979, 90).

During the late 1940s and 1950s, after pacification, it was no longer possible for men to achieve prominence through warfare and, furthermore, existing leaders lost some of their sanctions within their groups. The relevance of violence in the gaining and maintaining of political influence and power was thus partly hidden during the colonial period, and models of leadership based principally on exchange only incorporated some of the several elements involved. Missionaries had noted that opportunities for new wealth were open to many men early in the colonial era in Mount Hagen (Vicedom and Tischner 1943-48) and Chimbu (Nilles 1950). Access to wealth, status and the possibility of leadership became more open and perhaps more competitive under Australian rule than in precolonial times, and leaders, as we shall note, lost some of their sanctions. In the mid-Wahgi area west of Chimbu live the Kuma people, whom Reay first studied in the early 1950s, just a few years after pacification. She says (1959, 1984) that in Kuma there was a rule of succession to a titled position as authorised leader ('the first') for each sub-clan. For reasons such as inappropriate age the eldest son of a leader may not follow his father. But the role will probably stay in his lineage, with the brother or the father's brother's son of the previous incumbent if he is a mature man and can perform the required roles. This rule provides a pool of eligibles, from which a suitable leader will emerge for each sub-clan and clan. The required attributes in this competition include, *inter alia*, warfare skills and bravery, a scheme very like my model of Simbu.

There is agreement on frequency of fighting and the pervading insecurity of precolonial Simbu life. Yet Brown's (1963,3) use of the term 'anarchy' to describe precolonial Simbu is at best ambiguous in this context, because as well as meaning the absence of fixed authority it usually implies the absence of *any* authority. It is often taken to mean a somewhat Hobbesian state of nature, the condition of 'every man against every man' and 'worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (Hobbes 1968:185, 186)¹⁸. Reay argues for the Kuma that competitive relations *between* groups lacked order, and thus could be termed anarchic. However, she herself has identified continuing patterns of both marriage exchange and conflict between groups over generations, which would appear to modify this view. Within groups, however, she rejects the notion of anarchy (pers. comm. 1980). There were some organizing principles in relations between groups in Simbu, and when there were patterns of marriage linking groups, serious sustained conflict was less likely. The evidence points to basic order and fraternal loyalty within clan groups as a

18 Hobbes' arguments on the need for a strong state to ensure peace and the common welfare appealed to my Papua New Guinean students at UPNG, who sometimes saw precolonial society as the state of nature and the (colonial) state as the (imposed) firm but benevolent Leviathan. But they did agree when I pointed out to them that there had been order within clans, and that conflict between groups was never constant.

precondition of survival, and Brown's term 'anarchy' is not applicable. Between groups, there may be grounds for using analytical models developed in the discipline of international relations, an approach beyond this study. Nonetheless, inter-group exchange, competition and conflict provided not just the context of intra-group politics, but resources used in those politics.

Conclusion

Simbu clan groups required leaders rather than men creating groups in order to have something to lead. Groups preceded the rise of particular leaders in precolonial times and survived their passing. Clans were based upon an ideology of agnatic descent, and involved a religion based upon the ancestral spirits. Simbu religion thus is in accord with the notion of leadership inherited from forefathers. A rule of inheritance both strengthened the existing leaders and provided a field of eligibles from whom a leader could emerge. In troubled times the need for solidarity meant that leaders were obeyed, and were rewarded materially and in terms of prestige. Although leaders sometimes harmed members of their own groups, the benefits of their strength could outweigh the costs. If their activities were too oppressive, leaders could be removed, and sometimes they were. In the colonial era different skills were required which widened the field of candidates. This should serve as a warning against projecting one 'present' onto the past. Allowing that people may objectify, reify and mystify their own culture, which needs to be checked against observation, one should note Keesing's warning against 'the cognitive anthropological tradition, which assumes people can't verbalise their rules properly'.¹⁹

To say there is a hereditary element in Simbu leadership does not require genealogies to be followed strictly or a rule of primogeniture. Biological facts can be ignored or falsified to enable the ideologies and the realities of power to coexist. There were political roles which had to be performed for groups to survive. At times it was necessary that leaders' strength went beyond influence to the exercise of real power. Clans needed internal cohesion, especially in their external relations, and had to be able to act in a co-ordinated way both in fighting and in major exchanges when their reputation was at stake. To handle all the issues involving his clan a leader needed the qualities of a wise mediator and an inspiring fighter, and the wealth to be generous, with many partners for both peaceful competition and allies in war, backed always by superb rhetorical skills.

19 Department of Anthropology Seminar, Research School of Pacific Studies, ANU, 1 April 1981. Note, however, that Keesing (1989) also acknowledges the political motivations behind contemporary ideological statements concerning precolonial society and subjects them to strongly sceptical scrutiny.

In short, the ideal type leader was a superb manipulator of men. As Weber might have said, perhaps few combined all these capacities, or if they did they displayed them selectively in different contexts.

At other times different qualities were called for, probably bringing different men to the fore. At times of stress, what Meggitt (1971) calls the 'systolic' phases, a domineering, tough, aggressive stance was required and a leader of the sort Read (1959) called a 'strong' man emerged. Today such fiery men are called '*kor*' men in Tokpisin, which is pronounced like the English 'hard'. Both seem appropriate terms for a particular style which adaptable Simbu leaders can occasionally display, at will. In more relaxed times, Meggitt's 'diastolic' phases, more empathy, greater energy and subtler manipulative skills were required for what Read (1959) saw as the desired element of 'equivalence' in relationships. At all times, but especially during wars, the clans could ill afford internal division, so the ability to express group sentiment persuasively in a dispute was an essential component of leadership. The sanctions of a 'strong' man could be blunt indeed in the *saim bilong tumbuna*.

Simbu paths to power in the precolonial era were multiple, but given the perennial fact of conflict it is clear that physical strength and bravery were probably preconditions to full status as an adult, just as owning pigs and taking part in exchanges was required for such status. However, there were also times of peacemaking, of feasting, manipulating credit, of giving out valuables, of creating and strengthening alliances and of mediating the conflicts of others through diplomacy, and for some specialists, of war magic and sorcery. Success in these varied endeavours could be a form of leadership, and open the way to influence and power.

There were thus no high roads to power, although there were distinct advantages for men who learnt their political skills at their fathers' knees. These advantages were often shared by several who were the sons of leaders. Usually, a rich man's wealth was dissipated at his death, if he lived a full span. Succession was not automatic. Leadership was attained in *de facto* competition, and older men always watched young boys to choose suitable candidates to groom, but a strong ideology of heredity added legitimation. These precolonial elements of political culture will reappear throughout our exploration of how Simbu changed their means of gaining and regaining power in the following 50 years.

CHAPTER IV

GUNS AND GOVERNMENT: COLONIAL LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS, 1933-62

They said: 'You have arms'.

We said: 'We are the government!' (Former Patrol Officer John Black)

This chapter analyses early changes under the colonial state, namely the contact and pacification processes and the early colonial incorporation of existing leaders as village officials, processes of transition.¹ Three factors of particular interest here are the role of force, the use made within the Simbu polity by early colonial leaders of resources obtained from the state and the disjunctions between Simbu values and those of the Administration patrol officers. This disjunction led to quite different perceptions of the processes under way in the middle colonial period, the 1950s. In the decade immediately after the War, a second, largely dependent, colonial elite, emerged. Throughout the 1950s, however, the expanding infrastructure enabled the introduction of schools, of the cash crop, coffee, and other economic changes in the heyday of Australian rule, the 1950s and 1960s. These major changes impinged upon how men gained and retained power, and Simbu perceptions of political processes, throughout the remainder of the colonial period into the post-colonial era.

Acting Patrol Officer John Black went to Chimbu following the deaths of the Catholic missionaries in 1934-35, and 43 years later described early government contact to me in these terms:

In less controlled areas we had this approach:

- (i) establish friendly relations, so we could talk, and get through without being attacked;
- (ii) stop them visiting the camps and stealing;

¹ This section summarizes material discussed elsewhere (Standish 1978a). Oral material from Simbu informants was collected during fieldwork on contemporary politics. I have read all the colonial patrol reports available but only cite those I quote directly. There are gaps in holdings for the 1930s and 1940s in the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau collection (PMB 607 and 616) and in the Papua New Guinea Archives set for the 1930s and 1940s, but the 1950s and 1960s are almost fully covered in the Papua New Guinea Collection of the National Library, Port Moresby. Some *kiaps*, despite their fleeting visits, showed impressive skills of observation and analysis, as did the missionary writers Rev. Bergmann and Fr Nilles, whose residence in Simbu at the time of interviews had spanned three and five decades respectively.

(iii) preventing them coming to the station or camp armed to the teeth.

They said: 'You have arms'.

We said: 'We are the government!'

Then a long period starts of unwarranted interference in their customary and other affairs It was our role to stop and punish fighting. A lot of indigestible things went on (interview, August 1978)

The major changes to Simbu leadership in the early colonial period have been mentioned: identifying and incorporating the existing leaders as village officials, and then attempting to boost their wealth, status and power so that they could carry out the work of the colonial Administration, ultimately backed by the applicable power of the Australian state. At the same time they were denied some of their traditional sanctions. While perhaps dominant locally they were clearly subordinate to the alien power on the wider stage, and there were local indigenous rivals for status among the mission workers and sometimes police, although co-operation was more likely with the latter who were part of the Administration.

State domination

It could be argued that the ready acceptance by Simbu of the dominance of the Administration is in itself *prima facie* evidence that they were used to the concept of the hierarchy of power; certainly Simbu leaders today recall the colonial era in hierarchical terms. Indeed, some Simbu leaders rapidly became allied with the colonial regime, to their advantage, and the Administration was immediately used as a resource in Simbu local politics. Old Kamanegu leaders in February 1973 spoke to me of 'testir.g' the *kiaps* in the 1930s, before realizing their superior force. They quickly joined the new order and received recognition from the *kiaps*, thus strengthening their position vis-à-vis other individuals and groups. Those from controlled areas went with the *kiaps* to contact and pacify less contacted areas, and were amply rewarded while increasing their circle of experience.²

Government activities aimed to boost local leaders. Paradoxically, this ultimately undermined their authority. A notable early *kiap* was Ian Downs, who served vigorously at Kundiawa in 1939-40 and became a zealous DC for the Eastern Highlands in 1953-55. Previous *kiaps* had dissipated their energies in attempting to deal with simultaneous fights around Kundiawa. Downs set out to dominate central Simbu, but recognized that he could not be everywhere at once. So to control it he set up agents of government who

² Read (1986) describes the same process around Goroka.

could rule indirectly. He followed Taylor (1935) using a tactic used widely in Papua New Guinea (Healy 1962; Hogbin 1951), that of arresting troublemakers, impressing them with the might and wealth of the new order, and then enlisting them to quell their own areas - backed up, if necessary, with the colonial instrument of coercion, the armed police. They could not be refused.

Downs's own innovation in the pacification process, remembered still with awe, was to muster several thousand Simbu from 'neutral' groups first as a noisy human wedge to drive apart the combatants in a clan war, and use them to seize the pigs of the fighting clans. Downs then demanded that all the 'fight leaders' be given up. The result

was devastating, because the people faced real economic and social ruin ... the end justified what we had done and we took comfort from being able to persuade people by capturing pigs³ instead of men. I did not embarrass my superiors by seeking official support. (Downs 1978:238)

by revealing details of these operations in his reports. This tactic was used five times, which was all that was needed.

A profitable nexus

In general, the *kiaps* used clan leaders to speak to warring groups, which had precedents in precolonial 'good offices' peace-making by neutral groups. First used as government agents in contacting new groups, these leaders were later given some autonomy in controlling their clans in what started out as a form of indirect rule. The leaders whom *kiaps* and missionaries worked with were known as '*bosbois*' (a term also used for plantation foremen, but translated at the time as 'headmen'). Both pre-War government and mission *bosbois* were each given a porcelain ring to be worn on the forehead, but later commerce enabled the wealthy to buy this status symbol which thus became worthless.

Although unpaid, *bosbois* and their successors, the village officials proper, the *luluais* and *tultuls*, had enormous economic advantages as the channel for trade with patrols. They also received and often kept most of the payments made to their groups for materials or land bought by government, or, later, for work done. Although they formally were nominated by visiting *kiaps* and appointed by the DC, frequently this followed recommendation by local interpreters and the police. The latter did accept gifts and sexual hospitality proffered as incentive. Especially in the late 1940s, some police recommendations appear to have been made as reward for unspecified 'services

³ Some of the seized beasts were used to pay the *kiap's* allies for their assistance, some to feed police and labourers, and some were kept on government pig farms and returned to their owners in farrow to Downs's imported stud boars (Downs, interview September 1978).

rendered', rather than following the *kiaps'* explicit intention, which was to recognize existing authority within Simbu society.

Early *kiaps* explicitly engaged in the manipulation of a whole society and its leadership. Downs once even arranged a marriage of a leader to bring together two widely separated clans. When interviewed in 1978, he was not one to play down his role:

We had to create our own leaders there, through force of circumstances. You just couldn't seek to control the area without some assistance from the people. And in the early days with which I was associated it was pretty well the start of the Administration there. I don't mean walking through the place like J.L. Taylor did, scattering largesse left and right and making a good fellow of yourself; that was very easy. But getting the place under control, or some semblance of control, was entirely different, and so we sought out particular leaders and made them wealthier. We paid attention to their sons and families as well, and we probably created, for the time being anyway, people with whom we could deal. Because it would be quite fatuous to be running after people all over the countryside every time somebody did something wrong or every time there was a call for assistance. I mean you would never be able to stop.

Downs's pre-War reports spoke of 'tribalization', bringing groups together into larger units for administrative convenience, and this was promoted by his census work. One example was his 'reconstruction' of the previously fragmented 'Tambare' (now Tabare) tribe in Sinasina, under the leadership of Dama of Womai (PMB 607). Several men, who had been mentioned in reports by Downs and earlier officers, continued over the next two decades to dominate their clans, sometimes their whole tribes, and in a few instances held some sway over their neighbours. Some had been prominent since before colonial rule. Those still alive in the 1970s, like Dama, were treated with great deference long after the withdrawal of their official status. As pointed out by L.J. (Laurie) Doolan, DC Chimbu 1967-74, this deference indicates a deep-rooted cultural tradition (interview, May 1978).

Having read his pre-War reports, I put it to Downs (ID) that, rather than just creating headmen, he was in some instances dependent on the authority of Chimbu leaders to maintain a semblance of order, and had to pick strong men to help this.

WS: It wasn't just a matter of creating them, but you were playing a very delicate political game then.

ID: Oh, I suppose so.

WS: You enlisted the strong men, and they used you to get stronger.

ID: Oh, we were quite happy for that to happen. The stronger they were the better, because of the huge populations, you see. We really needed somebody, you needed people like that. It would be hopeless otherwise.

I mean, what could we do? We were dealing with thousands and thousands of people. (Interview, 1978)

As mentioned above, village officials were formally appointed, *tultuls* for clans and *luluais* for tribes, after 1946. The *tultuls* were nominally Tokpisin-speaking assistants, originally messengers, subordinate to the *luluais*, but their stature varied; some *tultuls* were clearly dominant. A few Paramount *Luluais* were appointed if their influence extended beyond their own clan to other clans or tribes. Apart from helping the *kiap* by 'lining' their groups (literally in a line) for census, health patrols and public works, the village officials' role was to settle disputes and maintain peace in their groups (Rowley 1958; Ainsworth 1924). Although legally they were restricted to reporting serious crimes such as rape and murder to the government officials and, preferably, arresting the culprits, they were encouraged *de facto* to hold informal courts after the model of the *kiap* Courts of Native Affairs within their groups (A.M. Strathern 1972a).

Chimbu perspectives on these roles and strengths of village leaders and traditional leaders differ from those of expatriates. I asked Endugwa leader Kir (K) in February 1973 if leaders had been stronger in precolonial times than after the whites came.

K: I was strong man when the whites came. Taylor gave me *bosboi* rings and I was still leader after that. My father was leader and it passed on to me. After being made *bosboi* I helped the Administration on patrols. If we saw fighting we would break weapons and burn them, and so on ...

When made *tultul*, I said we'd have no more fights with Dom and Nauru. We redivided the land we'd won and gave some back to those two tribes. When I was *tultul* some neighbouring tribes lost land.

(His kinsman Mondo said Kir had helped stop some groups expanding at the expense of others, saying 'We're with the government', and helped the weaker groups regain their land.)

K: I was called in by the *kiap*. He wanted to go but the road was bad so he'd tell people to build the roads. When whites came they called me 'Kir Donkey' because I worked so hard ... I held courts, before ... I was tough in the old days, and people were scared of me. Now I'm getting old. The old men in the men's house can tell stories of me. Because of my toughness the *kiap* called me the donkey. My name was known all over. I was king for a long time. That's all I have to tell you.

The prominent Kamanegu leader Siune was recognised by government and created *luluai*. At Kurumugl, Kokia Waim (KW) discussed him with me.

WS: Did Siune do what the *kiap* wanted, or was he independent?

KW: Normally he followed the *kiap*. He did what the *kiap* wanted and told the people. He kept on doing what he wanted in the village.

WS: Did the government strengthen his position?

KW: Fr Schafer saw his prominence and made him *bosboi*. He even got stronger as a *luluai*. He kept his power until the council was formed.

Elsewhere, at Mogoma in Kamanegu, I asked if the *kiap* was boss before and was told:

There were disputes and fights all the time. Village leaders took disputes to the *kiap*. Leaders acted as mediators between the people and the government.

These statements tend to simplify what was clearly a variety of relationships between the early village officials and an administration which locally comprised white *kiaps* and black police. Several Kamanegu, who had been leaders in church matters but not village officials, spoke of these relationships at Ega.

Gende (G): When the *kiaps* came they marked *luluais*. One man tried to give the *kiap's* orders. *Kiaps* selected them - who was prominent, and strong.

WS: Did the *kiap* boss people inside the *lain*?

G: [referring the question.] Was the leader independent?

Au Mondo: When *kiaps* came the *luluai* still had autonomy and worked with the people. The *kiap* was like a guide. As Tokpisin became known and some worked with *kiaps*, these leaders became more influential.

WS: What was the role of the police? To help the *luluais*?

G: When there's a fight, the *kiap* orders the police. He got the *luluais* and police together and tried to settle the situation.

WS: Who bossed whom?

G: They worked together, but if the *luluai* made trouble the police would get him, so the *kiaps* were really on top.

WS: Was it a good system?

Enau Gende: I don't know if they liked the system at that time.

WS: Was the whole system good?

Au Mondo: We feared them and moved into co-operation with them, the *luluais*, *tutuuls* and police. We worked in co-operation with them and we like it so far. So we got the road. There were no machines then. It was all done by men with shovels.

Brown (1963:3) argued that 'traditional leaders...were followed by appointed native officials with a number of powers and a security of tenure previously unknown in the society. They were in turn replaced by elected councillors'. From this starting point she argued that 'tribal leadership changed in a generation from the absence of any fixed

authority ('anarchy') to a system giving officials the opportunity to dominate ('satrapy') (Brown 1963:3).

The use of force

The early police and first village officials exercised some power unsupervised, and, with *kiap* encouragement, they not only held informal courts so as to mediate disputes but also accepted fees for their services and imposed punishments by way of fines of compelled labour. Patrols were rare in the early colonial days. Missionaries were the main expatriate check on police and officials when they were remote from the *kiap* and acting in league. The missionaries' concern with human rights abuses, a term not in vogue in 1940s New Guinea, sometimes caused tensions. In a patrol report a *kiap* called one priest a 'pseudo-king' who resented the intrusion of the Administration into his domain. In the upper Chimbu, Nilles campaigned against abuses of power by police and village officials, but the *kiaps* listened to their indigenous underlings.⁴

Some village officials were violent with their own people, although Brown's (1963) description of violent 'satraps' avoids saying what they did. Some prisoners were beaten, and several Simbu told me (and J. Hughes 1985) that some were interned underground in trenches, a story denied by early missionaries and Downs. (A.J. Strathern [pers. comm.] states that 'Prisoners were put in trenches in Mt Hagen. I saw one such deep hole in 1964'.) I found no reliable evidence for, and some denial of, a story widespread in Chimbu that police urinated and defecated on such internees. There were certainly sexual relations between agents of the state and Simbu people.⁵ The wealth and potential strength of the government workers was irresistible, and furthermore, women have long been used as a political resource in Simbu.

Force was never far from the surface in colonial Chimbu, although *kiaps* avoided shooting unless attacked. However, police shot at least one man in a fight, while not themselves under fire (Bergmann, interview 1978), and some Simbu former police today openly boast their tally of kills. Two members of a contact patrol in the Gumine area said

4 Nilles was so resented by *kiaps* that in early 1949 he was forced to apologize to the police. While Nilles, too, might have been given biased information in all probability Nilles's allegations stand. Even if bullying, the misappropriation of goods and the abuse of women were not frequent, it is worth noting that Nilles's testimony, which he later published in muted form (1953), resembled similar behaviour to that in coastal areas in early colonial days (Healy 1962; Hogbin 1951).

5 Taylor, Black and Downs all told me in 1978 interviews that they had encouraged their police to marry local women, in order that jealous wives and in-laws control them and reduce the spread of gonorrhoea then current amongst government and mission workers alike. In the mid-1940s a police brothel was condoned by some *kiaps* at or near Kundiawa. Documentary evidence as well as oral testimony indicate that some post-War patrols had women camp-followers, and Mintima villagers say one *kiap* who slept around widely took a Simbu mistress on patrol.

in 1976 that while serving under a certain *kiap* the police had killed many. First they marked out the leaders: 'If people defied us and started fights, we shot them. If we had not done this', they said, 'there would still be trouble here. It was necessary'.⁶ A missionary with over 25 years' residence elsewhere in Chimbu reported villagers' testimony that early patrols deliberately 'picked off' leaders (pers. comm. 1976). Some Kamanegu claimed that the village officials advised *kiaps* on such occasions, which would be a good way to weaken enemies, but other data indicate that the police usually acted alone and village officials, as such, had not been appointed.

The indiscriminate use of force by administration officials was rare, but it had occurred,⁷ so its potential was known and that was enough. Indeed, the *kiaps* undoubtedly used a strong element of bluff in the colonial period. As a Lutheran missionary with 30 years' residence put it, 'It was a thin line, but they dared to hold it' (Rev. Bob Heuter, interview 1978). Simbu students named some *kiaps* who occasionally 'thumped' people in Simbu as late as 1970, in Karimui national *kiaps* used fists as recently as 1977. Villagers could not retaliate, given the force of the police backed by the courts and jails, both run by *kiaps*. A former *kiap*, who had not worked in Chimbu, told me that 'When I see how many are killed in tribal fighting these days, thumping was the lesser evil' (pers. comm. 1979). My own observations reinforce village and *kiap* testimony that the *kiap* tradition was more diplomatic in Chimbu than the tough stance used in the Western Highlands. Nonetheless, in Chimbu the police (who stayed under *kiap* control until the late 1960s and remained under *kiaps* on outstations till 1978) were not subtle when acting independently. Early Simbu police are clearly remembered, which possibly hindered their later political careers. Clan warfare was suppressed between 1950-72, yet brawls among siblings and fellow clansmen were and are a potential part of a normal Simbu life. The naked displays of crude power which were witnessed in their youth by today's Simbu politicians are now part of their 'role model' of how powerful men behave.⁸

⁶ The relevant patrol report is missing from the Archives, but subsequent reports indicate there had been widespread killing in the first post-War patrol in the area. A mission source has indicated that people of a nearby area named over a 100 deaths from this patrol. Another former policeman, who was also present, cheerfully discussed how he shot many people in Southern Simbu. This did not hinder his police career as he rose to high NCO rank.

⁷ Taylor 1935 and mid-1930 patrol reports by Bates, National Archives of PNG. Peter Kamis in 1982 recorded from (named) eye witnesses in the Upper Chimbu the names, dependants and clans of twenty people shot dead by Jim Taylor (punitive expedition?), probably following the 1935 police action. For more oral testimony, see J. Hughes 1985

⁸ A.J. Strathern (1970 and 1984) discusses the complex roles of the (expatriate) *kiap* who acts as the agent for a distant power. The big-men and councillors use indigenous models and work within their groups, or as intermediaries without the sanctions held by the *kiap*. Although they compare themselves to the *kiap*, this is somewhat rhetorical.

Dependent colonial leaders

A second phase in the era of the village officials commenced in the late 1940s. The first appointees had been at the peak of their influence in the precontact or early colonial period. Early headmen in Simbu enjoyed the power gained through government. In contrast to the 'honourable' role taken by the village constables in Mekeo of mitigating the *kiaps'* demands as far as possible (Stephen 1979), patrol reports show that from the earliest colonial times Simbu headmen really pushed their people in order to increase their own stature and that of their group. The first generation of village officials could do this only because they had some autonomous, precolonial authority of their own, quite apart from the boost provided by the Administration. Many had been fight leaders and were used to exercising somewhat brutal power without any government role-model.

When on a free rein without regular supervision, village officials reached the apogee of their power in the 1940s. This could not last: improved paths and then roads facilitated a schedule of twice yearly patrols which operated, in Healey's (1976) words, as 'a visiting module of government', patching sores, settling disputes, dispensing rough justice - including hearing appeals against arbitrary or harsh decisions. Patrol reports from the late 1940s show that repeatedly the *kiaps* tried to temper the excesses of their indigenous underlings. If headmen persisted in behaving autocratically, in Simbu as elsewhere in the Highlands, and could not silence their clan critics, they were chastized by the *kiaps* and sometimes removed from office.⁹

The first officials were often recognized leaders who had previously had their own power base and authority, and were administering a form of justice even rougher than that of the *kiaps*. Apart from the ban on murder, Salisbury (1954) reports they were denied the customary sanction of spearing the legs of flighty wives. Wives were allowed to sue for divorce and - depending on the *kiap's* assessment of fault - their *lain* could retain much of the bride wealth, which upset Simbu domestic power structures considerably (cf. Reay 1974). Although encouraged to settle disputes, the village officials ultimately could not do it their indigenous way.

From the late 1940s the strains inherent in the new roles started to show. Even apart from natural wastage as the older leaders passed their prime, there was a considerable turnover in village officials. Many were removed for over-zealousness and, in the name of the Administration, misapplying their own values in ways taken to be an abuse of office when eventually reported to the *kiap*. Further, as happened with colonial

⁹ As early as 1940 Downs set up a model court to try to introduce the rule of law. The external trappings of the courts were adopted more readily than the subtler British rules of evidence and traditions of fair play, but in face-to-face societies most people know the facts of a case anyway.

chiefs in Africa (Vincent 1977) the village officials had demands placed upon them for unpaid labour which were not in any way customary. Apart from the one or two days of work each weekly on the roads, which Simbu beautified with flowered verges, village officials had to organize village cleaning, the building and maintenance of rest houses (T = *haus kiap*), for patrols, and - after the wartime dysentery epidemic - the digging of toilets, some of which were kept only for display (J. Hughes 1985). To survive, they had to be Janus-headed, facing both the Administration and their own people and keeping both happy.¹⁰ So it was not surprising that the inbuilt contradictions of being both clan leader and official caused a number to resign from this public role, or precipitate their own dismissal, while retaining prominence in the clan's domestic activities. The patrol officers interpreted their actions as weakness, but the political costs to clan leaders of fulfilling *kiap* demands probably warranted them quitting government service.

They were replaced by younger men, some of whom were rather impotent 'front' men nominated simply because someone had to fill the job, while others were wealthy with several wives and thus were assumed to be politically prominent. Many had learnt Tokpisin and befriended Administration representatives. By the mid-1970s Peter Kama Kerpi (1976) wrote scornfully of men who had risen rapidly to prominence as 'mushroom leaders'. The second 'cohort' of village officials often lacked the authority of their predecessors; they had not been moulded in the heat of battle and lacked 'traditional' authority (Nilles 1950; 1953:19, 22). Nilles anticipated Brown's (1963) 'satrapy' argument by a decade, saying that the less authority village officials possessed in their own right, the more arbitrarily they used the name of the government, often to their personal benefit. He argued:

Some of these men should never have been accepted as leaders, as their authority rests rather on physical force backed by the government. The former state of democracy in the groups has been replaced by that of oligarchy. (Nilles 1950:4)

This loss of autonomy and increased dependency on the Administration in the 1950s is progressively obvious from the patrol reports. Despite attempts by some village officials to suppress criticism, their power was curbed. The village officials could not totally dominate their clansmen (Salisbury 1964), even though the latter had little idea of their rights (Brown 1963). Very young patrol officers became more and more involved in 'settling' what they saw as trivial domestic disputes, which were serious matters for clanspeople. They included damage to gardens by straying pigs, marital disputes over custody or bridewealth and the use of insulting words, in addition to minor charges and

¹⁰ As Bulmer (1961) pointed out, these demands weakened their popularity in their groups in the Baiyer River area of the Western Highlands, an area under colonial rule later than central Chimbu.

larger issues such as serious physical assault cases or the marking of disputed clan land boundaries. One patrol 'settled' 500 disputes in three weeks, and heard 30 court cases (Hayes 1952). Many cases heard by one patrol were recontested (T = *bekim kot*) before the next *kiap* posted to the area, in an attempt (T = *traim tasol*) to reverse the judgement. The success rate was sufficient for the Simbu to develop a reputation for litigiousness. Many such cases were revived because the village official lacked authority and an avenue of appeal was open to the aggrieved parties with increasingly frequent patrols.¹¹ As the network of roads grew the *kiaps* could quickly reach trouble spots, which further reduced the autonomy of their local agents and hence weakened their authority. Younger leaders were unable to readily mobilize their people for government work. Yet the 1950s *kiaps* frequently wrote optimistically of strengthening officials, apparently without any awareness that their own increased presence did the opposite. Yet from a clansman's perspective, in being 'weak', the village officials were serving the clan.

Land boundaries were the single most important issue not resolved in the colonial era (Hide 1973). Perhaps boundaries never can be fixed, given that holdings had varied according to the strength of groups and their leaders, whether or not warfare is banned. Official reports indicate there were several small 'brawis' or 'riots' in the 1950s and 1960s in Simbu as groups jockeyed for control over disputed land. Sometimes these tensions were exacerbated when the *kiaps* sought help from village officials and other leaders, first to adjudicate and then to mark land boundaries with plantations of trees or the traditional marker, the *tanger* bush (E = cordyline). Yet the state combined successfully in many cases with local leaders to enforce minor boundary changes, at least temporarily. Land tensions remained and intensified as population grew and once cash cropping increased the economic value of land. A politically important example is discussed in Chapter V.

New resources for renown

The *kiaps* had increased the wealth and stature of many Simbu leaders, and the power of some, but the changes they brought also ultimately increased the competitiveness for leadership. The first groups of Highlands Labour Scheme returnees often had to surrender much of their hard-earned cash and cargo to clan leaders, and the resettlement process was closely monitored by *kiaps*. Later returnees, travelled sophisticates in the rural context, did not accept unchallenged the demands of the village officials, whom they mocked as rustics (T = *bus kanaka*).¹² Being used to cash, they did not wish to revert

¹¹ Once again, the sequence was similar in the mid-Wahgi (Reay 1974).

¹² A former *kiap* in Chimbu, Geoff Burfoot, recalls a 1950s group of Simbu leaders going on an educational tour to the coastal town Madang, where they felt out of place dressed in Chimbu regalia.

to unpaid work. They owned some money and were no longer dependent on their elders and the recognised leaders for (the devalued) shell for bride wealth. Equipped with Tokpisin and modern knowledge (T = *save*), they had the confidence to act as brokers (cf. Boissevain 1974) and thus to break the village officials' near-monopoly on contact with government. After a few years the leaders were reluctant to let so many young men leave, on the grounds that their labour would be lost.¹³ These and other concerns, like the loss of a captive public, motivated them against emigration and still do today (Standish 1981a).

By the mid-1950s several categories of people had modern *save*. Government interpreters, wealthy in Simbu, were joined by mission workers, retired police, and domestic servants all claiming knowledge of the white man's ways. They had proven their adaptability, and desired to change their own society. Very often, the earliest workers for the Europeans were refugees from their own group at contact,¹⁴ or men outside their clan's precolonial power structure, who shrewdly took other avenues to prominence when the whites arrived. Later on they returned home as wealthy innovators and entrepreneurs (cf. Barth 1963) and by the mid-1950s the way was open for them to find new ways to domestic prestige by using their connections with the outside world.

So by the end of the 1950s the village officials' prime had passed in much of Simbu. Former officials with some authority of their own kept their influence, and a few made the transition to become businessmen and councillors. One such was Paramount *Luluai* Kondom of the Naregu tribe, the first Simbu to acquire a horse for personal transport. In 1959 he was appointed by the government to the (otherwise elected) Waiye (later Kundiawa) Council, and became its first president.

New ways: roads and coffee

Road building and coffee planting, the most visible changes to Chimbu in the 1950s, were also promoted by the leaders but, as intimated above, ultimately reduced their sway. These government campaigns had initially boosted the leaders, but they also gradually widened opportunities for personal wealth and so again increased the local competition for

They quickly changed outfits; Paramount *Luluai* Kondom Agaundo returned to Kundiawa, Burfoot said, 'dressed like a Mekeo spiv' (interview 1979).

- ¹³ In central areas, coffee was being planted, so coastal labour was increasingly restricted to people on the colonial periphery.
- ¹⁴ As in the cases of Siwi Kurondo of Gena in East Koroni census division (see Chapter IV *et seq.*), Launa Miule of Chuave (who became an interpreter, council president and later Deputy Premier of the Interim Provincial Government), and the policeman and later councillor, Wanugi Bagme of Yuage, Mintima.

status and power within and between groups. Some paid foremen on the roads (expolicemen, for example) used their positions in hiring workers or buying food to become patrons (cf. Scott 1972; Boissevain 1974), thus increasing their wealth and status. Furthermore, by bringing whole language groups into contact with a wider world for the first time they also enlarged the political arenas. The fortunes of tens of thousands depended on their closeness to the Highway. Whole villages moved to the roads for convenience. Roads brought new wealth into villagers, such as cattle and vehicles, and provided access to coffee buyers, thus providing a source of rural income. However, they also gave men (and eventually women) easy ways of taking the 'exit' option (Hirschman 1978), emigration. The spread of coffee tended to follow the road network (I. Hughes 1966; Shand and Straatmans 1974), as did expatriate and Simbu owned trade stores, malaria, tuberculosis and gonorrhoea, betel nuts, beer, moving pictures shows, road accidents and other by-products of civilization - most recently typhoid fever.

Cash crops converted Chimbu from a 'tribal' society (in the sense of an autonomous one using rudimentary technology) into a 'peasant' economy linked, but subordinate, to outside political and economic powers, as Meggitt (1971) first argued for the Highlands in the case of Enga. The term 'peasant' often carries irrelevant connotations which I will discuss further later. Good (1979:102) uses Shanin's definition of peasants as being

small agricultural producers who, with the help of simple equipment and the labour of their families, produce mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfilment of obligations to the holders of political and economic power. (Shanin 1971:240)

But to this I must add the *caveats* (noted already) that quite ordinary men in Simbu sometimes use non-family labour, and indeed that wealthy families are likely to have more family labour at their disposal than are poor ones. Setting aside some small-scale vegetable sales and early village plantings of passionfruit (for commercial processing in Goroka and export to Australia), coffee was the only significant cash crop in Simbu for two decades. Questions of stratification are discussed more fully in Appendix 4, and this is not the place for a major analysis of coffee and class formation, but since Good and Donaldson (1980) have argued that coffee was introduced in such a way as to promote men already prominent in Highlands society, a brief historical sketch is in order.¹⁵

Coffee was initially promoted in Chimbu by *kiap* patrols which were instructed to try, in the first instance, to interest village officials and other leaders. The *kiaps'* express

¹⁵ Detailed studies are to be found in Brookfield (1968) and Hyde (1981). My sources are mainly patrol reports.

aim was to use the most dynamic and prestigious men as innovators, but they used communal coffee nursery gardens to grow seedlings for distribution. *Kiaps* attempted to maintain communal production but the Simbu desisted - whether on the initiative of the leaders, or not, is unclear from the 1950s patrol reports. Communal gardens were soon divided (cf. Brookfield 1968), a *fait accompli* which was accepted by the government with some relief because it reduced the likelihood of disputes later over labour and rewards. Some village officials were among the most active growers, which took an act of faith because coffee takes four years to bear the 'cherries' containing the beans (Brookfield and Brown 1963; Apa 1978). Other officials held back till they saw the benefits (Apa 1978). The most active early coffee planters had traveled and worked outside Chimbu and seen the cash-earning potential of the crop during the Korean War boom (Apa 1978). One such was the ex-policeman Siwi Kurondo, who in 1956 was the biggest grower in Gena (if not Chimbu) with over four acres planted with about 3,000 trees, a third of them already bearing (Gauci 1955-6; Ball 1957).

By the late 1950s, coffee was seen as a way to modern wealth, culturally the way of *bisnis* (economic enterprise). It even rivalled subsistence gardening, which not only competed for labour and for the best land, but challenged the prestige economy based on the pig. Village officials - and, later, councillors - in Simbu urged all their clansmen to grow coffee, as individuals. They decided to cease holding the customary pig ceremonials in favour of the modern way to renown, *bisnis* (Brookfield 1973). By planting coffee early many village officials gained control of more land than others, which is customary, in that if a man cultivates garden land unchallenged he has rights to it and he owns a tree he plants (Brookfield and Brown 1963). When coffee is properly tended it is a perennial and virtually permanent crop, something new to Simbu.¹⁶ Thus coffee brought new wealth into new hands, and to a degree upset the pre-existing distribution of wealth, although that depended as much on the energies of individuals as on their land holdings. Successful Simbu coffee growers often started small trade stores and by 1960 some, including Siwi Kurondo, had bought four-wheel drive cars to carry their cargo and people. The 1950s thus saw the first of a new category prominent in Simbu life, the *man bilong bisnis*. The most prominent Simbu leader-businessman was the council president

¹⁶ With the exception of the prized pandanus trees.

and storekeeper Kondom, who in 1961 was chosen by Highlands councillors and others to represent the Highlands region in the Territory Legislative Council.¹⁷

Conclusion

The theme of this chapter, the early interaction of the colonial state and existing Simbu institutions, is perhaps best expressed by quoting from Downs's 1954/55 Annual Report as DC:

These densely populated tribal areas are eager for the future but they lack sufficient grounds to progress without help and leadership. Until they can develop their own leaders and respect their own leaders it is the Administration which has to supply the leadership. (Downs 1955:21)

Similar statements had appeared in Downs's pre-War reports, and were common in the 1950s in official writing, apparently without awareness of the contradiction inherent in its paternalism. By the 1950s, in seeking to build up Simbu leaders the Administration was undermining them. With hindsight, colonial reports show that 'the unwarranted interference in the affairs of others' referred to by Black was inevitable. Colonial policies finally reduced the power and autonomy of Simbu leaders to a state of dependence. Such interference is a *sine qua non* for the colonial state, its rationale, and hence autonomous indigenous power ultimately is impossible. The state, with *kiaps* and police, had its own centre post. Its strength was accepted for most of the period covered here by colonial leaders, so long as it appeared to deliver, or was about to deliver, values which the Simbu themselves wanted. If it did not, Simbu leaders effectively opted out of the state system, while keeping influence over younger men who were their successors. Yet from within Simbu culture the strongest Simbu leaders retained their own legitimation for their roles and influence. State positions were used only so long as they could benefit Simbu leaders' positions within their clans and in inter-group relations.

The changes in Simbu politics under colonial rule were complex, and occurred in several stages outlined here: the recruitment of old leaders, the creation of colonial leaders, the emergence of government and mission workers, and more recently the rise of men of *bisnis*. In each phase, resources from outside the clan were used to strengthen a man's internal position within the Simbu polity, in intra- and inter-clan relations. This

¹⁷ Kondom failed to win the 1964 House of Assembly election (Criper 1963), but as a zealot for development from 1964 he actively promoted the Kundiawa Coffee Society in alliance with the Administration, and became its first chairman. He was killed in a car accident in 1966. Although Nilles reports his influence did not extend beyond Naregu (J. Hughes 1985), his popularity throughout the Highlands had been of some concern to *kiaps* and his funeral ceremonies attracted massive crowds from the whole Highlands region (Marie Reay pers. comm. 1976).

process is consonant with precolonial political strategies, that is, the mechanisms were the same, although the resources available had widened.

Economic changes also created new inheritable valuables, increasing the possibility of leadership being taken up by a younger generation. While cash was readily dissipated, and most businesses collapsed on the death of their founder, cash crops in the form of permanent tree crops were a new form of inheritable wealth. Furthermore, colonial leaders could more readily provide for their sons, and, remarkably, their daughters, by funding not only primary but secondary education, giving advantages shared by few of their age-mates. These people were to become the new generations of leaders in the subsequent decades; given their fathers' prominence it is not surprising that ideologies of hereditary leadership are promoted by younger men of ambition.

In addition, totally new dimensions of political power had been demonstrated. With precolonial sanctions removed, Simbu leaders had seen their own power diminished in stature to the extent that some observers describe their political capabilities as influence (J. Hughes 1985). New resources were demonstrated to Simbu people, and immense wealth controlled by state officials. Colonial role models included occasionally autocratic behaviour by government officials, ultimately backed by armed police. Yet the sanctions of inter-group conflict had declined, so that new cohorts of leaders arose whose basis for political prominence was their capacity to manipulate the colonial system as much as the clan economy, as well as a capacity for rhetoric and demonstrated wisdom. The colonial era was not a phase of stress requiring 'hot' or hard leaders, and although there was rhetoric of strength, the rituals of governance meant that despite constant negotiations of status between *kiaps* and Simbu leaders, their respective roles and the discretionary powers of colonial officers ensured that the mature ones were received with deference.¹⁸

The rapid rise of new generations of leaders has been noted elsewhere in the Highlands (Uyassi 1978), although there has been a tendency by some writers such as Donaldson and Good to conflate them all into one category of big-men. Even as these new groups gained prominence more changes were under way, especially the education of Simbu youths in English-language schools. The competition among these men in the new political institutions created in preparation for decolonization is the subject of the next chapter.

The changes described here concerning how men gained power and sought to maintain it resulted both from external intervention but also from the manipulation of

¹⁸ Once again, Siwi Kurondo was an exception. Having seen *kiaps* at their weakest both politically and personally during the War, the colonial mystique did not enchant him.

Simbu values. Already in the late 1950s patrol officers could see that Simbu hopes for development would never be reached using coffee because of the low resource-base (Pegg 1957). Kondom Agaundo told the United Nations Visiting Mission in 1962 that Australia was not doing enough to help. He wanted the Chimbu to break from Australia and pass under American rule. Paula Brown noted a deep malaise: 'For the first few years, they accepted the innovations of Europeans with awe and eagerness for new things. They now see how dependent they are, and are becoming impatient' (1962a:12). The Australian Administration having failed them, perhaps they were again seeking a centre post of their own.

CHAPTER V

NEW MEN, OLD STRATEGIES AND TROUBLE: TRANSITIONS TO SELF-RULE, 1963-73

Preparation for self-rule within state institutions commenced with the local government councils created from the 1950s. Then, following recommendations by a Select Committee of the territorial Legislative Assembly and the 1962 United Nations Visiting Mission, the territorial (national-level) House of Assembly was established in 1964, under the (Australian) *Papua New Guinea Act* (1949 as amended). Yet there was little awareness in Chimbu of PNG's ultimate independent destiny, among either officials or the Simbu people themselves. Conservative Australian governments had long said PNG could become self-governing when the majority of its people wanted that status. Only in 1968 had the Australian government eliminated the notion that PNG might become a 'seventh state' of Australia or make it clear that it seriously considered independence as an option. Nor were serious steps taken to transfer executive powers until 1970, followed by legislative changes in 1971. In April that year the McMahon coalition government said that if a clear majority of the House to be elected in 1972 sought self-government, then that would be taken as the majority wish for the nascent country. Australia made it clear that it was keen to transfer powers of self-government to such a group (Goode 1975). As late as the February 1972 election, however, many Simbu leaders did not realize that PNG would soon be self-governing. They thought they could continue to delay constitutional change in order to catch up with coastal areas, because the anti-colonialists were in a minority in the House. Nevertheless, from 1971 there was a clear impetus at the territorial level towards self-government and eventual independence, and the better educated - and hence younger - Simbu leaders started to act upon it.

This chapter sketches the opening of three arenas in late colonial politics in Simbu with the introduction of local government councils, the establishment of the government-sponsored coffee co-operative and the creation of the first Chimbu-wide local government body, the District Advisory Council. The House of Assembly became another arena for political competition for Simbu from 1964. In the 1960s the second generation of Simbu village officials was overshadowed, first by councillors and later by members of the House. Only a few former village officials were to succeed in the new institutions. The first national elections were held for the House of Assembly in 1964, before most parts of the Chimbu had experienced councils. The candidates for that election and subsequent ones in

1968 and 1972 included older leaders as well as councillors and, increasingly, educated young men; but village officials - with one notable exception - were bypassed in these new arenas. Here I briefly summarize the 1964 and 1968 House of Assembly elections in Simbu, in which were contested by colonial leaders who were modernizers for their era. Then the 1970 by-election and the 1972 national election for the Chimbu Regional seat revealed the emergence of young, well educated and nationalist men of ambition who were to dominate the 1972 election for the Chimbu Regional seat, and Simbu politics throughout the decade.

Through elections in a wider arena than the clan or tribe it became possible for men to gain prominence very rapidly, without having to prove themselves in the traditional economy. New wealth and status acquired outside the clan and tribal arena could be brought back into it, but unless there was a direct personal link between such new leaders and their elders, rivalry continued.

The controversy in Chimbu over self-government was expressed in major local power struggles, both in formal state political institutions and in the coffee co-operative. The debate about self-government deeply divided different generations of Simbu political figures, who reacted in several ways. Some opposed the new national government, while others initiated a drive for power in the new arena of the province, which is analysed in the following chapter.

A third response was effective withdrawal from the rule of law and the colonial state. In the society at large there was a resurgence of clan fighting, which was seen at the time as a return to traditional ways, and a deliberate attempt by older leaders to boost their own political position by heightening the solidarity of their clans and tribes.

This chapter describes new manifestations of competition between generations of leaders, showing new men of ambition and men of past renown tussling for different types of status, influence and power, using new and varied resources in their separate arenas, and sometimes seeking alliances between these arenas.

Councils¹

Administration officials intended that councils break down such parochialism (Mair 1970; Fenbury 1978). As mentioned above, Simbu leaders seized the chance to widen their political arenas, which accorded with Australian colonial policy in the 1960s.² Council wards (electorates) in Chimbu initially were based upon clans (or even sub-clans) which had some political unity. In the first elections (1959-63) councillors were chosen by a process of 'pre-election', in which a consensus emerged in the clan as to the appropriate person to be councillor. Sometimes no-one opposed this choice when the *kiap*'s electoral patrol came to the rent houses, took nominees' names, and held the vote; occasionally an opponent was put up as a formality to please the *kiap*. Voting was done simply by lining up voters behind their candidate. After the first elections a preferential secret ballot was used. Non-literate people could whisper their choices to the poll clerk for marking on a ballot paper; often the 'whisper' was a shout of loyalty.

Villagers say they were encouraged by *kiaps* to choose Tokpisin speakers, thought to be modernizers, but the earliest councillors were often former village officials. Most councillors had difficulty with alien meeting procedures and obtaining funding for projects, and with the concept of electoral accountability. In later elections the former officials mostly stood down in favour of Tokpisin-speakers, men who had been to the coast as labourers, or who had work experience as domestic servants for Europeans, or as aidpost orderlies, interpreters and policemen for the government.

After the first elections more candidates were attracted to stand. Sometimes, by agreement, leaders of different sub-clans within a clan alternated as councillor. After the

¹ Observations similar to those in this section are made in Howlett, *et al.* 1976:183 ff., where my contribution is acknowledged. This highly summarized section is based upon a partial survey of the council records held at the Provincial Office, Kundiawa, the minutes of councils and combined council conferences 1963-72, attendance at many council meetings 1972-80, and interviews with councillors, villagers and officials. Despite my different data bases, my conclusions correspond with the generalized findings of Waddell (1973) for the Mount Hagen and Sungebar Councils, and his useful summary article (1979).

² Council areas were proclaimed as follows:

- (a) Waiye 1958, joined by Dom Census Division (CD) in 1960; Yonggamugl NLGC formed in 1961. These merged to form Kundiawa LGC in 1967;
- (b) Koronigl NLGC 1961, was joined by Kup CD to form Kerowagi LGC 1967;
- (c) Chuave NLGC 1961 was joined by Elimbari and Nambaiyufa CDs in 1965 to form Elimbari LGC;
- (d) Gumine LGC 1965;
- (e) Mt Wilhelm LGC 1965;
- (f) Sinasina LGC 1966;
- (g) Salt-Nomane LGC 1970;
- (h) Bomai-Mikaru 1973; and
- (i) Siane LGC (Nambaiyufa CD) broke away from Elimbari in 1974 (Howlett *et al.*, 1976:184).

amalgamation of smaller councils based on a census division into one covering a sub-district, council wards grew to include several smaller clans, which meant there were fewer councillors than previous village officials. Ward elections became competitions between leaders representing clans which - despite the *kiaps'* good intentions - were not always closely allied. Later still the rivalry within clans increased as younger and more confident men entered the arena, bringing new forms of status achieved in business and government, schools and the missions. By the late 1960s councillors were often business-oriented men in their thirties, who had grown up without more than a few years of formal education. While accepted for their skills in the new and wider context, they were nonetheless still young; real authority on internal clan matters generally stayed with the ageing former village officials.

In Chimbu as elsewhere (Jinks 1968), councils were strongly 'sold' by Australian *kiaps*. The official conceptions differed from the hopes of the Simbu, who at first saw these new bodies as greatly hastening the economic development process. The officials intended councils to widen political consciousness and to provide an extension of administrative activities to villages. Councils were officially seen to be part of 'area administration', using their tax base to provide basic infrastructure (such as building roads, schools and aidposts) and even paying for welfare workers. The first flush of enthusiasm for councils was short-lived. By 1964 people in the upper Chimbu were critical of the first council, Waiye, for its alleged ineffectiveness, and did not want a council because it would mean taxation (Criper 1965). The *kiaps* threatened tax collections for areas without a council, thereby overriding that objection, and the prestige of having a council or being a councillor soon led leaders in other parts of Chimbu to follow Waiye and accept councils.

The first major problem for the new councillors lay in their limited powers, especially the lack of an acknowledged dispute settlement role. They had no powers of arrest, and police did not support them. Village officials had been actively encouraged to hear disputes in their groups, and villagers needed this service, but now police and *kiap* support for councillors' unofficial courts vacillated (compare A.M. Strathern 1972a). Against the arguments of senior local government officials, David Fenbury, and many other *kiaps*, the Australian Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, followed the advice of Professor David Derham (1960) and declined to give councillors any formal judicial role (Hasluck 1976; Fenbury 1978; Downs 1980; B.J. Brown (ed.) 1969). Nonetheless councillors informally filled quasi-judicial roles. Also following the recommendations of Derham, the *kiaps'* own police and magisterial roles were reduced in the late 1960s as an indigenous magistracy was hastily trained, which led to a serious gap in dispute-settlement services for rural people.

Councils were not models of local democracy. Councillors tended to see their role as one of command of their people, rather than of representation, which remains an alien concept. They rarely reported back to their constituencies as a whole, and some rarely to their own sub-clans. Tensions with other sub-clans whose candidates have been defeated can cause this reluctance by poorly-paid part-time officials to put in much effort. There is also a desire to monopolize knowledge and hence power, but the lack of feedback could also have come from sheer incomprehension of many agenda items. Government officials often sought to use councillors as a channel to spread their own messages, and only the most astute councillors obtained government action within their electorates.

Councillors, like their predecessor officials, sought to use their positions to obtain individual gain from the state. The issues most frequently raised in council meetings were councillors' own perquisites: monthly allowances, use of council vehicles and 'educational' trips to Port Moresby and Australia at official expense. The Australian administration clearly used these prizes as a reward for political compliance, thereby establishing a tradition which continues, but councillors and officials struggled constantly over the remuneration and privileges of office. For the most part Australian officials kept a brake on these until 1973.

Councils were in the 1960s effectively subordinate to the administration officers and the relationship of most councils to the administration was one of deference. It was only an exceptionally strong councillor, such as Siwi Kurondo, the President of Kerowagi LGC, who could dress down senior officers publicly (Jack Baker, interview 1977). Indigenous council clerks were young, inexperienced and poorly trained, and so the *kiaps* acted as Administrative Advisers to councils (either full- or part-time). In Chimbu *kiaps* sometimes dominated council discussions. In Gumine in 1972 I witnessed a *kiap* take over the president's role as chairman and use the gavel to restore order and redirect a council meeting.

Councils had a limited political role. Local issues which concerned them, apart from standardized rules on pig trespass and village hygiene provided from Port Moresby (which were rarely enforced), were social matters such as repeated attempts to limit bridewealth presentations ('bride price'). Councillors themselves often broke their bridewealth rules in seeking prestige by demanding (and getting) high sums at the marriage of their daughters, or by paying them for at their sons' weddings. From the 1960s they also sought to control the out-migration of young men, and of women as well in the 1970s, so as to retain their taxes as well as their labour and votes.

Wider political concerns only interested the more dynamic councillors who had mastered procedure and dominated the meetings, and whose wards got the bulk of project

funds. These were the men who brought these issues forward to the Annual District Councils Conferences, held with the District Officer (1963-65) and the District Commissioner (1966-72). These conferences, the forerunners of the Area Authority (1972-76), which is discussed in Chapter VI, did not mobilize a Chimbu public, but did help create a Chimbu elite.

Delegates at district councils conferences often expressed concern at the coffee marketing system and sought higher prices. The one political issue councillors took up largely on their own was the demand for more land. They wanted land for resettlement in the Ramu Valley area of the Madang District to the north of Chimbu and several councils even started contributing funds for a road between the upper Chimbu and Bundi areas. Later their concern shifted to resettlement proposals in the Karimui-Bornai areas in southern Chimbu. Other recurrent issues were the desire for more schools, roads and development in general, which they saw as coming from Australia. As talk of self-government and independence rose in the late 1960s, they passed resolutions calling for Australia and Australians to stay, and self-government be delayed.

Senior colonial officials quietly lobbied the dominant councillors before meetings, when they judged that Chimbu interests would benefit if they were articulated by local leaders. Thus resolutions would be pushed through councils and conferences, which local officials used to pressure the central Administration with no overt signs of *kiap* manipulation. One such case was the councils' pressure for full-time *kiap* supervisory staff for their councils (Doolan interview, May 1978). Other cases concerned the creation of the coffee co-operative (see below) and the establishment of Radio Chimbu in January 1973.

Council revenue bases were quite limited. Up to 60 per cent of council revenues came from the central government in direct or indirect subsidy. The most financially successful activities were unglamorous contracts providing cleaning, nightsoil and garbage collection services on government stations and townships for the Administration. A small but steady income came to councils from issuing trade stores with 'Licences to Trade with Natives' costing \$6 each (in 1972 some 2,072 such licences were issued in Chimbu).

Collections of the major indigenous revenue source, personal ('head') tax, were usually well below the nominal potential. Depending on the income from coffee in the council area, head taxes went from \$1 to a peak of \$12 for men, and from nil to \$5 for women in the 1970s. The visiting tax patrol comprized a clerk and perhaps a *kiap*, and a few councillors who formed a tax review committee. The latter often gave exemptions as personal favours, especially to older people, even those with considerable incomes from coffee, while denying them to younger men with low cash incomes. In the 1960s, tax defaulters were prosecuted. In the 1970s, police were instructed not to handle council

matters, including tax summonses and prosecutions, which reinforced the perception of the councils as weak bodies. Avoiding tax merely required being away when the tax patrol arrived. In the 1974/75 financial year tax collections for Kundiawa Council were only K35,000 of the budgeted K60,000, and the following year a considerable shortfall was expected. The senior clerk wrote that the problem was 'endemic' to all councils in Chimbu and the whole Highlands area; the stage was rapidly approaching where costs made head tax collections uneconomic. He proposed a levy on coffee sales so as to equitably spread the burden of local government programmes,³ thereby foreshadowing a later struggle over control of this potentially valuable revenue source. By the end of the 1970s, not surprisingly, councils' tax collections were negligible, their works programmes had declined markedly and councillors lacked real power and even prestige. Kundiawa council became effectively bankrupt and was suspended from 1976, its affairs run by an administrator.

Councils repeatedly sought to enter business ventures, intending to raise revenues. Although properly based in law in the *Local Government Ordinance*, and often desired by the council *kiaps*, such activities were strongly discouraged by local government supervisors at district level. Repeated attempts by councils to combine to build a hostel and/or buy the hotel in Kundiawa foundered, perhaps to the relief of officials. Substantial business activities were permitted, when they provided services required by government officials, missionaries and business people alike. At least three timber mills were started by councils in Chimbu, only to fail. There were also pig, cattle and chicken breeding projects, wholesaling and blanket-weaving enterprises and, later, vehicle-hire and wholesale service for village trade stores. All such activities were opened with great ceremony and a feast which served to boost the proprietors' prestige.⁴ Advisers played up this desire for a prestige show in order to boost their own pet projects. Not unreasonably, officials were concerned about management. Few people were employed, but nepotism was commonly alleged and officials often claimed that councillors themselves consumed potential profits.

Council financial impropriety had become publicly accepted by the 1970s. Councillors themselves often avoided paying tax (as they sheepishly or brazenly admitted when publicly challenged on this by advisers), and there were a number of proven cases in the mid-1970s of councillors and tax clerks failing to pass on monies collected. The moral indignation displayed by other councillors when such cases were raised at public meetings

³ W.F. Ammerman, Kundiawa LGC to DC, Chimbu 25 August 1975.

⁴ In 1970 I attended the massive opening ceremony for a timber mill near Wongoi in Elimbari (Chuave); the mill soon failed, but the ceremony was remembered in 1987. From later observation of such occasions it appeared to me that sometimes the celebration mattered as much to the leaders as the enterprise.

was minimal. One notoriously dishonest council clerk was convicted by district supervisors, others resigned or even continued their work with the protection of councillors. Two stood for parliament, one successfully. Nominally subordinate to the council executive committee (comprised of the president and a few leading councillors), the clerks themselves became patrons through their control of council resources.⁵ The *kiaps* sought to check these practices, but the villagers could see them and the councillors were as often as not resented as wasters and indeed thieves - an attitude mollified, of course, if one was a recipient of a lift in a council car.

Lack of resources was a major weakness of councils. They had a low income base, little plant and few skilled staff to use it. Initial funds were used to build up reserves. Then, after an early rush of capital project expenditure, budgets increasingly were required for maintenance of existing projects. Thus new works slowed down, which reduced public enthusiasm.

The district's perennial shortages of skilled staff, equipment and funds led the *kiaps* in 1963 to set up a Council Equipment Pool, so as to avoid duplication of purchases and provide central maintenance facilities for road plant. The first Chimbu-wide, government body under nominally indigenous control, this was formalized in 1967 as the Chimbu Councils Services Unit (CCSU), an incorporated body with capital contributions from the six constituent councils. The CCSU engaged in building, maintenance, roadworks, equipment hire, vehicle maintenance and fuel and hardware sales for councils and private individuals. Like the works programmes of councils themselves, the success or failure of the CCSU depended upon the quality of the expatriate management at the time. The unit existed for eight years but was not often profitable. Councils themselves duplicated its activities, but lacked the skilled staff to keep plant operative. This was the first major enterprise established in the name of elected politicians in Simbu, and although its effective control stayed with expatriate officers it served as something of a counterweight to the coffee co-operative, which was similarly managed in the name of a rival elite of local leaders.

Like the councils themselves, the CCSU was an avenue for local Simbu politicians to show their capacity to operate within the state system, to learn how the administration operated, and - if successful - to gain resources for their electoral base. Through patronage, the government officials were able to reward those Simbu politicians who complied with the rules and restrictions imposed by the colonial administration. This was

⁵ Council vehicles, for instance, were often used by councillors for private purposes in very public abuse of office, such as transport to a beer party. Their awareness of the abuse of office gave the clerks considerable political leverage.

dependent politics among a group of people - perhaps 150 councillors in all - who had very little education and capacity to independently manipulate the rules of government on their own behalf. They were dependent on expatriate advisers and clerical staff, at the very least, and frequently were in a symbiotic relationship with expatriate officials. They each needed the other, to justify their own role, and were each likely to be challenged by the generation emerging from upper secondary and tertiary institutions in the late 1960s.

Chimbu Coffee

Almost all adult Simbu, except those at the highest altitudes, grow coffee. The peak of the harvest, known as the 'flush',⁶ occurs from April to August, with a higher flush on alternate years.⁷ In 1973 about 40,000 smallholders in Chimbu grew an average of 189 kg of parchment coffee (valued at \$93) on an average of 0.1 ha each (Howlett *et al.* 1976:219, 220, 227), and few individual growers made much money. As the sole export industry, coffee cannot but be the object of political interest, and because it became central to Chimbu politics in the 1970s, further background is required at this stage.

In the coffee industry the large profits lie in marketing and processing. Mobile coffee buyers are funded with cash advances by processors.⁸ The factories carry the costs of the crop purchase until they can sell to exporters, and so themselves borrow considerable working capital for 'crop finance'. The factories' prices depend in part on their export contracts and, the managers argue, closely follow world price trends, although Stewart (1986) argues that this is one of the 'pinch points' in the marketing chain where the producers are 'squeezed' (exploited).

After allowing for processing costs, the factories in Chimbu suggest suitable roadside buying prices to coffee buyers (be they salaried workers, contracted or freelance operators), a system which allows a margin to cover collection costs⁹. The buyers' greatest expense is keeping a 1-tonne 4-wheel-drive truck on the road with its minimum crew of four.

⁶ The Chimbu use of the term 'flush' differs from that reported by Stewart (1986) for whom the 'flush' is the higher peak of the bi-annual crop cycle.

⁷ Women and children, and men, pick coffee cherries and the red pulpy skin is then removed with fingers and teeth or a less labour-intensive hulling machine. The beans are then washed, fermented, and dried to the parchment stage, after which smallholders and their wives sell parchment coffee at the roadside. Individual growers' allocations of the resulting income differ; often in Simbu wives retain cash from coffee they have harvested, but then spend it on the family, not themselves (cf. H. Barnes 1981).

⁸ At the processing factories the coffee is machine-dried and sorted. The parchment skin is removed and the resulting green bean polished before sale to exporters, usually (for smallholder coffee) as 'Y' grade Arabica.

⁹ This approach differs from that in the Eastern Highlands (reported in Stewart 1986).

Depending on the degree of competition, which may lead to brawls as buyers try to stake out exclusive territories, buyers try to pay smallholders as little as possible for their crop. Smallholders in remote areas have little choice of buyers. They may not dry the coffee well and some increase the weight with pebbles. 'Wet' coffee or damaged beans all reduce the factories' profitability. Dramatic price fluctuations are common, so coffee is a risky industry which requires hard labour, a shrewd mind, good local knowledge, a tough personality and sometimes a quick fist. At any stage of the chain, too many scruples can hinder profitability.

Coffee growing was promoted from 1950 by the Administration, which provided the initial buying service, but the crop soon grew too large for the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries (DASF) to handle. In the late 1950s European buyers based in Goroka and the Wahgi Valley came into Chimbu, and then a factory was set up at the Chimbu River (P = *Wara Simbu*) by Goroka businessman Jim Leahy, brother of pioneer Mick. The Leahys, who are business and marriage partners with the Collins family (also from Queensland), by then dominated retailing in Chimbu and the western Eastern Highlands. A young coffee buyer, Mike Collins, 'a big raw-boned Irish Australian' (CCC 1975:5), was the first factory manager. Laurie Doolan, then Deputy DC, had considerable previous experience with co-operatives and saw a chance to create a large co-operative to buy and process the crop, so Simbu would profit further from their only industry. With official approval he enlisted Kondom Agaundo, President of Waiye Council, to help *kiaps* promote the co-operative. Funds, in £1 (\$2) shares, were collected by Cooperatives Division officers to buy out the Leahys' factory.

The Kundiawa Coffee Society, later the Chimbu Coffee Co-operative Limited (CCC) but generally known as 'the Society', was set up in 1964.¹⁰ Collins stayed on as manager for 18 months. In its first years coffee prices were high and the CCC was profitable. But more funds were needed to buy the growing harvest and to expand the plant, so further calls were made for share contributions. A *kiap* involved in share collection patrols says official 'sales talk' falsely raised expectations of high profitability (pers. comm. 1975). With falling prices and a rapid turnover of managers in the late 1960s, profits fell and with it the loyalty of its 17,000 members who had (by 1970) paid up to \$320,000 of an authorized \$500,000 share capital. No satisfactory means was ever devised to pay shareholders with rebates for coffee supplied. By 1969 the co-operative had expanded into wholesaling of tradestore goods, which were 'backloaded' to remote areas on empty coffee trucks, but this operation was unprofitable. The Society's first plant was small and inefficient, and staff

¹⁰ For its early history see Singh 1974:128-45; Cartledge 1978:237-42 and Chimbu Coffee Co-operative Limited 1975.

numbers grew dramatically. At one stage the complex was one of the major brothels servicing the Highlands Highway. In 1970 the banks were unwilling to provide crop finance and the CCC faced bankruptcy.

The political function of CCC for the Chimbu people and the Administration was far more than its symbolic role as the district's only big (Simbu-owned) business. By the mid-1960s a select few young Simbu were buying coffee, and from the late 1960s some bought on their own account. The CCC was the largest co-operative in the country, and had even exported directly. It was largely a government creation; indeed very close personal relationships existed between managers' families and those of senior officials. CCC competed with expatriate firms from Goroka and the Wahgi Valley to buy the Chimbu crop from smallholders at the roadside. Not surprisingly, the CCC's advantages were opposed by Australian competitors, planters and traders in neighbouring districts. There was also sustained opposition from politicians and other Simbu who had separate buying arrangements with expatriates, or marriage links, or both. The CCC involved as directors, staff and buyers some of the best known Simbu, and/or their families, so prestige and incomes were at stake. None of these prominent people could afford to see the enterprise collapse, even if there were to be a full return of capital to shareholders.¹¹

At the time of the 1968 House of Assembly election the expatriate general manager, Eric Pyne, declared and distributed a small dividend. Not surprisingly, with a minimal campaign he won the Chimbu Regional seat, which covered the entire district. The CCC foundered in the next two years as the result of poor management, unprofitably low-priced forward-sales contracts and lax supervision of staff. During an official investigation Pyne left the country and resigned from the House late in 1969. Subsequently the wholesale trading arm was sold off. The Administration put forward legislation to guarantee bank loans for crop finance up to \$300,000, on condition that Mike Collins was brought back in as general manager. With a reputation for toughness, Collins had become a successful trader and coffee processor in the Eastern Highlands. He was appointed early in 1970, having negotiated a three year contract at \$20,000 p.a.,¹² with the use of a large house and fine grounds, a vehicle and one domestic servant, plus a bonus of 5 per cent (later 10 per cent) on net annual profits over \$100,000, terms which later caused some controversy.

Within two years of his appointment, Collins had returned CCC to profitability. One of Collins's first actions was to drastically reduce staff numbers, and he terminated all part-time staff, a move which had considerable repercussions. Collins was aided by the

¹¹ I am grateful to Randal Stewart for discussion on this point.

¹² As an indication of relativities, that was three times a UPNG lecturer's salary at that time.

Australian Administration, which guaranteed Reserve Bank loans for crop finance, and by the national Coffee Marketing Board. The CMB (later Coffee Industries Board), based in Goroka, was a body of ministerial appointees with a professional staff, charged with protecting the interest of the coffee growers of PNG (Cartledge 1978; Stewart 1986). The CMB agreed to institute licensed dealers' plates to reduce competition from outside buyers within a gazetted area¹³. Under pressure from the colonial administration, almost all the 40 plates legally required to buy coffee in Chimbu were issued to the Chimbu Coffee Co-operative. The 'plate' system, contentious from the start,¹⁴ effectively guaranteed the CCC enough turnover in a restricted market to return to profitability and declare a 6 per cent dividend before the 1972 national election. Chimbu Coffee was well on the national political agenda long before the co-operative's Chairman, Kelale Wel, campaigned, unsuccessfully, for Sinasina Open electorate in 1972 using posters which Collins had formally authorized (Kuabaal 1976).

Chimbu Coffee continued to be a central issue in Simbu politics through the 1970s, and is discussed further later in this chapter. Although nominally privately-owned and controlled by a board chosen by shareholders' delegates, it depended upon state inputs and guarantees for its crop and its finances, which made it politically vulnerable. It was a potential political resource waiting to be utilized by elected Simbu politicians in the name of the state and Simbu people.

The PNG House of Assembly

Despite official attempts at 'political education', the anthropologist Criper (1965) reported that the 1964 elections for the House of Assembly created bafflement among village voters and candidates alike, plus some officials as well. For many Simbu, this was their first experience of an election. Enrolment was compulsory for those over twenty-one years, although voting itself was not. Any voter eligible on residential criteria could stand for election, on payment of £A25 (\$A50) deposit, refundable if he (or she) gained 10 per cent of the winner's vote.

In the first instance there were four Open electorates in the district, named Chimbu (covering Kundiawa, Gembogl and parts of Sinasina sub-district), Sinasina (including part

13 The boundaries were gazetted to include the Watabung area of the Eastern Highlands District, west of the Daulo Pass, where there were many CCC shareholders. The desire to protect the CCC is shown in the direct link between the gazetted boundary and the shareholders' territory.

14 Even Mike's cousin, Tom Leahy MHA, said that it was not possible to exclude efficient outside buyers, thereby creating an artificial situation of monopoly and inefficiency which would collapse and hurt native growers. 'It will blow up in our faces', he predicted (*House of Assembly Debates (HAD)*, 18 March 1970, pp 2594 ff.).

of Chuave), Kerowagi and Gumine (including Karimui, Bomai and Nomane). Simbu and Australian expatriates alike could nominate for these Open seats.

In 1964 people in Chimbu could also vote for the Special Electorate which covered the entire Highlands.¹⁵ For the Highlands Special there were two candidates: Ian Downs, the former patrol officer and DC, later coffee planter and member of the Legislative Council, and Dennis (later Sir Dennis) Buchanan, proprietor of the third-level airline, Talair, based in Goroka. Criper (1965) says these two were barely known in the Upper Chimbu valley, but both visited briefly. Buchanan created much interest by bombarding people with leaflets from his aircraft, but the better known Downs won with a 77 per cent majority.

The 1964 elections were so quiet the deputy DC was concerned beforehand that there might be insufficient nominations (Doolan interview, May 1978). Voting was held in February-March, before coffee incomes expanded peoples' wallets. On average, five men nominated for the Open seats: Chimbu (eleven), Chuave (four), Gumine (two) and Kerowagi (five). Two Europeans stood, both men with trading and coffee buying interests and Chimbu wives; both polled strongly. After the *kiaps* had explained the possibility of splitting an area's votes, there were negotiations towards preselection - a move to put up only one Upper Chimbu candidate in order to prevent someone from another area winning - but this attempt broke down (Criper 1965). The Simbu men who became candidates were mostly older men of renown, some of them village officials and councillors, subsistence farmers who had made their 'names' in the context of traditional exchange. Matters such as continued Australian rule and development were not contentious, because these were sought by all candidates. The candidates moved around the Chimbu electorate as a group, merely introducing themselves, saying in similar pat formula speeches that they were already known to the people and would talk out 'strongly' for them in this big new council in Port Moresby down at the sea (Criper 1965).

An 'optional preference' (elsewhere called 'transfer vote') system was used, whereby voters after giving their first preference could then opt to rank any of the remaining candidates. If no candidate had an absolute majority of valid first preference votes on the first count, the candidate with the lowest total was eliminated and his voters' second preferences were transferred at full value to the remaining candidates. The distribution process continued thus until a candidate gained an absolute majority of the votes remaining

¹⁵ The Special electorate was like the large outside frame of a multi-panelled window, with the Open electorates forming the inner panes. The ten Special members were intended to perform a tutelary role for the Open members, and only expatriates could stand for these electorates. The Special seats were intended to calm fears of rapid decolonization among expatriates and indigenous people alike.

in the count.¹⁶ This process could lead to the defeat of the first count front-runner, who under a 'first past the post' simple plurality system would have won.

Rather than establishing a zero-sum mind-set in which anyone's gain was automatically a loss to others, the preference system was intended to encourage co-operation between candidates. Clans or allied groups with opposing candidates could assist each other, knowing that if one lost his preferences could still go to a closely allied candidate, provided enough second preferences (known as '*namba tu vot*') had been indicated. A large group fielding two or more candidates could still elect a representative, provided preferences stayed tight, requiring good will between candidates in the campaign period.

So far as can be determined, the winners were those whose area of potential votes was least split by rivals. Aside from the Australian *ex-kiap* (Graham Pople) elected in Gumine, who had earlier run political education patrols there, the Simbu MHAs were a council vice-president and former medical orderly and *tutul* (Waie Siune), a *ex-policeman*, businessman and council president (Siwi Kurondo), and a village official and small businessman (Yauwe Wauwe Moses) who when his area obtained a council, was elected to that body. Together they epitomized the Simbu colonial elite. The turnout of voters ranged from 45 to 75 per cent of those enrolled. In order to for a candidate to emerge with a majority of votes, several counts of votes were needed in which preferences (which some people had allocated) were distributed to the remaining candidates. Despite the massive administrative effort, the elections as a whole did not have a significant impact on village life.

The lives of these Simbu members were changed, however, a fact noticed by other men of ambition in status-conscious Simbu. MHAs received substantial salaries (\$1,900 p.a.), free travel and travelling allowances of \$10.50 p.d. plus a \$50.00 p.a. postage and telephone allowance. Many also were taken on overseas 'political education' study tours, mainly to Australia. Generally they concentrated on building up their *bisnis* activities at home, sometimes using their influence to gain access to government and private credit, and technical help from Chimbu-based public servants. Some of these men are still prominent, with coffee-buying vehicles, large stores, retail liquor licences, cattle projects and so on, and they could afford to send their children to high school. Renowned in their own clans and tribes, they were accorded respect by black and white alike in Kundiawa, even though in Port Moresby they sometimes appeared to act like dependent puppets of the colonial regime. Beyond their own clans, they were widely criticized for failing to report back to their whole electorate about parliament and its alien rituals.

¹⁶ An example of such a count is given in Table V.4, Appendix 1.

A prestigious new arena had been opened, which for some successful candidates provided power in the state, for others influence. Many more resources became available to the new national members. Like the village officials and councillors, these men had used their bases in clans and tribes to gain state office, and then utilized the perquisites of office to strengthen their position within their groups. Thus political office was translated into status and prestige. This process, which continues, was a modification of the precolonial leaders' technique of mediation between kinship groups, and gaining political resources from that role. The mechanism was similar, but the scale of the spheres between which the new MHAs moved had increased markedly. With political time, political space had expanded.

The first House as a whole had a limited effect on territory-wide affairs, and the politicians who were elected from Simbu had little impact except by supporting the colonial regime. As Highlanders, they mostly wanted to delay decolonization. The exception was the former policeman, Siwi Kurondo of Kerowagi, who consistently voted with the nationalist group which in 1967 became the Pangu Pati (Papua and New Guinea Union Party) (Loveday and Wolfers 1976: 36). Like the Australian members, the indigenous MHAs shared a fear of Indonesian expansionism, a fear then prevalent in Chimbu (Criper 1965: 137) and in PNG overall (Nelson 1974), but in general parochial concerns overrode national affairs. No MHA from Chimbu became an under-secretary, the ill-defined and powerless quasi-ministerial training position that was created for the first House (Parker 1966a:257-58; Parker and Wolfers 1971:27; Meller 1968:3-5).

In 1968 the four Special electorates were abolished in favour of fifteen Regional seats, generally one per district. For Regional candidacy there was no racial qualification but instead a prerequisite of Territory Intermediate (Year 9) or its equivalent education, which excluded all but a few educated (and hence young) indigenes. Chimbu Regional was won by the CCC manager Pyne, in competition with the sitting Gumine MHA¹⁷ and an audacious but polite secondary teacher trainee, Godfrey Agen Dua from Sinasina.

Chimbu gained another Open seat in 1968, Sinasina, and that year political competition increased greatly. The DC commented that the elections were seen as 'something of a lottery', with parliamentary office 'a political plum worth picking' (PNG 1968:36). On average, there were 13.4 candidates (all male) per Open seat in Chimbu in 1968 compared with the national average of 6.3. Again there was a 74 per cent voter turnout. But campaigning was fairly quiet, with repetitive agreement amongst the candidates that they wanted to defer self-government and eventual independence.

¹⁷ Pople, a coffee buyer and trader, allegedly visited his Gumine electorate rarely and reportedly was unpopular there by 1968.

Candidates drilled the public more effectively in the use of preferences, and - as elsewhere - these were used effectively. In Chimbu, preferences enabled three candidates to overtake the leaders on the first counts and eventually to win.

Building on strong bases as local big-men, two of the three incumbent Open members were re-elected, so there was little change. One was the Chuave MHA, Yauwe Moses, *ex-luluai*, thriving businessman and council president. Also returned, after several counts, was Siwi Kurondo of Kerowagi.¹⁸ Kurondo left Pangu, which opted for the role of 'loyal opposition', in order to accept the new post of Assistant Ministerial Member for Forests. His rural business interests grew but he kept up the almost ostentatious scruffiness affected by some older Simbu leaders¹⁹.

As elsewhere in the Highlands, the Chimbu consensus was against all political parties (jokes about beer parties aside) because the first viable party was the anti-colonial Pangu identified by Highlands MHAs and their expatriate Australian *eminences grises* as dangerous 'coastals'. An official political education leaflet (quoted in Loveday and Wolfers 1976: 16-17) had described a political party as 'a group of like-minded people who aim at gaining power in the Government of a self-governing country', something very few Highlanders wanted PNG to become, at that time. In the 1960s, anyone who spoke favourably of independence was seen as radical. The Administration appointed four Highlands DCs or ex-DCs (but not Doolan) as official members in the second House and with their lobbying could muster sufficient support to act like the majority political party - without using that label, of course.

In their hostility to parties and constitutional change in general, most Highlanders were influenced by expatriate businessmen-politicians, several of whom were elected in 1968 and immediately set about organising in opposition to Pangu. They initiated an Independent (Members) Group with a strong Highlands component which ultimately converted itself into the United Party. This group was able to dominate the House till the 1972 election (Woolford 1973; Stephen 1972; Loveday and Wolfers 1976).

Two points about these early elections are noteworthy. First, alcohol had become legally available to indigenes in 1962, but was not widely used by Simbu till much later in the decade. However, according to a missionary witness (pers. comm. 1977), one expatriate candidate in 1964 did 'treat' some of his supporters generously, with a mobile

18 On hearing he was losing on the first count, Kurondo put an axe through his radio.

19 Once Siwi Kurondo arrived at his departmental headquarters in Port Moresby, dressed in his bush gear, only to be told by the stiffly groomed white receptionist '*Nogat wok!*' (E = There are no jobs here). He patted her arm and gently told her '*Torait misis. Mi ministra bilong yu*' (E = It's OK, madam, I'm your minister), but fifteen years later while verifying the story was still not amused.

beer party in his jeep. Such behaviour would have broken the Criminal Code which then, as now, prohibits 'treating' which is defined as giving liquor to influence votes.

The second is that, despite commonly professed colonial attitudes, there were some Highlands candidates who wanted change in a hurry. One such was the young mechanic Iambakey Okuk, who contested the Regional seat for the Western Highlands where he had been brought up by the Simbu policeman, Corporal Okuk, and worked at Wabag.

Despite Iambakey's protestations that he was a good Western Highlander, did not want political independence for the Territory and belonged to no political party, his name became inextricably associated with that of Pangu. (Colebatch *et al.* 1971: 271)

Hence he was thought to favour early self-government and independence, and to oppose the Australian Administration. He spoke of his friendship at Sogeri High School with Pangu leader Michael Somare, yet presented himself as a regionalist advocating Highlands rather than national goals (Hal Colebatch, pers. comm. 1977).

There was no 'Yessir' in Iambakey's political vocabulary: he was prepared to argue with the European candidates and stand up to cross examination. (Colebatch *et al.* 1971: 272)

Although he lost that election to an Australian planter, Okuk's 1968 campaign in the neighbouring province was a sign of things to come in Chimbu.

1970 By-election

When a by-election was called after Eric Pyne's departure, Okuk quickly moved back to Kundiawa and became a part-time mechanic at Chimbu Coffee. Barely known in Chimbu, where some called him a 'Hagener', he started campaigning for the Regional seat. His job provided transport and enabled him to build up local support, an early illustration of how employment can help a candidate and of the central place of CCC in the politics of Chimbu. Collins has said that in removing all part-timers he was unaware of sacking a candidate (interview, 7 July 1972), but also that he gave Okuk the choice of staying as a mechanic or leaving for politics, and he left (*National Times*, July 1-6, 1974). Okuk took a strongly critical and even nationalist stance on most issues and lived up to his 'radical' reputation, and so once again was painted with the Pangu brush. He spent over \$1,000 in an energetic campaign, and later worked briefly (and unsuccessfully) as a coffee buyer for the Society (Hatanaka 1970; Standish 1976a).

Entry to the Chimbu elite was widening, and political competition intensifying. Several young Chimbu returned home hoping to campaign in the by-election, but some,

including Mathew Numambo Siune,²⁰ dropped out when the conservative banner was taken up by the 'retired' missionary Fr John Nilles. Nilles stood following the suggestion of council presidents, MHAs and 'Administration people' (*House of Assembly Debates, HAD*, 3 September 1970:3069) including the DC but not, he said, because of the DC (pers. comm. 1976). He styled himself '*Papa Nilles*'. The rhetoric of Okuk excepted, the Simbu debate was indeed paternalist in 1970. During a hard-fought campaign Nilles received considerable material support from the airline operator Buchanan, who was by now the Independent Group MHA for Eastern Highlands. Also standing were an Australian businessman (Graham Gilmore) who was a former Eastern Highlands MHA, an agronomist from Gulf District based in Chuave (Francis X. Irere), and a second Simbu, a Lutheran expatrol officer from Sinasina (Gela Dom) who was also considered radical, which meant anti-colonial.²¹

Probably because of poor outreach by candidates and because people lacked the stimulus for voting for their favourite sons in concurrent elections for Open seats, only 37.5 per cent of enrolled persons voted. Nilles won with 46 per cent of the valid primary vote, Okuk gained 15 per cent and Gela Dom was only 47 votes behind him, with the Australian, Gilmore, and the Papuan, Irere, gaining 11 and 13 per cent respectively.²² Dom's votes were concentrated in his home area, whereas those of Nilles and Okuk were fairly widely spread. As he had intended, Okuk had made his name for the 1972 election.

Given the size of the Regional electorate, resources other than a clan base were needed to win. Several people with mission backgrounds had stood unsuccessfully in previous elections without sectarianism becoming an issue, but this changed in 1970. To an extent Okuk tried to identify himself with the Lutheran Church. Nilles was undoubtedly helped by Catholic churchmen, especially catechists, but sectarian tensions were not stirred by the two leading candidates. Officials took extreme precautions to balance the denominational composition of polling team members, in order to avoid charges of bias from the losers. The suggestion that Nilles, and/or his supporters, had abused his church position came from Gilmore - himself a Catholic. The results did not obviously indicate voting on denominational lines, which could only be assessed by a detailed examination of voting figures for areas which were 'neutral' in kinship terms (those which had no ties with any candidates), and where the candidates had different church membership. The potential

20 Mathew Siune had failed UPNG preliminary year and worked as an interpreter at the House of Assembly, and later with the Development Bank (Standish 1976a:321 ff).

21 My thanks to Hal Colebatch and David Hegarty who kindly gave access to their field observations on this by-election.

22 The final count was Nilles 18,496, Okuk 6,084, Dom 5,887 and Irere 4,949 after excluding Gilmore (4,258), whose 2,121 preferences went 1,382 to Nilles and 339 to Okuk (Kelly 1970).

influence of church workers as community leaders was, however, seen by political actors as significant.

Once again externally induced constitutional factors were about to change the rules of politics for Simbu players. These changes were precipitated, not by PNG nationalism but by the anti-colonial zeal of the Australian Labor Party and Opposition Leader, Gough Whitlam, who announced policies for rapid decolonization when he visited in December-January 1969-70 (Johnson 1983). The 1969-70 campaign of the Mataungan Association in East New Britain against multi-racial councils and for land also contributed to the hastening of decolonization. Australia did not want to be in charge of a United Nations trusteeship which it could not control; these events placed PNG on the agenda of the conservative Australian government, which then initiated the transfers of certain powers at a time when most Papua New Guineans did not even wish to discuss dates for self-government (Wolfers 1976).

In his visit of July 1970, Australian Prime Minister John Gorton unilaterally announced the transfer of executive powers over many domestic issues to the ministerial members in the Administrator's Executive Council (AEC), thereby precipitating the formation of three new political parties additional to Pangu to seek control of the constitutional process - the Peoples Progress Party (PPP), the Niugini National Party and the Combined Political Association (Compass). The latter, as Wolfers (1976) put it, articulated a 'more indigenous' conservatism. Fr Nilles joined Compass, which was soon renamed the United Party (UP). On his election he had said his decisions would not 'be influenced by any party platform or [alluding to the church] by any organized institution. I shall be responsible to my conscience and to God' (*HAD*, 3 September 1970: 3069). Generally conservative on matters of constitutional change, Nilles basically kept a low political profile. He became a Kundiawa councillor, however, and pushed for the creation of an Area Authority for the district, based upon the councils. This initiative, which had also been foreshadowed by Gorton, is discussed in Chapter VI. Once again, Chimbu politicians were seeking to adopt new structures and arenas, which had been determined elsewhere, into their internal politics.

The 1972 national election

In observing the 1972 House of Assembly campaigns I concentrated on the Regional seat and looked for signs of mobilization and radicalism with modernization (Standish 1976a). Modernization theorists argue that as the economy and politics become more differentiated, as roads open up travel and as a common language, formal education and news media spread new ideas, so too political mobilization becomes not only possible but

likely. My interest was whether this would lead to the growth of parties and mass movements using broad - even nationalist - policy or ideological appeals rather than parochial ones, and I doubted that Highlanders were 'conservative'. In Africa as in coastal PNG, politics in the new state organs had been taken over by well educated - and hence young - people, who apparently demonstrated what Staniland (1969:154) called the 'modern young man hypotheses'. Several such educated young men stood for the Chimbu Regional seat (see Table V.1 in Appendix 1 for their personal details), so I decided to focus specifically on their attempts to create wider political publics and indeed a new political arena: the Chimbu District as a whole. The 1970 by-election had demonstrated the potential use of the churches as political resources and the conflict between those with dependent colonial and bitterly anti-colonial sentiments.

The 1972 Open campaigns followed a pattern now familiar. In the 1972 House there were seven Open seats within Chimbu Regional (see Map V:1).²³ An average of ten men stood per seat in Chimbu, compared to a national average below seven, which again reflects rising competition. As in subsequent elections, some of the key decisions over who would nominate were made in private. One ultimate winner allegedly used a carton of beer to persuade an established local politician not to stand. Candidates' personal backgrounds and occupations are given in Tables V.1 and V.2. Open seat candidates were younger, more travelled and slightly more educated than those who stood in 1964 and 1968. Their average age was 37 years, and that of winners 38. Two winners were in their twenties: John Kaupa, a hospital secretary from Chuave who had covered his whole electorate on foot, and Kobale Kale, who had covered the entire Sinasina electorate well, distributing and planting seedling trees while helping a forestry officer. Kobale reaped a harvest of reaped second preferences from areas where he was a 'neutral' figure, and over eleven counts he rose from third to first place (Kuabaal 1976). Kaupa and Kobale were more anti-colonial than their rivals, but they were also the only ones to campaign extensively through their entire electorates.²⁴ Few Open candidates risked opening up inter-group conflicts by campaigning stridently beyond their own or closely related clans, although once again they sought preferences and cooperated with candidates in other areas.

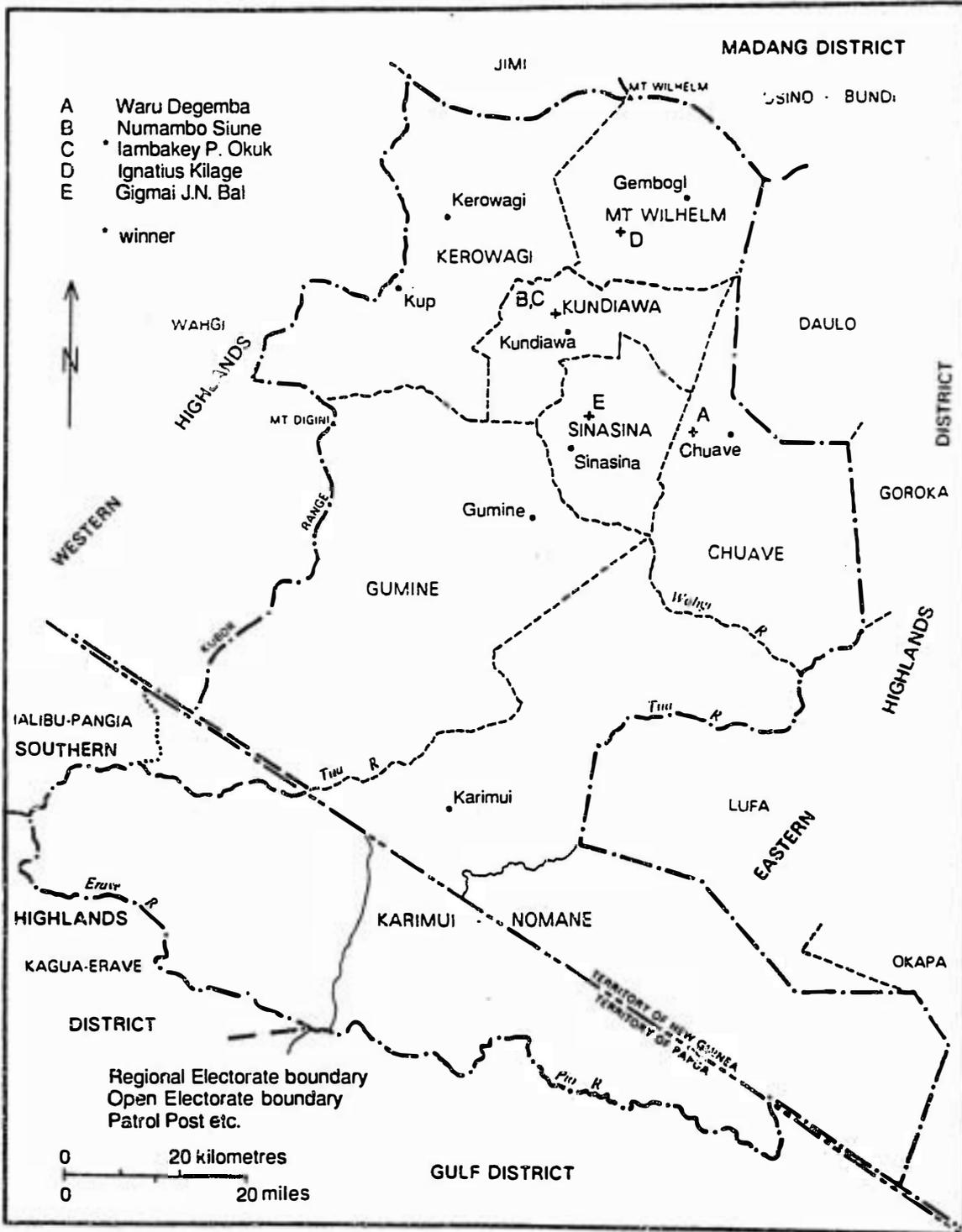
Although the Open electorate campaigns were parochial contests, elements of party politics were grafted onto some campaigns which were intense. The sympathies of the Kerowagi MHA, Siwi Kurondo, towards Pangu, as well as long-standing local tensions, led Wahgi speaking people in Kup Census Division to chase Kurondo away when he, as

²³ With a quota per seat of 30,000 people, this was one more than the number justified by the 1971 Census which gave Chimbu a population of 169,000 people.

²⁴ Detailed figures from the returning officers, however, indicated that Kaupa gained very few votes outside his natal census division of Chuave.

Map V.1

CHIMBU REGIONAL ELECTORATE 1972



Forests Minister, also campaigned in the guise of distributing seedlings. Kup people had already in September 1971 torn down the newly-adopted national flag in symbolic protest against impending self-government. Only five of the 61 Open candidates in Chimbu were anti-colonial; self-proclaimed UP supporters predominated.

In the Regional contest, Iambakey Okuk this time claimed Simbu identity, using the middle name 'Palma', which he said was that of his dead father, who had been a prominent Kamanegu leader.²⁵ He thus made an implicit appeal to the dogma of inherited leadership capabilities. Running as a non-party independent, he eased his stridency on self-government and independence issues, saying they would come inevitably, just as the hands of a clock keep turning, and were not issues he could influence. Using *Tokpisin* at public meetings, however, he displayed nationalism and used populist appeals when he accused the expatriate businessmen behind the UP of being parasites. Appealing to Chimbu suspicions of outsiders, he said these businessmen used tricks, like fattening a chicken before the slaughter or baiting a fish-hook, before grabbing power. He claimed that he had told the Chimbu Coffee directors how to run the Society, and gave a precursor of a later crusade.

Collins and Leahy (*sic*) does not like me. Why? I know. He gets \$24,000 a year. He doesn't work properly. Kicks the workers in the backside. I say vote me in. Are you afraid? Don't you believe in your black skin? You have been saying 'Yes! Yes! Yes!' for how long?

He did not want to expel whites, he said, but knew how to deal with exploiters. He was not seeking money or fame for himself. 'I want to work for you. I won't get a car or a big house. I'll stay in a thatch-roofed house and be one of you, a real New Guinean, not a *masta man*' (E= a black-skinned boss like a white). His jibes won laughter from councillors and market crowds alike, while his UP rivals said Okuk would be powerless if elected, because political action required being part of the majority.

Party organization as such was non-existent. An attempt to set up a Pangu branch failed and Okuk and others had disrupted meetings intended to establish a UP branch. Although from differing parts of the province, Okuk's conservative opponents (the high school teachers Waru Degemba, Joe Bal and the bank official Mathew Siune) did not coordinate their efforts or trade recommendations on preferences, and so pulled each other down. Some like-minded younger men tried to coordinate the actions of Okuk and the anti-colonial Simbu priest, Fr Ignatius (later Sir Ignatius) Kilage from Kanggiri in the Upper Chimbu, so there would only be one 'radical' candidate. Pride, conflicting ambitions and possibly the group basis of voting support got the better of them, however. By standing,

²⁵ Rev. Bergmann, after decades at Ega mission (see Map II.5), had no knowledge of this man, who had lived less than a mile away on the Porol escarpment (interview, May 1978).

Kilage had ensured that Nilles did not stand, and the older priest - and some church workers - supported Kilage. Table V.4 shows that even in a Chimbu-wide contest, most candidates' support was highly concentrated in their home electorates. However Nilles had failed to sway the voters in Upper Chimbu towards Kilage, who won only 817 votes in his home Open electorate, Mt Wilhelm, and came third there behind Okuk with 2,045 and Siune 976. Okuk, once again, gathered a remarkably wide spread of votes and so won the Regional contest after preferences were counted (see Table V.5), closely followed by Waru Degemba whose vote was heavily concentrated in his home Open electorate, Chuave, Kerowagi (where he had taught) and Gumine.

Many candidates had posters printed, but it was not an expensive campaign. Few owned vehicles and any use of official cars caused controversy. Since 1968, however, liquor had entered the traditional exchanges as part of bridewealth and death payments, and beer played a small part in the 1972 elections. Kuabaal (1976:363) writes nicely of the ineffectiveness of 'treating' at the Kundiawa Hotel:

While providing all the drinks [the candidate] was constantly telling them that if he won they would all be drinking like this; therefore, if they desired to continue to have free hospitality they must all vote for him. Of course the guests agreed in principle, but they changed their minds when in the company of other candidates, or when no drinks were bought for them when the man came to the hotel next time.

The impact of the beer on voting is difficult to evaluate, but - in contrast to the 1977 and 1982 elections - random treating (whether giving out individual 330 ml 'stubby' bottles at forty cents or cartons of two dozen at \$8.40) was rare. There was little cash around in 1972, given low coffee prices and it being the off-season. Ordinarily a Simbu would only drink in a hotel with those with whom he had a strong relationship of trust: friendship if not kinship.²⁶ This is partly because of the occasional eruptions of violence and the simple need for security. But as Reay points out (pers. comm. 1980), elections are unusual times when people drink more freely.

All five sitting members stood again in the Open contests in 1972, but only one, the former interpreter Ninkama Bomai of Gumine, was re-elected. By 1972 there was widespread cynicism in Chimbu about politicians, their promises and their absences. In many rural areas my own queries and reports from resident foreigners (such as missionaries and anthropologists) indicated low interest in the campaign. The Open seat voting figures highlighted two trends, a low vote, and the block nature of clan voting discussed next.

²⁶ A similar phenomenon is found by Reay (1982a) for Kuma and (A.J. Strathern 1982b) for Hagen society.

Only 52 per cent of those on the roll bothered to vote,²⁷ with a higher figure (77 per cent) in remote Karimui and a low figure (32 per cent) in Mt Wilhelm where emigration was high, the weather was foul and people were blasé about a visiting election patrol. The Regional count included 36 per cent informal votes.²⁸

For Open contests, ballot box figures show that the solidarity of clan groups in voting together was very strong. Voting took place at the *kiap's* rest house for each clan (or sometimes tribe), with each box used only in one location. Detailed ballot box counts are available for Kundiawa and Sinasina electorates. In Kundiawa there were eleven candidates, and 22 ballot boxes in rural areas. Six candidates gained over 90 per cent of votes in particular rural boxes, five of them over 95 per cent. The average vote of leading candidates in each box was 72 per cent, and of second candidates 19 per cent, and their combined average (omitting the other nine) was 88 per cent. In urban Kundiawa, where people voted from throughout the province, votes were fragmented: the leader obtained only 39 per cent, and the second contender 20 per cent. After combining urban and rural figures, the average vote of leading candidates was 71 per cent, and of the leading two in each box was 86 per cent. In Sinasina Open, with 12 candidates and 18 boxes, all rural, there were six boxes where the leading candidate obtained 90 per cent of votes - three of these over 97 per cent. The box average for leading candidates in Sinasina was 72 per cent, and the combined average of the two leaders per box was 85 per cent.

This uniformity of voting demonstrates striking degrees of clan and tribal solidarity in the modern electoral arena. Where two closely related candidates were standing, there was a reduction in the degree of solidarity. In later elections these figures were not so marked because with increasing numbers of candidates the chances of a clan splitting its vote increased, yet the votes remained with clan candidates. A notable aspect of these voting figures is that they include the votes of women, who lived outside their natal area, but usually retained strong residual relationships to their natal clan, to which they could be expected to demonstrate residual political loyalty. Women comprised almost half the voters in 1972, a figure which rose slightly in 1977 and yet, particularly in the polling booths where over 90 per cent of votes went to one candidate, they demonstrably voted mostly with their affines. In addition, Kuabaal (1976) has demonstrated for Sinasina Open in 1972 that

27 PNG Chief Electoral Officer (1973). Many who voted did so under S.131 of the Electoral Ordinance, which provides a mechanism for those whose names cannot be found on the roll formally to declare their eligibility and be admitted to the poll. Thus the percentage of those on the roll who voted is slightly lower than the official figure for voter participation.

28 This figure probably included many voters whom the young aspirants had failed to mobilize to vote, but the figure was such a substantial rise on the 1968 figure of 13 per cent that it is probably best explained by changed procedures by cautious polling officials (see Standish 1976a:341).

traditional clan and tribal loyalties and alliances were also manifest in the tightly disciplined allocation of preferences by members of the clan groups.

Such solidarity has been replicated in subsequent national elections, except where there are multiple candidates. Warry (1987) notes the fragmenting of clan and tribal votes in council and provincial assembly elections in 1980, but for the national legislature the picture is remarkably uniform. The persistence of clan voting patterns determines candidates' campaign strategies and to a large extent prevents a determining role for political parties in elections. As stated in Chapter I and Appendix 2, it was political expressions of the kinship ideologies of group solidarity in elections, and in resurgent clan warfare which I discuss later in this chapter, that early in the 1970s indicated that Simbu was not conforming to the predictions of political development theory. They also determined the central theme of continuity in what I here call political culture.

Post-election tristesse

The stance of the UP in 1972, that of campaigning to win power in order to slow down the decolonization process, contained an irreconcilable contradiction. The only way to have any influence on the speed of decolonization was to be involved in a government, in other words effectively to participate in the decolonization process itself. The colonial government had set the pace in constitutional change in 1970-72, and the probability of a federal Labor government after the December 1972 Australian election indicated decolonization would speed up further. The educated Simbu candidates had perceived this, and wanted power, as Highlanders, as Simbu and as individuals. Nonetheless, having decided a conservative stance was best for the Highlands and the way to be elected, they concurred with their more gradualist elders in saying 'go-slow' to self-government and 'don't go' to Australia.

After the 1972 election many local leaders in the late colonial Chimbu political elite, especially the councillors and failed candidates, sensed they had lost control of events. Okuk's victory did not surprise them, nor the emergence of Kobale Kale and John Kaupa. But they had been quite sure that the UP, as the largest party in the House, would dominate it. They were stunned when Michael (later Sir Michael) Somare, the Pangu leader from the East Sepik, cobbled together a parliamentary majority with the clear aim of early self-government. By subtle lobbying, Somare's National Coalition brought together a prominent independent, Dr (later Sir) John Guise, Julius (later Sir Julius) Chan with his Peoples' Progress Party (PPP), and - importantly - the East New Britain and Bougainville members (Standish 1972). There were few Highlanders in the coalition, and there was anger across the region at their loss.

The first group which pledged itself to Somare was the National Party. The Niugini²⁹ National Party was created in late 1970 by UPNG Highlands students opposed to the expatriate-dominated UP. Thomas Kavali, MHA from Jimi in the Western Highlands, agreed to lead the Nationals. Sometimes seen as a 'Highlands Pangu', this party was not visible during the campaign except in the Western Highlands Regional contest where its secretary, Paul Pora, a Mount Hagen economist and (then) council official, stood unsuccessfully. However, upon their election Okuk and Kaupa quickly joined Kavali and with help from university students they met, hosted and lobbied newly elected Highlands MHAs as they arrived in Port Moresby. Thus they recruited Inuabe Egiano (Karimui-Nomane) and Kobale Kale (Kuabaal 1976). In April 1972 half the Chimbu MPs voted for Somare in the National Coalition with Dr John Guise and the PPP. Kavali and Okuk, National Party leader and deputy respectively, were given the Lands and Agriculture portfolios. After alleged death threats from a Chimbu UP member, which were the subject of a parliamentary censure motion, Inuabe abandoned National. The Kundiawa MHA, Joseph Tiene, told me he personally wanted to join National but felt his electorate would not stand that. Once the new government took power a number of Simbu political figures (including many failed candidates) considered directing all their MHAs to join Okuk, so as to maintain district solidarity (Marie Reay, pers. comm. 1980), but this move failed. Both Ninkama Bomai (Gumine), who became Opposition spokesman on police matters, and the Kerowagi MHA, Wena Wili (Koima), remained staunchly opposed to Pangu until the 1977 election.

Like many Highlanders, the Simbu politicians felt cheated for power by what they saw as a '*giaman gavman*' (E = gammon government) and felt 'tricked' and betrayed by Okuk. A former Ministerial Member and Deputy Leader of the UP, Sinake Giregire, MHA for Daulo in the Eastern Highlands, is widely known and has affines in central Simbu. He rallied Simbu UP supporters to direct their frustration against Okuk. A large, angry demonstration was mounted in Kundiawa on Wednesday 19 May 1972 from the Naregu village of Wandi, led by an unsuccessful Open candidate, Kugame Kura. A preliminary meeting had been addressed by the defeated Kamanegu regional candidate, Mathew Siune, and Okuk's former campaign manager, Jerry Geri, with whom Okuk had broken after the count (Standish 1983a,91). Rumours that Okuk's life was threatened by a defeated candidate were taken seriously by police and *kiaps* and Okuk was accommodated at the Chimbu Lodge under constant guard. Deputy Chief Minister Guise made a strong radio statement against those allegedly involved, one of whom police ordered to cease driving for some months for fear he would use a vehicle to attack Okuk.

29 This phonetic spelling of New Guinea was at this time often used by nationalists and their sympathisers to designate both Papua and New Guinea. Papuan separatists rejected the term, which in the coastal *lingua franca*, Hiri Motu, means 'a stand of coconuts'.

Okuk's problems went beyond individuals' sour grapes, however. A further demonstration was planned for Saturday 22 May 1972 when Okuk returned home, but did not eventuate. Visibly frightened, according to several witnesses, the new minister nonetheless accepted the DC's advice to seize the initiative and held his own rally. Accompanied by the DC, he also spoke at Mingende Catholic Mission and at Mintima village over the next two days. There, according to Naregu villagers a month later, Okuk said that he was in the government, he was a minister, and he, Okuk, was 'boss of Chimbu'. In fact he reportedly proclaimed himself the 'big boss from Kainantu to Mendi' (spanning the Highlands). With this formulation Okuk appeared to be using the model of 'politics as power', and an authoritarian one at that. Villagers clearly did not share this attempt to gain authority through membership of the 'coastal' government, and he showed a lack of judgement in seeking to impose authority, rather than appealing to his audience.

This speech angered the villagers, who said they had not voted for Okuk, or for self-government, a topic on which he had not explained his position, the witnesses claimed. This young man, who was unpopular among many of his constituents, had almost instantaneously become a powerful national figure, but with more power in the centre than in his electorate. Despite his characteristic fearlessness, Okuk found it difficult to represent the anti-colonial position in Chimbu and was pleased to host visits by the popular Chief Minister, Somare, and the UP leader, Matthias Toliman, who argued that Australians themselves had decided to transfer sovereignty, which was thus a matter beyond PNG's control.

As a minister, Iambakey Okuk was usually preoccupied outside Chimbu, but he fumbled some moves to widen his support base. Through an influential Endugwa tribesman, who was Kundiawa station interpreter, he bought rural land on the fringes of Kundiawa township and arranged for some Endugwa to build a *kunai* house. Henceforth this centrally placed man became a devoted Iambakey follower. The new member paid for this in December 1972 at a massive feast hosted by his stepfather, ex-Corporal Okuk, in memory of the elder Okuk's clan brother, Palma. This nominally 'modern' party, which had strong neo-traditional overtones,³⁰ was a tense, all night affair because the Kamanegu had an ongoing land dispute with Endugwa, but an old Kamanegu policeman prevented a squabble erupting into a fight. Tension also arose because of the presence of members of the Orgondie clan, a group which had broken away earlier this century from Okuk's Awakane; relations between the two groups remained fraught with menace. Another incident in mid-1972 illustrated Iambakey Okuk's unfamiliarity with Simbu ways. One

30. There was a portable record-player, but Okuk also distributed 30 pigs, 100 cartons of beer and 13 cattle carcasses obtained through his Agriculture Department and trucked close to Geregambagor on the Porol escarpment.

Saturday he avoided the funeral of a murdered Kamanegu headmaster; instead he invited me to drive 30 km to visit an expatriate club at Minj. When I asked him why, he said he did not have the Kuman language rhetoric to make a funeral speech.

The self-government debate

Throughout the Highlands there was widespread fear and confusion over 'self-government', a term an unwilling Administration itself had difficulty in defining (Bayne and Colebatch 1973; Goode 1975). As early as 1968 the Administration in Chimbu received reports that villagers took the term to mean that the whites would go. The term was never adequately translated, and for many Simbu became *sikin gavman* (E = skin government), with overtones of a new ruling people. The term *gavman* had meant only one thing, in their experience, Australian rule which had brought peace and economic development. Hence 'self-government', a new phrase not translated from English, was taken quite widely in Simbu to mean that *narapela kantri* (E = another country) would arrive. Some took this foreign occupation to imply an Indonesian takeover, or worse.³¹

Resident Australians were asked repeatedly, often by the same individuals, if they would be leaving with self-government. The official answer was that Australia's aid would continue and its nationals stay as long as PNG desired, but in 1972 I heard Australian *kiaps* saying loudly in English, within the hearing of well-educated Simbu, that they would catch the first aircraft out after self-government. In several parts of the Highlands, as in Minj (Philip Kaman, pers. comm. 1973), both young and old translated the term literally as *gavman bilong yumi yet* (E = our very own government). This was taken as implying an absence of any state, and came to be seen as a 'free time', lacking official constraints, the chance to take over the European's assets - cars, houses and plantations. Some were keen for this to happen, while others - especially the elders - feared trouble.

Divergent attitudes towards self-government had become apparent among three neighbouring tribes in the Waiye Census Division. I set out to find out why in early 1973 in the discussions described in Chapter III (and Standish 1973b). Each group comprised respected elders and some middle-aged men. Young men mostly stayed silent unless the elders had trouble with a question, although sometimes they added dissenting - usually more 'radical' - views. My concerns were predispositions, hopes and fears in the interaction of local politics and national events, not a tightly-structured attitude survey which

31. Kondom's surviving brother, Kugame Kura, started collecting money to build a concrete fence to keep out self-government. According to fellow Naregu, he predicted a huge serpent would travel up the Highlands Highway, taking over people's land and pigs, and ravishing the women. Similar fears (without the snake) were reported in Sinasina (Hide 1974:3).

should use methods more subtle than I considered possible given the problems of cross-cultural communication.³²

The three tribes were the Kamanegu (3,631 people in 1972), the Endugwa (2,027) and the Naregu (3,102).³³ which are located within 8 km of Kundiawa (Map II.5). The Kamanegu have this century pushed the Endugwa from the high ground of the Porol Range down below the line of the present Highlands Highway, almost to the Wahgi River. Much Endugwa land has inferior soils, and while the Kamanegu's land is fertile there is insufficient for both food gardens and *bisnis*. With *kiap* help, the Endugwa have retained an ancestral cemetery and pig ceremony ground at Kogo on the Porol Range, and young Endugwa are often reminded of other sites on the range lost to the Kamanegu within living memory. The Kamanegu feel cheated of conquests made but not consolidated before the white men imposed peace, and first the Lutherans and then the government occupied some of their newly-won land. In the 1950s and 1960s land tensions between them led to minor skirmishes which were quickly controlled by *kiaps*. The Naregu have a variety of land types on the ridge and valley sides and, although they earlier were pushed southwest by the Kamanegu, in the recent past had no major disputes with them or the Endugwa. In the 1950s they had had a dispute with the Siambugla clan to the west, which in the early 1970s appeared to have been resolved by the exchange of parcels of disputed land, and the Naregu in 1973 were generally happy with the *status quo*, although the Siambugla dispute re-erupted with fighting in 1980 (Standish 1981c)

The Kamanegu have had strong leaders through the colonial period, both old men and educated ones, while for a long time the Endugwa's leadership was relatively weak. The Naregu as a tribe had strong leadership under Kondom Agaundo and have some successful young men, but following the 1974 death of Kondom's adopted son, John Kambu, founder of the local savings and loans society, had no obvious modern successor. The Kamanegu and Endugwa had more contact with public servants, as their land abuts Kundiawa, but compared with other Simbu all three groups had great access to new information. Naregu men said they had been excluded by schoolyard fights from Gon school in the 1950s which may explain why their tribe in the 1970s had fewer educated men than the other tribes.

The attitudes of these three groups to self-government were as follows: the Kamanegu wanted immediate self-government and early independence; the Endugwa were prepared to accept self-government on fulfilment of certain conditions, in particular settlement of their land claims against the Kamanegu, but wanted to delay independence;

32 See Appendix 3.

33 Figures from Chimbu District Office, 1972.

while the Naregu were so implacably opposed to both that they threatened to isolate themselves (literally to secede) from the rest of the country when the time came.

In addition, the groups' attitudes were distinctive on land and public order questions. Discussions of land were initiated by the groups themselves in all but one instance. The Kamanegu expressed confidence that they would be able to expand their land holdings with self-government and independence. They did not need to say how, but 'self-help'³⁴ (in this case armed action) was implied. Being a dynamic tribe, the Kamanegu were confident of holding their own, both through numbers and through their young men advancing in the state apparatus.

Various factors other than land could affect these disparate attitudes but land was clearly crucial. It might be expected that Okuk would have swung the Kamanegu behind National Coalition government policy, but in 1972-73 he was quite unpopular with his own people, whom he rarely saw. No groups expressed concern at national or regional factors, such as the alleged domination of PNG by coastal people, or Papuan secessionism. The Administration's district political education officer, Martin Nombri of Naregu, had worked hard to calm his own people's fears. But in September 1973, led again by Kugame Kura, some hundreds of Naregu (primarily women, who were concerned in part at food price rises) stormed into Kundiawa and tore down the new national flag - the symbol of change - at the hospital. They tried the same at the District Office, but police were forewarned and just kept the flag aloft by driving off the demonstrators with tear gas. The bent pole was kept in place for years, a silent reminder of local opposition to change. Although Kugame was called to similar demonstrations in Chimbu and the Wahgi Valley, and tore up a paper flag in Chief Minister Somare's presence, his career soon ended. The indigenous Deputy DC said officials deliberately did *not* charge him, so as to avoid creating a martyr (Jerry Nalau, pers. comm. 1973), and he soon lost his local mass support. 'All he got for us was teargas' said some fellow Naregu.

Naregu fears of declining public order had some local basis. There had been a major fight at Kaerowagi in 1972 and serious fighting with potentially deadly bows and arrows later broke out at Kundiawa market in July 1973, despite a strong Administration presence. The occasion was a compensation payment for a murdered Endugwa, with passions fuelled on one side by the keening of Endugwa women and on the other by a fiery Kamanegu speech about land. The fighting lasted only a few hours but tensions were high; riot squad police harassed the Kamanegu for days (Kundiawa SR 1/73-74), and men from both sides were charged and convicted.

³⁴ I am indebted to Andrew Strathern for introducing this usage in this context to me in 1973 (cf. also Podolevsky 1979).

Given these tempestuous events in the area, it is not surprising that these people's attitudes on national constitutional change were influenced by their local interests, and involved the very ground from which they took material and spiritual sustenance. Their varied attitudes clearly were based on their perceptions of their groups' best interests at the time. What they shared was a belief that the transfer of power from Australia would lead to the cessation of the colonial peace. Some people expected to benefit from this, and others to lose, hence the differing attitudes to self-government and independence.

These beliefs about future political insecurity might not to outside observers have been the causes of instability in the form of clan warfare, but they were part of the political context and as such were an issue, both a problem and a resource, with which leaders and political aspirants had deal. The fact that such conflicts continue and are resurgent is significant evidence in evaluating the notion of political development and cultural continuity, and also shows the primacy of local affairs in determining attitudes and alliances within the state.

Clan warfare and leadership

The predictions of trouble arising from 1973 discussions about self-government may have had self-fulfilling dimensions; certainly, they were realized over the succeeding years as conflict spread. The central government did not cause the renewed warfare, but was unable to prevent it. The belief that there is no official redress for grievances encourages groups to fight when tensions become unbearable and other motives apply. Heavy fighting started in Chimbu in December 1972, a year before self-government, although that event with its attendant uncertainty soon passed, the associated predictions of trouble remained. These became self-fulfilling prophecies; when there is no certainty that the state has the capacity or even the will³⁵ to prevent warfare, it is easy for hotheads to stir conflict deliberately.

In precolonial times many provocations undoubtedly had to fighting between clans and/or tribes, issues of a nature which during the colonial era had had to be handled peacefully because of the effective prohibition on fighting. Confrontations over land still occurred occasionally, and demands often arose for compensation on various grounds: after a murder or a death which westerners - but not Papua New Guineans - would consider accidental; for the return of bridewealth; or as redress after an insult. These demands sometimes were expressed in incidents the *kiaps* called 'brawls' or 'riots'. For two decades

³⁵ Respected leaders from both sides of the April 1980 Naregu-Siambugla conflict spoke with the police and *kiaps* in Kundiawa and Kerowagi respectively, unsuccessfully seeking a police presence. They failed, and fighting erupted soon afterwards (Standish 1981c).

almost no Chimbu were killed in fighting; the penalties were firm. Village officials, aware of the sanctions and keen to keep their positions, brought intractable disputes to the Administration. *Kiaps*, by their swift arrival with a few police, by strength of will and the possibility rather than the actual use of arms, could prevent fighting which otherwise would inevitably lead to a long chain of payback reprisals.

Contemporary battles in central Chimbu involve hundreds and even thousands of men in spasmodic battles over weeks, months and years. Revived clan warfare has led to the deaths of dozens of people and the injury of hundreds more, the burning of thousands of houses and the destruction of huge areas of food and coffee gardens. Up to four major conflicts were underway simultaneously in Simbu in the late 1970s, and later. One, in Kup, ran from 1973 to 1981 and was revived in 1988. Directly or indirectly, through alliances and individual participation, about half the Simbu clans have been involved.

There is no single cause for this renewal, which has occurred also in much of the Western Highlands and Enga provinces and to a lesser degree in the Eastern and Southern Highlands. Until 1990 it has not been total warfare, as sometimes did occur before contact and wiped out or scattered whole groups (Feil 1987), although at times quite murderous ambushes replaced symbolic ritual clashes.³⁶ Meggitt's work on Enga stresses the desire to retain or to gain land as the central cause of fighting both past and present, although his later work with Gordon brings in political and administrative contributing factors (Meggitt 1977; Gordon and Meggitt 1985).

The government's Paney Committee report (PNG 1973c) emphasized social stress caused by population growth, disappointment with cash cropping, the unmet expectations of school leavers, and also road deaths caused by poor drivers, often influenced by alcohol, using battered vehicles on bad roads - a deadly combination. A former *kiap* and Lands Titles Commissioner wrote of fights alleviating boredom (Orken 1974). A Chimbu graduate, Peter Kama Kerpi of Kup, has written passionately about the thrill of battle, resurgent group pride and the religious imperative of revenge in order to placate the ancestral ghosts (Kerpi 1976). At the Simbu Provincial government opening ceremony in 1977 Okuk, as an Opposition member, blamed Prime Minister Somare for neglecting Chimbu, saying 'a hungry dog barks'. In previous studies I have mentioned all these

³⁶ Homemade shotguns, common from the mid 1980s, were augmented by the use of semi-automatic weapons in 1990, with several killed at very long range in a day of Simbu fighting. Reportedly dozens were killed in a day's fighting near Mount Hagen (Bob Anderson on ABC Radio 2RN 'Laeline', March 1991).

factors both in terms of national level changes in government and of local factors as old leaders seek to regain prestige at a time of political instability (Standish 1973c; 1981c).³⁷

Most fights involve group pride, even if the pretexts are land disputes or high claims for compensation after deaths. The Pagau group of clans from Kerowagi attacked the Dage group in December 1972, after the Pagau had been insulted by members of a third group, the Gena, for not obtaining compensation for deaths on the coast which were attributed to Dage (Standish 1973c). It was a similar deliberate insult from a prominent Siambugla clansman which in 1980 provoked the Naregu into warfare that spanned four months with several fatalities (Standish 1981c).

Perhaps the most politically significant case was the dispute between the Gena and Siku tribes near Kerowagi,³⁸ (see Map II.5), although it was only one of many land disputes *kiaps* found unresolvable. In the 1930s, before effective pacification, the Gena had driven the Siku westwards across the Koro River, as shown by colonial maps (Vial *et al.* 1938; Nilles 1950:26; Brookfield and Brown 1963). Later, as was customary, the Gena had allowed some Siku to resume occupation of parts of the land. Patrol Officer Brian Heagney (1950/51) had for some time been concerned at land shortage among the Siku, who had sold land to the Administration for Kerowagi station. Patrol Officer A. M. Keogh (1952/53) marked a boundary giving Siku use of a large area of land east of the Koro, and despite the reluctance of other Gena he was assisted in this by the Gena tribesman, ex-constable Siwi Kurondo of Sim village (see Chapter IV above). The appearance of Gena acquiescence did not last; five leaders walked 100 km to Goroka and protested to DC Downs. With his detailed pre-War knowledge of the area, Downs sent a telegram³⁹ to Chimbu, urging that the river border be reinstated. This was not done, inexplicably, and the Gena commenced a series of confrontations, land hearings and court cases which lasted over two decades.

During this time, Kurondo became a prominent man of *bisnis*, council president, MHA and Assistant Ministerial Member, but remained vulnerable to criticism from fellow Gena (and especially one ex-evangelist, a fellow councillor) that he had given away the

37. In another general review of this Highlands problem, Andrew Strathern's (1977) conclusions are similarly wide-ranging, while Jenny Hughes (1985) reaches similar conclusions for Simbu.

38. This summary is based upon Standish 1973b, patrol reports and the Chimbu Lands File 'Gena Siku Land Dispute File 1934-77'. The village books containing the *kiaps*' comments on the case, which would normally have been left in government rest houses among the disputing parties, seem to have been lost.

39. Reference GO 204, on Chimbu Lands File 'Gena-Siku Lands Dispute 1934-77'.

land. In the 1972 national election, other Gena opposed Kurondo, who lost his seat and for a time withdrew in shame from public life.

A Lands Titles Commission heard test cases on two small portions of the land in July 1972 but the tension of waiting for a decision was too great. Kurondo allegedly urged his tribe to forget the white man's courts and to settle the matter in the customary Simbu way. The Siku were driven from the land in battle. The Commission awarded the land to Gena. Kurondo and some hundreds of Gena were arrested, initially despondent, but with a *kiap's* encouragement Kurondo led them on foot, singing proudly, to the Kundiawa lockup. His initial conviction and two months sentence for inciting a riot was quashed on a technical appeal (the duplication of information). The Land Titles Commission finally awarded the land to Gena and so Siwi Kurondo returned to public life a Gena hero. Soon he was Kerowagi Council president again and in December 1972 he became chairman of the District's new Area Authority. Thus he converted a traditional role - allegedly leading his people into warfare, although not actually fighting - to improve his position in the introduced political institutions.

Stirred by their Kerowagi⁴⁰ Kamanegu clan allies, the Siku occasionally attacked Gena and tried to regain their land for another four years. This conflict was intense.⁴¹ Officially, entry to this land with its valuable coffee gardens was banned while investigations continued, and finally, despite a Siku appeal to the National Court in 1976, the Gena won all the land to the river. The government lent the Gena almost K100,000 to pay the Siku for improvements made on the land they had surrendered, a loan which was handed over in a public ceremony which coincided with a Gena pig ceremony, but was never repaid. Kurondo's dominance of Gena politics was thus assured, although he had gained a public reputation in Simbu as the man who restarted warfare.

This well-documented case thus clearly shows how there can be a nexus between warfare and leadership in Simbu politics, and that success in the former can be translated into a useful resource in the latter. Tribal arenas and provincial politics here intermeshed, and resources in the form of cash money from the state were transferred into inter-group dispute settlement. In the national arena, however, tribal fighting was regarded as primitive and violent behaviour. Some senior officials were tempted just to let Highlanders fight, without state intervention (A. Voutas, pers. comm. 1973). Fighting undoubtedly

40 According to the oral tradition, the Kerowagi Kamanegu clan originally migrated from the Kamanegu tribe in Kundiawa.

41 On one occasion a Gena man was murdered at Minj and his genitals mutilated. When the dead man's kin two years later returned this gruesome insult to a Siku battle casualty, their action was praised by a prominent Gena leader.

contributes to the province's poor reputation as a place to work and hinders its development (Howlett *et al.* 1976).

The political functions of fighting help explain its renewal. By fighting, youths demonstrate that they are full members of the clan, especially since initiation rites ceased in the 1950s. They help ensure their rights to land and help with bridewealth. (Young men obviously were able to get land and brides in the 1950s and 1960s when fighting was prevented, but as fully fledged warriors in the 1970s they were less beholden to their elders.) For old clan leaders who had been by-passed by the new political and economic structures, fights, and even raised levels of tension which could lead to fighting, raise the value of their ritual knowledge, fighting and diplomatic skills. For all, conflict reasserts ties to the clan which were weakened under the colonial state. Group solidarity is strengthened, and obligations to ancestral spirits are satisfied. Leaders with whom I discussed these matters in 1973 were explicit about strengthening the clan, but did not themselves raise religious aspects (for which see Kerpi 1976; J. Hughes 1985 and references therein). Not surprisingly, none actually said they would themselves stir up fights for these or any other reasons, but they did foresee many fights in Simbu over land.

Similarly, parties other than the principal belligerents can benefit from warfare. Groups can stir conflict and offer assistance in fighting so as to create obligations which must be paid for and indeed reciprocated. They thus strengthen their own alliances in preparation for their own disputes. The costs are minimal: they know they will be compensated for their own losses. Often people help friends and relatives in a battling clan, as individuals rather than in clan groups, and sometimes different members of a 'third' clan assist both opposing sides in a conflict. In such instances their individual partnerships are strengthened, but not their clan as a corporate group. As in precolonial Mount Hagen (A.M. Strathern 1972a), kudos may go to the peacemakers, mediators who use traditional means, starting with 'shuttle diplomacy' *à la* Kissinger, in order to bring protagonists to sit, talk and eat together. A number of candidates for political office sought to use this role to gain renown and votes from 1977 on. Renown, at least, followed if they could provide livestock for peacemaking feasts, which is a traditional practice. In the 1977 election period some candidates also stirred up compensation demands, thus raising tensions until conflict erupted, apparently hoping thereby to divide their opponents.

The constitutional debate

The resurgence of clan warfare reflected the frustrations felt by older Simbu leaders, both in their personal political careers and in their failure to influence events in the national arena. In mid-1973 older leaders from central Simbu still felt unable to slow down moves

towards self-government. Their political ineffectiveness in national affairs was demonstrated during the visit of the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) in August 1973.

In September 1972 the National Coalition government had appointed the CPC as a committee of cabinet. The Chief Minister, Michael Somare, was nominally chairman of the CPC and his Deputy Dr John Guise was a member, but neither took active roles. The committee's leaders were a well-educated trio of backbenchers who had not received portfolios: Fr John Momis (the member for Bougainville Regional, Deputy [and *de facto*] Chairman), John Kaputin (Rabaul Open) and McKenzie Daugie (Northern District Regional) (Goode 1975). Momis and Kaputin were well-known as anti-colonial 'radicals', whose home areas were potentially secessionist.

The CPC was asked to make recommendations for the 'self-government constitution' which would carry PNG through to independence, and to garner support for its proposals toured the country. Ostensibly seeking out public opinion, the CPC members in practice took an activist role, using the exercise as a political education tour (Standish 1974a). They argued that 'sovereignty should not be reduced by external political, economic or military dependence', and promoted their own vision of the country's future as a 'genuinely just, honest and egalitarian society' (PNG 1973b, Interim Recommendation 4). This would be made possible by the constitution,⁴² and their key instrument for regaining control and avoiding dependency was citizenship. Even before the CPC's 'Draft Final' (PNG 1974c) and 'Final' Reports (PNG 1974a) were tabled in June and August 1984 respectively, the House, like the cabinet, engaged in heated debates especially about citizenship (Standish 1974b, 1975a, 1975b; Wolfers 1976).

In Chimbu, as in all other districts, government liaison officers (GLOs, previously called political education officers) set up discussion groups of local leaders, with teachers as their scribes. Twelve groups met in Chimbu with varying degrees of enthusiasm and examined CPC discussion papers on issues such as citizenship, decentralization of power and the structure of the national executive. I attended six of the nine large public meetings held for the CPC in Chimbu; it was clear that few of the older leaders understood those points on which the CPC sought opinion. At its Kundiawa meeting the nationalist and sometimes apparently racist CPC was firmly met with insistence that anyone helping PNG

⁴² The CPC reported that 'If the Constitution is to be truly the fundamental charter of our society and basis for legitimate authority, it should be an instrument which helps achieve the fundamental social goals of our people and not one which obstructs' (PNG 1973b, Interim Recommendation 1). Kaputin encapsulated the mood: 'To produce a constitution that will simply legitimise the existing institutions will be a sure guarantee of political and moral bankruptcy. In other words, there is no justice in a constitution that cannot create change' (*Post-Courier*, 12 September 1973).

could become a citizen, including the expatriate businessmen - both European and Chinese - opposed by the CPC. Such relatively 'conservative' arguments came from those strongly in favour of self-government, like the old Kamanegu leaders with whom I had spoken the previous January. The CPC members rejected their viewpoint and even told some respected Simbu elders to shut up. John Kaupa (Chuave), a CPC member, tried to mediate but the older Simbu leaders later expressed anger at this farce of consultation. The Simbu elite clearly was split on these constitutional questions, with the elders aware of their own declining role and resentful of the young men displacing them as decision-makers, a sentiment also noted among Sinasina councillors by Hide (1974:4). Some in their frustration called for a return to the old ways and sought to strengthen clan and tribal loyalties, which in some instances heightened tensions which erupted in fighting.

Chimbu Watchdogs and Chimbu Coffee

Bypassed again in the national arena, Simbu political activists sought a way to assert themselves politically. In early 1973 a group of Simbu village leaders decided to travel throughout PNG assessing people's wishes on the self-government issue, though Okuk said this would serve no useful purpose as the House of Assembly had already decided the matter (*Post-Courier*, 29 March 1973). Then, apparently prompted by the CPC's visit, a group of educated Simbu decided to oppose constitutional change by forming a Chimbu pressure group. Their ultimate aim was to mobilize the political support of villagers and as a first step they formed the *Chimbu Pre Pol Sinaminga Bung*, or Chimbu Watchdogs Group. Most well-educated Simbu working in the district were associated with Chimbu Coffee. They included the main organizers in this group, among them the failed 1972 Regional candidate, Mathew Siune, Sinasina coffee buyer Clement Poiye, CCC's Secretary Dominic Bre from Gumine, and its most successful coffee buyer, George Leahy.⁴³

The group used Mathew Siune's 1972 campaign strategy of forming alliances with councillors and former village officials. It denied any political party connection, but said its role was to explain new issues to Chimbu leaders and then to publicize their views. It would be a 'policeman' or 'guardian' (*P = was papa*) for Chimbu interests which, it argued, were being ignored. On Radio Kundiawa Mathew Siune stated, 'It's the time of the young men, now, and there is lots of trouble erupting all over the place'⁴⁴ (Siune 1973). He told me the old men were the real leaders in *Pre Pol*; the young ones only helped. He

⁴³ The son of the late Denny Leahy and a Mount Hagen woman, George is a cousin of Mike Collins, then the CCC General Manager.

⁴⁴ 'Nau luk olosem tai m bilong ol yangpela man, na planti trabel kamap long olgeta hap'.

denied that the group was anti-Okuk, but said Okuk was never in Chimbu to act as its spokesman. Interestingly, he said that he himself no longer opposed self-government (interview, 9 September 1973). Along with the MHAs, the demonstrative, but no longer respected, Kugame Kura was specifically excluded from the group.

This highly organized alliance functioned for several months, but was controversial. Monthly meetings comprized six leaders from each of the seven council areas who afterwards were driven back home each with a carton of beer as a gift. 'You need to *gris* people', said Siune (*P gris* = *E flatter*). *Pre Pol* used Chimbu Coffee vehicles, Mike Collins later admitted, but said this could not be controlled (interview, July 1974).

Clearly CCC resources were being used against Okuk, and Okuk in response attacked the *Pre Pol* directly and claimed that only 'rubbish men' attended its meetings, a point which Poiye denied (interview 23 November 1973). Siune used the national media well (*P-C*, 30, 31 August 1973; 14 September 1973), so from Port Moresby *Pre Pol* looked viable, but after a few months the organization collapsed for lack of persistent effort, in the opinion of George Leahy (interview, 9 November 1975). In fact *Pre Pol* had become subsumed in a dispute over Chimbu Coffee which was slow to erupt, but which became 'a conflict between different Chimbu individuals and groups over the distribution of power' (Hide 1974:2).

Apart from Okuk's sacking by Collins in 1970, the incentive payments to Collins made him a sitting target for political resentment, as foreshadowed in Okuk's election campaign.⁴⁵ The directors were all middle-aged Simbu leaders, except for Collins, who with a few token shares in the co-operative was the only expatriate director. Whether or not Okuk commenced with a strategy to take over CCC,⁴⁶ the co-operative and the coffee industry in Chimbu were to be central in Simbu political struggles for the next decade. The Co-operative was an alternate power base, the very presence of which would challenge any elected politician in Chimbu. If Okuk was to dominate Chimbu he had to challenge another

45 Early in 1972 the CCC board had doubled the general manager's bonus to 10 per cent on profits over \$100,000 before tax and depreciation and extended the contract to 6 years (CCC Board, 5 February 1972). The political controversy had started then: director Yauwe Moses, ex-MHA, told Assistant Administrator Tony Newman that he regretted the political friction between old and young (CCC Board, 20 April 1972).

46 Compare the Namasu case study (in Hide 1974). Okuk became involved in the politics of business in early 1973 when, with Akepa Miakwe, MHA (Bena, Eastern Highlands), he led a walkout of Highlands shareholders from the annual general meeting of the Lutheran mission trading company, Namasu (the company for which Okuk had worked during his election campaign). The two MHAs became directors, replacing expatriates, and the new indigenous-dominated board changed the management. Ultimately Okuk acquired the Namasu store in Kundiawa, while others were sold to politically ambitious Lutheran pastors in Kerowagi. Namasu like CCC had expatriate management, as Hide (1974) notes, but Namasu contrasted with CCC in that its board had also been dominated by expatriates, and Namasu was apparently in financial trouble at the time of the MHAs' putsch.

dominating personality, Mike Collins. I now explore the unfolding events at length because they show both young and old Simbu politicians learning to use the media and national organs of the state. They also clearly demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between the older leaders who were CCC board members and the expatriate management as they sought to resist a determined assault on their central position in the colonial political economy of Chimbu.

Okuk was an activist as Agriculture Minister, seeking to promote avenues for indigenous businessmen. He initiated 1973 and 1974 legislative amendments designed to localize roadside coffee buying nationwide, but which failed to break the financial hold of expatriate factory owners over indigenous buyers. He also pushed through other amendments which banned the purchase of cherry coffee, thereby ensuring that peasants themselves processed the bean to the imported value-added parchment stage.⁴⁷ In the Chimbu context, Okuk complained that CCC paid less than factories in neighbouring provinces, and stated that CCC chairman Kalale Wel had failed to understand the impact of this.⁴⁸ By implication, Okuk was arguing that older Tokpisin speakers were unable to comprehend modern business, and were the puppets of the European managers. Wel, an unsuccessful candidate for Sinasina, wrote to the Chief Minister expressing concern at interference in the affairs of the co-operative by Okuk and Kaupa, and asked 'what authority these members have to influence the running of this Society which is run by its members through their elected Delegates and Directors'⁴⁹. Several subsequent clashes occurred between the CCC board, and Okuk with Kaupa. The MHAs, who were not shareholders, attacked the protected market afforded to the society, which they claimed reduced buyer competition at the roadside and hence lowered prices paid to their constituents. They maintained that these were their motives, rather than any personal vendettas, or strategies to expand their own local power base in Chimbu.

In order to place the matter on the legislature's agenda, Kaupa late in 1972 moved that the government pay half of Collins's salary, since he had been appointed on the urging of the Administration. When Wel defended Collins's achievements, Okuk entered the debate, arguing he was not against Collins or questioning his abilities, but rather his contract and the commission, which Okuk said reduced growers' dividends. In one press statement, possibly written by a staff member, Okuk stated that Collins was an 'exploiter of Chimbubus', who had 'brainwashed' the directors. 'We Papuas (sic) Niuginians are basically socialists and so co-operatives all over the country were put up as window dressing for the

⁴⁷ See also Fitzpatrick (1980: 121).

⁴⁸ DASF 1-1-44 to Donatus Mola MHA, Minister for Business Development of 21 July 1972.

⁴⁹ CCC to Chief Minister, 4 September 1972.

capitalists'. The society was intended to fail in order to show black people could run nothing bigger than small co-operatives, he said.⁵⁰ In a Tokpisin letter to Okuk, with copies to Kaupa and the Chief Minister, the directors responded that the co-operative was performing strongly, saying 'We are fed up with the lying talk of Mr Okuk and Mr Kaupa'⁵¹ (CCC Directors to Mr I. Okuk, 16 May 1972). Newspaper editorials, letters from Chimbu students and other co-operatives, and replies by Okuk all sustained the controversy for several months.⁵² Okuk claimed that although he saw no corruption at present in CCC, the present situation 'must lead to corruption in our economy if it is allowed to continue' (*P-C*, 4 July 1973).

In September, parliamentary debate resumed, with two ministers opposing Collins as manager (*P-C*, 28 September 1973). Collins replied publicly, calling the attacks on him 'lies and nonsense', claiming 100 per cent support of Chimbu people, and denying political involvement (*P-C*, 2 October 1973). Collins was defended again by Wel and the Minister for Business Development, Donatus Mola, a PPP member. Okuk was criticized by fellow Simbu in the province and Port Moresby, including *Pre Pol* leader Clement Poiye (*P-C*, 2,3,4,11,17,18,19 October 1973) and replied, saying he had told Collins to keep out of Chimbu politics. Increasingly, Okuk alleged political links between CCC and the UP, which he said were geared to the next election (CCC Board, 23 October 1973; *Contact* [ABC Radio] 16 November 1973). The minister attacked student letter writers as only learning the 'perpetuation of the present business set up', and criticized the Chairman of the Federation of Co-operative Unions as writing 'like a *masta*. ... he sees things in a non-Niuginian way' (*P-C*, 23 October 1973, 22 November 1973). Legally powerless in this private matter, the coalition was becoming increasingly embarrassed; possibly hoping to break the log-jam, the Deputy Chief Minister, Dr John Guise on 15 November moved an amendment which called for Collins voluntarily to halve his salary. The House passed the amended motion by 34 to 29 votes on 15 November (*P-C*, 20 November 1973, *National Times*, July 1-6, 1974). John Kaupa would not comment on this amendment, saying it confused him (*Contact* [ABC Radio], 16 November 1973).

In Chimbu, the intensity of Okuk's onslaught was proving stressful. The CCC directors determinedly resisted Okuk and his argument, with no lessening of his passion. The board, in defence of their position as well as that of Collins, sought to widen their support. MHAs, area authority members, council presidents and other leaders were

⁵⁰ Dated 17 May 1973, and typed on Chimbu Coffee newspaper!

⁵¹ T = 'Mipela les pinis long ol giaman tok bilong Mr I. Okuk na Mr J. Kaupa'.

⁵² Hide (1974) summarises press coverage (*P-C*, 28,29,30 March 1973; 9 April 1973; 22,29 May 1973; 19, 21 June 1973; 4,9 July 1972; 13 August 1973).

chauffered in to board meetings to hear the directors' case, with about 350 people attending a special general meeting in June 1973. The MHAs sniped at each other on the issue; those criticising the society were not listening to the people, according to CCC Chairman Kelale Wei (CCC Board, 23 October 1973). In a long letter to the Coffee Marketing Board, Wei argued for protection in the Chimbu market.⁵³ Collins's half yearly report defended his role in turning the society from effective bankruptcy in 1970 to assets of \$650,000, with \$54,000 dividends paid out and a 6 month profit of \$282,000. He stated that the dispute was causing loss of responsible staff and making recruitment impossible. 'I pity the poor bush shareholder' he said, and warned of serious consequences unless there was reconciliation between politicians and directors and shareholders.⁵⁴ Collins told the board that this appeared to be a 'personal vendetta', and that 'Mr Okuk is very keen to have his own appointed manager at CCC. His suggestion of corruption could come true'.⁵⁵

Okuk attended the October board meeting and suggested the society diversify by wholesaling of trade store goods. Calling for a decision on his position, Collins left the room. Repeatedly the directors, mostly older men and non-literates, told Okuk they could not understand his objections to Collins. Implicitly they rejected his accusations of politicking by the CCC, and they unanimously resolved that Collins complete his contract and consider extending it (CCC Board, 15 October 1973).

Collins was under continuing challenge, some of it indirect. A young high school graduate, John Dua Kaupa from Gumine, had been sent to Port Moresby by Collins for co-operatives management training. On his return, Dua Kaupa led a 2 day strike by 38 CCC workers. Although their main concern was higher wages, there appeared to be no union involvement.⁵⁶

Dua Kaupa's main concerns⁵⁷ appeared to be political: he alleged that Collins had used CCC resources to set up *Pre Pol* as his own mouthpiece; called for Chimbu Coffee to sell used vehicles to shareholders for coffee buying; alleged Collins had favoured Mathew Siune in buying coffee; and called for the removal of George Leahy from the society's depot at Chuave. The strike was reported to the Regional Labour Office by Okuk's secretary,

⁵³ CCC to CMB, 23 August 1973.

⁵⁴ M.D. Collins, General manager, CCC to Chairman, CCC, 1 November 1973.

⁵⁵ M. Collins, photocopy of undated notes.

⁵⁶ Indeed, although there was a Kundiawa branch of the Public Service Union, the country's most powerful union, I noted no significant union activity in Chimbu during my entire fieldwork.

⁵⁷ As listed in handwritten notes he gave me a week later..

Elies Vuvu,⁵⁸ and by Okuk, who personally demanded action by officials. When a labour inspector met with strikers they denied any concerns other than wages; the strike folded when they were told their wages and conditions were already above award levels. Some workers stated Dua Kaupa had recently been seen talking with John Kaupa, MHA and with Vuvu. Dua Kaupa was among eighteen workers sacked by Collins, who had an excessive workforce at the time.⁵⁹ When Dua Kaupa was charged with theft from the society, Okuk used his superior resources to lend him the services of his lawyer.

Even the climax of the Collins saga was protracted. On 17 November the board resolved, in this order: that Collins himself take over CCC's insurance policy on his life; that the directors and delegates receive bonuses of \$50 and \$20 respectively; that CCC build a new house to replace the one its chairman had lost in a fire while on a dividend payment patrol; and that, 'in view of the deteriorating political situation in the Chimbu District and the implications of the resolution passed by the House of Assembly', Collins's contract be terminated on completion of the erection of the new coffee factory, 'with full settlement of the unexpired portion' (CCC Board, 17 November 1973). Collins stated on 19 November that he had been advised the House motion did not have 'any teeth', but said 'It looks like they are trying to persecute me out of the country' (*P-C*, 20 November 1973).

At another meeting on 20 November the chairman said that with political interference and 'with Self-Government only a few days away the position of the General Manager may be jeopardized' (CCC Board, 20 November 1973). A CCC director and former MHA, Yauwe Moses, said that the new Assembly had power and wanted to replace Europeans with local people. Like other directors who endorsed Collins's performance, Yauwe he stated that the two MHAs 'apparently had no intention of desisting', and because of this the contract should be terminated. Collins himself offered to work on to complete the new factory building on a short-term contract, but said that 'with Self-Government only a few days away he wanted the matter resolved immediately as the Government would soon have more power and try to interfere even more'. The CCC Secretary reported that paying out Collins's present contract would cost about \$50,000, which was accepted. The fortunes of the older Simbu leaders and the foreign businessmen were intertwined in this body, with each dependent on the other: the directors voted themselves \$50 each 'for the continued pressure and uncertainty of their positions' (CCC Board, 20 November 1973).

58 The son of a Tolai driver for the Mingende Catholic mission and a Siambugla woman, Elies Vuvu at this time was a confident young man who had been President of the Students Representative Council at UPNG, and a Pangu Pati recruiter while there. He suspended university studies (initially commenced at Sydney) to work for Okuk after the 1972 election and finally completed his degree years later.

59 District Labour Officer, Mt Hagen (file 15-1-1) of 2 November 1973 to Secretary, Department of Labour.

Two days later yet a further meeting was attended by the Secretary for Business Development, Paulias Matane. The directors stated that they were very happy with Collins's work but still the criticism from the House of Assembly continued; the directors 'could not tolerate this any longer and had decided to terminate Mr. Collins' contract'. Matane said he had come to hear their views, and told them the Assembly had no power over the contract between the society and Collins. The future of the society was in their hands, he said, but 'that he and many other people in Papua New Guinea were very worried about the state of affairs'. After a discussion about advertising for and selecting a new general manager, the board resolved yet again that Collins's contract be paid out. The chairman warned directors that they 'must find a manager who concentrates on the business ... and does not get involved in politics, or the Society would collapse and the shareholders would not get any more dividends' (CCC Board, 22 November 1973). Reportedly the chairman wept as he said politicians had ruined everything and the CCC would never be the same again (*National Times*, July 1-6, 1974). Collins banked his payout cheque immediately, but stayed till April 1974, with two subsequent visits, to complete the factory and installation of processing plant.

The Simbu directors of CCC had an understanding of the imperatives driving Okuk, not only his desire to control Chimbu Coffee but his desire to redress a personal grievance and remove a cause of public shame. Okuk always denied that Collins had sacked him as a mechanic, and even stated that he had not been a mechanic, only a buyer. His pride and sense of justice were at stake, perhaps even his sense of honour. These would have been offended often in his childhood and youth, especially in the racist context of the Western Highlands where he spent much of his life; certainly expatriates from the Wahgi Valley said that some of his employers had given him a hard time. Perhaps Collins symbolized these bitter memories, and Okuk was motivated by more than a desire for revenge, known crudely in PNG as 'payback'. Matters of individual pride were customary, and were compelling motives, and the Simbu board members clearly read them, and probably Collins, too. Okuk's self-assertion was also important in the transition to self-rule. Like other members of the Somare government and backbenchers on the CPC, Okuk was telling unreconstructed expatriate colonialists in general, of whom there were many in the Highlands, that there had been a changing of the political guard.

The minutes of these meetings show a Simbu cultural factor at work, as I noticed later in the Area Authority. Simbu leaders occasionally gave way - against their expressed better judgement - when their opponents had high stature, were aggressive and looked as if they would never desist. Unless debate on an issue is adjourned, continued bitter political division in Simbu political culture is expected to lead to certain defined outcomes: one side conceding defeat, violent conflict, or withdrawal (the exit option). Conceding victory to

Okuk and Kaupa meant a financial loss to the co-operative, but not to the directors personally. They could not tolerate the tension, which possibly for them carried expectations of violence which were unacceptable. By late November Collins himself wanted to go, and the directors made it possible for him to exit, taking his salary and ultimately the commission.⁶⁰

Collins did not lose out, but, in this gladiatorial duel, Okuk was victor from several perspectives. Okuk and his allies had used several innovations in his use of external political resources in this Simbu power play, bringing to bear the media, the workers, the legislature and his position in government. While his role in this costly episode was held against him for years afterwards, Okuk had successfully used the issue to demonstrate that he was not a man to be tampered with lightly, and his fearlessness came to be admired.

This was to be only one episode in the struggle for control over the coffee industry in Chimbu. Chimbu Coffee remained the biggest and wealthiest source of power in Chimbu, apart from the state bureaucracy, and still no politician controlled it. Like many intractable political issues, the debate over the coffee industry in Chimbu itself was a 'resource', a continuing matter for political contest, which served to place politicians centre stage. The issue of coffee rolled over into new political arenas and so recurs in succeeding chapters.

Self-Government

Chimbu Coffee dramas aside, there was late in 1973 something of a hiatus in Simbu politics. Self-Government Day, 1 December, passed relatively calmly, although some saw an ill omen in the outbreak that day of fighting at Kup between the Kumai and Endugwa No. 3 tribes after a marital dispute (Kerpi 1976). In central Chimbu people came to town, only to find the stores closed and no organized celebrations, as the government tried to downplay this much-feared transition. To ease the tensions the DC asked storekeepers to open, and they sold thousands of dollars of soft drinks, but after nervous anticipation among Simbu and expatriate communities alike the day itself was an anti-climax. There was one death, that of a policeman at Kerowagi township who angrily cornered a group - which included his wife - illegally gambling on cards (Standish 1976a). For months people had been saying 'We have self-government already', as indeed was true, *de facto*, because the Administrator, L.W. Johnson, had transferred effective control to Somare's cabinet ahead of the constitutional changeover (Johnson 1983). In Simbu some of the anxiety then shifted onto independence, the date for which was not set for another eighteen months.

⁶⁰ Leaving his initials welded on to the highest structural girder in the largest building in Chimbu.

Conclusion

From the early 1960s to the early 1970s there were two new waves of leaders in Simbu, the 'modernizers' of the 1960s with limited education and some experience in the outside world who became councillors, and the young men with secondary schooling who entered politics after some professional training, seeking council or parliamentary office. Each new generation used knowledge and experience gained outside the clan to seek the support of their own kinship group so as to achieve an elected position in the state structures. Once a man gained public office, he used the benefits obtained from the state - especially access to credit and business opportunities and advice - to build up personal wealth and public credit within the clan and tribe, thus emphasizing those traditional aspects of leadership which require wealth and generosity. Such wealth was not produced by traditional means, but was derived primarily from a government position. The new leaders used their position as intermediaries between different spheres to boost their status within their traditional group, which was indeed a traditional technique. This process was followed by both the former mission and government workers who became councillors and MHAs in the 1960s, and the educated young men who became councillors, MHAs and ministers in the 1970s. Outside resources helped each new cohort to bolster its position against an earlier generation of leaders. Having initially used a group vote base, they needed to strengthen their hold using appeals which could apply beyond that base.

The question for them was what means to use. In Chapter IV we saw how colonial leaders used their positions as intermediaries to tap into the political resources made available through the colonial state, as well as raising their own wealth and status through increased traditional production and exchange. These had been times of peace, when the qualities of wealth, generosity, the capacity to build alliances and incur debts were important, as were the skills of oratory. Relations with the state were one of clientage. In the 1970s another, more assertive aspect of tradition was utilized by the anti-colonial young firebrands of Simbu. These were uncertain times. The path of development appeared not to have led very far, and there were resentments at the constant humiliations and dependencies of colonial status. The angry young men of Simbu, with clear cut ideas for change, thus were capable of making relevant political appeals within the differing strands of Simbu leadership traditions. Perhaps, despite the resentment of people who had followed other routes to power locally, this was a time for hard or even hot men ('strong' men in Read's [1959] terminology), and this is why Okuk succeeded in the 1972 election, and later over Chimbu Coffee.

Yet a deep generational cleavage remained between the young men and old, which was frequently mentioned by both groups. This chapter has also described the apparent eclipse of two generations of leaders, first the late colonial village officials, and then the councillors themselves. The sense of trauma and insecurity in the society was such that older clan leaders, some of them former *luluais*, revived inter-clan warfare to settle disputes, with the effect of raising their renown and subordinating younger men who were unfamiliar with this sort of politics.

The clan was demonstrated to be the fundamental unit of political support in the state arenas, too. The mobilization of clans to vote was frequently extremely successful, as demonstrated in the solidarity of clan voting. Younger men needed a clan and tribal base as a launching pad for entry into the new political institutions, but to be sure of success they had also to make appeals which transcended their clan base. The problem of political mobilization was most clearly demonstrated in the 1972 campaign for the Chimbu Regional seat, but was manifest in the Open campaigns as well.

The most successful candidates were hard campaigners who had made personal contact with a wide range of voters, and older leaders who articulated traditional exchange relations, government positions as interpreters, and church positions as catechists. They required symbols and ideologies which would have appeal within the changing Simbu political culture. Similarly, the older men also needed younger men with *save* in order for their groups to gain access to the resources of the state. With mixed success, as with the *Pre Pol* Watchdogs, young men successful in the cash economy therefore sought alliances with older leaders, using financial and other resources from outside the clan.

This was a tense period of adjustment. As a major test-case the conflict over Chimbu Coffee had clearly demonstrated the nuisance value if not the formal power of the new young men of politics. Okuk, in particular, had demonstrated himself a fearless hater, a warrior in the new district and national political arenas, with immense disruptive capacity if not jural power in a range of spheres such as business and local institutions. In late 1973 the young men appeared to be ascendant, but inter-generational struggles continued through 1974. They were still the strongest dimension of political conflict in mid-1975, when the final transition to independence and the process of forming the provincial government commenced.

CHAPTER VI

PULLING POWER INTO OUR HANDS: DECOLONIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

After Self-Government, Simbu political actors set about exploring and, if possible expanding their roles, finding new sources of power and how to control them. Major issues which had arisen in the preceding months did not disappear, but were merely transferred into new arenas. Four case studies are given here of attempts by Simbu politicians to expand their power, all of which involved the national parliamentarians in their home arenas. These are the creation of a political arena for the entire Chimbu District, in the form of a 'district' (later to be called 'provincial') government; the effort by Iambakey Okuk to create a local political and business base to complement his national office; the continuing tussle over the local coffee industry, which was an issue that became embroiled in the provincial government struggle; and the foiled moves by politicians from northern Chimbu to take over large areas of land in Karimui/Bomai. These issues bridged formal Independence in 1975.

Changes in the external (national) context continued apace. As Goode (1975) points out, the national political debate in 1974 moved from the timing of decolonization to the contents of the constitution. The House resolved that a date for Independence would be set after the constitution was passed. The national executive and legislature systematically followed the legislative programme for decolonization negotiated with Australia with a rush of legislation, and the House of Assembly members - sitting as a Constituent Assembly - in July-August 1975 passed the National Constitution. In Chimbu as in the national arena, after the smooth *fait accompli* of Self-Government, the issue of formal Independence became something of an irrelevance in the district's continuing internal power struggles.

National constitutional decisions had local repercussions in Chimbu in 1975. On 30 June, even though the constitution had not yet been passed, Somare successfully moved that the Independence date be set at 16 September, a date which from 1971 had been deemed 'National Day', and which was the 91st anniversary of the declaration of the British protectorate over southeast New Guinea. Then on 28 July the legislature extended its own (originally four year) term of office to the five-years set in the draft constitution for future parliaments. The extension was opposed only rather half-heartedly by Somare, having been foreshadowed by a resolution on 25 February.

This decision was widely perceived as an act of cynical self-interest by parliamentarians, and in Simbu for months afterwards was claimed as a precedent by councillors also wishing to extend their terms of office. The move was taken as a sign of MPs' lack of confidence in re-election. It infuriated students in the national capital and antagonized politically aware people in Simbu, thus increasing the opposition to incumbents. The extension was moved by Kobale Kale (Sinasiona), Government Whip, who shared a Port Moresby residence with several Highlands members of UP. Kale's cross-party, pan-Highlands links played an important role in building support for early Independence. There was also an element of tradeoff in extending the parliamentary term while hastening Independence. Okuk was behind the move to extend the life of the parliament, and he too was building pan-Highlands support at the time, another sign of the weakness of party allegiances. Soon after Independence, Okuk as Transport Minister took Kale to the United States for talks with Boeing Aircraft Corporation at Seattle. Kale at the time was moving close to Somare and the American trip was seen as Kale's reward for the support he delivered on the timing of Independence.

The 1974-75 period was the tensest time in PNG's decolonization, for all people. Simbu village leaders perceived a decline in government services and the economy. Some fears associated with Self-Government lingered: Papuan and Bougainville secession remained possibilities, and there was a visible reduction in expatriate staff, who were replaced by less experienced nationals. Related to this in the leaders' thinking was a continuing rise in clan warfare. The only people in Chimbu who were confident about the pace of constitutional change were senior national public servants and politicians. The transfer of sovereignty would of course increase their power, and they were sure of their ability to manage the state. Some were buying urban property cheaply from departing expatriates, and looked forward to prosperous futures.

Among expatriates there was a great deal of uncertainty, especially in a rural area like Chimbu where they were a small and ostentatious minority. Insecurity troubled expatriates in both business and government, even those who were sympathetic to the newly emerging nation of Papua New Guinea and who were doing much to promote indigenous people (who were by then referred to as 'nationals'). They were concerned that public service 'localization' was being rushed too fast, and worried at the stresses on national staff being promoted and transferred too rapidly to learn, consolidate and mature in new jobs. The first non-kiap appointee as a District Commissioner was seen by district administrators in Chimbu as the harbinger of a system of political appointments to senior public service positions. (Changes in the national bureaucracy are described in Ballard 1981a.) Other departments were seen as 'poaching' the most experienced and competent field administrators, at a time when recruitment into the lower ranks of the *kiap*

service had slowed down (and ceased for a few years after Independence). As experienced staff became harder to retain, both nationals and expatriates admitted the decline in services which villagers had perceived. This process was inevitable, yet it came to be seen as caused by the post-colonial decentralization of political and administrative powers.

Decentralization commences

The second of the Constitutional Planning Committee's terms of reference was 'local-regional-central government relations'. In a Discussion Paper (PNG 1973a) and verbally at public meetings the CPC advocated a form of elected 'district government' which would be stronger than the existing Area Authorities (AAs). Support for this proposal was uneven, and quite low on the main New Guinea island. In fact the demand was stronger in Chimbu than in any other mainland district, according to a CPC staff member (pers. comm., September 1973). At the CPC's Kundiawa meeting in August 1973 the AA chairman, Siwi Kurondo, demanded district government in order that decisions be made quickly. By contrast, a national MHA, Ninkama Bomai (Gumine), seriously questioned the utility of the idea. This division, based upon their different personal and institutional interests at the time, was a precursor to structural conflict embedded in the issue which emerged later.

The CPC had several concerns in advocating provincial government. The first was to deflect secessionist feelings in Bougainville and regionalist sentiment in the Highlands and Papua (PNG 1973b), the latter potentially far larger in scale than Bougainville secessionism and hence considered more dangerous to national unity. Other concerns were to increase popular political participation and decentralize control of the state into local hands so as to sensitize the bureaucracy to local needs. Although the House legislated in June 1974 to give Bougainville an interim provincial government, recurrent Bougainville crises added to the sensitivity of the decentralization issue. The *Government Paper* (PNG 1974b), in responding to the CPC's *Final Report*, strongly questioned the concept of immediate nationwide decentralization. This paper precipitated a serious division between the government and former CPC members (Barnett 1981), who formed a cross-party Nationalist Pressure Group (NPG) in August 1974 to advocate radical restructuring of the polity. At times in late 1974 and early 1975 the government's majority looked insecure, but the opposition UP leader, Tei Abal, preferred Somare's gradualism to the NPG's radicalism. The CPC's decentralization recommendations received only brief and superficial discussion in the Constituent Assembly in March 1975. The topic was referred to a Follow-Up Committee (FUC), comprising former members and advisers of the CPC, Pangu and the UP, for discussion until June (Ballard 1981b).

Despite their public commitment to decentralize, national government ministers became concerned at the likely consequent loss of their powers. Somare stated that 'To force on provincial leaders responsibilities for which they are not ready would be to invite disaster and chaos'. He spoke of the enormous costs that would arise from decentralization, saying that to give all districts provincial government now 'straight off the counter' would bankrupt the state within three months (P-C, 18 and 19 February 1975). Nonetheless, the government participated in the FUC's detailed consideration of the powers of the provinces and how to devolve them. Then, after months of inconclusive negotiations with the Somare government, the Bougainville leaders on 30 May 1975 resolved to secede from Papua New Guinea. This threat angered and united the House behind a rather shaky government, which nonetheless attempted negotiation with Bougainville leaders throughout July.

Meanwhile, during early 1974 the Chimbu AA members collectively came to see that their only possible chance of sharing real power with national ministers lay in the CPC's district government proposals. Their own lack of formal education meant that they could never become powerful public servants, and also for most that they could never follow the detailed technicalities of matters before the national legislature. Although prominent councillors in their home areas (two had been national parliamentarians), they felt they were being by-passed by younger and better educated men in politics, administration and business. Given their important role at the district level of politics, I collected their personal profiles. Seventeen provided personal details, and one declined (Standish 1979b:56 ff).

In many ways these were 'middle men', neither traditional nor modern leaders. Nine claimed *Tokpisin* literacy, but I judged only three as functionally literate. Their average age in the mid-1970s was the mid-forties, a mature age in a society with a life expectancy in the mid-fifties. Yet they valued modern education, because 59 per cent of those with children of secondary school age had sent them to high school - daughters included. Sixty per cent were polygynous. One had disposed of his pigs on becoming a Seventh Day Adventist; the others claimed to have six or more pigs, with an average claimed ownership of 28 pigs and a median figure of sixteen, figures which I could not verify and which I strongly suspect to be too high. In the northern Chimbu 30 years ago only 10 per cent of adult men were polygynous, a proportion which has since halved. Average pig ownership was about four in another group of men I questioned of about the same age. So by the simplest criteria these were 'big-men'.

These impressions were reinforced by their modern business sector activities. Almost 60 per cent owned or had owned pig projects with imported stock; 52 per cent

had or had owned cattle projects; 94 per cent grew coffee, and 76 per cent owned coffee hulling machines; almost 60 per cent owned or had owned motor vehicles; 53 per cent were engaged in coffee buying. If they were peasants, they were big peasants. For their political work each received allowances of over K1,000 *per annum*, and 71 were able to employ paid workmen, which was perhaps needed to create time for politics. Given that yearly per capita incomes were around K50, the AA members were part of a privileged and small elite.

These were the people who followed Siwi Kurondo's 1973 lead and opted for early provincial government, and strongly pushed this view upon Chief Minister Somare when he visited their meeting in June 1974 (Rabbie Namaliu, pers. comm. June 1974). Given Kurondo's pioneer role in Pangua as a Highlander, Somare agreed in principle to the AA's verbal submission. Thus the national government agreed that Chimbu would have the first Highlands provincial government.

The AA members set about finding other ways to gain prestige. Having spare funds at the end of 1974, the Authority sent a delegation of six on an educational tour of Malaysia, Singapore and Brisbane with their executive officer, an Australian. Apart from one discussion of a "farmers' university" (an agricultural training institute) in Malaysia and occasional ribald references, this trip in subsequent years was rarely mentioned in public by those who went. The executive officer considered the party suffered acute culture shock whilst abroad (John Dagge interview, June 1975).

Explicitly to increase the Authority's dignity, Kurondo sought from the chair to impose procedures similar to those of the national House. Also replicating the national legislature, the AA's meetings frequently grew rowdy, especially after lunch-time sessions at the hotel. Often, after such politicking, the meetings would revise a vote. The loudest voice was possessed by the Deputy Chairman, Kuman Dai,¹ whose bulk was imposing; Kurondo, by contrast, clearly had a greater degree of subtle authority. A flexible chairman, Kurondo often adjourned the meeting for coffee (or cold water) at a heated moment. He would accept an unimportant proposal which he personally opposed and quickly push it through, in order to keep business moving towards an agenda item which he wanted passed.

In mid-1975 Kurondo instigated a 'question time' system, at which senior officers in Chimbu from different central government departments (Chief Minister's, Education,

¹ The middle-aged son of former Gumine Iahoi Dai, Kuman Dai was amongst the earliest Simbu educated to Grade 6 and functional literacy at Kondiu school in the 1950s, only years after peace in his area. He became a councillor and occasional coffee buyer.

Public Works, Agriculture, Health and so on) would come to answer questions on notice from Authority members. These then became general question sessions, and were intended to create open communication with public servants. The competence and enthusiasm of the officials - or their lack, in one case - soon became apparent, but the Authority members themselves were very often gratuitously hostile and counter-productively rude to public servants. Although these sessions were designed to raise the knowledge and stature of the AA members, their impatience or inability to listen to relevant technical considerations lowered their stature in public service eyes.

Even though AAs were formally only advisory bodies, as part of the government's response to problems noted by the CPC, and to the CPC itself, Chief Minister Somare sought to increase their roles. The principal field in which the AA had a role was in the preparation of the district's Rural Improvement Program (RIP), minor projects funded from the central government. In 1973 and 1974 the District Co-ordinating Committee (comprising departmental representatives) prepared recommendations on the following financial year's RIP programme on the basis of submissions from their staff, including Assistant District Commissioners and councils. These were passed to the AA for cursory comment, and the AA accepted them as *faits accomplis*. For the 1975 recommendations the AA invited proposals and debated these at length, but without any clear policy priorities there was heated division. On only one occasion before 1977 were generalized policy guidelines spelt out, in relation to the 1976/77 RIP recommendations.

This occurred in January 1976, with the RIP recommendations well overdue in Port Moresby and the AA sitting ending, the Authority established a sub-committee to rank the 142 submissions for funds from councils and non-government bodies. This group included the AA's three functionally literate members and young men from the provincial government committee. I was also appointed, presumably for my clerical skills, and John Kaupa, MHA, merely attached himself. In order to avoid any charges of meddling and to give some coherence to our task, I summarized what appeared to me to be the AA's consensus on priorities. These were to open up a road to Bomai in southern Chimbu (of which more later), to promote business (especially prestigious cattle projects for councils) and to open more high schools. These priorities were implicitly accepted by the AA. We worked until 3 am, our proceedings prolonged by John Kaupa, whose loud persistence repeatedly wore down the committee, for the apparent benefit of his electorate, although many of his local Council's proposals received such low priority they were not expected to receive funding. Nevertheless, this was a good example of an educated young man drawing state resources into his local arena. The group's recommendations were accepted by the AA, if only because the meeting was scheduled to end. This was an atypically rational process; the Simbu politician is a strong-willed

person and if a desired course of action conflicts with an agreed set of abstract principles then he or she has no qualms about dropping the general and implementing the particular.

From 1974 steps commenced to improve planning and co-ordination processes which had always been weak in short-staffed Chimbu. On the initiative of a Simbu member of the Public Service Board, Ignatius Kilage, seeking to help his people from Port Moresby, the Central Planning Office (CPO) commissioned an Australian National University (ANU) study team led by Dr Diana Howlett to prepare a base-line socio-economic study. She had worked on the Eastern Highlands over many years (Howlett 1962); other team members, Robin Hide and Elspeth Young were completing doctorates on Simbu agriculture and migration respectively (Hide 1981; Young 1977). The team commenced work in June 1975, along with three Simbu counterparts. Because leaders in the province had limited knowledge of conditions outside their home areas, the team conducted three workshops with AA members in remote corners of the province to assess the concerns of rural villagers, and held a concluding seminar in Kundiawa with officials and educated youth.

The resulting 'Green Book' report (Howlett *et al.* 1976) highlights social and geographic inequalities and argues against large-scale agricultural projects and capital-intensive secondary industry. Rather, it advocates the development of small businesses using 'appropriate technology' wherever possible. After this document was presented to the AA in November 1976 (with a Tokpisin summary a year later) a series of seminars commenced in 1977 at which the report was explained by tertiary educated Simbu. The older AA members and national politicians resented being lectured by youths, and rejected the overall egalitarian thrust of the report. Some called the report 'the Chimbu Bible' and carried copies around as symbolic legitimating devices, but the AA lacked any commitment to it as a policy guide. The seminars concluded early as immediate political concerns took over with the creation of a provincial government.

While the ANU/CPO team was working in Chimbu a women's organization coincidentally emerged which initially appeared to seek small scale, decentralized agricultural business and to meet the Green Book's recommendations. This was the 'Kuman Yangpela Didiman' (E = Young Agronomists), a Chimbu-wide organization which eventually comprised 21 constituent clubs, mostly led by the mature wives of leading rural figures. This body bore no resemblance to the Western Highlands-based, and Lutheran church-inspired, movement using the same *Tokpisin* name, and in fact it was primarily interested in commercial activities. Although its president was a woman, its main organizer and many club secretaries were male (a pattern also noted in a women's movement called *Kafaina* in the Chuave area, Warry 1985). Nonetheless it was

perfectly designed to seek central government funding with submissions couched in terms of the government's quasi-ideology, the Eight Aims (or Points) for National Development, the seventh of which was development of women. Eventually *Yangpela Didiman* did obtain a vehicle and other external support for its organizational expenses. As noted below, *Kuman Yangpela Didiman* became embroiled in politics and proved a minor irritant to provincial politicians.

More frequently to be found centre stage were the tensions between the AA and Iambakey Okuk, since each had a district-wide representative role. Okuk was often absent on ministerial duties so had little chance to win over members of the AA. Members of this body did not attend a large party to which Okuk had invited them, to Okuk's chagrin, and refused his request to rent him an office. In particular, they criticized Okuk for the poor performance of the man appointed on Okuk's nomination² to manage the Chimbu Councils' Services Unit (CCSU).³ Okuk lost stature in this affair which damaged his subsequent attempts to nominate managers for Chimbu Coffee Co-operative in what coffee industry figures and other politicians presumed were attempts to gain control of this valuable resource.

Okuk's local politics

In late 1973 Okuk was especially unpopular in Chimbu for his role in deposing Collins from Chimbu Coffee, and in the capital stories of his allegedly wild behaviour made him unpopular in Somare's cabinet. A drunken incident allegedly involving two ministers at the Mandarin Restaurant in Port Moresby brought Okuk bad publicity in Simbu, and led to an unsuccessful parliamentary censure motion (*P-C*, 20 November 1973). He was moved to the Transport portfolio in February 1974, perhaps because of his controversial actions regarding the coffee industry.

Okuk's lifestyle and frequent overseas travels were strongly criticized as extravagant by university students who in June 1974 converted a strike over their own conditions, food and allowances into a general critique of ministerial perquisites that

² I. Okuk, Minister for Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries to Chairman, Chimbu District Area Authority, Ref ME-3-17, 13 July 1973 (on AA Coffee file).

³ Okuk's nominee as CCSU manager, an English engineer, communicated poorly with both fellow expatriates and Simbu workers. He was unable to detect and/or to stop continuing theft of building materials and expensive autoparts, apparently by his staff. Chimbu's isolation required high stock inventories but poor stock control led to massive over-ordering. The unit had a great deal of trouble completing work and in meeting its quoted prices. When by 1975 the CCSU was bankrupt in all but name, the AA directed that the unit (with its Management Board of Councillors) dissolve itself and realize its assets. The councils lost their share capital and the AA bought the property and stock cheaply and gave the creditors about 75 cents in the dollar.

shook the Somare government. Okuk replied with an open letter to the students, saying that while abroad he was exploring new technology (in particular, aerial ropeways which are used in mountainous tourist areas) and that his layman's views were as important as those of his departmental specialists; besides, he said, any expertise he gained would remain in the country. Okuk's student critics were led by a fellow Kamanegu tribesman, the economics student Barunke Kaman,⁴ a nationalist opposed to Highlands regionalism. Okuk and John Kaupa had in 1973 supported the Highlands regionalism articulated in 1972-73 by Simbu students active in the Highlands Liberation Front (Standish 1976b; 1982). The first generation of Chimbu students assumed a higher status than was accorded to them by Simbu villagers or politicians (cf. Welch 1976), and they even subsequently attempted to gain representation in the provincial government, but those who criticized Okuk were not alone. Simbu elite members criticized the fact that a German friend of Okuk's - who like all ministerial staff, nominally worked in the chief minister's office - stayed several months at the expensive Chimbu Lodge while acting as a 'social scientist' among Kamanegu women. Okuk knew he was isolated in Chimbu and his standing low; he was dispirited in 1973-74 and he told me he doubted he would be re-elected in 1976.

Okuk did not start seriously building a political base at home until mid-1974, when constitutional debate was well underway and the Chimbu Area Authority was becoming preoccupied with provincial government. Okuk needed the support of his own large tribe, the Kamanegu. He imitated his parliamentary colleague John Kaputin, who had created the Mataungan Association's New Guinea Development Corporation on the Gazelle Peninsula as a means of getting business in the area into the hands of his people (Kaputin 1977). While Kaputin spent years talking with people while collecting share funds, working through an existing mass movement for which he was spokesman, Okuk established the Kamanegu Development Corporation Proprietary Limited during visits home in just a few short months in mid-1974. Like his opponents in Chimbu Watchdogs, Okuk brought in older leaders as figureheads.

These men said that Okuk had appointed thirteen of them to be directors; most were prominent clan leaders and some were councillors. The Chairman would be Siune Kumba, a prominent councillor and father of Mathew (Numambo) Siune, Okuk's opponent in 1972 and then in the Watchdogs, and in mid-1974 an employee of Chimbu Coffee. Mathew Siune was to be the corporation's secretary and treasurer. In June 1974

⁴ A member of the Orgondie clan which had broken from Okuk's Awakane a generation earlier, with a legacy of continuing tensions, Barunke is son of Lutheran pastor Kaman Au, a candidate in the 1964 and 1972 elections. Barunke was educated first in Morobe Province by missionaries and later in Armidale, Australia at a church secondary school before attending UPNG.

Mathew told me that Okuk had tried to give him a post as a diplomat, but that he had doubts. Unable to lure Mathew out of the country, if that was his motive, Okuk set about recruiting him into his camp. The first step was to bring Mathew's father into the corporation. Okuk subsequently helped Mathew through a court case and facilitated his gaining employment in the Area Authority.⁵

I could obtain little information on the corporation from older Kamanegu leaders (four of them councillors) who said they were directors, except that they saw it as being like a Kamanegu council. Okuk ran things, they all said. Siune Kumba anticipated considerable government funding to help this fledgling national business. The corporation would collect share money, much as council tax was collected. Echoing Okuk, the directors argued that the profits from the corporation would be used to provide development and local government-type services for the Kamanegu people, which would obviate the need to pay tax (interviews, 23 June 1973). This idea thus also owes something to the business arm of the Kainantu Council and its *Eria Komunitis* (Howlett *et al.* 1976). For some months Okuk's staff did collect what was called 'tax' and village people thought their \$4 or \$5 contributions were buying shares. Some directors said no council tax would be needed now, others said taxes would fall. Former *luluai*, Kuatinenem, said the corporation was a good thing as it involved all five Kamanegu clans, would cut tax and give them their own *bisnis*.

The Memorandum of Association of the Corporation⁶ shows it had a catch-all variety of objectives, to 'promote and encourage developmental activities and businesses of all kinds' including 'equity participation and loans', 'all kinds of research'; to sponsor students, artists and craftsmen; and to act as agent for 'governmental bodies concerned with development'. It aimed to carry on many businesses and activities, ranging from 'facilities ... to cater for all types of traditional exchange' and 'welfare services of all kinds', to retailing and wholesaling, importing and exporting, transporting by land, sea and air, entertainment and accommodation including 'the provision of roadside food and drink', agriculture and land development, marketing, including coffee marketing, and natural resource extraction. Nominal share capital was 50,000 \$1 shares, with members

5 Okuk helped Mathew Siune obtain a job as Area Authority clerk, despite a major scandal: late in 1974 Siune had abandoned his job as Kerowagi branch manager of Chimbu Coffee and was charged with the theft of \$A1,643.70 coffee buying funds. The magistrate accepted Siune's plea that he took the money to pay higher prices for villagers' coffee, and did not benefit personally. Okuk provided defence counsel and wrote to the court pledging to repay the missing coffee monies - which he did only in part. Siune was found guilty and was given a one year K300 bond (P-C, 1 March 1976).

6 Dated 30 October 1974 (held at the Registrar-General's Office, Port Moresby).

(share owners) limited to fifty, and their liability limited. Only two shareholders were registered, Okuk and his secretary, Elies Vuvu.

For Okuk the politician, the corporation's early success created some mixed political results. He used it for patronage to give employment to both political allies and former opponents. He bought, on hire-purchase, a highly visible 6-tonne highway truck, which symbolized the corporation's existence and sparked resentment in other tribes, but was then humiliated when this vehicle was repossessed. Okuk used his ministerial position to the corporation's benefit. With funds from an expatriate businessman he obtained a fuel haulage business backed by a government contract, and a local agency for the national airline, Air Niugini, which came under his portfolio. He rented a building from Collins and Leahy for a token trade store which legitimized a thriving liquor outlet, and acquired a prime vacant allotment opposite the airstrip. He had ambitions to acquire the Kundiawa Hotel from Collins and Leahy, and to take over land at Bomai which Chimbu Coffee had obtained for agricultural purposes. By 1975 this Kamanegu success was resented, so Okuk opened 'membership' to anyone in Chimbu and on the advice of an Australian businessman unofficially changed the name to Chimbu Yomba Corporation.⁷ On Okuk's account the corporation eventually had 3,000 shareholders, only 300 of them Kamanegu. The corporation also bought a K70,000 house for an expatriate manager - who never arrived - and then by 1976 had debts of K196,000 and failed as a business. Okuk told me he blamed thieving kinsmen for its failure. He personally took over its assets and the liquor outlet, saying he was using them to repay the corporation's debts (*P-C*, 8 August 1978).

Imitation being a sincere compliment - even when self-interest accrues - Chuave MHA John Kaupa in late 1974 set up a Chuave Corporation with the express aim of building a tavern, to be owned jointly with the Council. He personally collected 'share' funds on several occasions but had difficulty in accumulating enough cash to start his tavern. Kaupa lacked Okuk's political weight and credibility among his own people. It was three years before funds from the Papua New Guinea Banking Corporation and the South Pacific Brewery enabled the tavern to be opened with a big party in the very week voting started in the 1977 national election. The tavern, owned jointly by the Elimbari Council, ran for only a few weeks, compared to the Kamanegu Corporation's 3 years.

Okuk went from strength to strength as a local patron. He set up a government-financed Asian 'study trip' for Anton Aba, a local businessman/ politician, previously an

⁷ The name 'Chimbu Yomba' was not recorded by the Registrar-General. It means, in effect, the strength of the Chimbu people, *yomba* being a hardwood tree, a branch of which is sometimes carried by old clan leaders as a symbol of the clan's strength and their leadership (see footnote 2, Chapter III above).

opponent, who became a strong ally. He told me in June 1974 he always gave away the wristwatches presented to him by visiting Japanese delegations, so no one could say that he was influenced by these gifts. He complained that his constituents were draining him of funds with their constant requests for contributions for death payments, bride wealth and so on, a traditional aspect of the big-man's role. In all this, he was creating obligations that would, by custom, be repaid, but he did this amongst those who were unable to reciprocate in kind. At once obligated and grateful, they were thus drawn into his camp, and many eventually became active members of his faction. Lack of reciprocity creates a sense of unease amongst Melanesians. This process occurs in all political areas at all times; there are no free lunches.

But all was not smooth - and Okuk's ministerial career was the most turbulent in the first Somare government. Acting without formal approval, he committed the government to the purchase of a fleet of Mercedes-Benz cars, a mild scandal. The Public Accounts Committee criticized his department's unapproved purchase of a large Datsun sedan for his use in his own electorate. He put pressure on foreign firms to use national owner-drivers as haulage sub-contractors, and his use of the language of race inspired fear amongst expatriate businessmen (*Nation-Review*, October 31- November 6, 1975). His private life remained a matter of public concern. He was stabbed by a jealous woman outside the Kundiawa Chimbu Lodge Motel, was charged by an expatriate couple with using insulting words, appeared in court several times on traffic and drink related charges, and engaged in several brawls both verbal and physical in government offices. Somare grew tired of protecting him and, as more Highlanders were recruited into the coalition and Somare's legitimacy grew in their region, the Prime Minister's need for Okuk declined.

Serious policy conflict between Okuk and Somare had become public during the 1975 constitutional debates, during which Okuk wanted to restrict the rights to compensation for freehold land of expatriates who became citizens, and to deny them rights to hold political office. This last move would have excluded PPP leader, Julius Chan, from office. Okuk, who had long associated privately with regionalists such as the Highlands Liberation Front while publicly taking a nationalist position (Standish 1976b), lobbied unsuccessfully for months among Highlands parliamentarians to oust Somare just before Independence (Marie Reay, pers. comm. 1976). Okuk and Somare also clashed in 1975 over Chimbu Coffee Co-operative management and the coffee border restrictions.

Okuk finally lost his Transport portfolio in December 1975 because of his dealings with the Boeing Corporation.⁸ After a trip to Boeing at Seattle he demanded that Air Niugini should buy Boeing aircraft, contrary to a decision by Cabinet at that time to lease aircraft. The airline was eventually committed to buying a second-hand Boeing, and Okuk continued to advocate purchase of further Boeings. He was transferred from the Transport portfolio to Education as part of a general reshuffle in December 1975, a field which needed a strong minister, but one which a National Party staff member told me 'lacked opportunities'.

Okuk's response to this perceived demotion was a clear demonstration of his tactical audacity and sheer political willpower. He initially sought to rally Highlands support to regain the Transport portfolio, and then with a series of statements with National Party leader, Thomas Kavali (Jimi), he provoked Somare to sack them both from the ministry, by describing the reshuffle as dictatorial. The denouement almost appeared to be scripted in advance. In January 1976, on the day Somare demanded his resignation in a letter hand delivered by Okuk's departmental head, Okuk threw a party in Kundiawa for some hundreds of Simbu leaders and some prominent expatriates whose presence was used to show his acceptability. I costed this exercise at K1,400 for meat and drink alone. Okuk's welcoming speech to his guests was brilliant. In sorrow more than anger, he explained that he had been removed by the 'Coastals' who dominated cabinet because he had struggled for the Highlands people. He subsequently always denied he had been sacked, however, saying he had resigned from the ministry. Thereafter on every possible public occasion he distanced himself from the Somare/Chan (Pangu/Peoples Progress Party) government and blamed it for Chimbu's lack of development, bitterly attacked coastal dominance of government (especially the public service) and sought to build up a broad regional alliance based on a sense of 'Highlands identity'.

Many older, local-level leaders quickly rallied to his side. With no ministerial responsibilities, Okuk was able, as well as forced, to concentrate on his electorate for the first time in four years. He occasionally, together with John Kaupa, used the National Party label, but he mainly set about building up a personal following in Chimbu rather than a party machine. By the end of 1976 he had won over most of the members of the Area Authority by displaying both generous hospitality and a ready interpretation of national political events which used inside knowledge far surpassing that of all but one or two fellow Simbu. Although presenting himself as a modern leader, in traditional terms he displayed generosity and even charm on occasion; he was a man of knowledge, who

⁸ The reasons for Somare removing him from the Transport portfolio were never announced, but when I put this interpretation to Okuk in November 1977 he agreed with it.

was also fearless, with a well-known capacity for instantly manufacturing anger if the moment suited. His 1976 reversal thus became the start of his comeback in the 1977 election.

Coffee politics

The limited influence of the Chimbu AA is well illustrated by the continuing saga of the coffee industry. The general manager who replaced Mike Collins at Chimbu Coffee - an Australian former prison officer with no industry experience - was unsuccessful and lasted only three months. He was replaced by Australian-educated George Leahy, the most successful buyer for CCC. Leahy's previous *Pre Poi* involvement branded him an opponent of Okuk. He finished installing coffee processing machinery in the new factory building, and CCC quickly became profitable again. But, because of low prices and the society's heavy debts (including unpaid taxes of \$49,000), Leahy was unable to recommend to the directors that they declare a dividend. Nor, indeed, did he want to, arguing that the estimated \$10,000 cost of distributing a dividend to 17,000 shareholders was too high.⁹

Chimbu politics began to impinge upon the nationally appointed Coffee Marketing Board. Throughout the 1970s a majority of its members were indigenous. Despite the Board's charter to promote growers' interests, some members from the Wahgi Valley (Western Highlands) were expatriate planters who also bought smallholder coffee for processing and thus had a direct economic interest in that phase of production. The delegate to the Board from Chimbu was usually a coffee buyer as well as a grower, and for most of the time was also Chairman of the CCC. The AA was consulted by the minister about Chimbu nominees for the Board, and rejected Okuk's suggestion to recommend a fellow Kamanegu - a man who was to become his campaign manager in 1977. The AA continued to endorse the CCC's suggested nominees for the Board, a further rebuffal of Okuk.

The AA was less amenable to the CCC position on the geographic restrictions on coffee buying which were part of the 1970 'plate system' rescue package for CCC discussed in Chapter V. It was the CMB which in 1970 had allocated Chimbu Coffee with most of the 40 licence plates for buying coffee within the borders of the gazetted Chimbu zone. The remainder went to Eastern Highlands and Wahgi Valley buyers linked to foreign processors. Subsequently the Agriculture Ministers, first Okuk and then (from

⁹ This process was logistically similar to a government mounted tax patrol or census, in that much of the province had to be covered, shareholders located and identified, and their claims checked against a massive computer printout before dividends were distributed.

February 1974) Dr John Guise, pressured the CMB to lift the border restrictions. The CMB itself had always opposed the buying restrictions (Cartledge 1978), which may have reflected its location in a coffee processing town, Goroka, rather than its membership, which was intended to represent smallholders as much as planters. The Board's officers themselves believed that Chimbu Coffee was enabled by its privileged position to pay lower prices than outside buyers would pay - to the disadvantage of growers. The CCC system of pricing parchment differed from that of other factories and so strict comparability is impossible, yet my own comparison of Chimbu Coffee's quoted factory door prices with those of Eastern and Western Highlands factories indicates that from 1973-76 (but not in 1977) CCC prices were usually within 2 cents or *toea* per pound of prices paid by rivals. Chimbu Coffee responded to the CMB that it had an obligation to buy in the remote areas of the district, thus incurring average collection costs of 5 cents per pound, and claimed that outside buyers, who could choose to concentrate on the 'Highway' and good roads where overheads were lower, were 'taking the cream off the coffee'.

During the time when CCC management was weakest, the restrictions were lifted for six weeks in mid-1974, as the result of pressure from the AA. The 'plates', a ready identifier of licensed buyers, disappeared at this time. On taking over, George Leahy lobbied strongly for the reinstatement of protection for the Chimbu market; the AA quickly changed its collective mind and when minister Guise visited in July 1974 they persuaded him to impose a blanket ban on outside buyers.¹⁰ Local government councils in the Eastern and Western Highlands immediately protested against this reimposition of the border restriction.

The total ban on outside buyers was essentially unenforceable and the issue remained unsettled. The new CCC factory could handle twice Chimbu's annual crop, and needed a large throughput to operate economically. If the border were removed, George Leahy told the AA in November 1975, the co-operative would not survive and he would resign as general manager. This argument carried some weight, because - as noted above - of the considerable symbolic significance of the society as the only large Simbu-owned business. CCC led support for the border, although another processor, Chimbu Developments (known as 'Wandi Coffee')¹¹ undoubtedly benefitted greatly

¹⁰ Official statement, Minister for Agriculture and Stock and Deputy Chief Minister, Dr John Guise, 18 July 1974; *Contact*, NBC 17 July 1974; CMB (ref 193-/A/9160) to Chimbu District AA of 19 July 1974.

¹¹ This small but highly efficient plant was 30 per cent owned by and managed by a former co-operatives officer in Chimbu, Terry Shelley. Some 66 per cent of shares were owned by Angco, PNG's largest commodities exporter, Australian-owned until the PNG Investment Corporation bought it out in late 1976. The remaining 4 per cent was held by Simbu coffee buyers (interview, T. Shelley, 1976).

from its presence. Wandu Coffee management, however, claimed to be able to operate profitably without the border, and did not engage in the public debate. Supporters of the border included private buyers firmly attached to these factories. In 1972 there had been eight such Simbu buyers, but by 1977 there were almost one hundred.

Wahgi Valley processors sought access to the Chimbu market, and there were Chimbu buyers willing to sell to them. In September 1975, the national minister again sought AA advice on the matter. Gumine growers had long been dissatisfied with CCC prices, and a group of Gumine people (including coffee buyers and most of the Gumine councillors) came together under the leadership of a mission school headmaster. With advice from an American priest, who subsequently became a coffee buyer himself, in August 1974 they wrote a strong submission to the AA arguing that the border be removed, so that they might have more competition in their area and the chance of getting higher prices than those offered by CCC.¹² This letter was supported strongly by the Gumine members of the AA, including the local member, Ninkama Bomai, and other allies of Okuk. Debate in the Authority was heated and particularly hostile to the Simbu teacher and the missionary. After several adjournments, the Authority remained so divided that it initially decided not to answer the letter. Then, unwilling to be seen as vacillating, the AA members finally agreed to reply that the border should remain in place at least until the end of the year. This temporary face-saving formula allowed the issue to re-emerge in new form in 1976 and 1977.

Late in 1975 a multi-pronged attack on Chimbu Coffee management was launched by Simbu political figures associated with Okuk, including Mathew Siune. Forming a short-lived Chimbu Coffee Growers Association, they called for CCC to enter the export market in order to gain additional 'commission', as they called it. They proposed a new manager, a close ally of Okuk's. Cr Siune in the Kundiawa Council on 15 October called for the sacking of the manager in a wheedling speech, given - unusually for him in such a context - in Kuman language.

The Council Services Unit failed through bad management. The Coffee Society is the same. The money goes in and out. The manager and the clerk handle it. They get the money from the Coffee Marketing Board and Australia. The root of the problem is the manager and the clerk. They pay for the coffee, cars, buildings the factory. We don't know what is happening, what he writes and what minutes they put. They are fouling us

12 Gumine LGC President, (ref. 26-2-K) to Minister for Agriculture, 8 October 1974 (copy in Chimbu AA file).

and do not do what we say. They set the prices, not the delegates and directors ... The manager is 'eating' all our money!¹³

This speech provoked uproar and drew out several defences of the CCC management from councillors, including a CCC director. It was an appeal to non-literates to suspect the educated, in this case non-Simbu, people. Such manipulative appeals were commonly made, frequently by educated people themselves, such as Iambakey Okuk or Mathew Siune, and often had grey heads nodding in agreement. Conspiracy theories abound in Simbu.

In December 1975 Michael Somare, already in conflict with Okuk, strongly endorsed the management of Chimbu Coffee when he presided over the ceremonial opening of Mike Collins's factory. Later that month an attempt was made to sack George Leahy while he was overseas on leave by directors close to Okuk, advised by an expatriate accountant. Leahy was alerted and returned to Chimbu after driving overnight from the coastal city of Lae. He called the bluff of the shamefaced directors, and sacked the accountant who had been tempted with the manager's job. Leahy then initiated steps towards exporting coffee. He had a close working and personal relationship with some AA (and later provincial government) secretariat members, and this particular coffee crisis passed. Eventually, however, there was another coup in December 1976. There was no claim of mismanagement; it was entirely political. The CCC had made profits of around K500,000 in 1976. This time Leahy went, with a payout of K80,000, nearly 4 years' salary. *Déjà vu*. Although the move was taken by a fellow Kamanegu close to Okuk, the parliamentarian avoided visible links with this move. Nor was he in the ascendant. His proposed nominee for manager was again rejected, and Barunke Kaman, by then Provincial Secretary, joined the board of Chimbu Coffee.

The public activities of the Simbu politicians on the coffee border question directly reflected their private interests. In several cases it is possible to link policy waverings with their substantial business dealings with Chimbu Coffee, Chimbu Developments and Wahgi Valley processors, such as credit for vehicle purchase and cash advances for coffee buying. Some factory managers wrote off thousands of kina lent to politicians as a necessary operating expense, seen as a form of protection money. The pressures to remove the coffee border increased just when the managers in Chimbu sought to recover unacquitted advances at the end of the buying season. One Simbu politician changed his vote on the border when a factory bought his old vehicle at an over-generous price, which more than covered an outstanding coffee buying advance. Others attacked CCC when denied credit and started dealing with Wahgi processors, which involved the illegal

¹³ BS field notes, 15 October 1975.

transport of unprocessed coffee. Whether or not the coffee border suppressed buying prices in Chimbu, it certainly served the interests of the owners and management of the Chimbu factories, and the politicians.

The prospect of the border increasing provincial revenues swayed the issue through 1976. With full provincial government imminent, and desiring to secure revenues from 'derivation grants' (that is, allocations based on a percentage of the value of exports derived from the province) which are higher for commodities processed within the province, the interim provincial government in 1977 again appeared united behind the borders. In a year of booming prices, buyers were in a sellers' market, able to get advances and take their coffee wherever a deal could be made. Good roads, the lack of any border control and high prices led Chimbu buyers into neighbouring provinces and into deals with factories outside Chimbu. Several powerful politicians, as well as directors of CCC, were selling coffee into the Wahgi Valley. Receiving little support from the Coffee Industry Board (CIB), the new provincial secretary negotiated with the Chimbu factory managers to fund two vehicles to police the border. A small detachment of extra-legal 'inspectors', chosen for their brawn and close personal relationship to the secretary, policed the border in June and July. They hampered some of the more important Chimbu buyers and netted some interesting catches, including 17 bags owned by a prominent provincial assemblyman. The provincial legal officer somewhat reluctantly prosecuted a test case, which failed. In late July 1977 the CIB resolved that since CCC had made a large profit in 1976/77, the buying restrictions should be revoked from 1 August. Despite heated public exchanges, neither the CIB nor the Minister for Agriculture would change their stance or give the Simbu Provincial Assembly legislative powers over coffee marketing. The patrols ceased, and the interim provincial government kept the vehicles.

The common element in the Simbu struggles over coffee was the desire of local leaders and national politicians alike to gain control of the major enterprise in the province, for a variety of reasons which could have included status competition with the directors, known in Tokpisia as jealousy, the desire to control the politically valuable patronage which the manager could allocate in the form of vehicles and cash advances for buying coffee, and the desire merely to prevent some other group controlling this resource. In addition, there undoubtedly was an element of cupidity, and in at least one case the manager's position was dangled by a politician conspirator before an expatriate staff member.¹⁴ Yet so long as there was strong management with a good knowledge of Simbu politicians and businessmen, and there was a degree of government protection in

¹⁴ This person even 'bugged' his office to tape record discussions.

good markets, the CCC maintained its autonomy. Yet it was a fluctuating struggle, with no decisive victor at any stage, and a degree of duplicity among the directors as well as the outside forces seeking control.

Independence

The issue of independence was *passé* in provincial politics before 16 September 1975, because already the provincial elite was preoccupied with the issue of provincial government. For villagers, however, constitutional change remained a concern, as expressed in council meetings after Independence and by local leaders.¹⁵ Just before Independence the new District Commissioner, Gerry Nalau from Finschhafen in Morobe District¹⁶, gave a number of reassuring talks over Radio Kundiawa saying that Papua New Guinea was now adult, a full member of the international community, and urging the need for hard work. This last point was reiterated with relish at the various Independence ceremonies held at Kundiawa and other subdistrict centres, where the principal speakers were often retired colonial policemen. The shrewd use of such colonial figures to legitimate the new government reflected the insecurity of the 1970s political leaders. Siwi Kurondo was unable to attend the Kerowagi ceremonies because of the Gena/Siku tensions. National politicians were not in Kundiawa for Independence Day itself, as they were in Port Moresby being sworn in at the National Parliament.

On 15 September, Independence eve, there were tears in the eyes of the first indigenous DC as the Australian flag was lowered for the last time. This event was immediately followed by a very dramatic thunderstorm, which was seen by some Simbu as an ill omen. At official instigation, huge fires were lit that night by mission and other groups on the mountains flanking the South Wall of the Wahgi Valley. This revealed something of a cultural gap between officials and some villagers, who saw the bonfires as reminiscent of the fires traditionally lit before tribal fights. In Naregu, on the Wahgi's North Wall, Mintima village was quiet before midnight as people waited around quietly to see if anything perturbing occurred, but delighted yodelling broke out at 0001 hours on Independence Day when they saw a fireworks display 8 km away in Kundiawa.

Independence itself was something of an anti-climax. Just as in Port Moresby, where a Papuan separatist sorcerer worked unsuccessfully for rain to dampen the international dignitaries at the ceremonies on 16 September, so too in Kundiawa rain failed to eventuate despite Kugame Kora's predictions. For three days sports events and

¹⁵ For example at the three meetings held for the ANU/CFO study team at Gumine, Wornatne and Keu (Elimbari) in September-October 1975.

¹⁶ Premier of Morobe Province in the later 1980s.

string band competitions amused the youth. The DC and Okuk had lobbied successfully for a visit from Prince Charles, who travelled the Highlands Highway through Chimbu and stayed overnight in Kundiawa. Most of the crowd were youngsters, their elders apparently having stayed home. Some MPs and officials wore traditional dress for the occasion and dance groups competed for prizes, but the main star was undoubtedly *pikinini bilong Kwin*, the Queen's son, resplendent in braided uniform.¹⁷ This event was a splendid example of the 'circuses not bread' school of politics, but undoubtedly the royal family are used to their role as a political resource. Iambakey Okuk was the epitome of the national establishment as he squired Charles through the province. Then in his speech he stated bluntly that he had defied his electorate by entering coalition with the Pangu coastals, and thereby gained a place for Chimbu in the cabinet and a powerful ministry for himself. The impassive crowd heard him out and then village people got on with their affairs with some relief that the ceremonies had passed without trouble. Perhaps Okuk gained some reflected charisma from the Prince; certainly the national government used similar celebrations across the country as part of a nation building (or distracting?) exercise. There remained a great deal of insecurity as PNG launched itself into the unknown waters of independent statehood.

Provincial government committee

As part of the preparatory steps towards the creation of provincial government, in April 1975 the Secretary of the Chief Minister's Department wrote to each District Commissioner asking that he create a consultative body to assess opinion within the district about the creation of provincial government, and - if it was favourable - to make detailed recommendations about its establishment. An eighteen-person provincial government committee (PGC) was appointed for Chimbu, comprising half the Area Authority and nine others - including representatives of churches, women's groups, business, unions, public servants and tertiary-educated Simbu. The PGC thus incorporated people who were already in conflict, as the AA members and councillors frequently railed against the young educated English-speaking '*bighed*' (E = conceited or defiant ones), especially Barunke Kaman, mentioned above at Footnote 4.

Kaman was to become central in Simbu politics, so an *excursus* on his early career is warranted. At UPNG he had shown political skills in the students' representative council and was secretary of the National Party and a part-time staff worker for Kaibelt

17 Some villagers called him 'King', but when Prince Charles was called upon to congratulate the Miss Chimbu beauty queen in her topless regalia his embarrassment appeared even greater than that of Fr Nilles, the chairman of the judges.

Diria, MHA (Wahgi, Minister for Posts and Telegraph). He returned home believing he had been promised a position as district planner, but soon discovered that Okuk had blocked this appointment. Then local politics and inter-generational conflict led the Kundiawa Council to reject a *kiap*'s suggestion that Kaman be appointed as Council Secretary. For a time he bought coffee at Wandu coffee and worked to sell shares in Chimbu Developments to Simbu businessmen. His main energies went into the Sigewage Club, a youth group he started for school dropouts and others in his Kamanegu tribe, which had - among other activities - basketball and football teams. (Kaman was a good footballer, a sure path to fame in Chimbu.) His club held dances near the police station, which brought Kaman into conflict with drunken policemen.¹⁸ In late 1974, fired with enthusiasm for pig- and chicken-waste digestors as a source for plant and animal foods and methane gas (Chan 1972), he proposed to the AA that his Sigewage Club be funded for a pilot digester under the Rural Improvement Program. The AA initially agreed after some heated debate in December 1974, but then in early 1975 under the sway of members closest to Okuk - especially the parliamentarian Ninkama Bomai - the AA reversed its decision. The Simbu big-men were determined to humiliate others as 'small boys' (Price 1974). Kaman then joined the ANU/CPO study team as an energetic Simbu 'counterpart', drafting a section on local government and the Kainantu experiment.

At the first meeting of the PGC the tensions between these different generations of politicians were immediately obvious, and threatened to split the committee irreconcilably unless a compromise or division of labour could be made. Nominations for chairmanship included Kaman, Siwi Kurondo and Fr Nilles. The group was split with equal votes for the former two, and Nilles was chosen as a compromise. Perhaps partly in face-saving compensation, Kurondo was made chairman of a 'drafting [sub] committee'. This position was conceived after the vote on the chairmanship, but echoed the effective division of labour in the national CPC, with the deputy chairman the *de facto* leader. Kaman became executive officer to this drafting committee. Kurondo and Kaman worked in conjunction with the *kiap* Bevan Stott, who had just been appointed AA Executive Officer.

Existing political allegiances and tensions were bound to embroil such a committee, including those among the younger members of the committee. The loquacious district planner, James Arba,¹⁹ cultivated Kurondo and the older leaders, but Kaman's sheer

¹⁸ He was charged with taking part in a tribal conflict, on police evidence which appeared to me (as a witness of the event and in the court case) to have been falsified.

¹⁹ A former seminarian who had taken a short course at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Arba was an scolytz of Ignatius Kilage, Public Service Board member.

energy, acuity and competence soon overshadowed Arba with the older generation. None of the committee members could develop the new institutional structure and create the new political arena alone, so after this shaky start the committee members united around the common task and despite their differing personal agendas formed a strong symbiotic alliance. At its first meetings in June 1975, the committee decided to follow the CPC model and tour Chimbu to sound out opinion.

Given few guidelines, the committee started methodically to work through the various options available. Kaman and Stott started discussing costings with departmental heads in Kundiawa and the implications for them of a provincially coordinated public service. To suggest placing government under direct local political control was likely to unsettle entrenched public service interests, and they drew a rather negative response from officials.

The greatest early setback came from the national legislature, however. Largely because of Bougainville's intransigence and threatened secession, Somare on 30 July 1975 after a brief debate persuaded the Constituent Assembly to remove the provincial government chapter from the draft national constitution. However, the government stated that provincial governments could be created under subordinate, non-entrenched legislation which lacked constitutional status, initially under the interim Act passed for Bougainville. Despite initial reports implying that decentralization would not occur, by telephoning Port Moresby Stott soon ascertained that if popular demand for decentralization was demonstrated in a submission from a representative body, a province would obtain a provincial government. The Chimbu PGC thereupon intensified its efforts to obtain public support in order to legitimize its proposals, not just within Chimbu but to make them credible in the capital.²⁰ There was already confusion surrounding the provincial government issue, and suspicion if not outright hostility from councillors, so it was thought necessary to make the Chimbu tour to sidestep accusations of a conspiracy.

Even though the provincial government system was not incorporated within the National Constitution, the existing districts were renamed 'provinces' at Independence and the previous sub-districts formally became 'districts'.²¹ The DC became the

20 In the Eastern Highlands there was no such tour. The AA members simply declared themselves to be representative of the province as a whole, and on that basis made recommendations on the form of government for the province. In Goroka there had always been close links between the district administration and the AA through the executive officer, a *senix kiap*.

21 The old terminology lingered however, and the new districts were often called 'sub-provinces', with the virtue of clarity.

Provincial Commissioner (PC), and Assistant DCs became District Officers-in-Charge (DOICs, an abbreviation which some thought undignified).

In January 1976 the PGC divided into two teams (A and B) in order to tour the province, holding a total of 23 meetings at government offices, council chambers and other central places. District officers had been given rather flimsy material with which to brief councillors and other leaders on the topics to be discussed, and few knew much about the proposals. Unless a member of the AA was resident in the area where the meetings were held, the committee had to explain the reason for its visit from scratch. I observed all the meetings of the 'A' Team headed by Kurondo and Kaman. The meetings started with Siwi saying that a *namba tu gavman* (or second tier of government ²²) was proposed, as found at the state level of countries like Australia and the USA, which would enable Simbu people to 'boss' the public service. Kaman tended to emphasize the term *namei* (middle level) government, and argued that improved public service coordination would bring developmental benefits. Both said that a provincial government would be able to build more roads. A vote was then taken on whether the meeting approved of an elected government for the province, and if it did then detailed questions were put about the name to be adopted (Chimbu or Simbu); the name of the head of the government (chairman, *luluai*, president, premier, or *waitpus* [an old Tokpisin term for paramount *luluai*]); whether he should be chosen by the elected assembly members or by the entire province in a separate election; how many elected members there should be (21 or 23); and whether the term of office should be 2, 3, 4 or 5 years. Few details were given about finances, or indeed known at that stage, and there was little discussion about the general issues of decentralization unless local people were prepared to challenge the visitors' single-minded demand for a provincial government.

The 'B' Team, headed by Kuman Dai and James Arba, officially reported that all its meetings supported provincial government in Chimbu, although there was some opposition at one I attended and, witnesses reported, at others. Members of Team 'B', which travelled through the Gembogl, Sinasina and Chuave districts, told me that they had enthusiastically 'sold' the idea of provincial government, saying *inter alia* that roads would be built immediately they were requested, such would be the speed of provincial government decision-making: 'You ask today, we start work tomorrow'. The only 'B' team meeting I observed went smoothly; Kuman Dai very competently explained the issues, sharing the scripted questions with the other team members to reduce audience fatigue, and obtained a favourable response.

22 This could also mean second-rate government.

At three of five 'A' team meetings I witnessed the committee met with embarrassing opposition. I mention four meetings in some detail for the insight they give into the roots of opposition and into the styles of Simbu politics. The first two meetings went badly for the team. On 18 January a meeting was held near the Minggende Catholic Mission among the Siambugla and Waugla clan people, traditional opponents of Kurondo's neighbouring Gena tribe, with whom there was some tension at the time. Several older village leaders replied to Kurondo's opening speech and said the pace of change was too rapid, and that people needed time to adjust to Independence before further changes were made. Chimbu should wait till mineral wealth was found, they said. As at all the meetings I attended, local speakers made requests for the creation of village courts for their tribes. This was the arena of politics at which people saw a need for new institutions, in order to improve public order - and doubtless also local leaders' authority - at the village level. But as the village courts were to be located administratively under local government councils, they were not part of the package which Kurondo's team had come to promote. He urged that a provincial government would get extra funds, and build roads, but was explicitly rebuffed by a Siambugla councillor, the step-father of a successful and politically ambitious public servant, who said the government had insufficient money for a provincial government.

The sharpest blow came from one Peter Kumgi, a senior agricultural extension officer (T = *didiman*) and a Gena tribesman. Kurondo had said the provincial government could rectify a common complaint, that *didimen* were not getting out into the field, whereupon Kumgi argued strongly that Chimbu should wait before setting up a provincial government, pointing to the lack of funds as one reason. 'You old men', he said, 'cannot even run a business'. He said PNG was 'humbugging' with Australian funds, and argued that revenue would only come with hard work. (Kumgi a year later stood in the national elections, at which time he admitted his political ambitions were of long standing.) Visibly annoyed, Kurondo abandoned the meeting and requested another when the audience had decided amongst themselves. He urged people not to listen to educated young men, but a former *luluai* proposed a boycott of all further meetings, arguing that these visitors were not talking well but deceiving, merely 'greasing' (flattering) people for their own ends. After this and subsequent meetings, Kurondo ordered John Kaupa, MP (Chuave), whom he suspected of opposing provincial government, and me not to report the opposition he had encountered. We told him these were public events which could not be hidden.

The pattern of rejection continued. The next day a Catholic community leader in the area, who had criticized Kurondo on the local radio for his alleged role in restarting clan warfare in the province, silently walked through a team 'A' meeting and literally *givim*

beksait (E = turned his back) to Kurondo in what Simbu observers saw as an eloquent insult. Again the provincial government concept was rejected, and Kurondo blamed Okuk and his ally Siune for lobbying against it.²³

On 19 January the team moved on to Kup, part of the Kerowagi district south of the Wahgi River. Here the Kumai and Goligup people use the Mid-Wahgi language, rather than Kaman, and have long felt themselves an isolated and neglected minority in Chimbu. Also in Kup the Kumai and Endugwa tribes had been fighting on and off since Self-Government Day 1973 (Kerpi 1976). Having defied police attempts to stop them, they had attracted the attention of the Area Authority, which in late 1975 had threatened to cut off all government services unless they stopped fighting. Although the AA lacked the legal power to enforce this threat, it did sponsor a tearful reconciliation meeting between Endugwa and Kumai leaders on Kup station, and there was peace in the area till late 1977 when clashes erupted between Kumai and Goligup tribes.

The Kup people's resentment of the rest of Chimbu had been high since they surrendered a considerable amount of prime land to the Administration in 1943 for a government station, hospital and airstrip, only to see their hopes of rapid development fade at the end of the War when all staff were withdrawn to Kundiawa. Kup ever since has felt neglected, and indeed most of the area on the South Wall of the Wahgi in Chimbu is isolated and very undeveloped. I have noted their 1971 protests at the pace of constitutional change and in the national election and their 1972 chasing away of 1972 Kerowagi Open candidate Siwi Kurondo, which occurred not just because of his Pangu tendencies but because Kup people were dissatisfied with what they obtained from the Kerowagi Council under Kurondo's presidency.

Kurondo opened the Kup meeting saying that without provincial government Chimbu would suffer, to the benefit of other provinces, and Barunke Kaman followed up saying that 'The *as* [E = basis or motive] is pulling power into our hands'. Team member Launa Miule (Elimbari) said 'The *as* is to get money'. The Kumai councillor Sumuno Suagl replied, saying he did not expect many changes with provincial government, just as, despite promises, there had not been with Self-Government and Independence. Nevertheless he moved a motion that Simbu have provincial government. He was immediately followed by young businessman Peter Kama (Kerpi),²⁴ who said

²³ Okuk's secretary, Elies Vuvu, joked to me about 'all the Indians who wanted to be chiefs and to put flags on their vehicles, even if their only wheels were bicycles' (Interview, 19 January 1976).

²⁴ Peter Kama Kerpi is a university graduate, poet, playwright, and aspirant novelist who returned to Kup in 1975 and became a coffee buyer and storekeeper. By 1980 he was an executive of Chimbu Coffee and owned stores in Kerowagi. By 1987 he owned stores in Kundiawa and was proprietor of a plantation management firm operating in the Western Highlands.

that this was fine, but asked whether the Kumai would be able fully to participate? Bigmen had to look after the interests of their own people, he said.

This unleashed a series of bitter speeches from Kup leaders, who played on the image of never having enough meat when dividing up a pig. They said they had contributed to the party for Kerowagi Council (some 10 years before), but had not received a fair cut in return. Some even wanted their own Kup provincial government. Team spokesmen Kaman, Kurondo and the Lutheran Pastor Nii (also from Kerowagi) made no impression with their response that Kup could participate and benefit. Councillor Konbug Au from Endugwa then moved that there would be no provincial government. A school headmaster home on leave argued that there were insufficient funds, and that Chimbu should wait. Two members of the PGC then angrily asserted that Kup's objections would be over-ridden. When Kurondo forced a vote it went 140 for Konbug Au's motion of rejection and 34 for Sumuno Suagl's in favour. Unfazed, Cr Sumuno cheerfully suggested that the meeting end as there was no point in asking further questions on the details of the PG Committee's proposal.

The arguments of neglect made by Kup leaders were valid, but there were personal motives as well behind this charade. Peter Kama had been sent by the Chimbu administration for training as a Manager of RIP programmes in 1975, only to be humiliated when the Area Authority rejected him, nominally because he was university educated but doubtless because Mathew Siune wanted the job. Cr Sumuno likewise had been kept waiting for days by AA members when seeking funds for the *Yangpela Didiman* training base and headquarters which was situated on land he had donated. Eventually they had relented and recommended RIP funding of K7,000. Two days before the PGC team's Kup visit, Peter Kama at a preparatory meeting had used the colloquial image 'They are only scratching their faces for food' with telling effect. Smart young men were not rejected on their home ground, and could even form wary alliances with elders in related clans.

After the formal meeting ended, Kurondo abused educated people in general for blocking his plans, and me in particular because Peter Kama had been my student at UPNG (5 years previously). I suggested that that was downplaying Cr Sumuno's ability to control his people, whereupon Sumuno laughed and said that he himself had nominated Peter Kama to do the talking. Kurondo had introduced me as a reporter, perhaps in an attempt to add weight to the proceedings, but the next day he threatened to eject me from his vehicle if I wrote about the events at Kup, and also to cut off funds from *Yangpela Didiman*, a threat he repeated to Sumuno thereby further antagonizing him and other Kup people. Team 'A' members took the opposition they met at Kup to have

been personally motivated, which may have had an element of truth. The slights received by Kup leaders, young and old, at the hands of Kuman-speakers at the AA were perceived by them and doubtless presented to villagers as expressions of Kup's peripheral colonial developmental and political status. The AA was renowned for its hostility to outsiders and potential rivals, and the negative response of the Kup people was predictable.

Indeed the opposition was strong throughout Kerowagi district. A meeting planned at Kerowagi station failed to materialize and was deferred a week. Kaman blamed the *kiaps* for failing to drum up attendance, but councillors present at the eventual meeting clearly were opposed to provincial government. One said

We are opposed to what you are doing. You are only doing it for the money, to help your own pockets. If you are cross with me, I can fight back.

It later emerged that the previous week's council meeting had resolved against provincial government and recommended a boycott of the PGC team's meetings. These people had planned their opposition to the PGC, but were unwilling to express open confrontation to Kurondo and his team. Such a *modus operandi* appeared more 'traditional' than the frontal charges of Okuk and Kaman, which were reminiscent of rugby football.

The next meeting, at isolated Kilau in southern Chimbu, drew a different response, partly because it was the home base of Nebare Kamun, who was not only council president and an AA member, but one of Team 'A'. He translated the proceedings from Tokpisin. Throughout the meeting Nebare Kamun spoke of '*promis gavman*', which seemed appropriate as Kurondo promised to give funds to the council cattle project in the area, which was already on the RIP programme. Barunke Kaman said that like any mother the central government tended to ignore some of its many children (the provinces), and that 'With a government of our very own we can have our own laws and improve our lives.' On the motion of two AA members, the meeting happily voted for provincial government. However they were not willing to provide a *carte blanche*; they insisted (against Kurondo's wish) on voting about the term of office and 100 people opted for a two year term so as to be able to eject poor representatives, while only eighteen voted for the four years advocated by Kurondo. Committee members themselves voted in this long meeting, some dozed after hours on a rough road and not all questions on the committee's list were asked. There was surface harmony, yet provincial government was somewhat remote from these villagers' concerns; the most frequently voiced concern was the desire for village courts.

The political context of the following meeting at Gumine was important. Team 'A' stayed in policemen's houses on Gumine station, near to Kuman Dai's family hamlet. Kuman Dai himself was away with Team 'B', so the visitors were hosted by Ninkama Bomai, the Gumine MP and a UP frontbencher from Mul about 8 km east of Gumine station. News had just reached the team that Prime Minister Somare had demanded the resignation of Okuk and his National Party leader, Thomas Kavali. One MP present barely suppressed his delight, shouting '*Bihet man, rausim ol!*' (E = They're defiant, kick them out). An AA member commented that people should talk straight: '*Maski tok beksai!*' (You shouldn't criticise behind people's backs), a criticism of Okuk. Only Ninkama Bomai defended Okuk, saying he had fought to get road money when Somare had removed it from the budget.²⁵ Clearly there was a difference between the visitors and their host.

Ninkama's people at Mul village were traditional enemies of the Gumines, so when he had gone home to safety two team members reminisced over drinks about a contact patrol in Gumine three decades previously. During this patrol, they said, police from northern Chimbu had killed many people (as mentioned in Chapter III above). It is widely believed that one of those killed was none other than the father of Ninkama Bomai. Not surprisingly, many people in the Gumine area appear to bear a grudge against central Simbu people which goes beyond the politics of resentment by a relatively undeveloped area against more 'central' developed zones, a factor which became important in the subsequent elections.

The next morning Ninkama Bomai as interpreter had a pivotal role and he made the most of it. Kurondo and Kaman made their usual speeches in Tokpisin and promised roads to help local business. I hastily recruited an educated Gumine youth to translate for me and soon discovered that in his Golin language translation Ninkama was adding his own embellishments.

With provincial government there will be lots more politicians and officials and cars. Where will all the extra money come from? I am the one who stands up for your ideas, I go to Port Moresby and get what you want. I can get all you need. They talk of the road to Bomai [to the south]. I have got that already - the money is there.

Ninkama moved that Chimbu get provincial government, and was seconded by a councillor, Simo Wera, with the amendment that village courts must come first and provincial government come much later on. Simo Wera then went into a tirade, which was echoed by many subsequent speakers - but not translated by Ninkama - about the decline in

²⁵ It is unclear which funding he was discussing, but at one stage Okuk had organized the transfer of funds from Gumine roadworks to be spent on the Gembogl (upper Chimbu) road, were much nearer Okuk's political home base, and then later had transferred some funds back to the Gumine road.

government and living standards since Self-Government and Independence. With provincial government, he said, the provincial leaders would get the cash. The local people, as now, would only get 'the scrawny tail on the possum on the back of the shilling [10 *toea*] coin'. The central government would retain the funds, and Chimbu would be ruined. Several councillors took up these themes and added that the council would be ruined, and by former village officials. They were followed by two young and junior Chimbu public servants questioning where the money would come from. For the members of Team 'A' much of the criticism was *tok beksait*, in that Ninkama did not translate it. Kurondo cheerfully congratulated Ninkama for his support even as Ninkama, a former government interpreter, publicly undermined Kurondo behind the barrier of language. Ninkama and Simo Wera had used sophisticated procedural ploys. Ninkama also demonstrated a mastery of duplicity in interpretation, a common trick which can amuse Simbu villagers, as when they relate how *wantoks* can use their common language to cuckold the husband of a mixed marriage.

The argument grew more heated as the sun burned the crowd. Kaman abused public servants for laziness and drunkenness, and freely admitted that there would be extra taxes on luxuries while denying that there would be a provincial head tax. Kurondo, however, denied that there would be any extra taxes at all. With a tropical thunderstorm threatening, Ninkama and others filibustered, but finally a vote was taken during what I recorded as 20 minutes of uproar. The vote on the amended motion was 89 for provincial government, and 84 against. The absent local clan leader, Kuman Dai, had discussed provincial government at the market on a few occasions, but not proselytized actively, and he was with Team 'B'. The motion's supporters were mainly from his clan, while the opponents mostly came from more distant groups (from further east and west) and included many older leaders. These leaders were fully enmeshed in the conflicts which embroiled their groups, and within a few months several of the groups arguing that day became engaged in clan warfare in which one AA member was killed and for which six councillors were arrested. The debate over a new innovation like provincial government had reflected some of the increasing tensions which divided these peoples on traditional lines. Given the stalemate, no further questions were asked by the committee, and while driving home Kurondo again blamed the educated youth and public servants for opposition he had met. Neither he nor Kaman had perceived Ninkama's deception, and neither mentioned that the split meeting mirrored the rivalry between Ninkama Bomai's group and Kuman Dai's.

In each of the meetings described, local support and opposition to the decentralization proposal could be analysed in terms of local or even personal politics, but could also be interpreted as resulting from challenges to existing power structures. John Kaupa, MP told me at length that rivalry between councils and this new source of local power meant

inevitably that most councillors would oppose provincial government, and he also predicted competition between provinces. I had just witnessed the first of these 'predictions', and felt Kaupa could just as well have added the likely rivalry between national and provincial politicians. While Okuk was publicly opposed to provincial government and Ninkama had successfully showed two faces on the issue, Kaupa and two other Chimbu MPs (but not the Mount Wilhelm MP, Karigl Bonggere) were with varying degrees of openness working against the proposal during the PGC's tour. For instance, Joseph Tiene (MP, Kundiawa) spoke against provincial government at the Team 'B' meeting held at Ku in Yonggamugl, which was beyond his electorate. He raised sufficient doubt that the first and crucial vote on whether to have a provincial government was tied at 36 all.

The opposition of older village leaders, especially former village officials, has also been noted. They were resentful of all succeeding generations of leaders, and like the other groups mentioned were keen for village courts to be established so as to recoup their status and handle local problems effectively. No doubt, too, there was a natural reluctance to try anything new, but this was a formidable range of opponents and interests for the committee teams to overcome, and they did best where the local leader was himself an active proponent of decentralization.

Siwi Kurondo correctly pinpointed the opposition of educated youth; their use of fears about finance was a successful tactic which the committee never neutralized. Even if they worked as lowly clerks on outstations, in rural society such people had perceived expertise and prestige. While their expressed concerns may have been genuine, the political conflict was over power to control state resources, a struggle between different generations of men with different political experience and support bases, and with competing present and future interests. In effect, it was conflict between different political classes.

The fact that a number of the strongest early opponents of provincial government in Simbu subsequently stood in the 1980 Provincial Assembly election and won places is irrelevant²⁶. Once the new arena was established with its new rules, they merely entered the new game. Such pragmatism was common. Okuk was in conflict for seven years with the AA members but this did not prevent him from cultivating them because he needed their backing for his projects and the schemes of others.

The consultation process had been one of legitimation. Having picked up the idea of decentralization, a few members of the Simbu political elite had fought to extend their

26 Even Ninkama Bomai was co-opted into the Assembly in 1980, having lost his seat in the 1977 national election.

possible power base by seeking a provincial government as soon as possible. Others also took the opportunity of the committee's tour to travel the province, show their own faces, listen to local concerns and assess local political talent. One such was the United Party branch secretary, Jerry Geri, and several MPs travelling well outside their electorates. In so doing, they involved people in the new tier of government, and, in so far as the Chimbu public accepted their proposals, helped legitimate it. As in the national constitutional planning process, public acceptance was lower than claimed in committee reports.

The provincial government committee found, overall, that there was overwhelming support for decentralization in Chimbu, and made a detailed set of recommendations for a provincial constitution in a report to the national government in March 1976. That same month the Area Authority unilaterally proclaimed itself the Interim Provincial Government.

Throughout 1976 there followed several months of intensive drafting, again demonstrating the dependence of the older leaders on young professionals. Barunke mobilized a number of UPNG law students and the then only practising Simbu lawyer, Isidore Kuamin from Kerowagi. They put together a draft constitution, which when rewritten by central government lawyers, was accepted by the Chimbu committee and the AA. In November 1976 the province was issued with a charter.

Perhaps all this preparatory work had been unnecessary, as far as the central government was concerned, because at the end of the very week in which the Chimbu committee was touring, the Bougainville secessionists staged a series of incidents against central government facilities which brought the central government to the negotiating table (Standish 1979b; Ballard 1981b). Among the first concessions the centre made was that provincial government be given constitutional status, and that provincial governments would be created nationwide, automatically. Thus, whatever the Chimbu committee had recommended, provincial government would have arrived by 1978. So once again, a major change was brought about in Chimbu because of decisions taken elsewhere.

Establishing the provincial government

The agitation phase for provincial government had passed; dividing up the powerful jobs became the next preoccupation. The interim provincial assembly virtually selected itself. As in most provinces, it comprised all the former AA members, who in 1976 dubbed themselves a constituent assembly, along with a woman's representative and the two churchmen from the FGC. This body was appointed by the national government, and

thus had no electoral base in the province. Several members had ceased regular contact with the local government councils which originally selected them for the area authority. Their official allowances and salaries averaged around K3,600 each, the equivalent of a middle level manager in the bureaucracy.

This 21-person assembly chose the interim premier and his deputy. The original constitution for the interim provincial government (PNG 1976b) closely followed the PGC's recommendations (PNG 1976a), and provided for ministers to be elected directly by the assembly, and for the entire executive to be removable on majority vote. This constitution was changed during drafting stages in the Department of Justice in Port Moresby, contrary to PGC recommendations. The Secretary for Justice on 18 April 1977 suggested in writing that these changes be discussed with the constituent assembly, but the matters were not raised there. The provincial executive met on 27 April, and on 5 May 1977 the provincial secretary wrote to Justice accepting the proposals. The changes mirrored the national constitution and greatly increased the premier's power, in that the executive members (known as the cabinet) were to be chosen by the premier, and he himself was entrenched by the requirement for a two-thirds, absolute majority vote of the assembly to remove him (PNG 1977; Standish 1979b:69-70). The assembly was scheduled to hold office until elections in 1978, but when Fr Nilles as an appointed member suggested keeping to that timetable he was shouted down. Preparations for these elections were extremely slow and the interim body retained office for over three years.

The Simbu elite was polarized in December-January 1976-77 during a particular intense selection process for the secretariat, which displayed openness if not naivete among SIPG members. For years the interim Premier had vacillated, 'playing favourites' among the educated political activists in a divide-and-rule ploy to destabilize potential long-term rivals. Now the interim assembly accepted Okuk's suggestion that the selection panel comprise the Provincial Executive Council (the AA executive, and ministers-to-be), an MP (his ally, Ninkama Bomai), and several Chimbu senior public servants (Okuk's friends in Port Moresby). After warning of the dangers of *wantokism* (in this context, E = nepotism), Okuk with a show of reluctance allowed himself to be drafted onto the panel. John Kaupa merely insinuated himself into the deliberations. The principal candidates for the key position of provincial secretary were Barunke Kaman, who is, as mentioned above, a member of Okuk's Kamanegu tribe, and a senior public servant from the Kurondo's Gena tribe to whom the premier-elect had previously pledged the position.

The selection process, however, showed that neither the premier nor the parliamentarian favoured their own kinsman, who might be considered a potential political rival within their home base. The panel, weighted with Okuk's allies, initially voted to

exclude Kaman, but Kurondo insisted that he be chosen. Because of this stalemate the process was adjourned over Christmas and lobbying continued apace. In January, however, Siwi demonstrated that Kaman remained his personal favourite by presenting him with the hind leg of a pig at the Gena pig-kill, and Kaman became provincial secretary. Kurondo thus avoided having a provincial secretary beholden to Okuk, although thenceforth Kaman was to be constantly undermined from within the secretariat as well as the assembly by Okuk allies. Kaman had been in conflict with Okuk for years over a range of issues from Chimbu Coffee to his family relationships,²⁷ and had brawled with Okuk physically in Kundiawa township, and accused him of corruption. In formal terms Kaman's appointment institutionalized the conflict between the two strongest personalities among the younger Simbu leaders, each with a state office as power base.

Although intense, the politicking for the provincial premiership, was held in private, and lacked the visible drama of the secretariat struggle. There was even some light relief when, after accepting the post of speaker of the provincial assembly, Kuman Dai discovered that he was thereby excluded from a ministry. However, this was followed by bitter feuding within the secretariat and assembly when Barunke Kaman conveyed the national Department of Finance's rejection of the interim provincial government's initial bid for high salaries.

The PGC was a stepping stone for other younger Simbu, as well. James Arba followed up his work in the ANU/CPO team to become organizer of the women's association, *Kuman Yangpela Didiman*. That body's president, Mrs Anna Nombri, joined the Interim PG from the PGC as an appointed member, as did Fr Nilles and Pastor Nii.²⁸ Some became party political organizers. A former magistrate, Rufinus Komba, joined the secretariat, as did the lawyer Isidore Kuamin. Mathew Siune transferred from the AA staff to the secretariat with Okuk's support, until dismissed in 1979 for non-performance of his duties. Kaman's close assistant, the Canadian volunteer, Frank Binkley, became planner.²⁹

For public servants, like the provincial politicians, there was considerable difficulty in creating their respective new roles under the new order. The national government had

27 Barunke Kaman, by his own account, incensed Okuk by initiating, serially, child-bearing relationships with two sisters from Kaman's mother's (and Okuk's) clan, the Awakane (Fers.comm 1984).

28 The latter became a businessman and in 1980 was elected to the Provincial Assembly.

29 Binkley as Business Development Officer had assisted AA take up an investment in the trucking firm PNG Freighters, which was taking in national equity in 1974. This investment had been brought to the attention of the AA by Okuk, Minister for Transport at the time. Further detail on the business arm is given in Chapter VIII.

not done the necessary planning on executive structures and powers under the new system. In particular, it vacillated on whether or not there would be an official to head the public servants within provinces, and if so what his powers and lines of responsibility would be. It took a long time to resolve whether the previous provincial commissioners would retain their symbolic if somewhat powerless position as the most senior officials in the province. The PC positions ultimately disappeared. Some took the post of administrative secretary, especially by returning to their home province, as did the Chimbu PC (Standish 1979b; 1981a). The PC was not particularly fazed by the changeover: he and his wife socialized with the Okuks, but he had little emotional investment in Chimbu. However, the transition was particularly difficult for the most senior Simbu *kiap*, who came from the same general area of Kerowagi as the premier-elect, and was thus potentially a rival. He reached the position of Acting PC during the early months of the interim PG but then saw his life's ambition slip away from his grasp. Ever alert to symbolism, the premier had his car painted black like those of the former DCs and he took over the PC's house, the highest on the hill in the old part of town. The acting PC quit government service.

Expatriate business people, too, were nervous about the new government. The AA had put political pressure on Collins and Leahy for seeking to collect overdue rent from Okuk. Subsequently two expatriate controlled firms gave K5,000 each to the committee organising the Interim PG opening celebrations. Expatriate businessmen told me at the time that they felt that requests from this body were a form of 'blackmail', but that nonetheless they had contributed as necessary 'insurance'.

At a different level the Premier-elect, Siwi Kurondo sought to build up political support among Simbu age-mates. While scorning his own MBE, he showed a preoccupation with imperial honours and offered decorations to others. Ignoring many briefings that police powers would remain with the national government, he asserted '*Mi bosim polis*' and promised promotions to Simbu police in boasting kerbside conversations.

Okuk, meanwhile, sustained his virulent opposition to these pretenders to provincial dominance. Although in parliament he voted for the organic (constitutional) laws establishing the provincial government system, on the radio he spoke out against the provincial system saying PNG was becoming over-governed. He argued it should be replaced with a tier of government based on regions which were larger, such as the Highlands (Okuk 1979).

The Simbu Interim Provincial Government (SIPG) was inaugurated on 24 February 1977. Okuk showed his contempt by stating that anyone could become a leader.

However the ceremony was performed with due *gravitas*, in the presence of Prime Minister Somare, by *kiap* Taylor, OBE. As was intended, Okuk was upstaged by Taylor, who spoke briefly in Kuman with beautiful rolling rhetoric, naming the early colonial leaders of renown, and perhaps even provided symbolic legitimacy as he laid his hands on the new provincial flag and, in a reversal of their colonial roles, raised it for his former policeman, Siwi Kurondo, MBE.

Karimui land grab: a provincial case study

Although coffee issues remained unresolved yet again during the period up to 1977, there was consensus among Simbu leaders over land shortages and the need for access to more land. Okuk and the AA and later the SIPG worked for this common goal. From the late 1960s Chimbu authorities had believed more land must be opened up for resettlement. But where? Highlanders are unpopular settlers in coastal areas, and Simbu settlers had difficulties in the Western Highlands. Chimbu politicians had long cast covetous eyes on the thinly populated Ramu Valley to their north in Madang Province, and to their own southern Karimui and Bomai areas. In late 1976 the SIPG executive chartered an aircraft to examine a possible road route across the Bundi Gap to connect with the Ramu Highway, which consultants had costed at \$19m. in 1972, and in 1977 they resolved to vote K0.5m for a minor road, without consulting Madang authorities or the national government. Although the Bundi people have cultural links with some Simbu groups, Madang leaders were (and remain) very concerned about urban immigration problems and had resolved that they did not want a direct road link to the Highlands. Although by 1987 a very rough 4-wheel drive track had been bulldozed, most attention remained on the province's own southern areas.

The Karimui/Bomai plateau areas have long been seen in land-short northern parts of the province as a land of milk and honey. Over the years, various patrol officers had dreamt of large-scale resettlement in the area, despite negative assessments of the area's potential by agriculture and soils experts. A scheme being planned in 1969 received adverse publicity from an anthropologist (Wagner 1971), and was scotched by the Administrator, L.W. Johnson after a visit to Chimbu (Johnson 1983). Then in 1973, at a time when his electoral standing was low, Iambakey Okuk revived the Karimui dream. Later that year an AA group flew to Karimui and reported that 800 to 2,400 hectares would be available for resettlement. The area had been shown by an expatriate family to be suited for growing the valuable spice, cardamom, which has the advantage of growing best underneath the forest cover and thus can become a perennial crop. Okuk's National Party colleague, Lands Minister Thomas Kavali, announced late in 1974 that he had

instructed that the government would buy 20,000 hectares of land for resettlement. Yet a departmental officer had ascertained that only 440 hectares was available in Karimui. A major conflict appeared likely on the issue in Port Moresby.

The Office of Environment and Conservation commissioned a feasibility study to collate all available information (Simpson 1975), which stressed the need for caution. After future needs of existing residents were taken into account, Simpson argued, there would be no spare land in Karimui, and the Bomai land could only support 800 families, a few thousand people, equivalent to a year's population growth for Chimbu. Resettlement would not warrant the development expense. The report recommended further research into agricultural intensification, and a family planning programme.

The Simbu response to this report was dramatic. In June 1975 AA chairman Kurondo, Public Service Board member Ignatius Kilage and other Simbu leaders and officers reacted angrily to an illustrated briefing in Port Moresby. They denied that Chimbu had a population problem, although somewhat paradoxically they said more land was needed to make *bisnis*. The Karimui and Bomai people lived in the dark ages, said Kurondo, and needed the Simbu to bring them enlightenment and modernization.³⁰ Paradoxically, then, the Simpson report thus strengthened Simbu determination on the issue although it alerted other bureaucrats and scholars to potential human and ecological difficulties. In January 1976, in accepting the initiative of the DOIC at Gumine who was an energetic road builder,³¹ the AA recommended that some K50,000 of RIP money be allocated to build an access road to Bomai for resettlement purposes. Following the sacking of Okuk and Kavali from the national ministry that month, the proposal was quietly blocked again by the central government. Food gardens were prepared for road workers along the proposed route, but access to the roadhead was blocked by sustained clan warfare. All work ceased for a time but, undaunted, the SIPG obtained 160 hectares of land at Bomai in 1977 for cardamom growing and attached this property to the provincial business arm (see Chapter VIII below). The desire for commercial farming was also shared by the Karimui people, who became major shareholders in a highly profitable joint enterprise with the provincial government in later years.

30 Behind such bluster, there is also fear of sorcery from Karimui. Like the Ramu people, they are notorious for the potency of their sorcery, a belief reinforced by the malaria and other disease endemic in the area. Cultures continue.

31 Soon after this *kiap* was transferred to Gumine, the imposing local leader Kuman Dai reportedly walked into the his office, beat his chest, and gave his name. The *kiap*, a former Olympic pentathlete and keen body builder, stood up and reciprocated: 'Mi *kiap* bilong yu!'. After this confrontation the two men formed an alliance which tightly controlled local affairs, collected tax and organized council work projects.

The question of road access to Karimui opened up political conflict. The Chuave and Gumine members of the SIPG wanted any new road to pass through their own areas of Chuave and Nomane, or Gumine and Bomai, respectively. The Karimui members expressed a preference for a road to join the existing one from Lufa in the neighbouring Eastern Highlands, which would be a smaller job but take the area out of the Chimbu sphere of interest. Yet another road was approaching Bomai through Kambia in the Western Highlands. Meanwhile small-scale spontaneous resettlement continued at Karimui and in much of Bomai, causing tensions for landowners. This remains a continuing issue in Chimbu politics. In the late 1970s it appeared that by sheer force of personalities and numbers the northerners, both young and old, might overwhelm the rather quiet Karimui representatives in the SIPG. The Karimui people were, quite clearly, beyond the 'moral public' (Ekeh 1975) or human sphere as far as northern Simbu were concerned, who would not have dared a land grab in the northern sector of the province, or been able to do so. Following the 1980 provincial assembly election strong and subtle representatives from Karimui helped ensure that the Karimui people retained their birthright. This sequence demonstrated clearly the hunger for land felt amongst all Simbu politicians, and a ruthless preparedness to disregard any warnings from expatriates of undesirable consequences. The desire for land remains as firmly implanted in the new political institutions of Simbu as the old.

Village courts

A key aspect of the Kainantu model of local level government was the establishment of village courts to help keep public order. As one *kiap* said, Community Areas (T = *Eria Komunitis*) without courts were like dogs without teeth, and the system commenced well in the Kainantu area of the Eastern Highlands where the courts were brought in after considerable discussion among villagers and those they chose as their court officials. Many informal hearings by village court magistrates are still held outside the village courts, which mediate on and defuse minor matters. Some cases go to the Provincial Court on appeal or with recommendations for sentencing more serious than fines and community work orders.

Nationwide, the system was placed under the local government councils. In Chimbu, early indications were that the system (which started in Kerowagi in 1976) had not fulfilled its potential. The new courts lacked the dedicated nurturing received in Kainantu, and there was very little consultation by the *kiaps* (compare Macteine and Paliwala 1978). Mostly the magistrates and peace officers attached to each court were named by councillors, with minimal discussion amongst the community covered by each court. The courts were rushed into existence across the province at the request of

councillors keen to keep up with other areas, in the belief that the courts would help them collect taxes and coerce people to work on the maintenance of roads, aidposts, and the like on Mondays, as in the high colonial era. After an early 'honeymoon' period between councillors and court officials their relations deteriorated rapidly, perhaps because there was an element of political rivalry between councillors and court officials, who - apart from being better paid than councillors - took over the most needed public role of dispute settlement.

The early record of village courts in Chimbu was mixed. Villagers soon complained that magistrates were harsh and erratic in their decisions and frequently alleged theft of court fines. Court officials sought to raise their stature by acquiring not only badges of office but uniforms, and demanded powers of arrest, batons and handcuffs. Their desire was for increased backing by the power of the state, whereas the progenitors of the system hoped the courts' legitimacy would be based in their communities. Many of the first batch of court officials were replaced after a few years by less dictatorial people more attuned to community values. These courts were under very haphazard supervision from magistrates in the Provincial Courts.³² At Mintima in Naregu a village court magistrate risked and lost his position because he took an active part in the 1980 fighting with the Siambugla clan (J. Hughes 1985; Standish 1981c). His loyalty to the clan was a higher value than his position in the state, a difficulty identified by some early *kiaps* for the village officials. Because these courts are on the spot, however, they can defuse many disputes which otherwise would escalate into major conflicts, provided the courts' jurisdiction covers all parties to the dispute. Where a dispute crosses clan (or worse, tribal) boundaries the court's jurisdiction was rarely accepted by all parties. Despite these problems, the most detailed study of a court in action in Simbu (Warry 1987) indicated the value of this innovation.

Conclusion

The transfer of power is not necessarily about changing power structures unless there is a change of regime as the result of revolution. In Chimbu, formal decolonization did not further destabilize the existing power-sharing between public servants, parliamentarians, councillors, and village leaders. The indigenous bureaucrats and national politicians had already greatly increased both their status and power with Self-Government, and each wanted to preserve them. The clan and tribal level leaders had lost out, and feared losing more. One option, given their political skill and resource bases, was to argue for village

³² These magistrates lacked the time, transport and more especially the will to travel around the countryside in roles more familiar to *kiaps*. This became a source of considerable tension in provincial capitals between the two professions.

courts as an extension of the state which might help them to control local issues and regain for their sphere of politics the backing of the state.

The most frustrated group of all were the Area Authority members, who had reached the pinnacle of the council system only to see the importance of their positions decline as national MPs gained real power and it became clear that indigenous public servants would control far more resources. The symbolic deference made to councillors was thus revealed as having been a colonial charade, and so the AA members came to demand real power for themselves, once the Constitutional Planning Committee and the Bougainvilleans had shown them the way.

If the opposition they met was predictable, just as explicable was the support they received from certain key Simbu individuals. These were the young and often quite well educated potential elite members who for reasons of personality, ideology, or the chance of birth were not succeeding within the state system then established. The most obvious example was the political activist, Barunke Kaman, who had once been rejected by the AA members. He traded his skills and drive with the older men, and through his efforts, and those of some students and school teachers whom he mobilized, he was able to help create an interim provincial government. Whether consciously or not, through this symbiotic relationship he was thus able to create a political role for himself while helping his elders expand their institutional power. He spoke throughout of trying to limit the sway of his *bete noire*, Iambakey Okuk. His reward was to become the AA's RIP officer and later its executive officer, and ultimately provincial secretary. While many of the younger generation remained out in the political cold, it was Barunke Kaman who moved most spectacularly from being an angry young man outside formal politics to what was probably the most powerful position in the province - all the while maintaining his rage.

And that was how the CPC's populist vision of participatory democracy was taken up by the Simbu political elite, and they pulled power to create a government of their very own.

CHAPTER VII

'LYING FOR POWER': CHIMBU PROVINCIAL ELECTORATE, 1977

The 1977 National Parliament elections clearly showed the major changes in the Simbu political economy since the elections of 1972. The transfer of institutional power had been matched by the growing wealth of the aspirants. National politics permeated clan politics, and *vice versa*. Candidates had to utilize and contend with the parochialism of clan loyalties. The 1972 campaigns had shown their inability to mobilize people widely, despite the use of existing institutions such as the churches and local government councils. In 1977 young businessmen used money in the pursuit of political power. To gain electoral support they sought to manipulate the political culture and social structure, and the political economy. Individual personalities obviously affected the outcome of the campaign, but their actions drew on or attempted to appeal to operative elements within the Simbu political culture.

This chapter concentrates upon the campaign for the renamed Chimbu Provincial (previously 'Regional') seat, which best illustrates the changes taking place in Simbu, but it also notes the linkages between candidates for the national electorates and members of the Simbu Interim Provincial Government (SIPG) as well. For the Provincial seat the whole of Chimbu is the arena. After describing the rapid changes in Simbu's economy and society it sketches the political context of political competition in 1977, a boom year for coffee. Descriptions of the campaign periods in March-July 1977 form the core of the chapter, and are followed by an analysis of voting patterns and their significance. The violent aftermath of the elections is analysed so as to examine the local significance in Simbu political culture of the electoral process as a whole, before reassessing those elements of Simbu political culture which were used in the election.

Political context

Always intensely competitive, politics was virtually the only avenue for advancement for those Simbu who had missed out on chances for higher training and bureaucratic careers. While most men who had been elected to represent Simbu in previous years had had some small-scale *bisnis*, such as trade-stores, on election they had all automatically received incomes many times those of their kinsmen. Most took advantage of their positions and utilized public financial credit and government agriculture and business extension services to the hilt. Contrary to popular belief in Papua New Guinea, most Simbu members

became successful businessmen only after their election to office rather than before. Not surprisingly, many rivals emerged in the years 1972-77 with the aim of taking their place.

It is a fair generalization that most of the sitting Open Members in Simbu were unpopular in their electorates. They had won with a low proportion of the vote and people from other clans had voted against them, so they rarely felt able to move freely around electorates which, in part, comprised traditional enemies. Yet conscientious local members like Joseph Tiene were accused of failing to visit people such as the Naregu at Mintima, when I know he had visited at least four times between 1972 and 1976. Rightly or wrongly, the Members were seen by most of their constituents as lazy nest-featherers. So the deferral of the elections for a year by the MPs had incensed the Simbu men of ambition.

All Simbu activists were further angered when the Electoral Boundaries Commission recommended on the basis of the 1971 census figures that their province was entitled to only six (not the previous and expected seven) Open seats, and proposed new electoral boundaries that removed some census divisions from the familiar existing administrative district-cum-council areas and placed them in with other census divisions in the new electorates. Kundiawa District was divided between Gumine Open electorate (which took in the Dom census division) and Sinasina (the Yonggamugl). The former Mount Wilhelm electorate (Gembogl District) was then amalgamated with Waiye census division to form the new Kundiawa Open electorate. Years of campaign preparation were wasted in part by these changes. The sitting Provincial member, Iambakey Okuk, and the Premier, Siwi Kurondo, gained easy political kudos by leading demonstrations against these changes. The national government was accused of deliberately and unjustly 'downing' Highlanders, of 'greasing' and deceiving people, and of (statistically) 'killing' some 9,000 people while filling its own pockets. The rhetoric reached new heights when, at the Simbu Interim Provincial Government opening in February 1977, Okuk proclaimed, 'If I am a man of principle, I must boycott the election'.

In large electorates, such as those for the Open seats in the National Parliament, which cover around 30,000 people, political aspirants must first of all attempt to ensure they are the only candidate within their own clan and tribal base. This usually guarantees the possibility of mobilizing their kinsmen and women to vote as their primary catchment of support, before utilizing existing alliances with other groupings and finally appealing to the electorate at large.

The desired qualities of leaders can be recapitulated. By way of an ideological statement, Simbu leaders and ordinary villagers argue that there is a hereditary element in leadership: leaders must be the sons of leaders, a principle which is often observed. Yet

by this criterion many are eligible. Simbu people also perceive 'strength' as one attribute and/or characteristic which allowed a man to become prominent, to gain influence and ultimately power. Before pacification, fearlessness and skill in warfare were important elements in making 'a name' but usually not enough to win a political role. Energy and hard work would produce wealth needed for exchange relationships. A leader extracted resources from group members, yet also redistributed luxuries to gain a name for generosity. These economic activities demanded management skill and manipulative ability, which in turn required oratorical skill and a reputation for wisdom. To reach leadership positions could take decades, although more fiery personalities with bullying dominance would be accepted in times of warfare, because of the need for decisiveness and unity.

In the colonial era those adept men who collaborated with the new rulers often gained prominence, cleverly utilizing the introduced wealth of the white men in entrepreneurial ways. Skill in traditional *bisnis* and modern business, and *save* (knowledge of the new ways) became increasingly important, so that by the early 1970s the most obvious common dimension of political conflict was that between generations. Middle-aged, non-literate, Tokpisin-speaking colonial politicians such as councillors and parliamentarians were increasingly confronted by a politically ambitious new generation of English-educated public servants and young businessmen.

A most striking example of changing ideologies of leadership and the role of business wealth was given by Iambakey Okuk in January 1977 in a debate on 'black capitalists' which had been set up by UPNG students briefing the SIPG members on the ANU/CPO Simbu development study (Howlett *et al.* 1976).

The government wants us all to be equal. I don't believe in this. If I 'represent' Chimbu, or Matthias [Merimba, a successful trader from Gembogl who had bought a large trade store in Goroka town] then the name of the whole Simbu is uplifted. We are all happy with this. You young kids talk about capitalism. The previous speakers said there were class differences - some people up high and others down below. But where is this different? Communists want equality but I don't believe this has been achieved. You say that the provincial government can tax businessmen like Anton Aba. If you do this, the prominent men will see their business ruined, and decide to stop their activities and do nothing, except to take part in fights.

Should we become mere labourers? I am a business man, not a priest, and I don't throw money away freely. But in Papua New Guinea we have the *wantok* system, whereas whites keep their resources within their immediate family. We give to our in-laws and our matrikin and our classificatory brothers; and there are always compensation payments to be paid. Every day I am approached, 'Just K2.00 for bridewealth?' This happens to me - not to you - and others are all like priests who are poor and have no funds. We are not all priests, but no man in Papua New Guinea is so big that he

can run the whole country. Their relatives always pull the big-men down to scale.

Should we Simbu be dominated by other provinces next door? They are all capitalists already. If we Simbu were just to keep on performing the drudgery and hard work for others, then that would be a disaster. (Field notes, 12 January 1977, also in Standish 1978a)

Several concepts were used in this brilliant speech, apart from the anti-communist smear of those concerned with matters of equity. Firstly, the appeal to Simbu dignity, and secondly the notion that the stature of the whole group (in this case the whole province) would be raised by the activities of a few entrepreneurs. Thirdly, businessmen were argued to be generous and supportive, with a cultural 'levelling effect' in operation. This in a sense was a distortion of traditional values, because ordinary men in contemporary Simbu get much less 'spin-off' from the activities of modern capitalists than from those of a prominent leader in their own sub-clan. However the biggest businessmen of Simbu, as noted below, based their activities away from the province, which helped keep the extent of their wealth relatively confidential and thus reduced the pressures by kin and would-be clients for patronage. In 1977, probably no more than twenty Simbu businessmen in Chimbu ran enterprises profitable enough to yield, say, K10,000 net per annum. If they employed, say, twenty men each, the rewards to the total of 400 employed by them are minimal compared with the returns to the followers of hundreds of Simbu leaders in clans and tribes. The arguments do, however, strike a chord with Simbu listeners. The ideology of the 'big-man model' is here used to justify a phenomenon which is a quantum leap in scale beyond anything previously existing in Simbu society.

Social and economic change

Socio-economic change in Simbu was rapid, continuing the trends taken through the 1970s, but the most dramatic single phenomenon in Simbu life throughout the early 1970s had been the resurgence of tribal or clan warfare. Yet by the usual indicators of political science (Deutsch 1961; Pye 1966), Simbu was a rapidly modernizing society. Communications had greatly improved: Radio Kundiawa had started broadcasting daily in late 1972. Transistor radios became commonplace.¹ The roads had been upgraded markedly and (although accurate figures of motor registrations are unobtainable) Simbu vehicle ownership increased several-fold, especially after the coffee price boom which started in August 1975.

¹ Especially after the coffee boom starting in 1975: by 1977 there were three in the dozen houses within earshot of my residence in Mintima village.

A second striking change in the society related to the new generation of young adults (still mostly men) who had received formal education in the decade before the 1977 elections. In 1965, only 20 per cent of the school age population were in school; the proportion reached 50 per cent in 1972 and stayed at that level. Each year in the mid-1970s over 3,000 pupils left school, mostly hoping to enter the job market. Post-primary enrolments rose from 120 in 1965 to 1800 in 1977. In 1974, some 332 graduated from Simbu high schools with grade 10 certificates and expectations of well paid, powerful and prestigious employment, although by then the main localization phase within the public service had slackened. By 1977, this first large generation of school leavers was competing in both the economic and political arenas in Simbu. All these factors of modernization and increased competition help explain the heightened ethnic consciousness and increased ethnic conflict, as experienced elsewhere (Melson and Wolpe 1971).

Business and the coffee boom

The Simbu economy widened for the wealthier rural men as the 1970s progressed. The first step on the usual road to commercial success in the 1960s and early 1970s had been *via* the village trade-store, at which point many older entrepreneurs bogged down. In the 1970s coffee-buying and passenger carrying gained popularity and by 1977 picture-show houses became a new trend with taverns the next planned step for many rural capitalists after sales of bottled liquor. By 1978 there were some 199 cattle projects with an average of about ten beasts each. The cattle are mostly used for ceremonial and ultimately political purposes by their owners, who can be defined as big peasants.

The young men of Simbu who gained economic prominence in the 1970s did not do so as peasant producers but as traders. With the coffee boom, trade store licences grew to 2,565 in 1977 (ECL [Economic Consultants Limited] 1979:191), a 25 per cent increase on the steady total for the early 1970s, which had been static. Wholesale trading remained an expatriate dominated preserve. The success of the Gembogl businessman, Mathias Merimba, who expanded beyond the province was unique. Only three Simbu businessmen managed to build up and maintain small fleets of large trucks on government roadwork contracts, and only two kept vehicles going in long-distance Highway haulage. Two started service stations, but only one of these operations survived.

Four local corporations had gained political relevance in 1977. The Lutheran church in 1972 expanded its own supply lines by forming a trading arm, Kuman Holdings, in the hope of funding its operations. It invested in rental housing, stores, a motel and service station in Kundiawa and a clothing factory in Kerowagi, as well as a coffee processing factory at Banz. The Chimbu Area Authority set up a business arm,

Chimbu Holdings Enterprises (known as CHE), in 1976 to handle an investment in trucking, and then expanded with urban real estate, buses and a service station in Kundiawa. In 1977 it was seeking land for plantations, and considering buying shares in Wandu Coffee (Chimbu Developments). Chimbu Coffee has been discussed above. Expatriates were heavily involved in managing all three of these enterprises. A fourth enterprise was Iambakey Okuk's Chimbu Yomba Corporation, discussed above.

Coffee-buying seemed a more appropriate level for the managerial skills of most budding Simbu businessmen of the 1970s. In 1972 the 34 licensed Simbu buyers were mainly employed by expatriates or the two factories. By 1977 the Simbu had taken over coffee-buying, helped by the 1974 legislative changes initiated by Iambakey Okuk. Of about 100 Simbu buyers fifteen were employed by factories and the rest used factory-provided cash advances which at times totalled K1 m. Some also bought for Western Highlands factories, or for foreigners married to Highlands women. Of Simbu's older generation politician-entrepreneurs, only Yauwe Moses survived in this tough game and he always used young buyers (T = *boskru*). In the age of the electronic calculator, coffee buying is a young man's game.

World coffee prices are extremely volatile, and in Papua New Guinea the marketing chain is so competitive that roadside prices for parchment can rise within 24 hours of a frost in Brazil. From 1967 to mid-1975 roadside prices were in a long slump, as low as 22t/kg, but they rose steeply from July 1975 to a peak of K1.76/kg in April 1977 and fell rapidly to about K1.10 in July 1977, as is indicated by the graph in Figure 1.

In a rising market all stages of the industry can make large profits, because prices rise between the placing and fulfilling of orders. Some buyers built up substantial businesses in a few months during the 1975-77 boom, and the two Chimbu factories made annual profits of over K0.5 m, greater than their capital.

The peak coffee prices and the 1977 harvest coincided with the election campaign. Total Chimbu earnings from coffee rose from around K5 m annually in 1972-75 to K15 m in 1976-77, and average peasant incomes K50 to K200. The pattern described by Townsend for the Highlands as a whole in 1976 was clearly shown in Chimbu. He estimates that of K28 m returned to smallholders, much was spent on vehicles, clothing and food, savings and beer. A massive K8 m was spent on beer which entered the exchange network, for example in marriage and death payments (Townsend 1977). The peak prices for coffee, and the coffee flush, were matched by massive beer sales in Simbu (Standish 1983a).

PRICES AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF COFFEE PROCESSING, PNG AVERAGES 1973-77

Key
Bottom graph Factory door prices quoted for parchment coffee
 (NB Add approx 20-30% for 'green bean equivalent' price)
Middle graph Price for Y-grade green bean coffee, in-store
 Loe (Factory quote)
Top graph F O B Loe price for Y-grade green bean coffee
 (exporter's price)

Source Coffee Industry Board, Goroka

NB (i) Higher levy rates for the coffee price stabilisation fund came into force in October 1976. These should be deducted from the net export price quoted here. (Above K2 45/kg, 50% of FOB price increases are levied for the fund.) Most processors had forward contracts in October 1976, so the levy did not 'bite' until early 1977.

(ii) The graph does not indicate costs at each stage of production, which rose steeply from 1974. If it does, however, clearly show that the margins of processors (which are probably underestimated here) grew much faster than either price paid to buyers, or the exporters' margin. Undoubtedly, buyers' margins also grew substantially, at the expense of growers, but there is no way of calculating price paid to growers on the roadside.

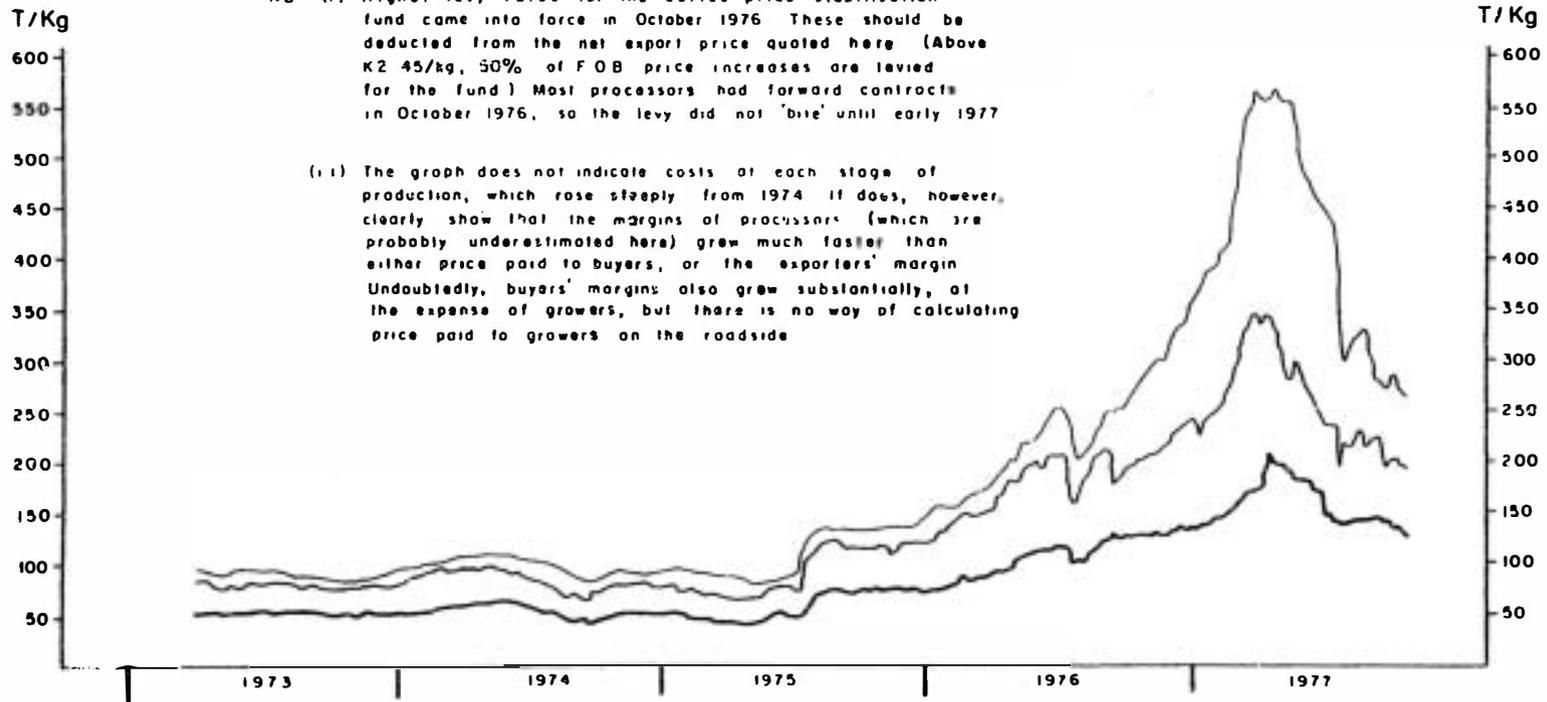


Figure VII.1

Beer is a prestige commodity and its formal gift ('prestation') boosts the donor's renown in the competitive inter-clan ceremonial exchanges in a manner similar to that gained by presenting pork or beef. (Cattle have been described as 'super-pig'.) To make this simile explicit, in 1977 beer was described as 'small pig'. Beer brings less prestige, however; to purchase beer only requires cash, while to produce livestock requires the control of land and labour. The value of beer has been devalued, just as shell was when used as trade goods (A.J. Strathern 1976; I. Hughes 1977), but beer remains a prestige food. Young traders may have few pigs but can outdo most big peasants in prestations of beer, as became significant in the 1977 election.

The candidates

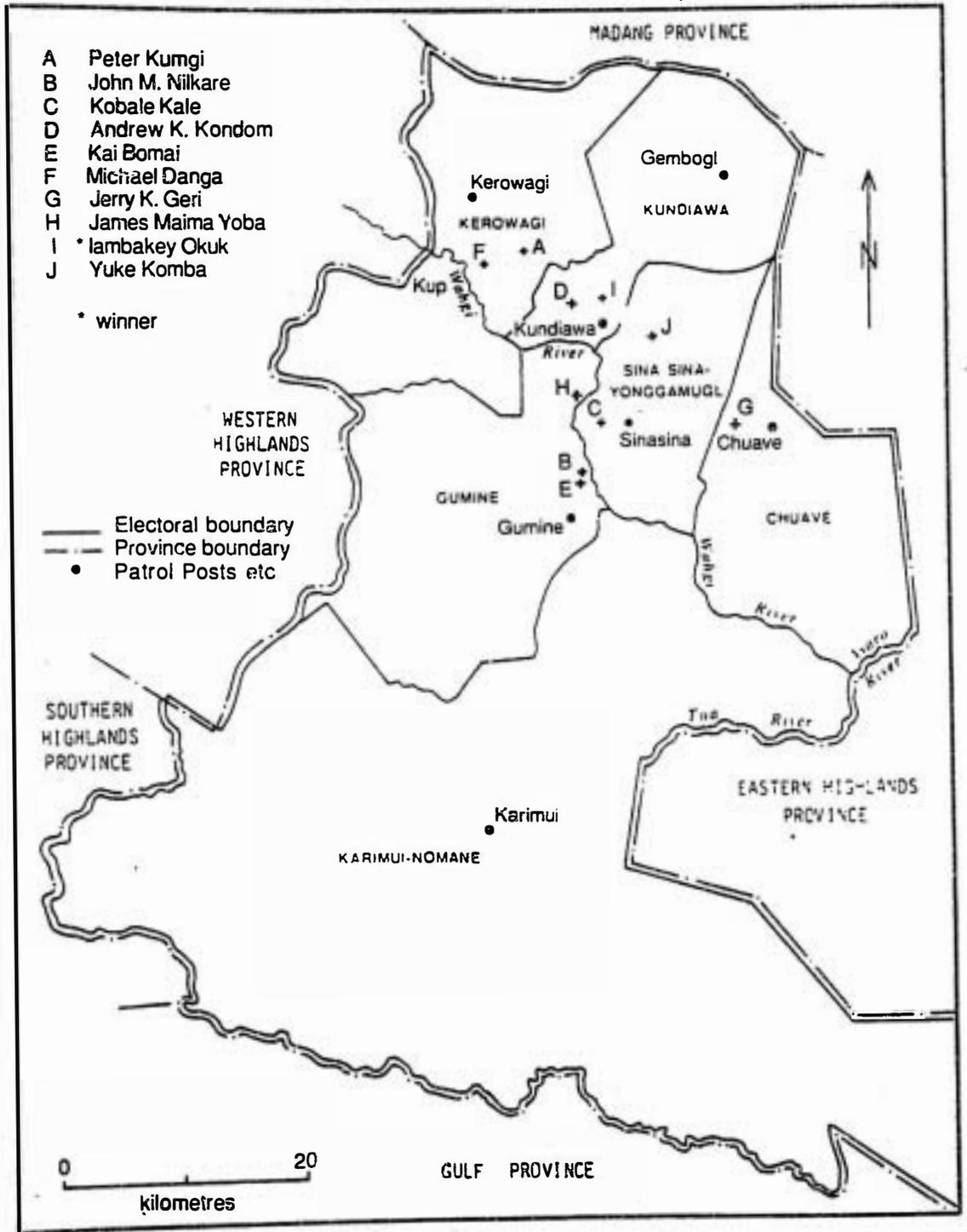
The Provincial contest in 1977 attracted ten candidates (see Table VII.1), whose clan locations are indicated by the alphabetical letters on Map VII.1). This was twice the number who stood in 1972, and shows not only the increasing size of the pool of educated and confident young men available for political competition as the first educated and mature generation grew in size, but also that these men, and perhaps their kinship groups, thought they had a political role to play. How many of them were genuine candidates, as against 'spoilers', standing to 'split' the vote base of other men of ambition, is difficult to ascertain. But even the role of spoiler, preventing a member of a rival clan, tribe or even district, from gaining political renown, is a role which links into the tradition of competition found in Simbu.

As the incumbent, Okuk (with his home clan base shown by letter 'T' on Map VII.1) was the best known candidate in the 1977 Provincial contest and almost certainly the wealthiest. Politicians in Papua New Guinea find no difficulty in raising finance and the shrewder ones convert this into political credit. When Okuk announced his assets in 1978, he said 'I have no Swiss bank accounts, no secret investments, or dummy companies. I have nothing to be ashamed of.' He said he owned one third of a small quarry, a K70-80,000 block of flats in Port Moresby (bought with a bank loan), and a hire car business (*Post-Courier*, 8-9/8/78). These assets were outside his electorate and beyond local scrutiny. Apart from Chimbu Yomba, nominally owned by fellow Simbu, late in the 1977 campaign Okuk's most obvious business activity in

Chimbu was the Tokma Limited coffee processing factory at Kundiawa. This he jointly owned with his wife, aided by a K49,000 loan from the Development Bank which had not been repaid years later. This factory symbolized his emergence from part-time truck driving in 1972 to being Simbu's richest man, with the resources to play both

Map VII.1

CHIMBU PROVINCIAL ELECTORATE, 1977



patron and broker (cf. Boissevain 1974). He arranged employment in the Kamanegu (Chimbu Yomba) corporation and in the government for both political allies and former opponents.

Okuk had been replaced as Education Minister in January 1976 by Kobale Kale (letter 'C'), who was an unusual politician for Simbu. A conscientious local member with grade 5 education, Kale lacked the common boasting Simbu leader's style and, since becoming a Seventh-Day Adventist, did not drink. Like other National Party Ministers who refused to follow Okuk and Kavali out of the ministry, Kale was expelled from the National Party. He teamed up with Pangu.

Once a minister, Kale became a new man. After travelling overseas he returned to Simbu displaying elephant hair bracelets and gold-mounted lion's claws, and seemed to have absorbed their strength and courage. His business activities, two tipper trucks on charter to the government, and a block at Karimui, were not ostentatious; in fact he sought to play them down. He played pork-barrel politics to an unprecedented degree with Education Department resources, particularly in Chimbu. He located new high schools to advantage Pangu, converted day schools to boarding ones, rapidly promoted Simbu teachers and at every opportunity loudly proclaimed these deeds.

Kale sought to build a political machine using institutional alliances. He had political problems in his own tribe, the Dinga. Despite Kale's informal efforts to resettle kinsmen in Karimui, he was unpopular at home and lived with his wife's Seventh Day Adventist community at Moruma, west of Kerowagi. Furthermore, the two Dinga clans had fought each other in 1976. The new Sinasina Council president, a coffee-buyer named Clement Poiye, also a Dinga, was a likely challenger for the Sinasina Open seat. Kale thus considered running for the Provincial seat, provided he could obtain outside help. The main offer of assistance came from James Arba, a former classmate of Kale's secretary. A freewheeling public servant, Arba worked as organizer for the 21 constituent clubs in *Kuman Yangpela Didiman* (Young Agriculturalists), mentioned above. Arba promised Kale to use this movement to deliver Kale a Simbu-wide vote, and he became a Pangu activist. Kale late in 1976 decided to challenge Okuk for the Provincial seat, and leave Sinasina Open to Poiye.

The Lutheran Church remained a political resource. Although some leading Simbu Lutherans had campaigned for Okuk in 1972, he had turned against them in 1976, apparently because of rivalries with the Lutheran *bisnis* arm, Kuman Holdings. The President of both the Church and this company, Rev. Boniepe Agere, had successfully lobbied the Prime Minister through Kale, in order to regularize the use of some mission

land for *bisnis* purposes. In gratitude, as well as his own ambition, Rev. Agere set up a Pangu Branch in Simbu with himself serving as President and the endorsed candidate for Kerowagi Open. To complete these linkages, Kale became Vice-President of both the Pangu branch and Kuman Holdings. At the end of 1976 the 1977 Provincial campaign was shaping up as a competition between Okuk and Kobale.

However, a third prominent Simbu was planning to stand: John Nilkare, the Chief Liquor Licensing Commissioner (letter 'B'). Very westernized in manner, with considerable overseas experience, Nilkare was well-known in political and business circles. His businesses included a chicken and pig farm near Port Moresby. In Chimbu he was known as a former magistrate and footballer, whose father had been Gumine council president and whose wife came from a family prominent in Kobale Kale's clan. His relatives in Chimbu had substantial business interests.² In 1976 numerous liquor licences were awarded by Nilkare's commission to rural trade-stores in Chimbu, in the belief that decentralized drinking would reduce the violence and road accidents, and subsequent compensation cases and fighting, which occurred with centralized drinking at Kundiawa township. These were popular moves, but Nilkare's likely candidacy - which he conveyed to me 15 months previously - had not been announced in Chimbu. Nilkare did not formally start campaigning until the writs were issued in April, since he was a public servant. Although he was a former National Party member and more recently a Somare supporter, Nilkare had close links with the UP-oriented Chimbu Coffee buyers. They agreed to campaign for him provided he did not stand for Pangu. However Nilkare had no party organization as such, or even a large faction, for support, and stood formally as an Independent.

The candidates for the Provincial seat were all, in their various ways, members of the new elite, aged 26-35, all married with young children, all involved in modern sector employment and all had considerable experience outside Chimbu. Their average formal education was 11 years. Kale was the only one who would not (because of insufficient education) have been eligible to stand for the old Chimbu Regional seat. Kale was well placed to know the changed rules and as a minister he had considerable resources at his disposal. Yet older political figures knew that there were no longer any educational barriers to Provincial candidature, so their abstention was not solely for lack of information. Probably more the important deterrent factor was the sheer energy and funds needed for a province-wide campaign. Also important, as we shall explore, were the confidence and modern *savoir faire* which education and travel can provide a young

² His sister's husband was a former Chairman of Chimbu Coffee, whose tradestore had a liquor licence, and Nilkare had subsidized his father as a coffee buyer.

man. Without strong linkages in traditional exchange networks, he might just hope to swing votes with clear policy statements and ideological appeals.

While all the Provincial candidates were engaged in modern activities and none was a peasant, their professed motives for standing varied greatly. Peter Kumgi (letter 'A') from the Siambuga-Wauga paired clans in Kerowagi district had been a renowned footballer, and hoped his six years in Chimbu as Rural Development Officer (*didiman*) would also help. After a work posting in the Enga Province his friendship with Opposition leader, Sir Tei Abal, linked him to the UP and gained him that party's endorsement. He said he decided to stand because he saw development by-passing the little men, and because of the laziness, self-interest and corruption he saw amongst existing MPs - especially what he called the opportunism of the National Party. He particularly resented his former minister, Iambakey Okuk, for ignoring departmental advice on agricultural matters.

Andrew Kombri Kondom (letter 'D') was another candidate who stood to reduce Okuk's vote. A former medical assistant and now a storekeeper and cattle owner, he was the son of Simbu's most famous colonial leader, Kondom Agaundo (see Chapters IV and V, above). His Naregu tribe abuts Okuk's Kamanegu. He was encouraged to stand by some old Kamanegu leaders on the strength of their friendship with his father and perhaps also their resentment of Okuk, though these same men later campaigned strongly for Okuk. Soon after nominating, Kondom considered withdrawing, but eventually campaigned rather passively as preparation for future provincial government elections. The Country Party repaid his KIOO deposit, hoping he would pull votes from Okuk.

Simbu political circles were shocked by the early nomination of the politically unknown Kai Bomai (letter 'E'), the youthful (27) ever-smiling, fast-talking Manager of the Chimbu Savings and Loan Society, because he came from the same village as John Nilkare, Omkolai in Gumine District. A pro-UP independent, he was not related to the sitting Member for Gumine, Ninkama Bomai (UP). With matrikin in the Salt area and in-laws in the Gunanggi (Sinasiona) Census Division, Kai Bomai was certain to cut deeply into Nilkare's potential vote bank. He had not spoken out of any plans to stand, and told me he decided only when he started three months' leave from work. Although many people knew of Nilkare's desire to stand, he and Kai Bomai each pleaded ignorance of the other's intentions, and Kai Bomai refused to pull out when Nilkare so requested him. Kai Bomai said that - not surprisingly - Okuk had expressed delight to him at this turn of events, when they met by chance in Goroka. Nilkare did not allege collusion on their part. Kai's work gave him considerable control over several hundred thousand Kina on loan to Savings and Loan Society members, and he took the golden opportunity the

members provided to recruit campaign supporters. As manager he had greatly increased both memberships and loans in the Gumine area (ECL 1979 III:199), whereas before his time the Society had little role in that area (Howlett *et al.* 1976: 252-57).

A 'vote-splitting' motive was alleged in the case of Michael Danga (letter 'F'), a former international footballer and schools inspector in Chimbu. Also pro-UP, he had resigned from teaching to campaign and was buying coffee. He attempted to initiate a development corporation to run a tavern at Kerowagi and a 'Simbu Association' to promote political cooperation amongst Simbu leaders. His father, Danga Bagme, had left his natal Kamanegu (Okuk's tribe) to settle with the Kamanegu clan at Kerowagi, where he became Simbu's largest cattle grazier and a perennial losing candidate at national elections. In the year before the election, Danga senior contributed nine cattle (worth around K3,600) to peacemaking feasts. This generosity expanded upon customary mediatory roles and was a spectacular way to win friends. In 1977 the father stood yet again in the Kerowagi Open seat and lost badly, but thereby sustained his claim to apolitical leadership role as well as business prominence, and increased his son's renown. Michael Danga's main slogan, 'Consider a new leader' simultaneously challenged Okuk and Kale. He attacked Okuk at a UP rally and in private criticized him for pursuing his self-interest. He argued that Simbu people were too individualist and incapable of cooperation: '*Oloman, Simbu, individual tumas*'.

There were three other minor candidates. Jerry Geri (letter G), a cousin of John Kaupa's from Aran village in Chuave, has already been mentioned in Chapter V. His family links were towards Sinasina and Kundiawa rather than towards Elimbari and Nambaiyufa (Siani). Significantly, this left these latter areas without a provincial candidate. Geri spent much of the campaign helping organize the Country Party campaign nationally. Earlier, Geri had abandoned his role as UP Chimbu Branch Secretary after an argument about funds, and allegedly taken the branch's membership details (P-C, 23 November 1976; Standish 1983,91). James Maima Yoba (letter H), was a 27-year-old schoolteacher from Dom (in Kundiawa District but part of the Gumine electorate and having a different language). An earnest young ex-seminarian, Maima Yoba lacked the money and resources for a showy campaign. Initially he described himself as a Pangu man, but on being refused Pangu endorsement and funds the Country Party recruited him. Okuk argued Maima Yoba would undermine his vote, but Maima Yoba more likely would have taken votes from the two Omkolai candidates. (Later, however, fights broke out between the Doms and the Gumine groups.) Another somewhat impoverished candidate was the Lutheran pastor, Yuke Komba (letter 'J'), who had worked in Lae and travelled overseas. Komba showed the stylized humility of many western clergy and appeared somewhat naive politically. He said he wanted to

help block Okuk, because the latter was attacking the church and had only helped his own group's economic advancement. Komba's campaign poster made a plea for development and Christian unity. His home area, Yonggamugi, is the natal area of Okuk's stepfather's wife, so Yuke Komba was well placed to reduce the incumbent's vote.

In the six Open electorate contests, the fields of candidates increased greatly to 95, still with no women, compared to 66 in seven seats in 1972. An average of 16 per seat stood in 1977 compared to ten per seat in 1972. These were the highest figures in the country, and reflect the intensity of political competition among the ambitious men of Simbu. At the opening of the SIPG Okuk had stated that 'people don't respect leaders; everyone wants to be a leader', a proposition at least partly verified when nominations closed in April 1977. Sinasina electorate had 21 candidates, then a national record. Clement Poiye asked 'Why do so many want to be politicians? I think it is because they are Simbu. They want to be the highest always'. Several older leaders, not candidates, simply said the competitors were 'crazy' and that the people were 'confused'.

Crude data collected by returning officers provide a general picture of the backgrounds of Open seat candidates (Table VII.2, and field data). These were new aspirants to political status. Some 73 per cent of the open candidates were standing for the first time, and only 24 per cent had previously held elected office. All were married, 10 per cent polygamously, including some young businessmen, which shows that that aspect of tradition survives among the ambitious Simbu men. Their average age was 34 years, compared to 36 in 1972, and their average formal education nine years (compared to only three years in 1972). Some 69 per cent had literacy in Tokpisin (as against 30 per cent previously). Their average age had dropped slightly, but the dramatic rise in their educational levels, combined with an increase in the number of candidates and their relative lack of political experience, compared to the 1972 candidates, demonstrates that a new generation of political aspirant had entered the Simbu political arenas.

The occupations of both Open and Provincial candidates, combined (shown in Table VII.3), had also changed since 1972, reflecting changes in broader Simbu society, and the number of people who considered they had or could obtain the various resources to invest in political candidacy. My categories are somewhat arbitrary, and some men fit more than one broad occupational heading. Peasants, whose livelihood is based on land, traders who build upon capital, and white collar workers who use their educational skills may all employ labour, but this does not automatically make them capitalists. My categorization is not an attempt to force these men into rigid class boxes, because they just do not fit comfortably into single categories. Indeed, a few candidates could occupy more than one category, but they are placed in the predominant one for present purposes.

The clearest change in 1977 was that there was a near doubling in the percentage of candidates who were businessmen (31 per cent compared to 17 per cent in 1972). Some 11 per cent had stores in 1977 (7 per cent in 1972) and 25 per cent were coffee buyers (11 per cent). The proportion of white collar workers rose slightly to 42 per cent in 1977 (as compared to 38 per cent in 1972), but included a slightly smaller proportion of mission workers (9 per cent as against 8 per cent) which perhaps indicates that other avenues to social advancement had been opened up. More significantly, perhaps, is that men broadly classified as 'peasants', that is, men who were land-based in their economic activities (whether large or small farmers, employers or not), fell to 31 per cent in 1977 from 41 per cent in 1972. Blue collar employees (who were prestigious in colonial days) fell to 3 per cent in 1977 from 10 per cent in 1972.

In summary, Simbu candidates in 1977 were far more likely to be businessmen and/or members of the salariat than in 1972, when over half were peasants or blue collar workers. A few old-style polygynous clan leaders, councillors and colonially appointed village officials stood in 1977, and some younger businessmen stood aside to prevent splitting their clan or tribe's vote with older leaders, but mostly it was the old men who dropped out to let the younger men stand, and chance their greater monetary wealth in electoral politics. Only 27 per cent of 1977 candidates had stood before, as against 48 per cent in 1972. National politics was being seen as a game for better-educated and more affluent men than previously.

Coming from an earlier tradition, the Premier Siwi Kurondo expressed his feelings towards the new generation of candidates like an old political warrior by saying that 'rubbish-men' and literates were standing, men who were not workers, and he sourly told me they were motivated by greed. Whether true or false, the candidates themselves still had to work within the contemporary version of Simbu political culture, so I now describe in detail the appeals made by the leading candidates for the Provincial seat.

The campaign

As an overture to the 1977 campaign the Lutheran Church invited Michael Somare to open the Kuman Holdings clothing factory at Kerowagi on 21 January.³ Okuk ostentatiously remained on the perimeter of the proceedings, nodding sourly when named by some of the speakers (but not Somare, who simply referred to 'other Members' in the crowd), and

3. Foul weather washed out the event before Somare's arrival. Excluded from the programme, a tired and emotional Okuk pushed through the crowd carrying a child, saying that whites and missions had fouled the people, and that the rain indicated God's displeasure at the occasion. Some 3,000 attended the next day when the ceremony was held, featuring the Premier, Kale, Mrs Anna Nombri (President of *Kuman Yangpela Didiman*), Rev. Boniepe Agere, the Defence Force Commander, Brigadier-General Ted Diro and Defence Force bagpipers.

responded with a statement run by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) that the exercise was a Pangu propaganda show, part of the coastal plan for domination of the highlands.

In February-March 1977 the conflict was intense. In parliament Okuk blamed the Somare government for the lack of development which he said was the root of Highlands fighting, overlooking his own role as a member of that government for four of the previous five years. In private, Somare blamed Okuk for blocking the 1976 Public Order Bill, which he said was designed to meet Simbu requests for tougher government action against fighting. In the dying twitches of the old House of Assembly the government struggled to sustain a quorum, and Okuk led several successful moves to block coalition bills.

Okuk placed corruption on the political agenda for the election, when on 17 February he moved in parliament:

That in view of

(a) much suspicion and mistrust surrounding the assests [sic], business connections, receipt of gifts, benefits and other services and the awarding of government contracts to private business ... [here followed a list of allegations against the government]

(b) this parliament resolves that

(1) an independent tribunal ... investigate and publish information concerning matters listed above in the Post-Courier newspaper by June next; and

(2) the Ombudsman Commission present to Parliament and subsequently publish in the Post-Courier the detailed submissions of the assets, the income, the business connections, the directorships, the business transactions, the granting of government contracts, gifts, services, privileges, liabilities and other personal relationships of the leaders as defined under the Leadership Code.⁴

Complete information of this kind would indeed be interesting, but Okuk's motion was not debated by the parliament, although his own affairs became an issue in the Simbu campaign. Perhaps in response to Okuk's motion, Pangu backbencher Tom Koraea asked Somare whether Okuk had improperly gained land in Port Moresby, a question which the Prime Minister said he would investigate. After a few days digging, all attempts at using political mud ceased, perhaps because some Pangu ministers used the same expatriate business adviser as did the Okuk family, and their wives were business partners.

⁴ National Parliament, Routine of Business No. 76, 17 February 1977.

Okuk cemented an alliance with various 'young Turk' UP leaders at meetings in different Highlands centres. Pushing the need for 'Highlands identity' he gained agreement for joint action between the National Party and the UP so as to control the next government, a strategy which he had already discussed with Sir Tei Abal in 1976. His themes were those of the defunct Highlands Liberation Front (Mel 1982; Standish 1982), calls for increased development in the Highlands and preferment for Highlanders in public employment to remove the existing regional imbalance (Welch 1976). National Party leader Thomas Kavali did not visit Simbu during the campaign and even before the count was finished had switched his allegiance to Somare. The National Party as such had no visible party organization to offer, although a kinsman of Okuk's wrote a begging letter to businesses as party president. Okuk's only hope for gaining office was in coalition with a larger group and he played this strategy well.

In a virulent Saturday rally on 20 March, Okuk told the crowd of Kundiawa shoppers and the socializing youth about the planned coalition, saying he would be the next Prime Minister. An NBC journalist in Simbu said his language was 'too hot' to report. He covered Kundiawa with the first 200 of his planned 10,000 posters.⁵ He campaigned early along the Highway and at rural food markets. At Ganigle near Kerowagi a former council president asked him what he had done while in government; Okuk flared up, insulted the man and then to cool tempers brought three carloads of men to Kundiawa for drinks.

Nominations opened on 11 April, and using a loudspeaker system on his new Landcruiser, Okuk bombarded Kundiawa offices and shops for three hours with speeches repeating his name over and over. Just after noon an outsider braved his territory. Buaki Singeri, the tiny Country Party Member for Kabwum in Morobe, walked up the main street, wearing a cowboy hat and shouting 'Country Party *bai i haipim yupela*' (E = The Country Party will help you). Okuk cruised up in his smart new car, the speaker blaring a mixture of English and Tokpisin with Singeri replying in Tokpisin. Calling Singeri a drunkard, a power-hungry crazy pig, Okuk rejected Singeri's plaintive response that he had helped Okuk and brought the mission here. Okuk ordered him to clear out: 'Pissoff! ... Don't cry now. Go and campaign in your own place'.

Okuk drove off, circling a crowd of 500 people whom he continued to harangue through the speakers, his voice cracking, near hysteria: '*Ol man bilong giaman long paua* (These men are lying to get power). Bloody coastals.' Singeri and his three companions

⁵ On the request of electoral officials he eventually moved a cloth banner so large that it broke electoral regulations, but pointed out that the anachronistic regulation was not being enforced in other centres.

left rather sheepishly, while Okuk crowed that despite Singeri quaking no harm was done. Okuk's continuing Tokpisin diatribe included some of the themes of his campaign, and is worth quoting at length.

Kobale Kale is Michael Somare's *mankimasta* (E = domestic servant). Before you were labourers who cut rubber and were *mankimastas*. Now you stand on your own legs with your own businesses. It was not just coastals who fought for Self-Government and Independence. I helped Somare but he turned his back on me and Thomas Kavali and kicked us out. I'm for unity. Do you want equality? Papua New Guinea should have equality. You should not work for *mastas* (white bosses). Who are those who want to be black *mastas*? Somare and Oscar Tammur. For Provincial government they only gave K25,000 in February.⁶ Chan and Somare are hungry for power. They *gris* (grease, flatter) for Pangu's sake only. They say we Chimbu are the *foulman* (spoilers), troublemakers, fighters. This is not so. They had troubles all over Papua New Guinea, too ...

Why do [my rivals] seek power? They can try, but pity if they lose. It's bad if people say we're cowboys. Singeri is a drunkard. I speak in full public view and say Sinake is a real drunk. We are real workers; we made our own roads, and now have coffee and cars ...

[In Kuman language] Whites - without them we would have to carry the coffee to the factory. We need them for work, and should work together with them.

[In Tokpisin:] They sacked me as a minister but I'm still the Member and am being paid. Do you want someone to replace me? He'll just grab money for himself.

[Kuman:] If you vote for me I'll run your business and get money here for you and you'll have lots of money ...

[Tokpisin:] The Ministers are all 'yes men'. Somare said I could return but I refused. I'll join with United Party, but I support National to join with United in a coalition. Miss Abaijah can join us in a coalition with United Party. Pangu will be in opposition. The government has not run the economy well. It has fouled the management of the economy and money. K40 million is missing.⁷ Ministers blame the public service and the public servants blame the ministers ... (Simbu is not getting its share.) There'll be K200 million income from coffee this year: we [Highlanders] are the strongest in Papua New Guinea. These smart educated people want to run things. Our Highlands leaders were the real fighters with a warrior tradition, and our leaders are those with lots of pigs. We will send our true

⁶ Tammur was Minister for Provincial Affairs. The K25,000 grant was the first half of an 'establishment grant'; another K85,000 was given to the *bisnis* arm as well as a K100,000 interest-free loan.

⁷ In late 1976 the Auditor-General reported that K43 m was astray in government accounts. This was almost all due to accounting errors and to the computer compounding the same debit items. The government quickly tracked down the 'missing' funds and made full explanation. See *Post-Courier*, November-December 1976.

leaders and speak out. People say the Eight Points⁸ are fouled up. No more Pangu here!

[In Kuman:] Do you agree? Do you agree?

[A few Kamanegu men in the crowd said 'Yes', rather slowly, while some others said hostile things.]

[Tokpisin:] I'll be forming the government with the United Party Don't forget this: *bisnis* and money will come to you if you vote for me, I'll get you these.

Later, in Kuman, he added

Don't listen to the coastal *gris*. They eat snake and should stay at home. Do you hear me? Other districts shouldn't compete with Iambakey Okuk. Don't waste your money, you other candidates. You could lose it what a pity to waste it!

At which point a drunken supporter from Gembogl shouted 'Okuk has won already!'

Helped by the presence of a film crew,⁹ Okuk kept this performance going for two hours, until he lost the crowd. He offered the microphone to prominent leaders from various parts of the province, and they gave the ear-splitting Simbu yodel. Okuk tape-recorded their endorsements in a verbal montage rather like his poster which showed many Simbu leaders apparently supporting him. He replayed the tapes - feedback distortion and all - across the province for two months, interspersing his own vitriolic comments and the soothing sounds of well chosen pop-songs ('I'm on the top of the world', and 'Don't forget to remember me'). Although villagers complained about the noise Okuk thereby succeeded in asserting his presence. Throughout the campaign Okuk repeated the *mankimasta* theme using scatological anal imagery which is found in Simbu argot, which - while acceptable between friends - can be insulting, provocative and potentially dangerous when shouted in public between rival individuals and groups.

The initial response from Pangu was mild. On 12 April Pangu held a rally in Kundiawa with all its nine endorsed candidates and about 300 people. Kale had come to town with two cars (one a government vehicle) loaded with singing Sinasina people, a few older councillors, and an inferior loudspeaker. All the candidates spoke, with Kale strongly outlining Pangu's achievements including the entry by nationals into large businesses, plantations and also coffee buying. He stressed his foreign travel and his ministerial role, and said he wanted the Provincial seat because he had seen all of Chimbu Province being fouled. Rev. Agere concluded the meeting saying 'Pangu is the breast

8 These are the Somare government's quasi-ideology, the Eight Aims for National Development.

9 O'Rourke and Kildea Filmmakers, whose film '*Eleksin: Politics in Papua New Guinea 1977*' has extensive sequences showing the Simbu campaign.

that has fed you. It's no use turning your back on them and throwing sticks.' Then rain stopped play.

These events require an *excursiu*. Okuk's jibes, especially the anal imagery, are of the kind used in the past - and still today - to stir up clan warfare. In Simbu cultural terms, although showing himself fearless, Okuk was also acting extremely provocatively and risked involving the Kamanegu in conflict. Kamanegu relations with Kale's Dinga tribe had been tense since 1975 when a Kamanegu school headmaster was murdered in Kundiawa. Confrontations over compensation twice led to fighting. Although the town had become government land and hence by convention neutral in tribal terms, essentially it had been under Kamanegu control at the first colonial contact. By taking over the township Okuk by implication flouted the convention and asserted his dominance over all Simbu. By campaigning in the town Kale reasserted the convention and challenged Okuk at Kamenegu's front door. Both his modern party and his ancestral tribe would not take insults lying down.

That day Okuk himself was out of town, but when the sunshine returned his close supporters replied to Pangu by taking the Chimbu Yomba beer truck and loading it with Kamanegu tribesmen. They specifically excluded other supporters because if there were trouble they wanted no compensation problems. They were expecting violence and saw the confrontation as being like a tribal fight. The crowd of 1,000 split into two groups on opposite street corners, clustered around the two trucks, with loudspeakers exchanging abuse. Drunken young Kamanegu told all other group members to get out of Kundiawa, and the tension was deliberately raised when Nilkare cruised through with a siren blaring into a crowd which swelled further as the hotel discharged lunchtime drinkers. (Later, in a moderating role, the Nilkare team called for calm.) Many Simbu expected a full-scale riot that afternoon, but there was none - probably because of lack of political mobilization. The row continued throughout the afternoon. Pangu's strongest speaker was Delba Biri from the Dom area, standing for Gumine. Previously an Okuk henchman, Biri asked what Okuk had achieved in office, saying he was a *mauswara man* (E = 'a waffler') who only helped Kamanegu. When Okuk heard of this *tok beksait* he raced back to Kundiawa. Round and round the trucks went, bellowing, halting, confronting, backing-off, and chasing each other like angry bulls, the insults echoing around the township.¹⁰

For three days these sound battles continued. Councillor Siune and older Kamanegu leaders tried to mute their juniors for fear of full-scale tribal warfare. Nilkare

¹⁰ Okuk told one candidate that he was the result of his father's union with a pig, a traditional insult, and told another 'you're a driver. Drivers are rubbish!', capping this with the crack 'Get out of town: I've met white bastards better than you!'

senior sought to mediate between the two sitting MPs, and the SIPG Assembly also vainly attempted to bring them together for a talking-tour. Then, as if by agreement, the campaigners moved out of town to where the voters lived and the early crises passed.

Okuk held a rally on 15 April amidst a huge crowd in town for a demonstration fight by the national boxing champion, Martin Beni. In this he was aided by the formidable presence of Raphael Doa MP, Western Highlands, who discussed the K43m of 'misaid' government funds, which were later found again (see footnote 4, above) in terms even more libellous than Okuk's. Both accused the government of lavish, campaign-oriented spending. A number of UP sitting members, John Kaupa and a series of other political hopefuls spoke, but lacked Okuk's passionate intensity. One comment heard at the time which perhaps reflected Simbu villagers' responses was the succinct phrase '*mauswara politik*' which I translate as 'tricky political waffle'. The crowd had come to town to watch another fighter.

Okuk's relationship with the UP merits exploration, as it shows how even an apparently strong political party can be hijacked by an outsider. Helped by his loudspeaker system, but much more than that by his sheer will to power, Okuk's genius was to make himself central to the UP campaign, rather like a huge tree which attracts various hangers-on, creepers which compete with each other yet serve to enhance their host's pre-eminence.

Okuk outshone the UP at their own rally on 20 April at which party endorsements were to be announced. Sitting UP parliamentarians received automatic nomination, payment of the K100 fee, 2,000 individual posters on a standard format and limited access to a UP vehicle. They could not object to multiple nominations by UP, however, and at least 60 others sought party endorsement. Party leader Sir Tei Abal and branch secretary Dee sat in the motel to finalize the party tickets, while Okuk spoke to UP hopefuls, stressing both his separate National Party identity and his alliance as a good Highlander. He challenged Abal's alleged weakness for failing to topple Somare. 'You are a bullshit organization - useless! I don't support Tei, but I support UP. Tei wants to be big at the Lodge. I'll go and get him.'

Abal announced a total of fourteen endorsements in the six Open seats, accepting Dee's advice. The organizer's local knowledge was limited but he did name two eventual winners. One strong candidate, Clement Poiye, was not endorsed, because, Dee said, as a businessman he could afford his own campaign. Peter Kumgi's friendship with Sir Tei ensured him UP endorsement ahead of Michael Danga. These two candidates, along with Kai Boma and Yuke Komba, were again overshadowed by Okuk, and jokingly took up his mocking taunt of them as *manki* (E = young boy). Sir Tei was alone in explicitly

rejecting Okuk's regionalism. Angry candidates who had nominated but been ignored by UP were not placated by a party luncheon at the motel. Pangu headquarters in Port Moresby were asked by five of these men for help, but stuck with its original nominations. None of the rejects won a seat, except Poiye who was close to Nilkare and fence-sitting, and who later negotiated with other parties.

These also-ran candidates were nonetheless a valuable political resource. Okuk shrewdly offered to print K200 worth of posters for fifteen of these 'UP' men, who gladly accepted and were thus immediately incorporated into Okuk's faction as clients in many distinct, yet classic, dyadic (two person) instrumental transactions (Scott 1972; Nicholas 1977; Bailey 1969). Okuk had individual links with these men and also most of the UP candidates who travelled on his vehicles and then introduced him into their *lains*, but he was personally unblemished by the competition between these men in their various Open electorates. These, along with members of the SIPG (including - late in the piece - the Premier, Siwi Kurondo) brought to the Okuk campaign their own close henchmen, lesser followers and kin. While UP remained a formal, slightly impersonal political party organization, lacking a distinct ideological drive and earnestly seeking a national spread of votes, Okuk's factional machine with the single purpose of re-electing him was buttressed by his appeal to Highlands ethnicity and was based on a series of personal transactions he initiated by shrewd use of his massive financial resources.

Political parties are often riven by internal factionalism. Dick Dee, who was not close to Okuk, explained that - although Okuk had started apart from UP - because he was fighting for that party and helped UP a lot they had come together. So the Okuk faction, starting from outside the UP, virtually absorbed that party in Simbu, with the exception of Okuk's own rivals for the Provincial seat. Pre-planned or spontaneous, it was brilliant political strategy.

On 4 June the UP held a Saturday rally at Kundiawa in which 23 vehicles took part, eleven from the Western Highlands.¹¹ Once again Okuk dominated, together with the Western Highlander Raphael Doa, while the endorsed candidate Kumgi protested that he, Peter, was the official UP candidate. Kumgi niggled Okuk, asking what he had done. 'Now power is with the people, who should use it and act. Days pass and leaders should change. I'm not a political prostitute. I'm a learner!' At which point Okuk interrupted softly in Kuman: 'Shut up!' Kumgi finished off: 'Enough. If Okuk wins he wants to

¹¹ Although invited, Eastern Highlanders did not appear. There were differences in style and policy. Okuk in late April had stormed around Goroka, followed at a distance by a bemused UP Eastern Highlands Provincial candidate, Kumoro Vira, who told me Okuk had come on his own initiative. The Goroka crowd were incredulous, even amused, at Okuk's tantrums, which apparently were alien to their political style.

come in with us, but it's up to Tei'. Using Okuk's speaker truck, Tei was cornered into ambivalence; 'Many young men are standing', he said. 'Look well, and choose a good man. Peter is UP. Iambakey is strong to help us. We want a strong man - Peter: Iambakey'.

Okuk was also planning for the post-election lobbying. There was a party at his house that night, with K200 of beer provided by UP, K200 by Chimbu Yomba and K100 by Okuk personally. He gave whole cartons to sitting MPs and some others from the Western Highlands. Similarly he travelled to four Highlands provinces, and went all the way to New Ireland in an attempt to block Julius Chan's re-election for Namatanai Open. Chan's People's Progress Party barely had a toehold in Simbu, with one businessman endorsed. Okuk accused Nilkare of being a covert PPP candidate. He bracketed Chan and PPP with Somare and Pangu. Dee was more pragmatic: 'We'll get PPP in coalition - they'll share any bed.'

As in previous elections, most Open candidates concentrated on the members of their own *lain*, deeply insecure in a society racked with clan warfare. It was the Provincial candidates who needed to travel widely and fast, and some of whom could afford attention-getting devices. The travelling political circuses spent most time on the side roads. Nilkare used more gimmickry than others, with lapel badges and car stickers, and cowboy films shown in villages at night before the soft-sell. He even funded rock bands to play for high school dances; no speeches were made, but his generosity became known. He was not just a very modern man, however; he said he would not visit villages without a friend there to introduce him in the customary way. He simply had not allowed enough time to create sufficient personal relationships, and was sensitive to this. Okuk was unable to hire commercial films because of Chimbu Yomba's bad debts, but showed two potently symbolic movies. One, *Bugla Yungu* (mentioned in Chapter II Footnote 2), depicts a huge pig ceremony from which, ironically, Okuk had been chased away, and the other showed Okuk braving the evil spirits on Mount Wilhelm, and raising the new national flag on the summit. *Iambakey* is the Kuman name of the Lesser Bird of Paradise depicted on the flag and national crest; a picture of which adorned Okuk's vehicle. Kai Bomai used Savings and Loans Society films in his campaign. The NBC's Radio Kundiawa sometimes announced these clearly political events, but did not report the campaign. Pangu used no razzmatazz, its loud-hailers insignificant among the hundreds sold in the Highlands during the campaign. Whatever it signified, the sound and fury penetrated most of Chimbu apart from Karimui, even remote Nomane.

Passions were high. There was a clash between Okuk's and Kale's followers at Chuave market. Okuk was forced by Nilkare to campaign hard after his spectacular

opening, and he shed 16 kg in his drive for power. He lost a tooth during the campaign, and a car windscreen at Gumine, but perhaps warned by the early confrontations, candidates and supporters avoided serious violence during the period of campaigning.

These men were over-tired, and a road accident brought death into the political arena on 17 June just before polling opened. Kale overturned his vehicle, killing a young girl from Koge village, and then gave himself up to police who charged him with manslaughter. Okuk gloated loudly around Kundiawa that this was God's justice because Kale had slandered him. John Kaupa celebrated at Chimbu Lodge. When a magistrate quite properly allowed bail that afternoon Kale's supporters toured the town reasserting his campaign. Such accidents often led to fighting, and in this case the temptations for candidates to meddle were great. One Sinasina candidate raised tensions amongst the girl's relatives, and on June 21 Kale rather foolishly drove through Koge, met a roadblock and once again escaped with his life. Fighting erupted immediately between Kale's Dinga and Nimai (Koge) people. Many were injured, four were killed and much property destroyed in a war which lasted a month - despite heavy deployment by the police riot squads - with a short truce for polling teams to collect votes. As in a number of Simbu disputes during the election, other candidates were keen to act as mediators. At one stage the Premier loudly repeated his support of Okuk. Fears of a compensation claim against Pangu may have led to the cancellation of a visit by Prime Minister Somare. Kale survived this ordeal and subsequently was sentenced to nine months for dangerous driving causing death.

Campaign issues

As in 1972, in 1977 policies were not the real issues of the campaign, and ideological conflict was difficult to discern. Pangu appealed to the wealthier and more prominent villagers with its stress on high schools, village courts and business. Okuk, while courting businessmen, appealed to all levels of Simbu with his coastal dominance rationale for Chimbu economic stagnation. His Highlands regionalism drew a ready response. Danga wittily responded to Highlands chauvinism, saying 'You need a mixture to make things tasty: it is boring just to eat sweet potato'. Most candidates used the cliché that policy pledges were worthless, yet all called for more business, roads, bridges, health facilities and schools, as well as the cessation of warfare. They wanted provincial powers to settle land disputes, even the wise young man whose poster said '*Mi gat mausgras - mi no laik promis*' ('I have a beard so I won't make promises'). Land for resettlement was not a campaign issue and the coffee border rule was apparently seen as a provincial problem.

Few young men, to my knowledge, raised the generation clash, a real fissure within Simbu society although it was often implicit when younger men stressed their formal education and modern *save*. One young man who bluntly condemned older politicians who drank and slept through parliamentary meetings was drubbed in the polls. Established leaders generally condemned younger men, saying they lacked Okuk's strength, wisdom or experience, or were motivated by sheer greed. Two sitting members, rivals in this election, jested in Kundiawa main street like a comedy duo: 'We're going bald, but we know the ropes, unlike the English speakers'.

The principal dimensions of conflict in the Open contests were ancient rivalries between clans and tribes, but in the Provincial seat large-scale geographic rivalries emerged. Okuk's opponents sought to utilize resentment against the Kamanegu allegedly for arrogating the provincial headquarters to themselves. Nilkare generalized this even further into a so-called '*bomai* alliance' against the 'highway-men'. As already mentioned, most development is near the highway, while to the south (K = *bomai*) there is little. The word '*bomai*' is used to mean bush unsophisticate, so this typical Simbu pun was nicely chosen for political underdogs. Not only did Nilkare speak of modern development but he reminded Kumai people of Kup that his ancestors had given their's refuge during precolonial warfare. His fellow villager, Kai Bomai, promised to ensure that more of his Society's loans went to Gumine, Salt and Nomane people. He had already delivered on this promise, and so had some credibility in the southern sector.

The fortuitous coffee boom helped Okuk immensely. In several parts of the province I was told that villagers, especially older people, really believed that Okuk, personally, had raised the prices. One core supporter, Provincial Assembly Member, Asuwe Kawage, proclaimed this and Okuk said that what Asuwe said was true. Generally, though, Okuk used the more subtle variation that he had 'ought to raise prices, and that he had gained local control of the coffee industry. Despite his opponents' explanations of the world market mechanism, people believed that Okuk's 1970 by-election promise had finally come about in 1975! Coffee prices did not fall significantly until the last few days of voting.

The personality, integrity and credibility of candidates was a muted issue. Okuk told Joseph Tiene (MP, Kundiawa) that he was a rubbish man because he lacked a car with speakers. He told Kale he was the son of a bad man, not a big man. He called another respected leader a pig. In discussing Okuk's claim to be the next Prime Minister, a close supporter of Kale told me 'A man who is cross like that cannot be Prime Minister, not one who attacks people like that'. A Simbu public servant expressed amazement: 'Okuk is so smart. He can twist people around his finger. They can't see how he is

operating. They can't see what he is doing. They believe him'. There were *some* who disbelieved, however, such as the Provincial Secretary, Barunke Kaman, who had a standup row with Okuk in the main street of Kundiawa in January, accusing him of corruption. Four months later, mid-campaign, Okuk initiated criminal charges that Barunke Kaman had 'spread false reports so as to create disaffection between peoples'. The matter was adjourned and Okuk let it lapse after the election - but meanwhile having largely silenced Kaman. Pangu supporters quietly raised Okuk's business activities and alleged misuse of government resources with me and most likely with others.

These matters came to a head as the last big issue of the campaign. In early June the Lutheran churchmen who were directors of Kuman Holdings discovered that their Banz coffee factory manager had lent Okuk some K22,000 for coffee buying, which was two months overdue for acquittal. Incensed, the directors sacked the manager (who then started working for Okuk), and attempted to reclaim the money. Okuk freely admitted the debt, and actually showed me his receipt, but was furious. He said they implied that he had stolen the money because he had had an expensive campaign.

Okuk's full fury was now directed at the senior expatriate Lutheran, an American, whom Okuk accused of being a Central Intelligence Agency operative and Satan's deputy, whom he would have deported. Okuk's kin close to the Lutherans dissociated themselves from his attack on the missionary, who asserted that he had 75,000 people behind him and that attacking the church was equivalent to criticizing motherhood. A Kamanegu allegedly said that Okuk had cost his fellow tribesmen so dearly that, if he failed to win the election, he would die. Characteristically, when Okuk was told that church services in the Gembogl area had been used to criticize him, Okuk himself broadcast this as an allegation of theft. He was planning legal action against Kale on this matter on the day of the road accident. Okuk's faithful supporter, Wagua Goiye, defended him publicly at Kerowagi, saying Okuk was not a thief, but rather a rich man, one who had cars. The role of wealth in the campaign needs deeper exploration.

Gifts and bribery: '*Wokim liklik bribery nabaut*'

Simbu was financially flush during the coffee boom, with few investment opportunities apart from social exchange relationships and - in 1977 - electioneering, so this section discusses whether one candidate's creole phrase quoted above ('doing a little bit of bribery around and about') fairly describes the use of money during the elections. The major candidates had the straightforward costs of vehicles (some were bought on hire purchase and reclaimed after the election), petrol, sound equipment, the printing of posters and (for four candidates) charter costs for aircraft used in leaflet 'droppings',

which some villagers found insulting. Less readily estimated were the large payments made to campaign helpers by some candidates, or the over-generous prices paid for coffee by Michael Danga and several others. Finally, there were gifts. Peter Kumgi gave a mere K300 to several communities for church improvements, to good effect. To prove his incorruptibility, one councillor in the Gumine area happily told me he had taken Okuk's proffered K30, but was suggesting to his *lain* that they voted for Kai Bomai or Nilkare, the local men.

Such statements go against Simbu cultural mores, in that reciprocity is a strong value, and in a genuine relationship a gift both incurs an obligation and opens a continuing exchange, so that in some instances I thought these men protested too much. Meanwhile, the local-level leaders made their own harvest in the electoral sunshine. 'Custom' is legally defined in Papua New Guinea's *Customs Recognition Act* as what people do, and traditions are constantly changing. Custom could perhaps be used as a defence of provocation for a criminal charge, and custom is taken into account in sentencing. The National Constitution of Papua New Guinea appears to give strong support to custom, but the necessary subordinate legislation has not been enacted. Nonetheless the appeal to custom might well be tried as a defence in cases of criminal charges arising from electoral 'treating', for instance. It was thus possible for Open candidates to give generously towards major prestations in their home areas as a 'customary' gesture, even though thousands of Kina changed hands (Jonathon Aleck, pers. comm. 1991). But as in the case of the Regional candidate, John Nilkare, who made massive contributions of beer and beasts to death payments in certain areas a great distance from his home base, his generosity was regarded as an electoral 'investment'.

Beer had been used as electoral *gris* in a minor way since the 1964 House of Assembly elections in Simbu, but in 1977 it was the outstanding feature of the campaign. One non-drinker warned about those who used *gris*: '*Ol memba bilong bia tasol long hotel na taun tasol*' (Their electorate will be the hotel and town; they will only represent beer!). The UP's Dick Dee urged people in a public notice played over Radio Kundiawa to vote for the best man and not the party, and not to vote for those who were trying to buy votes with beer and cash. In a speech discussing Okuk and Kumgi, Sir Tei Abal made the same point, adding that people should take the gifts but not to give their votes in return. Huge parties were heavily subsidized by the major Provincial candidates in several areas. The more affluent candidates gave out cartons to local leaders, while others, such as Kai Bomai, stirred up the resentment of voters who missed out. John Kaupa persuaded the brewery to provide his local Elimbari Corporation to prepare the tavern at Chuave for opening in three days flat, just before voting started. Despite Chimbu Yomba's K1,000 contribution to the opening celebration many missed out and

were annoyed. Huge parties were held throughout the province. Contrary to what villagers said in several areas, when prompted by a follower, Okuk told me he had not given out any beer, but that such parties had been laid on for him in several places in spontaneous demonstrations of support.

Cash was also used quite spectacularly. (Here I exclude the Lutheran leader and candidate who distributed dividends from the church company Namasu.) A few cases can be documented, although it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between a gift for electoral purposes and an advance of a few thousand kina to buy coffee, which may or may not be delivered. Okuk gave K200 to one Provincial Assembly member, who then danced across the main street of Kundiawa, holding the money aloft and shouting that he had been given it for his support and that others should vote for Okuk, too. One Open winner told me he pressed K2.00 into the hands of women on the roadside; one loser told me he surreptitiously gave cash to clan leaders when they were drunk. Money was given out quite freely in several parts of the province by Open and Provincial candidates. Some villagers were reluctant to discuss this with strangers, so there was some sense of impropriety. An Open candidate used Okuk's speaker in Kerowagi on 14 June to proclaim 'We're not *grising* you, giving money or beer in an underhand way. We're doing it in the public eye'.

Some candidates had the resources to drive each other into increasingly reckless acts of generosity. They were giving to third parties, rather than directly to each other as rivals do in Massim (Young 1971). Probably the candidates themselves kept no books, but five Open candidates told me they spent an average of K5,000. All lost. These expenditures were freely admitted by Provincial candidates: Kumgi, K480; Bomai, K1,500; Geri, K6,000; Nilkare, K7,000; and Kale, K11,500. Okuk told me on 9 July in front of several people 'I've spent around K21,000 and I haven't counted yet all that I've given out'.¹² Most candidates estimated others' expenditure to exceed their own. With 105 candidates in Simbu it is likely that well over K150,000 or K2 per voter was spent on the election. This is a significant amount of money when the average cash income is well below K100 per annum, but it also shows how all but a very few are excluded from entering such a costly race. Pangu headquarters gave Kale K9,000, while Geri used K2,000 of Country Party cash. Nilkare told me he had been given K2,000 by 'friends'. Few expatriate businessmen in Chimbu admitted giving cash to candidates; they preferred to help in kind (with patrol, for instance) when approached. The Chimbu coffee factories

¹² While Okuk's total expenditure was probably double that or more, the scale of his extravagance was not unique: his friend Anton Parao lightly told me that he had spent K24,000 in losing the Enga Provincial contest.

were still owed almost K100,000 for unacquitted advances at the end of 1977. How much of this was involuntary election contributions was unclear.¹³

Assessing all this generosity is complex. Michael Danga said 'The Simbu sway like leaves in the breeze. I give you cash and you praise me to the skies. I go and you kick me under a car'. Bribery and 'treating' with drink so as to influence voting are criminal offences. The National Constitution prohibits foreign firms or individuals giving money for political purposes to Papua New Guinean political parties or individuals, but the Organic Law which is constitutionally required to implement these provisions had not been enacted. Bribery or the exercise of 'undue influence' are sufficient grounds under the electoral law for declaring a poll null and void. As mentioned above, gift exchange for prestige purposes is a customary practice, with generosity and display intrinsic to the Melanesian way to leadership. Proving the intent to bribe, let alone the efficacy of any gift, might well be difficult. Yet gifts to local leaders helped cement support in many cases. The people may have voted as advised for a variety of other reasons, including indifference. The modern-day exchange relationship may not necessarily win votes by incurring an obligation, but because a candidate is seen as being a good, generous person, one who has also demonstrated the capacity to work one part of the modern system (business) and who by extension might, if the relationship continued, be able to deliver resources from the governmental arena as well. Even if the voters merely took the presents and voted as they chose, massive electoral expenditures had become a new Simbu tradition, which had some resonances with the model of the traditional leader who was generous, but who also manipulated the obligations he had incurred, and expected equivalent recompense.

The count

In 1977 there was a slightly higher turnout in Chimbu by enrolled voters than in 1972, 58 per cent (76,705 votes) as against 55 per cent (62,656 votes) (see Table VII.4). The high number (19.2 per cent) of voters not located on the electoral rolls in 1977 led to official over-estimation of voting turnout (as in 1972). Yet there was a clear increase in participation, especially the 20 per cent rise in Chuave and Kerowagi, two Open electorates for which the 1977 figures are comparable because they retained the old boundaries. These were areas of extravagant campaigning. Generally the turnout was lowest in the most developed area, Kundiawa, with only 40 per cent. Remote Karimui-

13 When coffee prices are falling, factories and buyers are likely to lose unless they drop their buying price very quickly indeed, which causes some risk of their losing their raw material supply to other factories. So not all the 1977 losses were due to electioneering nor to those over-generous or merely naive candidates who quickly burnt their fingers by mixing *bisnis* and politics and who bought coffee at inflated prices.

Nomane's 85 per cent vote reflects the fact that people there were lined up to vote by national *kiaps* and police in the worst authoritarian 'colonial' style. The Provincial candidates especially had succeeded much better in motivating voters widely in 1977. The informal vote was again negligible for the Open seats, but for the Provincial seat it dropped from 36.1 to 6.2 per cent. The informal vote in Karimui-Nomane was still the highest, reflecting poor penetration, especially in the remotest areas off the road network, but fell from 83 per cent in 1972 to 25 per cent in 1977.

The breakdown of votes by ballot-box in Open seats again showed most clearly the importance of real or implied kinship, by which whole clans and tribes vote almost unanimously for a single candidate, reflecting a corporate approach to political action, whether or not that resulted from leaders' suggestions. Most often people voted for the man with whose group they had closest continuing social relationships. Women had not taken an active, visible part in the campaign, with the exception of *Yangpela Didiman* President, Anna Nombri, but the female vote was as high as the men's. Although men jested that they could not *gris* their wives to their vote, the solidity of voting by ballot box (where each box was used in only one booth) once again indicated that men and women in the same places voted the same way. Most marriages do take place between neighbouring clans, so a commonality of political interest is likely.

With the first-past-the-post system as specified under the new National Constitution, the dangers of splitting the votes of a *lain* were greatly increased. All the winners had taken a long time to shore up their political support bases against rivals, with one exception. This was the eloquent young prison warder, Wagua Goiye, who defeated the somewhat ineffectual sitting member from the same clan (Pagau) and party (UP) in Kerowagi Open. (Goiye had attached himself to Okuk and made a generalized appeal in a hotly-contested electorate. Okuk and the UP provided resources which gave him a high profile, and as a gaol warder he had already won many friends in several clans amongst those imprisoned for fighting.) Not one sitting Open member was returned. Deliberate vote-splitting candidacies succeeded in several instances. John Kaupa (Chuave) had said 'This is the dirty politics' with glee, but he was beaten at it.

Party allegiance appeared to be quite irrelevant in rural Simbu where modern political institutions are used to play out old clan rivalries. The UP rejected two, possibly three, winning candidates when they refused to fund them; Pangu and Okuk were the beneficiaries. Among endorsed candidates, Pangu won three Open seats, UP two. Poiye stayed with Okuk when he failed to gain a ministry. These winners would have succeeded whatever party they embraced, given the potency of local loyalties. The Open winners were relatively young, educated, and wealthy.

In the Provincial race, Okuk won with 22.0 per cent of the vote, beating the closely clustered Kale (15.6 per cent), Nilkare (15.0 per cent) and Kai Bomai (13.4 per cent), with the others well behind. The candidates' spread of appeal varied greatly: looking at their votes by Open electorate, the minor candidates gained from 72 to 93 per cent of their votes in their home electorate, while the front-runners gained 55-75 per cent of their votes outside their home territory. Some of this more general appeal can be attributed to kinship, some to party and factional linkages, and some to personal ties, religious affiliation and perhaps also generosity. I do not have complete information on all these factors, and time and space preclude detailed analysis of the contents of 200 ballot boxes here.

The '*bomai*' strategists who had said Okuk's re-election would make southerners the servants of the Highway people failed for lack of coordination which led to splitting of the southern vote. James Maina from Dom helped divide the southerners. Kai Bomai polled very strongly around Gumine, his home area, and in Nomane, his mother's natal area. His family ties into the Gunanggi area of Sinasina attracted almost 1,500 votes in that electorate. These were fields which both Nilkare and Kale had hoped to harvest. Although Kai Bomai and Nilkare reduced Okuk's vote in Gumine from 2,000 votes in 1972 to 284 in 1977, they helped Okuk by destroying each other, as well as Kale. Nilkare's ties with the province's young elite of coffee buyers helped him, for example in Chuave where the winning young Pangu candidate, the coffee-buyer Robert Kaki Yabara, helped Nilkare gain a block of 2,100 votes. Interestingly, Nilkare won almost 2,500 votes in Kup, which reflected not only his modern-day *bomai* appeal but also his recalling of his clan's historic debt. He won 1,500 votes in Kale's Sinasina area. There had been no cooperation between these near-relatives. Immediately after the elections, Simbu politicians were amazed when Nilkare started mustering successful candidates on behalf of Pangu, and it emerged that right through the campaign he had been a member of that party's national executive!

Given that his motor accident had cast real doubt on his future, Kale's unspectacular pork-barrel approach served him very well to take him into second place. His share of the vote in Sinasina was low (21 per cent); this was possibly only in part because of the fighting under way during the polling. He had been a conscientious local member, and even won votes amongst what were then enemy *lains*. There are signs, apart from any help from his Lutheran connections, that the favourable comments about Kale I heard from Seventh-Day leaders - including expatriates - helped him win votes where this church was strong. Conflicts within *Yangpela Didiman* over money matters and Arba's political use of the association's vehicle possibly stopped it delivering many votes to Kale. In addition, many of the leading members were already associated with

other political factions. If Poiye's offer to stand aside for Kale was genuine, the latter had grounds to regret abandoning Sinasina.

Okuk's vote was patchy and is harder to interpret. He maintained his support in Kundiawa, especially in the Chimbu Valley where he took credit for road improvements and, according to Gembogl people, pledged to build a short route to the coast through the Ramu Valley. His use of the Gumine/Nomane road failed, if only because of the presence of two strong local opponents. Okuk polled strongly in Kerowagi, Kumgi's home area, in alliance with the Open winner Goiye. Although he lost votes in the Kuman language area to Komba, Kumgi, Danga and Kondom, and a few to Geri in Chuave, their relatively narrow bases meant that individually they posed no threat. Indeed, Okuk's greatest gain was in Chuave, where identical electoral boundaries enable direct comparison with the 1972 vote. Okuk's total rose from 1,240 to 4,333, with almost all this gain located in the Nambaiyufa Census Division. Nambaiyufa was the most isolated and 'neutral' area - in terms of kinship linkages - of any major population centre in the entire province. Here Okuk had established a base camp for his coffee-buying operation and had cultivated close ties with local leaders. He held a big party there and his generosity was well known. He also took credit for roadwork in the area and promised, if elected, to build a road direct to Goroka. Okuk pulled in virtually all the votes from much of Nambaiyufa, and succeeded in that region despite the efforts of a traditional leader - the former *Juluai*, council president, MHA and (in 1977) SIPG member and modern businessman, Yauwe Wauwe Moses - to swing provincial votes to Kale. If any single area influenced the election, it was the Nambaiyufa (Siani) census division which has sought to secede from Chimbu, with its own language, a large population and a quite separate geographic identity.

Counting lasted four nights and three days; on the second day Okuk arose from his post-campaign depression, loudly proclaimed his coming victory around Kundiawa town, and held yet another party for his followers.

Losers blaming the officials

Charges of partisan bias by electoral officials had been rife in Chimbu since the 1972 national elections. Accordingly, in 1977 every effort was made by officials in charge of the Chimbu organization to develop public credibility, which was difficult when few people - and certainly not all the officials - could follow the complex procedures. After the elections several allegations were made that polling officials had drunk with certain Open candidates, against previous dire warnings from the Secretary for Provincial Affairs. In proven instances, fraternization involved drinking with a provincial candidate

and giving him a lift in a government car. The public servants involved were transferred out of Chimbu or sacked. One official interpreter campaigned quietly for Okuk, and other public servants supported former workmates. The Simbu Premier greatly upset coastal officials in warning them publicly not to cheat.

The atmosphere was such, then, that losing candidates had ready-made rationalizations for their defeat. Certainly some minor malpractice was tolerated, as with outsize posters. The losing candidates had had a great amount at stake, and either could not or would not understand the voting, no matter how often it was explained to them; they nodded their heads and went away repeating their allegations of malpractice. Apart from bribery (which no one alleged in this context), they wanted to report slander, multiple voting and the illegal importation of large numbers of ineligible voters.¹⁴ The first is not a ground for appeal, and the latter must be shown to have materially affected the result. Okuk told me he had trucked in 2,800 Simbu from the Western Highlands who, he said, had not been away six months and were thus eligible voters. This was not in itself grounds for an appeal, as it would not have materially affected the result because his winning margin was 4,945. His rivals could not muster sufficient evidence, or energy, to make an appeal and eventually decided to let the issue lie.

In the immediate aftermath of the elections, candidates who could not tolerate their shame and loss of face tended to release their frustrations on electoral officials. Being unable to blame either themselves, or their own *lains* (kinship groups to whom they were mostly deeply obligated, even where the *lain's* vote had been split), or neighbouring *lains* which would raise the chances of fights erupting, they took the easy road of blaming somewhat defenceless and - in Simbu terms - largely neutral, public servants. In each Open electorate there were menacing confrontations involving holdups on roads, or ugly demonstrations on government stations, with severe damage to domestic government housing at Sinasina. The Acting Provincial Commissioner shrewdly replayed over Radio Kundiawa a tape of the Prime Minister saying that losers had only themselves to blame and that their kinsmen should not be duped into attacking officials. The storm subsided in a few days. 'Wild man' behaviour when frustration becomes intolerable is not uncommon in the Highlands (Clarke 1973) and people have learnt to live with it. Although one outgoing member had threatened to let fire with his shotgun if he lost, it was another losing incumbent who actually did so in a terrifying but ultimately harmless

14 On one occasion a Kamanegu policeman attached to a polling team warned a truckload of merry voters that they were ineligible, having been away more than 6 months. He also told them they would lose their rights to land in the Western Highlands if they voted in Chimbu, and they then left. A few days later the same group turned up at a rural polling booth, saw the same policeman and team on duty, turned tail and departed. For a newspaper letter concerning trucking and treating see *Wantok*, 4 November 1978.

rampage around a government station which led to a short term of imprisonment. Others tightened bows and loosed arrows; there was a very angry brawl at Omkolai village between the two candidate's families there. Serious fighting erupted in the Laiagam area of the Enga Province and was threatened elsewhere, so the Simbu response was mild.

However the violence also clearly raised doubts as to the administration of the electoral process. One immediate result was the demand from all staff at Sinasina for immediate transfer out of Chimbu, and a professed reluctance by public servants to officiate during future elections there.

Conclusion

Chimbu is not a happy province. Local politics are always tense when the whole society is under stress. The most significant issues discussed here relate to the nature and legitimacy of the electoral process in changing Simbu society. Here I distinguish between the acceptance of the process of campaigning and the public's acceptance or otherwise of the outcome at the polls.

A gap between rhetoric and reality is implicit in the campaign process, and accepted. Candidates made pledges even while denying the validity of election promises. The efficacy of *gris* was denied, yet there was a huge flow of electorally motivated giving. Recipients often asserted their autonomy but behaved as though obligated. It seemed they could not help but be impressed by the wealth and generosity of candidates, even when they knew the source and motivation. There was very clever manipulation of cultural mores, under the guise of modern politics, and similarly modern political activity which was dressed up as 'traditional'. It is widely accepted in the social sciences that tradition-modernity form a false dichotomy (Gusfield 1966), and in Simbu they cannot be distinguished. Yet while villagers expressed niggling doubts as to the morality of the electoral *gris*, campaigns have become progressively more lavish over the years as Simbu people move further into the capitalist economy and the salariat. The coffee-cash-campaigning nexus had arrived by 1977. There was an acceptance among villagers of the ritual of the campaign beer party, while making half-hearted denials of its effectiveness. There was also some understanding of the nature and mechanisms of political parties, highly personalized though these are in Papua New Guinea (Hegarty 1979; Standish 1977b).

Parliamentarians are expected to fill several roles, all of which effect the public acceptance of the result of elections in a society with highly divided, particularist local loyalties. Most importantly, a Member is expected to bring home the bacon in the form of

projects and employment for his¹⁵ electorate (Gadbois *et al.* 1978), and especially for his own *lain*. Groups which have gambled - which is the Simbu concept - on losing candidates thus feel they have wasted their effort. A Member is expected to be a delegate, rather than a representative with freedom of political judgement. Yet within two years Okuk (who became Opposition Leader in May 1978) had won over all Simbu Open Members to the Opposition despite their initial Pangu affiliation or independent status at the time of the election. Again, local kinship loyalties precluded the transfer of much trust to the member of a potentially (or actually) hostile *lain*. Perhaps most important, elections were contests between the clans and tribes, a barely sublimated manifestation of traditional rivalries.

A parliamentarian is in a sense a figurehead, sometimes claiming - as Okuk had in 1972 to be the 'boss' of his electorate - rather than just its titular leader. Electoral defeat brings humiliation, just as victory gives pride to whole *lains* and not just to the candidates themselves. The kinship divisions in Simbu are indigenous, and not a result of colonial divide-and-rule tactics (a view contrary to the argument of Good 1975). Group loyalties intensify with increasing pressure on available resources. With so much at stake, it was not surprising that one winner to reach Kundiawa needed a police escort through the territory of his rivals, while another had to fly *via* Goroka in order to avoid the anger of the vanquished. One winner could visit only a tiny proportion of his electorate in the following two years because of warfare. Even the Provincial Member is subject to this intense parochialism, and thus denied a wider legitimacy. Furthermore, his effectiveness as a representative is reduced because he has to cover such a large constituency. However incumbent parliamentarians are unlikely to make the necessary constitutional amendments to remove the Provincial electorates.

The potency of parochialism makes it possible for relatively wealthy leaders to manipulate kinship loyalty; in this case they are dividing the peasantry vertically rather than building up horizontal class consciousness and allegiances. The 'peasantry' is an analytical category only, and Marx's famous simile comparing the divided peasantry to a sack of potatoes (which lacks an integrating unity, Duggett 1974-75) is as true for contemporary Simbu as it was for France a century ago. There are both ascribed and achieved elements in clan and tribal leadership (Standish 1978a) and broker and patron-client linkages in state institutions which open the way to influence for young educated men in key positions. Properly played, these advantages enabled young men to gain the commitment of their elders and to recruit or neutralize possible opponents in that key part of the electoral process, the hidden lobbying before nominations even open. The

¹⁵ The male pronoun is deliberate: there was only one woman in the national legislature from 1972 to 1977, five from 1977 to 1982, one from 1982 to 1987 and none in the 1987 house.

candidates were clearly men of some stature or potential within village Simbu, and were often already members of the rural elite.

The winners were not a fair cross-section of the range of candidates. Three were businessmen (coffee-buyer politicians), and three white-collar workers (one a teacher), while only one was a blue-collar worker (who also sometimes bought coffee). None was a peasant, big or small. The average age of winners was 35 and their education level nine years, which compares with the outgoing members' average age of 37 when elected in 1972 and three years' schooling. Most of these modern young men got few votes outside their own *lains*, however. So while there was a changing of the guard in 1977, it was performed to the old parochial tune.

As elsewhere in Papua New Guinea (Groves *et al.* 1971) and overseas (Edelman 1972) personality, the use of symbolism and political style were important in the Provincial race and in some Open seats. Parties were less important except where they became part of personal political factional machines. Policies were essentially unimportant. Kale lacked Okuk's assertive, thrusting personality and the Pangu team's figurehead throughout the campaign was Michael Somare. By attacking Somare, Okuk by implication raised himself to the same level and thereby put Kale down. I saw profound awe amongst village people at Okuk's presence and also expressed by them at the mention of his absentee protagonist Somare. Servile deference was accorded to both by prominent local leaders. These men appeared to have some of the political magic called charisma (Willner and Willner 1965). Okuk won many votes in the Provincial electorate from people who voted for Pangu candidates in the Open seats, and so his conflict with Somare did not engender watertight political allegiances. Indeed one Simbu graduate told me that his people liked both men and were happy to watch them in continuing conflict. This is not just a flippant comment about a warrior culture, however: two strong men might provide useful checks and balances on government.

As befits a Highlands leader, Okuk was able to draw favourable responses from various levels of the Simbu audience. He vigorously played on a provincial scale the old tricks of a clan leader, and, as Burrige has said, it is real big men who 'transcend the system' (Young 1971:113), thereby creating new rules. Okuk was tough-minded, bold and resolute, combative in public and sometimes quietly smiling and manipulative in private. He had built up friendships that in turn added more and more subsidiary patron-client networks to his pyramidal faction. He voiced a rationale for Chimbu's troubles, a regionalist appeal to those in urban employment, and he made play with the coffee price issue for the rural people. He was able to take credit for a few government road projects, although he had not played much pork barrel. This was his third election campaign in

seven years, he was the incumbent, and he had been a government minister - so his name was by far the best known in the province. As in 1970 and 1972, he was the main target of his opponents and they gave him even further publicity. In 1977 he increased his vote by 57 per cent compared with his 1972 primary poll, yet this time his vote was far less evenly spread throughout the province (cf. Table V.4). Having started ahead of his rivals, he used every gimmick - from traditional symbolism to printed shirts - and remained the strongest candidate.

This saga leads me to a number of propositions about political participation in Simbu, and elsewhere in PNG. Following Parry (1972), I take political participation to mean the opportunity to significantly influence policy and the course of events. Improved communications and other aspects of modernization, especially the increased cash flow, enabled members of the political elite to increase their outreach into Simbu rural society. Particularly in the Provincial contest, this led to the improved mobilization to vote and the 79 per cent drop in the informal vote. Parochial ties and personality had greater potency than party or policy. Because of the gutter-brawl nature of the conflict, the low standard of the policy debate, the fatuous nature of some of the slogans which gained currency amongst rural people, massive political ignorance, and the lack of radio coverage, I conclude that many votes could not have been made on the basis of informed political judgement. But in terms of specifically targetted local appeals, people gambled if they voted for the man with the largest promises. During the campaign, most people gave only passing attention to the political antics around them. They were not presented with policy choices, but - at best - choices between members of factional team. Although they discussed politics in the men's houses, from several informants I gather that collective decision-making was based upon limited information and certainly not upon a comparison of policies. Personal linkages with candidates probably overrode all policy and party considerations.

After the colonial interlude, then, Simbu people probably have less political participation in affairs that concern them than before colonial contact. Their views are sought even less assiduously than in the Australian era, and they were not masters of their destiny then. Modern politics and government in Simbu were in upheaval in 1977, expressed more vigorously in inter-clan rivalry than in local government, provincial and national arenas. Thus, to echo Huntington (1965), there is not much 'political development' in the sense of institutionalization, but rather the opposite: Simbu politics is in a state of 'decay'. To adapt the phrase which Howlett (1973b) used to describe the Eastern Highlanders as having reached a limited plateau of economic 'terminal development', but not take-off, or even greatly enriched lives, Simbu appeared to have entered a condition of 'politically terminal development'.

However, given the range of candidates presenting themselves in 1977, the Simbu people were not duped. There is a tradition of tolerating the extravagant use and display of public resources for the purposes of individual and group glorification. Villagers shrug and say 'that is the way of big-men' (T = *pasin bilong ol*). The Australian administration merely adapted Simbu customs in this regard. There is some grumbling in villages about exploitation, usually concerning the leaders of other groups and sometimes - in a very low voice - about one's own. When village people have some connection with a leader, however tenuous, there is also some faint chance of receiving some future benefit in a continuation of the relationship. So from the point of view of the 'fatalistic' peasant minimizing his risks and choosing the limited good (Foster 1965), it is perfectly rational for him to give his vote and the highest head-dress plumage to the politician he knows - rather than to the one he does not.

In the villages and hamlets the party was over and rural life went on.

CHAPTER VIII

'FAT MEN BREATHING MONEY': ELITES AND MOBILIZATION, 1977-82

Politics changed dramatically in Chimbu with decentralization. From February 1977 until June 1980 the interim provincial government (PG) managed to defer facing the electorate; during this time it both reflected and helped recreate the political culture of the province. Iambakey Okuk as Provincial Member, and from May 1978 Opposition Leader, also helped reshape provincial politics, especially after he became Deputy Prime Minister in March 1980. Competition between provincial government and Provincial MPs was built into the new constitutional structure; it was manifest in politics and in business, with national as well as local ramifications.

With his single-minded drive for power backed by a tough-minded Australian press secretary, Okuk set much of the national political agenda from 1978 onwards. Twice he moved parliamentary motions of no confidence in Prime Minister Somare of Pangu. Okuk's motions named himself as successor, and failed in part because MPs feared his virulent Highlands regionalism. Julius Chan's People's Progress Party had left the ruling coalition late in 1978, claiming lack of consultation: first in Somare's unsuccessful attempt in April that year to strengthen the constitutional Leadership Code with a requirement that designated leaders surrender all business activities while holding office, and second in a cabinet reshuffle in November. Somare twice kept his parliamentary majority by attracting half the misnamed United Party. He also set new precedents for rewarding waverers when he distributed up to K50,000 of Village Economic Development Funds (VEDF) to individual backbenchers for 'village projects', in order to retain their support.

This approach failed the third time, however, when in March 1980 the new Melanesian Alliance (MA) headed by Fr Momis and John Kaputin crossed the floor and Okuk successfully moved that Chan (who had been knighted two months earlier) become Prime Minister. Once again Somare distributed VEDF funds, K100,400 in Simbu to six Pangu supporters, including present and former MPs, in an attempt to regain their loyalty. Okuk more shrewdly promised increased resources to MPs who were frustrated because the nationwide spread of provincial governments had decreased their influence over government expenditure. Many provincial premiers had travelled to Port Moresby to lobby for Somare, fearing Okuk would destroy the provincial system. Because Momis, the progenitor of the provincial system, retained the Provincial Affairs

ministry under Chan and Kaputin became Finance Minister, the provincial system remained unchanged until after the 1982 national election, although these MA ministers were often defeated in cabinet. The Chan-Okuk government took power just as the second oil price rise shock of 1979 took effect and commodity prices - including coffee prices - plummeted 30 to 50 per cent. Overall, government revenues declined 30 per cent in real terms. At the very first cabinet meeting Okuk defeated Chan and pushed through a demand for a K8 m executive jet aircraft, a wonderful toy which symbolized government extravagance. Okuk clearly dominated the Chan ministry, although his impulsiveness often proved self-destructive.

Confronted by major problems including rising levels of fighting, and declining incomes from coffee, the provincial government sought to make a leap into industrialization, but it lacked sufficient funds and expertise and its energies and resources were dissipated. In the 1980 provincial elections, two major dimensions of cleavage were noted: party conflict between the existing provincial government (linked to Somare's Pangu-UP coalition) and people supporting Okuk, and the attempted mobilization along geographic lines of politicians from the eastern and southern sectors of the province against those from the north western (Kuman-speaking) sector. Audacious intervention after the poll by Okuk enabled him to determine the composition of the new provincial government. Business, especially the coffee industry, became increasingly politicized, until expatriate businessmen took leading decision-making roles within the province. Both the provincial government and the Chimbu Coffee Co-operative were effectively bankrupt by 1981, however, and the activities of the premier chosen by Okuk ultimately contributed to his own patron's downfall in the 1982 election.

What had been trends in Simbu politics in the years 1972 to 1977 were to be solidified in the next ten years, especially the politics-business nexus, and the use of both private and public money.¹ This chapter summarizes these changes as provincial and national politicians alike sought to use their new positions to attempt to control administration and business. The financial problems of the provincial government and its complex financial relationships are described, and the rising importance of business in provincial politics demonstrated. Next I analyze the new lines of cleavage which developed within the provincial arena. It is argued that the provincial government was menaced and eventually overshadowed by Okuk, who determined the outcome of the 1980 provincial elections and then enmeshed friendly businessmen with the provincial government. Lastly, the chapter analyzes the 1982 national elections, in which traditional style rivalries and

1 I visited Chimbu briefly in 1978 and 1979, and spent three weeks there in 1980 and a total of five weeks before and after the 1982 national elections, plus three weeks during the 1987 elections.

conflicts expressed in a hugely enlarged arena determined Okuk's political fate within Chimbu.

Public order

A backdrop to provincial politics throughout this period, but an ever-present cause of tension in rural areas, was the decline in public order (Standish 1973c, 1981). This was a matter of public concern so widespread that 'law and order' became a *Tokpisin* phrase. At one level were the *raskols* (E = criminals) who, especially in the south and east of the province, used violence on the roads to steal money and cargo, especially coffee, from travellers. One factory lost K17,000 and suffered K10,000 damage to vehicles in early 1979, and repeated theft later led to its temporary closure. Coffee trucks were caged in, resembling police riot wagons, and businessmen and politicians alike started carrying shotguns and pistols. In mid 1980 the Gumine district officer, himself a Simbu, was robbed in daylight. He told me: 'I do not blame these people. They have no other way to get money. My control does not reach three miles to the Wahgi Gorge'. Groups of women off to market were robbed, and police trucks would drive around roadblocks being set up at dusk rather stop and risk being outnumbered. Sometimes local leaders handed over *raskols* to the authorities, but sustained robbery, localized in certain areas, probably indicated that the spoils were being shared among the residents in a form of social banditry (Hobsbawm 1974). Apparently enough was redistributed to big-men (and small ones) for *raskols* to appear able to act with impunity (as in the neighbouring Western Highlands, Reay 1982b).

Within villages there was a perception of increasing levels of violence, including an increase in rape. A common belief was that this was related to the increased availability of liquor in rural areas. The former liquor licensing commissioner, John Nilkare, had hoped that with 'decentralized' or 'localized' drinking there would be fewer road accidents and arguments at central hotels and taverns which can lead to deaths, compensation claims and clan fights. He eased licensing conditions and liquor selling became a new field for businessmen, less risky and arduous than coffee buying, and villagers saw having a club or tavern as prestigious. As in other provinces (Marshall 1982), liquor outlets increased dramatically in Simbu from 1987. There were 13 licences in 1973, 20 in 1975, 32 in 1977, and then 307 in 1980. In that year some 34 licences were for taverns, 70 for clubs and 198 for storekeepers (Piau-Lynch 1982: 123). In addition, there were numerous black market outlets. From my own casual observation and that of doctors, violence, including domestic violence, increased in villages in the 1980s. Against such impressions must be placed the evidence of Warry (1982), who observed considerable social control of drinking within a Chuave village and noted that fights were not necessarily serious.

Furthermore he noted that the incidence of fights did not decrease during the three month liquor ban imposed by the new provincial government in November 1980. One politically significant fact about such fights is that the police were seen as having no role, and that social control was attempted by hard-pressed clan leaders and village court officials. When major matters such as murder were no longer reported to the state, which happened, this was a fundamental shift in people's behaviour from the colonial era - a sign of their withdrawal from the state.

The state lost its monopoly over the use of force and proved incapable of keeping order. The principal demonstration of its lack of effectiveness, and ultimately legitimacy, was the upsurge of tribal or clan warfare which commenced in 1972 and continued almost unabated. Once fighting breaks out and deaths occur, conflict is prolonged which makes the government's peacemaking role much harder.² Such was the case with the Naregu/Siambuga fights of April to July 1980. Although police and district officers were forewarned - in my presence - that fighting was likely to resume in late May 1980, they apparently took no action and fighting erupted on cue, as forewarned. Some officials argued that most fights could be prevented with good intelligence and rapid follow-up on the part of officials. Since the rural police were separated from the *kiap* field service in the 1970s, their degree of co-operation had declined markedly. It had virtually ceased altogether after decentralization, except on the smallest government stations, because police were national government officials and *kiaps* under the province. With the government apparently incapable of resolving inter-group disputes, Highlanders returned in varying degrees to their own ways of settling conflicts. Might may not be right, but it has a definiteness which the occasionally almost randomly bullying agents of the state now lack.

Simbu relations with the police had long been poor but deteriorated further in the late 1970s. Riot squads would not spend time with warring groups, an effective technique of deterrence, but some old Highlands policemen showed that patient mediation can still bring calm. Although police helicopters, teargas and cameras (for identification purposes) temporarily halted some fights, their methods proved largely ineffectual, and so police engaged in fairly arbitrary, sometimes violent, harassment. The police in Simbu have a hard task but they worsen matters for themselves because they are often seen as partisan in local conflicts.

Twice in the late 1970s police killed Simbu when not themselves under direct attack. Police frequently arrested non-participants, or favoured one side in making arrests

² My analysis in this section is similar to that of Gordon (1980 and Gordon and Meggitt 1985), but was reached independently (Standish 1981d). See also J. Hughes (1985).

or held back one group but not another during fighting. Whether deliberate or not, this changes the local power balance. In 1980 ordinary Simbu villagers described police mobile squads as acting like 'wild dogs', thus echoing an expatriate former magistrate in Enga province.

In July 1979 Prime Minister Somare declared a State of Emergency in the five Highlands provinces and this lasted up to seven months. No new laws were used in the period but it was a time of general harassment of Highlanders by police. Simbu village leaders angrily confirmed reports that during the Emergency the police had extended their weapon searches and vehicle checks by breaking into houses, had stolen food and valuables including livestock and traditional decorations, and had committed personal assault including rape. Similar charges were reported to the PNG National Parliament's Emergency Committee (1979a; 1979b; 1980). In effect, the police in their frustration took revenge on the Highlanders and very shortsightedly turned themselves into public enemies.

Although there were few outbreaks of fighting during the proclaimed Emergency, Highlanders obviously did not learn the intended lesson. In the 4 months after the Emergency expired in June 1980 there had been, by conservative estimates, 40 deaths and hundreds of injuries.³ One fight in Simbu by May 1980 had lasted seven months, with thirteen deaths on one side to four on the other, and it persisted for some considerable time thereafter. Another, in mid-1981, caused eleven deaths. During 1980 and early 1981 there were often several fights underway at once in various parts of Chimbu, with the police and other officials quite demoralized and unable to stop them, which was widely known amongst villagers in this compact province. Clearly new approaches were needed. Highlands politicians have occasionally called for martial law in their region, but this is unlikely - if only because the military lack local intelligence and indeed the physical capability for such an exercise (Brig.-Gen. Ted Diro, personal communication 1977). The government would risk playing its last card and still lose the game.⁴

The costs of this warfare are enormous human suffering and the collapse of government services. Rural public servants such as teachers, health and agricultural extension workers are withdrawn and their services cease. Rural health aid posts and houses are burnt and gardens razed, and although the lives of women and school children are perhaps the most disrupted they also assist in the pillage. Having feasted on the spoils, the participants must work to compensate their allies and to replace their own

3 R. Hiatt, personal communication. See also the National Parliament's Emergency Committee statements (above).

4 As indeed it demonstrated in the Bougainville secession crisis in 1989-90.

losses. During the long period of tension after a fight they are cut off from kin. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of coffee trees are destroyed, although sometimes by mutual agreement the little men's 'money trees' are spared in what are otherwise scorched-earth fights. The worst losers, in material terms, are generally the 'big peasant' farmers and the village retailers and liquor sellers, whose showpiece projects are sacked.

Local politicians are unable to prevent tribal fighting simply because their electors are involved. The interim PG damaged the government's previously valuable image of neutrality. Provincial leaders in 1979 allegedly feasted on the plunder of one battle, and later refused official help to the losers whose food gardens had been destroyed (Barry Shaw, personal communication 1980). Although officially premiers had no police roles, it was alleged, with some plausibility, that Siwi Kurondo was re-elected to the provincial assembly in 1980 because Siambuga and Wauga clanspeople believed he had directed police activity against the Naregu tribe. The interim premier's frequent calls for peace lacked persuasiveness because of his own alleged role in 1972 fighting. Okuk when in opposition said that 'lawlessness was the result of people taking the law into their own hands because they no longer had confidence in the government of their elected leaders' (*P-C*, 7 August 1979). After gaining office in 1980 he called for a tougher stance by the police. Such calls are easier made in the abstract than in specific instances. As local leaders, Simbu national parliamentarians are seen as partisan during fights; they have to be seen as members of their groups, and in Chimbu in 1979 a national government minister allegedly took part in one fight.⁵

Politics is perceived in Simbu as an inter-group as well as an individual activity. When the same groups are mobilized for politics as for warfare, then the conceptual slide between political competition and clan warfare is marginal. Even if politics is not actually seen as warfare by another means, levels of tension are high, especially in the heightened pressure of elections when groups see their group identity and pride at stake. Fighting had erupted during the 1977 elections, and was feared in 1980 at the time of the provincial elections.

The interim provincial government

The division of national and provincial powers remained problematic throughout Papua New Guinea and certainly constrained the new SIPG. The CPC had recommended that a single national public service remain, with its officers under provincial political direction

⁵ Okuk in 1979 tabled a patrol officer's 'situation report' naming a Simbu in the Somare ministry as taking part in tribal fighting, and said he would pursue the matter in the courts (*P-C*, 28 August 1979). No further action on this matter was reported.

when carrying out government functions designated as provincial and those national functions delegated to provinces on an 'agency' basis. The *Organic Law on Provincial Government (1977)* lists a small number of legislative fields which are exclusive to provinces (Kale 1979; Standish 1979b 22-23, 148-49). A large number, involving most governmental activities in the provinces, are concurrent and subject to both provincial and national legislation - and hence negotiated control - with national powers overriding in the event of conflict. The residue are national fields, and include major projects (highways, large hospitals and senior secondary schools) located within provinces, police and higher courts, foreign affairs and economic relations and defence. In some matters, like junior high schools, policy is a national matter and administration is under provincial control. Although their funds were restricted, the provinces nominally controlled the main rural welfare and development services, health care and most schooling, public works, agricultural extension and local business development assistance. All the latter spheres are dear to local politicians: hence national MPs' resentment at their loss of influence.

In this scheme a major difficulty was that of deconstructing the national public service, while for the first time integrating it at the provincial level (Standish 1979b). To break the conceptual hurdle of dual lines of responsibility, known as the 'problem of two bosses', public servants within each province were placed in a division (later department) for that province, under a single command structure headed by an Administrative Secretary. This official, appointed by the national cabinet after seeking provincial advice, worked for the Provincial Secretary but also reported to the national Ministry for Decentralisation. Former representatives of national government departments became members of branches (later divisions) of the provincial department. Public service personnel management, such as promotion to middle levels, could take place within the province.

The financial package was also complex (Manning 1979; Bonney 1986), and severely constrained provinces. In 1982 some K163 m or 22 per cent of the national budget comprised payments on behalf of the provinces, but the few revenues guaranteed to the provinces, such as licence fees and royalties on their exports, amounted to only K18 m. Most provinces, including Simbu, provided less than 5 per cent of their own revenues, and like Simbu they sought to increase their 'untied grants' by collecting retail sales taxes, especially on tobacco products and liquor. Nationwide, some K55 m was a Minimum Unconditional Grant (MUG), based on 1976-77 spending, which paid for provincial functions. This grant was indexed for inflation, but adjusted downwards if national revenues declined in real terms, as happened in 1982. Most of the MUG was paid directly to public servants as salaries. Another K85 m covered transferred activities and other tied grants. The overall effect was that provinces had limited budgetary

discretion, and required national government funding for any major initiatives even within their limited range of provincial powers.

While campaigning for provincial powers in 1976 the older Simbu politicians had pledged public works projects and business opportunities beyond the capacity of any government. The new ministers had few ideas for policy initiatives and few established effective working relationships with their public servants, who often retained strong loyalty to their former national head office which could provide promotion out of the province. It appeared that the agriculture officials were under the effective influence of Okuk, the national Opposition leader. The provincial assemblyman who gained most projects for his home area, one who was re-elected in 1980, was the aging former *luluai*, Yauwe Wauwe Moses, who had learnt pork barrel techniques as an MHA.

Most provincial ministers sought symbolic satisfaction for themselves in the form of housing and motor vehicles, and for their immediate supporters in the form of jobs, car rides and generous hospitality. The provincial secretariat, which was outside the public service, grew from its authorized six to thirty people, many with cars and many of them relatives of SIPG members. Unable to control the tightly managed National Public Works Authority, the SIPG created its own Works and Industrial Division, which grew to 850 staff members, again with much nepotism, and 1,100 when the expatriate manager was on leave. A modern clubhouse was built in the premier's village; he said the Works Division gave it to him. In May 1980 I saw a joyriding beer party of 30 Simbu in SIPG vehicles some 120 km east of Chimbu. Such matters were not queried in the provincial assembly, but they were highly visible and so resented that government cars were stoned, which prompted their drivers to remove the SIPG door stickers.

In early 1980 a Simbu wit entered the Premier's office saying '*Mi laik lukim ol patpela man, ol i pulim moni olsem win*' (E = 'I want to see those fatmen, who breathe money like sucking in air'). His phrasing was apt, as the provincial leaders had indeed grown in size - if not in stature - over the years. The benefits of office were not just a superior diet, which is traditional for Simbu leaders, but the possibility of pressuring secretariat members for additional benefits of office. In Simbu in the run up to the 1980 Assembly election cash was given to provincial ministers. I personally counted K1,000 in notes, passed by a minister to a public servant for safe keeping. This was part of K4,000 cash given out, nominally for a rural project, to the minister - who soon afterwards lost the election. Others allegedly received K7,000. Under normal procedures such projects would have gone through a public works vote. In the overall pattern of things these 'grants' or 'loans' were only a small part of the problem. Criminal activity was never proven. Cabinet records were poor or non-existent, so proof of authorization

was lacking for the SIPG. Secretariat members had limited administrative experience and were unable to resist such demands from provincial ministers, dependent as they were on the older politicians for their employment and in some instances enjoying extra privileges themselves.

To a great extent provincial policies revolved around the provincial secretary. Kaman was relatively young and inexperienced in government. He had not been socialized in bureaucratic norms and was reluctant to seek public service advice. No doubt seeking loyal assistants, he recruited people with little experience in government, or even in Papua New Guinea. He was easy socially with young tertiary educated expatriates, but fellow Simbu undermined him by saying he was not, culturally, one of them and that he thought 'like a white man'. Perhaps to overcome this, he became almost a caricature of a tough Simbu leader. When he met resistance he used Okuk's tactic of exploding in anger, and the strain showed. He was only one of many who spoke of 'Simbu for Simbu', thereby further damaging public service morale. The old premier followed a similar path, and during the 1980 elections both men were personally isolated and almost totally ineffectual.

The public service was out of control. An unpopular posting for national public servants as well as expatriates, Chimbu was already well below its limited public service establishment. Senior officials reported that absenteeism, drunkenness during working hours, the misuse of vehicles and the theft of property were rife. Several public servants were killed in accidents and many cars were written off or stolen - as many as 25 were missing by late 1980. The worst drivers were from the provincial office itself. Matters of discipline, always problematic, had worsened because Simbu officers were protected by local politicians. All this meant there was less money available for rural development, because the budget was static. But SIPG extravagances were highly visible to electors and the provincial assemblymen's rivals.

Business and politics

Business activities became an obsession for the Simbu provincial leaders. The Area Authority had followed the Bougainville example and started a business arm long before the SIPG received the national government encouragement of a K0.50 per head of population grant plus a K100,000 interest free loan from the national government on the inauguration of the Interim PG. As noted above, Chimbu Holdings Enterprises (known as 'CHE') commenced by buying shares in a highway haulage enterprise, on the advice of then Transport Minister Okuk in late 1974. Councils took minority shareholdings, and the board was headed by prominent AA member (later Provincial Assembly Speaker) Kuman Dai. Over the next three years CHE expanded successfully into petrol sales, an

internal Chimbu busline and commercial real estate. In 1978 it bought land near Bomai airstrip, and it purchased land for small demonstration 'nucleus' projects for agricultural commodity production, effectively plantations.⁶ Subsequently CHE bought shares in the province's two coffee processing plants. Being a profitable company and enjoying privileged, semi-government status, CHE gained ready access to VEDF grants, with minor VEDF grants allocated by the provincial government, and to Development Bank finance. Secretariat members used Tom Wolfe's evocative phrase 'mau-mauing the flak catchers' to describe their visits to the Development Bank head office in Port Moresby.

Continuity of management was a problem for this business, as with any large enterprise in Chimbu. Management training and staff supervision was a continuous problem for CHE, with three trainees sacked for theft. The company's 1976-77 annual report stressed the autonomy given to its expatriate management, which was only likely to continue as long as relations with the Secretariat remained close and no substantial political interests were threatened by its apparently boundless expansion. In 1979 CHE sought to enter liquor sales and commenced negotiations with other provinces to establish a Highlands brewery and a soft drink factory. Expatriate businessmen resented CHE's invasion from a privileged position of what they considered their operating territory, and Okuk in particular saw a threat to his own activities and associated prestige.

Chimbu Coffee remained a locus of conflict. In 1976 it had been converted into a company, with shares owned by business groups, and it invested K50,000 in the new exporter Coffex. After international advertising by foreign consultants a new general manager was appointed in early 1987, a Netherlander with experience in the Indonesian coffee industry. He arrived to a declining coffee market and inherited unacquitted buying advances of about K100,000. Initially he took buyers to court to recover the funds, but found that even though he won the cases people were given time to pay off their debts and there was no police follow-up to civil matters. No one was jailed, and he wanted to jolt people into paying funds they could well afford, so he revived the tactic of the early *kiap* Ian Downs and without any court papers simply seized 250 pigs, some of which were sold for amounts up to K300 each. Soon after he quickly recovered the outstanding advances and the enterprise resumed working profitably. It even made K30,000 on selling trade store goods from coffee buyers' trucks. Nonetheless this general manager was sacked as the result of political intervention, which according to staff at the time was led by the provincial secretary Barunke Kaman, who had become a director.

⁶ Provincial officials were involved in these land acquisitions on behalf of the national government. The alienation or even registration of land under customary tenure had been blocked by expatriate *kiaps* during the colonial era, because of land shortages.

The affairs of Chimbu Coffee for this period are difficult to document, but in 1979 it was almost bankrupt because of failure once again to recover coffee-buying advances. The SIPG through its Works Division provided K200,000, nominally to buy 40 per cent of Chimbu Coffee shares, but in fact remained a creditor only. The SIPG then persuaded the Department of Finance to lend another K200,000, and to guarantee an equivalent bank loan as part of a rescue package. Thus the SIPG took control of Chimbu Coffee and appointed as general manager a fast-talking Australian citizen who had no previous experience in the coffee industry but who claimed a good background in textiles. The SIPG entered into a partnership with him in a new firm, Highlands Engineering, in order to use Chimbu Coffee's large vehicle workshops. In a number of proven cases this firm grossly over-charged the SIPG for servicing the provincial fleet, but its bills were paid promptly by the provincial finance officer, a countryman and apparently close friend of the new general manager. Although the Lutheran church's joint venture clothing factory in Chimbu had failed because of competition from cheap imports, the general manager spent considerable sums to set up a textiles plant and wire-fabricating section, and entered into a partnership in a trucking business with two leading young Chimbu businessmen. Meanwhile he allowed the coffee business to run down.

Provincial secretary Barunke Kaman dreamt of industrializing the province with one major project starting in each district by the time of the election. He never put these plans on paper, despite requests from central government funding bodies. In a speech in Australia he spoke favourably of Pangu's 'socialist' approach, and it was clear that he wanted development in the province controlled by government, not private investors (Kaman 1978). When international consultants appointed by the National Planning Office (ECL 1979) sceptically reviewed his industrial schemes he loudly rejected their report, and persuaded the cabinet to do the same. A local 'rewrite' which listed proposals costing K50 m over five years was incomplete by the 1980 election, and was never finalized. Kaman nonetheless hastily initiated work on textile, lime cement, lime fertilizer and brick manufacturing, and a prefabricated housing scheme. National government technocrats advised that, with the exception of the fertiliser project, these schemes were ill-considered and lacked potential. Aided by a foreign volunteer engineer whom he had appointed to head the Works Division, Kaman overrode expert warnings about basic problems of management, energy sources, price structures and markets. To free Kundiawa airstrip for urban development, the Works Division spent hundreds of thousands of Kina attempting to extend Kerowagi airstrip, which national government engineers said was impossible. Large sums were spent on a piggery and potato growing venture in the Western Highlands run by a friend of Kaman's, which was unprofitable. Some K50,000 was spent in commencing a textiles factory, but these funds were lost when the activity was taken over by Chimbu Coffee. All the new provincial business ventures and public

works were the responsibility of this organization, which controlled about K3 m, or half the provincial budget. Inevitably, services and maintenance lost out to business in the competition for funds. Exaggerating little, villagers said 'the roads have gone back to bush'.

Once again, management was the greatest weakness of the Works and Industrial Division. There was no adequate control of funds, no forward commitment ledger, no competitive tendering and no accounts system worthy of the name. An accountant left in disgust. The business community spread rumours of kickbacks, and the Chimbu Coffee general manager, not an unbiased source, compared the corruption to that in the Philippines: 'Things are tougher there, more sophisticated. Here, the corruption is open and crude. They don't hide it'. He added 'This place is filling up fast with funny-looking spivs'. He was in a position to know, and bluntly said he had come to make money for himself. However it was not clear whether all cases of manifest incompetence were necessarily corruption.

Although some central government officials knew of the problems in Chimbu and were worried, the responsible Decentralization and Finance officials argued that central interference would be against the spirit of decentralization - even if the national government had the power to act, which in the case of provincial business arms was doubtful. The finances of those provincial governments without full financial delegations were still nominally supervised by the central government, but SIPG budgetary items had long lost any meaning. Central officials had argued initially that the solution to provincial extravagances lay with voters (Manning 1979). Even if that were true, the SIPG avoided facing the voters for three years. By May 1980 the Simbu provincial government was already spending its September quarter advance and unsuccessfully trying to borrow K1.5 m from a commercial bank against government assets such as houses. Two national government departments started a low-key investigation and the province hired international chartered accountants, who reported in June that the SIPG was K0.6 m overdrawn, and K2 m overcommitted. They strongly criticized management, and the likely profitability of the industrial activities. Secretariat members in early 1980 had attempted to take control of national government public servants and funds within the province. Senior officials appear to have behaved calmly and with propriety, despite torrents of abuse. An attempt was made to remove the Administrative Secretary, who had distanced himself from the SIPG as it became more erratic. By mid-1980 the Provincial Secretary himself was facing several assault charges.

Provincial Assembly elections, 1980

Since the 1977 election the pool of ambitious younger people had grown enormously, again including public servants, tradesmen and businesspeople. They confronted

established clan and tribal leaders, such as councillors, who had seen their former colleagues transformed by membership of the provincial assembly. Given that provincial electorates held about 10,000 people, the older men stood a good chance of election if they could mobilize their group's support, and override the younger hopefuls who had not established leadership roles within the clans. Many young men who had talked of standing pulled back, and several who had formally nominated withdrew under pressure from their elders. Eventually some 245 candidates nominated for the 22 seats, including - for the first time in Chimbu elections - six women. These were mostly the wives of leaders, activists in *Kuman Yangpela Didiman*.

The statistics on these candidates in Tables VIII.1 and VIII.2 show that these candidates were an unusual group, given the trend in national elections to younger, better-educated and financially successful candidates. In 1980 the smaller provincial assembly electorates attracted candidates with a strong basis in clan society, two were about the same average age (37) as the national candidates, but with much lower educational levels (average 3 years). Some 29 per cent had stood previously and 40 per cent had had previous political office, mostly as councillors. Almost half were categorized as peasants, and only 19 per cent as businessmen. Some 27 per cent were in salaried employment and white collar roles, but few of these were in professional occupations.

All the sitting assembly members except Fr Nilles nominated, and as incumbents were the targets for all the grievances of all other candidates. These were articulated most effectively by a former high school teacher, Gola Ulgan of Sinasina, who had for three years demanded immediate elections and proclaimed himself a future premier. Gola had led protests demanding early provincial elections (Standish 1979b) and organized a series of demonstrations against the Interim PG for its closure of a vocational school (Standish 1981a) and against the coffee border restrictions. He alleged nepotism, mismanagement and wholesale corruption. Although an audit had cleared the SIPG books in 1978, there were grounds for concern. Gola, having nominated for the election, died in a car accident in mid-May 1980, just before another major demonstration at which he planned to confront the SIPG executive and staff with specific allegations of massive waste and theft, and also of bribery of police and magistrates.⁷ Gola's supporters believed that his death was the result of deliberate plotting or sorcery by his opponents, and a massive grave which was erected alongside the Highlands Highway served to remind the public of his political talent and ambition.

⁷ Gola was killed the day before our scheduled meeting, so I noted his allegations second-hand. He claimed to have (circumstantial) evidence of the failure of police to produce witnesses in a political case, and he alleged a magistrate had attempted to persuade an assault victim to withdraw her case against a provincial official. (Elsewhere, in the Western Highlands, a magistrate said of a similar case involving a prominent man that because of his position he should not be charged.)

There were several dimensions of conflict in the provincial assembly campaign: those between candidates themselves and their kin groups, those between candidates using the names of national political parties and their leaders, and those seeking to represent certain geographic regions within the province. At the local level candidates were appealing to smaller publics, and used fewer posters and produced less loudspeaker noise than in the national parliament elections. Older candidates, especially, campaigned quietly on foot, often restricting their efforts to friendly groups. Policy differences were just discernible; one former university student's poster repeated what his first year Politics lecturer had said had earlier been successful by saying he stood for roads, bridges, schools and aidposts - and he was elected. A number made extravagant promises, but many people were sceptical: 'Campaign promises are worthless'. The new tradition of the beer party had become a necessity in any campaign, even for non-drinkers (Warry 1982), and liquor licensees commonly spent K100 a night on largesse. Clement Poiye, MP stated 'To be a politician you need to spend a lot of money' (Dage 1980:13), which had become conventional wisdom in the Highlands by mid-1980.⁸

The names of political parties were one badge of difference which candidates used in their attempts to attract votes. The March 1980 overthrow of Somare, 'father of the nation' had clearly shocked many rural Simbu who had lost a pillar of stability. Despite some pride at Iambakey's elevation (cf. Hobsbawm 1959), the fact that it was at Somare's expense confused villagers. After eight years in power delivering the goods, Somare had made Pangu's name respectable. The party's coalition with the United Party from 1979 had also helped the pro-Somare forces. Pangu further benefited because Okuk inevitably had made some enemies in the province, while his own party name (National) was almost unknown. So although parties were not of prime importance, they were slightly better known than in 1977 and far more so than in 1972.

Once again, parties served as symbolic referents rather than as alternative policy teams. They were also able to provide funds they had collected from businesses to support candidates thought likely to win, regardless of their party affiliation. Candidates did not seek party endorsement as a ticket to election. The opposition coalition in the National Parliament operated as 'Pangu-UP', and comprised formerly bitter rivals. Pangu-UP in Chimbu was known as '*Lain bilong Somare*' (E = Somare's group), while the National Party was called '*Lain bilong Iambakey*'. Neither party distributed policy statements, and the candidates' commitments to these groups was shallow. If a candidate from one clan joined Pangu, his rival in another clan (or even in the same clan) went to

8 National Party president, Michael Mel, told me the Western Highlands and Enga provincial campaigns were very expensive in May 1980. 'You have to give a lot of beer and spend a lot of money to be elected'.

National in a reflex response, moves which had little to do with parties in either case. Since he had become Opposition Leader, Okuk's publicity had almost become a personality cult. His supporters once even proclaimed him 'Supreme Leader of the Highlands'. The fact that Sir Julius Chan was Prime Minister barely registered in rural Simbu, and Chan's PPP left this province well alone.

Party organization as such was weak. Aided by Okuk's funds and access to government staff and offices, National had more resources than the other parties and endorsed 67 candidates, providing them with individual posters. Pangu-UP coordinators said they had lost funds and membership details when their Simbu secretary, Jerry Geri, walked out, in a repetition of his 1976 performance with UP (see Chapter VII above). Somare's office provided K600 and over K2,000 was collected from businesses for Pangu, which endorsed 97 candidates and gave out posters showing groups of candidates. The UP provided some coordination with other Highlands provincial elections held at the same time. Somare visited, travelling under the wing of the provincial secretary. He talked with candidates, but held no big rallies and was criticized, as was Okuk, behind his back, for not visiting often enough.

Policy differences were just discernible. There was no agreed Pangu-UP platform for the election, and candidates were told to speak on local issues as they chose. A Pangu agent from Sinasina attacked Okuk for unrealistic promises, saying he had pledged to do away with school fees and hospital charges. Most of the SIPG incumbents were Pangu-UP oriented, which made it easy for Okuk's team to imply that all coalition candidates shared guilt by association. The National Party supporters showed a general tendency to support private business. One poster made a populist appeal to the government-assisted entrepreneurial ethic, as compared to the SIPG's 'statist' approach, and read:

The national and provincial governments must help people get loan funds to run businesses. The provincial government should not compete in business matters with the people.⁹

The poster called for improved government extension services (which generally help the big peasants) and public order (another conservative priority) and also for an even spread of provincial funds throughout the province (which would not have helped this candidate's centrally located electorate). Although close to Okuk, this candidate lost.

The third and most significant line of division during the provincial assembly campaign and after was the so-called 'bomai/kuman' or 'south/north' issue, which

⁹ A few months later the Premier, one of Okuk's main Simbu supporters, explicitly endorsed Mrs Thatcher's small government 'libertarianism'.

highlighted the imbalance in modern development in favour of the Kuman-speaking northwest of the province near the Highlands Highway, when compared with the less developed south (*bomai*) (cf. Howlett *et al.* 1976). 'Highway men', mainly Kuman speakers, had dominated the interim PG executive and were ready targets for vocal critics led by Gola Ulgan. He had attempted to articulate a '*bomai* bloc' of the periphery against the Kuman-speaking areas. The professed aim was to develop and 'lift up the name' of the *bomai*. This bloc included Sinasina and Chuave to the east, and Gumine and other southern areas. Yet all candidates in these areas could belong to the '*bomai* bloc', so this notion was only useful in campaigning against some sitting SIPG members and Pangu-UP candidates. Gola claimed he would bring together fifteen in the new assembly, a clear majority. Many independent candidates, such as the outgoing Speaker, Kuman Dai of Gumine, were free to join any party but promoted the *bomai* idea. This strategy clearly depended on solidarity among the '*bomai*' after the election.

The winners in 1980 were mostly clan leaders, middle aged (average 42 years), who had little formal education (4 years average, only) or experience at higher levels of politics (see Tables VIII.1 and VIII.2 in Appendix 1). Yet two thirds had previously held political office, almost all as councillors. Proportionately fewer businessmen won in the assembly election than in the 1977 national parliament elections, more peasants and more junior salaried public servants and blue collar workers. Two thirds of the sitting interim assembly members were defeated, as were all the women who stood, while four of seven former MPs who stood were elected. Those elected were closer to their clan societies than the 1977 national candidates, who were required to exercise a greater capacity for outreach, preferably a role which spanned and bridged kinship groups.

Fighting broke out in two areas over the election results, but was prevented in others by mobile squads especially in the Gumine area towards the south of the province. Such eruptions of group anger at their electoral loss are probably a combination of various factors such as jealousy, disappointment at the resources gambled and lost, but most of all at their loss of face. The solidarity of clan voting which can be demonstrated readily when ballot boxes are only used in one polling booth is harder to determine when several candidates come from the same tribe, and more detailed study is needed. With an average of 11 candidates in each 10,000 person constituency, several tribes or clans must have had more than one standing. There had clearly been insufficient co-ordination within the clan to prevent its vote being split, and wasted, but the individualism of the candidates has resonances in Simbu traditional culture. The outbreaks of fighting in response to electoral loss, or public insults after such loss, are the responses of people defending their culture strongly.

Post-election lobbying

The non-party basis of vote-getting in turn affected the post-election lobbying process for the new provincial government, even though a majority of those elected was nominally Pangu-UP. Illness prevented a planned visit by Somare for Pangu during the crucial lobbying period. Party members included many *bomai*-bloc adherents, who in theory also had a majority. Fighting or threats blockaded several winning *bomai* candidates in their home areas. A *bomai* plan to take the winners to Wau in Morobe Province before the first meeting of the provincial assembly collapsed. As leader of the *bomai* bloc and a long term rival of Interim Premier Kurondo, Kuman Dai was an obvious candidate for premier, and had maintained a non-party stance. Although widely discredited, Kurondo sought Pangu-UP nomination as premier. His initial refusal of advice to withdraw from the contest meant that Okuk's opponents lacked an attractive candidate. A few days before the Assembly met on 17 July to choose the new executive, Kurondo sensed defeat and withdrew, but too late to help Kuman Dai, who had been trapped in his clan territory by threat of warfare. Lacking Gola's organizational drive, the *bomai* bloc thus failed to assemble, leaving the field to Iambakey's skilled recruiting.

The formation of the new provincial government followed in somewhat exaggerated form a pattern used in Papua New Guinea ever since Michael Somare pulled his first coalition together in 1972 (Standish 1972; 1977), namely gathering together enough of the winners to form a government, isolating them from rival party suitors and then hosting them handsomely while making shrewd appeals to both their self-interest and idealism. This technique was used for the Western Highlands Provincial Assembly by Pangu frontbencher Pius Wingti, who isolated new assemblymen from the attentions of the National Party by taking them on an aerial tour around the country, after which - to Okuk's fury - they voted Wingti's ticket onto the provincial executive. Okuk immediately chartered helicopters to uplift a majority of the Chimbu winners, including a number of nominal Pangu supporters, from their beleaguered villages to safety in Kundiawa and thence to Port Moresby. Positions were carefully allocated to assemblymen from all parts of the province, deals done and jobs allocated amidst much mirth in a plush hotel. To pay for this exercise, Okuk was given about K5,000 by two Chimbu business partners of the Chimbu Coffee general manager. Greed and pragmatism, alcohol and women thus were used to defeat the *bomai* concept.

When the new assembly met, tensions were already high. Police set up road blocks and conducted body searches of all pedestrians in Kundiawa on 17 July 1980, the day the new provincial assembly was sworn in. Okuk's group flew in by chartered plane, with Kundiawa people unaware of its decision. A dynamic but illiterate and erratic Sinasina politician, Kelega Eremuge, had for a time been considered for the premiership but this

key position went to one of the few assemblymen with a full high school education, the tavern-keeper and Kamanegu tribesman, Matthew (Numambo) Siune (mentioned above in Chapter V). Siune was fond of saying 'Some people are born to rule, others to follow, and the Kamanegu are born to rule'. However, he had incurred political debts, as soon became clear.

The outcome of the election appeared to an official in the Decentralisation Department to be more of the same:

The problem with Simbu is that they've brought their behaviour patterns to the new provincial government: all their aggressiveness, competition, conniving, their spivving, their everything. Just what you do, I'm not sure. You throw out one set of spivs and replace them with another...It's misleading to say Simbu is typical of the spectrum [of provincial governments], but it's cases like Simbu which in the final analysis will make or break provincial government. (personal communication, July 1980)

Troubled times: 1980-81

Okuk and Siune pledged themselves to clean up and stop the waste in Simbu, but the business/politics nexus tightened under the new order. A Works Division bulldozer was symbolically moved from the former premier's tribal ground and put to work on the other end of the same road in the new premier's tribal territory. Barunke Kaman was suspended as provincial secretary, with Elies Vuvu from Okuk's staff a temporary replacement. Then financial matters dominated the agenda, with provincial government affairs apparently manipulated from Port Moresby by Okuk, using his now public alliance with the Chimbu Coffee general manager, who had deftly changed political patrons even before the election.

Okuk soon announced 'one of the worst scandals in the history of politics of PNG', namely a shortfall of at least K2 million under the 'irresponsible and reckless' interim government.¹⁰ He alleged that K230,000 had been improperly 'lent to former provincial ministers, officials, and friends' (*Niugini Nius* 25 July 1980). Premier Siune said the province was 'on the verge of bankruptcy', and that Kaman as chief executive 'had been in a position to prevent this state of affairs having occurred'.¹¹ Okuk also said that 'those responsible must be dealt with by the law' (*Post-Courier* 25 July 1980). Police fraud investigators were charmed by the Chimbu Coffee

10 This K2m figure was in fact the consultants' forecast of the likely shortfall if existing spending patterns continued.

11 The financial delegations were formally held by the finance officer, who was of course beholden to the provincial secretary.

general manager, a close friend of the Provincial Finance Officer, but senior Finance Department officials seeking to check the provincial books were sent back to Port Moresby by the new government. The consultant accountants had recommended that the provincial finance officer be sacked, but instead their own contract was abruptly terminated, a move known to a Simbu Chimbu Coffee executive in advance¹². Another provincial secretary was appointed, an Englishman with no Tokpisin, the man who had first brought the Coffee Co-operative general manager to Simbu in 1979.

The Works Division was pinpointed as one of the main problem areas. The manager of this division told the acting provincial secretary that he was leaving the country for health reasons, but would return for any inquiry. Days later, Okuk protested, saying it was the second time that such volunteer employees had departed in a hurry (*Post-Courier*, 6 August 1980). Thus it came about, as a local business figure had predicted two months earlier, that scapegoats were found. Nine months later no charges had been laid, and although in late 1980 a member of the national Ombudsman Commission apparently was shocked by what he learnt of Chimbu Coffee, no further action was taken, because, he said, he felt that steps were being taken by the national and provincial governments to bring matters under control.

The national government provided rescue loan funds to the Simbu Provincial Government, on certain conditions which indicated some cautiousness. These included payment direct to the province's commercial bank (rather than to the provincial government) in order to reduce the overdraft, the removal of the finance officer and his rather idiosyncratic accounting methods and the integration of the provincial accounts into the national government's Bureau of Management Services system. Further, all public works matters were to be handled through the National Works Authority. Once the economic hub, Chimbu Coffee had become the political hub of Chimbu. Despite financial problems, Chimbu Coffee executives remained power brokers: when in 1981 there was a struggle for control of the original provincial business arm, CHE, tactical sessions involving the premier were held at Chimbu Coffee.

Although these arrangements were sensible, the province initially resisted them for several months, and the money. In September it closed its Works and Industrial Division, and set up a new firm, Simbu Investments Pty. Ltd., headed by the three senior executives of Chimbu Coffee. This unregistered body was designed to be independent of the other businesses of the provincial government. It proceeded to strip the usable and

¹² He told me by international telephone, several hours before it occurred.

valuable assets of the Works Division, and tried to take over CHE's enterprises, although not without some resistance from Barunke Kaman, Kuman Dai and the former Works Division employees (who were initially sacked and then mostly temporarily reinstated). In September these workers hid heavy machinery in the bush to prevent seizure by Chimbu Coffee personnel, and police guards assisted the removal of Works Division plant from its Kerowagi headquarters to Chimbu Coffee. Then the sacked workers pounced *en masse* on Chimbu Coffee and drove the equipment triumphantly back to Kerowagi. National Finance minister Kaputin announced some rescue funds (a mere K120,000 advance, to which another K330,000 was later added) drily commenting, 'The interim government has left a financial mess but the present government has not been prudent' (*Post-Courier* 15 September 1980). For 4 months, until the new provincial secretary finally departed Simbu early in 1981, the province continued to pay Simbu Investments for public works, although it was reliably alleged that these works had not been performed, and for the hire of its own plant.

Simbu Investments, a nominal subsidiary, appeared to run the provincial government. The province's financial records were moved to Chimbu Coffee, and Simbu Investments officials, that is, Chimbu Coffee, claimed the right to allocate housing and cars within the province. Whereas local politicians had taken over Chimbu Coffee in mid-1979, by late 1980 a reverse takeover was under way. The Chimbu Coffee general manager in May 1980 told me he had come to Simbu to make money, and to Chimbu Coffee specifically for the sake of its workshop. He took over an organization with massive debts, at a time of falling coffee prices. The coffee buying and processing side of the operation remained in deep financial trouble. At times in late 1980 and in 1981 it stopped buying coffee. Chimbu Coffee funds and facilities were used to subsidise other enterprises, the Papua New Guinea Clothing factory, and a bag-weaving factory called Simtex allegedly bought Chimbu Cooperative land and buildings. Both PNG Clothing and Simtex were part-owned by the provincial government, possibly with some shareholding by Simbu politicians. The Chimbu Coffee general manager claimed huge expenses for controlling their affairs, apparently in alliance with Okuk, who applied pressure for a Development Bank loan to assist Simtex, and eventually was able to override Bank staff objections. Okuk also obtained approval in principle for a K100,000 grant from the National Investors' Scheme.

Late in 1980 rumours abounded that Chimbu Coffee management would run down and then take it over the operation and revive it with the help of a government-protected buying market. In reply to these rumours, the factory manager (a Simbu) said that the Cooperative was so heavily mortgaged that it could not be sold off; he suggested shareholders should be patient (*Post-Courier* 15 September 1980). A tertiary-educated

Chimbu businessman told me in October 1980 that villagers do not understand this sort of politics. Whether or not they do, this particular rumour of a sellout was used to incite 300 people to protest (cf. J. Hughes 1985) and the coffee factory was stormed when the demonstration got out of hand, which enabled Chimbu Coffee to claim K80,000 damage insurance. Some estimates put the true damage at less than K10,000, which implied that Chimbu Coffee made a profit on the riot. The politics of this affair are unclear, in that the antagonists were allegedly seen fraternizing happily soon afterwards in Mount Hagen.

The Simbu businessman, John Nilkare, argued that management had provoked the protest (*Post-Courier*, 19 September 1980). National Media minister, Clement Poiye, said that Chimbu Coffee was being deliberately destroyed by politicians. Poiye named Okuk and elements in the provincial government, as well as previous managers, as causing present troubles. He said that the shareholders knew that they could not demand dividends at a time when the Chimbu Coffee was running at a loss (*Post-Courier* 23 September 1980). In mid 1981 the future of the company was unclear, as heavy subsidies were still being negotiated. In early 1981 the dominant faction in Kundiawa was divided over money and political resources. The central government's restrictions on the works budget reduced the cash flow at the Chimbu Coffee complex, and despite Okuk's best efforts national protection was not forthcoming for the bag weaving factory (Okuk 1982). But work went ahead, apparently at Chimbu Coffee's expense. A detailed report on Chimbu Coffee found that the firm was insolvent with little prospect of becoming viable (*Times of Papua New Guinea*, 13-19 November 1981).

Funds for the province were also cut when Okuk, in the absence from cabinet of Melanesian Alliance ministers Kaputin and Momis, pushed through a proposal that national parliamentarians should be given the disposition of departmental sectoral programme funds. Some K6m funds for agriculture, health and transport had previously been allocated by the national departments in accord with provincial priorities. Henceforth these funds were allocated by MPs. Only Okuk and Poiye sought health bureaucrats' opinions before distributing their cheques. Others spent wildly on their nominated 'village' projects: several bought cars and one bought a bus and built a house outside his electorate. After the 1982 election, following an investigation and recommendation by the Ombudsman Commission, the Chuave member Robert Yabara was found guilty of the misuse of these funds by National Court judge sitting as a Leadership Tribunal and in consequence lost his seat. One Simbu provincial minister paid personal bills with sectoral programme money he said he received from a national minister and threw K2 notes at pedestrians while being driven through his electorate. Simbu was the only provincial government not to protest at Okuk's diversion of funds from provincial control and local services. It is not surprising that tensions developed between

the provincial government and its parastatal parasites when each in some way or other proved incapable of honouring promises, or of maintaining existing infrastructure because of expenditure on new work. Despite the strength of the dominant clique, Iambakey and Siune were not always in accord. Nor did the province control all the agencies of the state.

One cause of tension was the issue of liquor trading. The decline of public order, and particularly the drink-related murder of a Simbu district officer, led the Simbu premier in November 1980 to announce a liquor sales ban for an unspecified period. With sales tax on liquor its main local revenue source, the provincial government would lose from this bold step. Premier Siune, like Okuk, was a successful liquor trader who also stood to lose from the ban. An angry protest demonstration of 200 politically influential liquor traders did not shake the premier, but perhaps in response to pressure he announced that the ban would last four months as a trial. Annoyed at not being consulted, leading national politicians got around the ban by simply ignoring it, as did their provincial counterparts. The province pronounced the ban a success, then promptly lifted it.

Although generally quieter in 1981, with less coffee money to lubricate the roisterers, Chimbu remained unpleasant for outsiders. The Simbu use their tough reputation to threaten public servants from other provinces, even though Chimbu Province needs hundreds of non-Simbu teachers and health workers. Twice the police evacuated groups of Highlanders (including senior public servants) at midnight, apparently accepting threats of 'payback' terror tactics after road accident deaths or drink-associated murders. The greatest pressures were felt by coastal people, who learn early to fear Highlanders (cf. Latukefu 1978). In November 1980 a senior politician physically menaced a 'coastal' official dealing with the politician's unrepaid loan, which led to a protest by coastal public servants. When Okuk denied their allegations, many cases of theft, assault and rape were listed. Reassurances by one leading Simbu politician at this rally lacked credibility, in that he, too, had physically menaced a coastal rival for a job.

Simbu politicians create tension wherever they go, and in 1980 the strains were the highest I had ever known. It is not surprising that several of the main characters in the drama were stressed beyond their limit. Death threats had surfaced on various occasions since 1972, and were alleged again in late 1980. Rumours flew that one political figure had gone mad and was carrying a pistol. It was widely believed that many politicians carried hand guns. One Simbu businessman told me he carried a licensed pistol and that his car sported bull-bars, so he expected to live to sixty-five. 'It's the educated guys against the educated guys now', he said.

Premier Siune was most insecure: he floodlit his residence and hired Kamanegu bodyguards. Suspicion was rampant. In 1980 at least four motions of no-confidence were planned but aborted, with Kuman Dai of Gumine the alternative candidate. Then in February 1981, suspecting another such move, the premier sacked three of his ministers for allegedly scheming against him and replaced them with three men of ambition from the opposition.

A few nights later one of the premier's bodyguards disturbed a man thought to be an escaped prisoner from the Dom area, which is within the Gumine parliamentary electorate, although located in Kundiawa District. The guard gave chase, was stabbed and died. Siune told the media that the intruder, thought to be a Gumine, had planned assassination. Payback posse swept through Kundiawa at dawn, using provincial government cars, and three Gumine people were killed. The premier's father was one of seventeen men charged (cf. *Post-Courier* 9 April 1981; *Times of Papua New Guinea* 10 April 1981).¹³ Village people in Gumine heard by bush telegraph the inaccurate rumour that Kuman Dai had been killed and so took as hostage all northern Simbu in their area, most of whom were public servants. A state of terror divided the province north from south, across its 'middle'. At Boromil village, police with semi-automatic rifles arrived in time to save the life of one northerner who had been trussed up and given a few minutes to make peace with his god. Officials helicoptered Kuman Dai to Gumine to prove he was still alive. Both patrol officers, who were northerners, abandoned Gumine station. Other *kiaps* and armed police convoyed southerners out of Kundiawa to safety and backloaded northerners plucked by helicopter to Gumine, a two-way exodus which eased the trauma. A large group of people from Dom, armed with traditional weapons, attempted to recover the bodies of the slain relatives from the Kundiawa morgue, but were stopped at the Wahgi bridge: the town felt besieged, and the Doms were infuriated (officials' interviews; J. Hughes 1985). After a day of terror, a massacre was avoided.

Kuman Dai calmed his people, arguing that this was a small matter for the Kamanegu. Compensation talks opened soon afterwards, and Okuk helped organize Kamanegu payment of K4,000 plus pigs and cattle as compensation, which was reluctantly accepted by Gumine people, in part because it was much lower than usually the case. It had not eased their desire to get even. This whole episode played out on the provincial arena the values and tactics demonstrated in tensions between neighbouring clans and tribes, only the scale had been enlarged enormously.

13 In October 1981 six of seven men brought to trial (after eight months in custody) were sentenced for periods from two years (the premier's father) to nine years four months (G. Laphorne, personal communication 1981).

In Gumine and other *bomai* areas, this tragic sequence was seen as a case of the provincial government acting against all southerners. The crisis perturbed Okuk's supporters, because he needed southern votes to win in 1982, and the deputy prime minister himself was furious that his Kamanegu proteges had acted so irresponsibly. He shouted hard in cabinet to have the Simbu provincial government suspended, but this was legally impossible. As had been discovered in 1979 when factions in the Enga government had fought openly in the streets of the provincial capital, legislation to enable suspension had not yet passed Parliament. In March 1981 Premier Siune survived a no-confidence motion naming Kuman Dai as his replacement, the first such motion to reach a vote.

Simbu residents became more relaxed about small-scale clan wars after confronting the more terrifying prospect of large-scale ethnicity mobilized by men under pressure. Clearly, provincial politics was not what has been called 'consociational politics', the calm system of mutual accommodation designed by the elites in deeply divided societies for their own benefit (Lijphart 1969). Rather, as Barry points out, 'Once ethnic feeling has been whipped up, it has a terrifying life of its own' (1975:505).

National elections, 1982

The extraordinary efforts of the leading Provincial candidates, Okuk and Nilkare, made headlines internationally and have intrinsic relevance to the themes of this study, so after a brief discussion of Open candidates and the roles of political parties, the Provincial campaigns form my main focus here. Campaign issues and techniques in 1982 mostly followed established patterns, although competition intensified.¹⁴

The number of Open candidates grew to 135, a rise of one quarter on the 1977 figure. Many were taking a political role merely by standing. These figures once again demonstrated the rising numbers of educated young Simbu with confidence in themselves and the confidence of their clans, with the status and funds to back their ambition. They also reflect resentment at the performance of the incumbent MPs especially their alleged misuse of sectoral funds. Some undoubtedly stood to uplift their clans, and/or partly as 'splitters' to spoil other candidates and clans. As Kobale Kale, the former minister, said, many stood to pull down or block other big-men or potential big-men, as well as to become big-men themselves. There were fewer business opportunities available, but more Simbu public servants in senior positions. Even a losing candidacy is a political role which enables people to act as public figures and to

¹⁴ I observed Simbu for five weeks in May and August 1982.

stand again. The material rewards for success were demonstrably considerable, and candidacy was seen both as a gamble and an investment. The sole member re-elected, Robert Yabara, implied beforehand that he might lose but proclaimed satisfaction because he had had five years in office and gained a business.

Tables VIII.3 and VIII.4 summarise the background of all candidates and winners (Open and Provincial electorates) in the 1982 national election. They show first of all the increasing number of Simbu attracted to the electoral lottery, with the province's average of 22 candidates per Open seat once again the highest in the country. The data reflect many of the changes in Simbu society and the people who were entering its political elite. The average age of all candidates fell slightly to 33 years, but that of winners lowered markedly from 36 to 28. The 1982 candidates' average level of formal education had fallen slightly from 1977, but eight were graduates and many had 11 years' schooling; the winners' average formal education rose from 7 to 11 years. Previous political office had been held by far fewer candidates (7 per cent) and winners (17 per cent of Opens and none in the Provincial seat) in 1982 than in 1977. Two thirds of these last mentioned people were new to elected office.

Table VIII.5 shows the changing employment base of Simbu after the end of the coffee boom. Compared to 1977, the proportion of 1982 candidates whose economic activities were primarily cash-cropping (who are here classified as peasants) almost halved to 13 per cent. As in 1977, they provided no winners. There was a fall in the number of coffee buyer candidates to 4 per cent in 1982 from 17 per cent in 1977, and of winners to 14 from 29 per cent. In other words, those few coffee buyers who stood did relatively well in 1982, but fewer coffee buyers took the risks of standing. A larger proportion of truckers, who are more established businessmen, stood in 1982 (8 per cent, as against 3 in 1977), and again were 14 per cent of winners. Overall, the proportions fell of businesspeople standing (from 31 to 26 per cent), and winning (from 57 to 42 per cent). There was a slight rise in the proportion of teachers and clergy standing (from 20 in 1977 to 22 per cent), but a fall in their success rate (from 14 to 0 per cent). There were more public servants standing (33 as against 22 per cent) and successful (29 as against 14 per cent). There was a doubling of blue-collar wage-earning candidates (from 3 to 6 per cent) and winners (from 14 to 29 per cent). The boom times over, people of middling success in the world of modern employment were seeking political office, and a large proportion of men in their twenties, whose expression for the election as 'betung' on the 'race' encapsulated their punting spirit.

Two Simbu women candidates stood for national legislatures nominated in 1982, Mun Mek and Gagum Kama both of Kerowagi district. The first Simbu women to

stand for state office, they had long played leading roles in various women's associations. Mun Mek, speaking at a Pangu rally as an endorsed candidate, expressed concern about the waste of government money, which should be spent on health and educational services. Later she told me that men were wasters, who destroyed women's subsistence base in their clan warfare. For a woman to speak up outside the clan goes against the Simbu ethos that women are rarely heard in public. Mun Mek's speech was courageous in content, even though her manner was deferential. Half the voters were women, but this sort of public politics was seen as a male game, and only a few minor candidates made direct appeals to women's interests. Mun Mek and Gagum Kama did not mobilize women's solidarity in Kerowagi Open; together they received only 179 votes or 0.93 per cent of the valid total for 23 candidates in the electorate.

It is often stated that PNG political parties differ little in their policies, but there were differences in the kind of candidates attracted to the various parties in Simbu. My (admittedly impressionistic) assessment from their career paths is that Pangu candidates were mostly steady individuals with stable employment histories such as public servants, whereas the Nationals were private businessmen with peripatetic work histories. Of the minor parties, the Melanesian Alliance candidates were Christian welfarists such as church workers and teachers, and PPP candidates tended to be business people and former public servants, some with slightly erratic histories. It was unclear that this resulted from party choice, given the weakness of party machines in Chimbu apart from Okuk's.

Table VIII.3 provides details on the Provincial candidates, once again a highly educated group of young men. Party loyalties and endorsements were difficult to identify precisely for the Open candidates, because many candidates were informal supporters of parties or their leaders and received some material aid. Financial inducement motivated candidates to seek or accept party support from the two major parties, Pangu and National. Candidates shopped around; one, Robert Yabara, twice changed parties and finished up as a PPP candidate with National posters. National had the greatest number of Open candidates endorsed, about twenty, with Okuk the sole Provincial nominee, and about 30 pro-Nationals who received party support. Pangu endorsed seven Open candidates, with Nilkare the sole endorsed Provincial, but five other Provincial candidates were pro-Pangu. PPP endorsed five for Open seats but none against Okuk, although allegedly two Provincials received PPP support. MA had five nominees, with Philip Nanme, an ex-soldier, the organiser and sole Provincial nominee. The UP had two Opens as well as one Provincial standing, a minimal effort. Many Open candidates were independent, with five linked to Ted Diro's Independent Group. Two Provincials were 'Independent Independents', and received unwelcome

solicitations and accusations from other candidates. Party jingles on radio took Somare's and Okuk's names into villages *ad nauseam*, and were mimicked by Simbu villagers.

The main two parties' high profile nationally was more than echoed at the local level, however, starting with the National Party convention in Kundiawa in March 1982, a massive feast with 180 pigs, string bands and expatriate parachutists among the paid entertainers. Okuk later regretted spending 'about K70,000' collected from businesses on this event, and was annoyed at 'Barunke Kaman and his mob' for allegedly having broken it up. National spent K15-20,000 on conventions in seven other provinces.

Whether or not party endorsement or association with the leader actually gained them votes, the endorsed National candidates or their campaigners received about K100 cash, perhaps a beer party with several pigs and a cow, and high quality posters. National also gave out posters to self-proclaimed supporters. Pangu's Chimbu branch had much less funding, and K6,000 of centrally contributed campaign funds topped up by K1,000 from Nilkare disappeared early. For pro-Pangu supporters there were a few cheap leaflets to hand out. Once Pangu funds had been used up, that party disappeared as an organisation in Chimbu, and the remaining parties' presence was insignificant.

For Pangu, Somare was the greatest asset. The party program emphasized three policies. First, to tighten government administration. Second, to strengthen village courts, which appealed to village leaders concerned about declining public order. Pangu also pledged improved health services and higher levels of universal education. Third, and especially potent in Simbu, to improve the rural economy.

The dominant new impression in this election was that gained from the big public spectacles of the campaign and from talk among villagers, which was that for the first time political parties were the central issue in an election. Pangu and National were named in almost every sentence, and the names of their figurehead leaders. Michael Somare was in 1982 enormously popular in the Highlands, quite overshadowing Prime Minister Chan. the latter's helicopter visit had lifted the profile of PPP around the fringes but attracted little attention compared to the thousands at Pangu and National rallies.

These were personalized competitions between Somare and Okuk, with crowds quite partisan, even to the point of foolhardiness. When Somare went to Kerowagi to support Nilkare, Okuk followed by hired helicopter, but the angry crowd prevented him from landing by shaking the skids of the hovering machine until Okuk departed. Okuk was similarly chased away from three other Pangu meetings, including a provocative

attempt to visit Nilkare's village, Omkolai, and Okuk was also threatened with stones at Chuave. His rallies were broken up at Kundiawa and Gemibogl by opponents' supporters.

The National Party branch in Chimbu had a southerner as chairman, but as in 1977 this was very much a personal operation and in definitional terms was once again best called a political faction, because the focus was all upon the party leader. Okuk's slogan, 'The First Highlands Prime Minister', bluntly stated his personal ambition, his claim to stand for the dignity of the Highlanders and that he was equal to Somare, the former prime minister - his themes from the 1977 campaign.

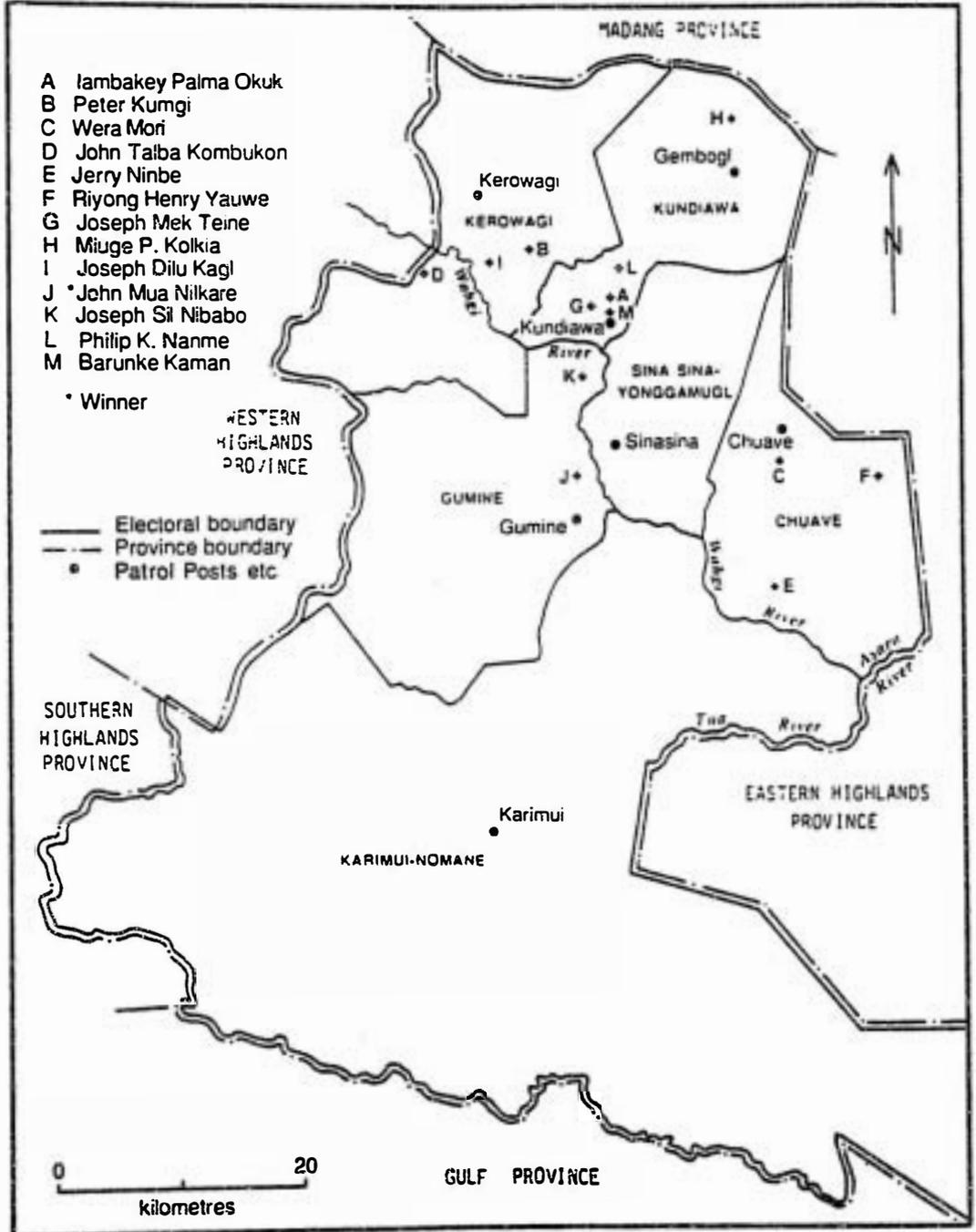
Okuk faced twelve opponents in 1982 (their details appear in Table VIII.3). Apart from Nilkare, businessman and lobbyist, only former the Provincial Secretary Barunke Kaman, by then a coffee buyer, had sufficient resources to mount motorised campaigns across the province. Yet with few exceptions their rivals were mostly credible candidates, established men in their thirties and almost all with post-secondary education. What was to become important was not the size of their campaign funds but the mere fact of their nomination and the locations of their home bases. Two other Kamanegu tribesmen stood, Kaman (Orgondie clan, pro-Pangu) and Philip Nanme (Bomaikane, MA); thus Okuk (designated by letter A on Map VIII.1) faced the shame of a divided home base, and the daunting challenge of eleven northerners as opponents, whereas Nilkare was the only southerner.

In two areas where Okuk had polled strongly in 1977, Upper Chimbu and Siane, candidates stood because Okuk had not delivered on promises to build roads out of the province. Several among those who stood against Okuk were well educated and were thus almost inevitably - given the province's history - northerners. They were also more likely to have a national, rather than a regionalist, Highlands orientation, and hence were Pangu supporters. These men were not just on 'Kamikaze' missions against Okuk, however; nor did they run 'dead' outside their home areas in order to benefit Nilkare. Their faces showing that gleam of faith which the politically ambitious often display in their special relationship with the electorate and several campaigned widely and strongly. Five candidates polled over 6,000 votes each, no mean feat, and in total the eleven minor candidates gathered 52,220, all of which were votes denied to both the front-runners, Okuk and Nilkare.

The key fact about Nilkare's candidacy in 1982 was that he was the only person standing in one third of the electorate (candidate J on Map VIII.1). Early in 1981, soon after the crisis of Premier Siune's alleged assassination, the local leaders of Gumine - including Kuman Dai - had got together, set aside their own substantial differences, and

Map VIII.1

CHIMBU PROVINCIAL ELECTORATE, 1982



decided that only one southerner would stand and that he would be John Nilkare. Some of the 'northern' candidates, such as Wera Mori of Chuave, had kinship linkages south of the Wahgi River and campaigned actively there, but effectively Nilkare was the only candidate for one third of the province. Before campaigning in Chimbu he flew a large group of southern leaders to a weekend party at his farm near Port Moresby to solidify their support. They had chosen a candidate with plentiful resources. He later said he had spent K45,000 on his campaign, although a campaign manager had put the figure at K76,000, which included K9,000 of motor fuel received from a foreign company.

Okuk constructed a *persona* for the campaign of himself as a tough, powerful and generous modern leader who was the son of a traditional leader. Dorney describes the popular image of him as 'just barely suppressed fury' (1990:54), but even in his exhaustion he could joke. Once again he appealed to a pan-Highlands ethnicity, bordering on Highlands chauvinism. In an appeal to past icons, his supporting teams showed Australian colonial films about the late Kondom Agaundo, the famous Simbu leader of the 1950s. Okuk was even rumoured to have visited Kondom's grave seeking spiritual support. Kondom was said by Okuk's supporters to have told mocking coastal people that he was sharpening his 'spears' - the educated Simbu youth. Okuk, they said was one of these young spears. On 26 May Okuk drew on a version of the past at Kerowagi as he gave his standard campaign speech:

They called us *gris pik* (E = pig fat), tinned fish eaters, *skin diwai* (E = bark belt [wearers]), beginners. Now I want to lift up your names. There are many educated candidates; but think about it, look closely at them, and get an orator with a good head who knows how parliament works. I am the son of a great leader, Palma, and I have taken his place. There are people from my own line, the Kamanegu, standing against me. The Prime Minister shouldn't be a Sepik or a Kavieng. We shouldn't be cargo boys. We have boundaries, setting out the positions in government. It's nothing to do with university education¹⁵ or lots of money. You can see that. Damn the educated young candidates! Some of them don't even have jobs. They are the children of rubbish men. The basis of work is competition. You Simbu should be happy, we didn't oust Somare with spears, but lobbied to vote him out of power. Now I'm competing to defeat them. I talk for all *gris pik* men, all *as tanget* (E = [wearers of] breach clouts).

Villagers and educated people alike around Chimbu said Okuk's populism appealed especially to the rural youth, unemployed and those resentful of their better educated and more successful agemates. Okuk said his main campaign theme was

decisive, strong, firm leadership. That is what we want. Somebody has either got to do something - lead or bloody get out of the way.... If you

15 In 1972, soon after his election to parliament and the ministry, Okuk had sought and obtained the right to study at UPNG, but never took it up.

make the wrong decisions, people will get you out I like to make some firm decisions. Good or bad.... That is the style of leadership which I am selling....PNG people need some instant decisions, right or wrong. (*Post-Courier*, 3 June 1982)

Asked if this could lead to a dictatorship, he said 'We have a tribal system here which will defuse any dictatorship movement.... Tell me who has the courage to say, "I want to become a dictator"?' (*Post-Courier*, 3 June 1982).

Okuk's Port Moresby media statements used themes quite different from those in Chimbu, and focussed on anti-communist and anti-union themes. Some of his nationalist statements, such as those criticising Filipinos and Indonesia's resettlement programme in Irian Jaya province (Griffin and King 1985: 59-61) were ethnocentric if not racist.

If Pangu had a local figurehead it was Nilkare. His campaign was largely autonomous, however, based on his own wealth and a bank loan, although his links with some Pangu Open candidates enabled him to contribute to several large beer parties. Nilkare and Somare in a helicopter tour of the remoter parts of Chimbu avoided Okuk's confrontational style. As in 1977, Nilkare was Port Moresby-based, but this time no other southerners stood to split his vote catchment. He made a final circuit of the province by helicopter just before polling. Nilkare conducted ten big rallies, at which he emphasized Pangu's economic policies and condemned the Chan-Okuk government's economic mismanagement and aircraft purchases. He also highlighted falling coffee prices and declining commodity stabilization funds. Outside the Kuman language areas, Nilkare used the *bomai* issue of differentials in development, but said he had avoided speaking directly of the 1981 killings because that would only turn people away. He did not need to, of course.

Nilkare's northern opponents thought his sophistication could be turned against him and whispered widely that he had abandoned his own kind. Nilkare nailed this story in a splendid Kuman language speech on 23 May near Moruma, west of Kerowagi, which drew laughter and applause.

People say I am a white man but my *tokples* (E = vernacular) is *bomai* and I have a black skin. It is true I have white friends, like Bill here [in the audience]. Stand up! People say I give to the whites. Seventeen whites work for me and I have to talk with them. It's a trick - if I don't talk with them they'll steal from me. ... I'm a director of Westpac Bank. The staff work for me. Some Number Ten men say I talk to whites, but these people are working for me. I'm a director of SP Brewery and I have accountants and lawyers. I'm Chairman of Port Moresby City Commission. So when things go wrong, the whites have to come to me! (BS 23 May 1982)

There was also what Nilkare called the 'personality issue'; he attacked Nationals as 'humbugs', making 'bullshit talk around and about', and using government money for their helicopter trips.¹⁶ 'They give you money and beer and imported pigs, and rotten old cars. Why do they have to buy votes? Where have they been that they have to buy your votes?'. Nilkare said that Okuk was trying to stay a parliamentarian because he was looking after his own welfare, throwing money around in the way one feeds a dog and forgets it, whereas 'I've got businesses, and I'm concerned about others'. The leader of one of Nilkare's three campaign teams, the former deputy provincial commissioner, Matthew Towa, drove the message home, saying Okuk and other candidates were 'only thinking of government money, whereas John has business. He has money already in his hands, so he is not thinking of himself. So John Nilkare will look after us later'. Nilkare concluded his Moruma speech by warning

Soon this country will be ruined. Okuk wants to be a dictator, one king alone, bossing the police and the army. If he says shoot someone, they'll do it - he's doing it now. Now we have a prime minister, but one without balls. True or false? Problems are like casuarina trees, they grow and grow.... If you want a happy life like before, vote for me.

A Kamanegu councillor, Tiene Boi, who had travelled the province with Nilkare, also spoke, saying Okuk had failed to deliver - a humiliating message from within Okuk's own tribe. The meeting ended with reminders from a local candidate that Pangu was like the country's parents, and had opened the way for people to sit down together, with Somare supporting the good life. 'People should accept Okuk's food or pork gladly, but not be happy with the man; vote for the best man and consider a replacement' (BS 23 May 1982).

The Administrative Secretary, Arnold Daugl Kamayagl, commented that the campaign was 'really hot'. There never seemed the possibility of riots in 1982, however, even though Okuk was threatened with stones at Chuave. Car loudspeakers were common, but banned from towns by magistrates on threat of contempt charges. It was an election in which conspiracy theories abounded, with some plausible claims of attempted or successful bribes for people to stand, or - alternatively - to desist. There was plenty of rough-and-tumble when candidates shouted out at marketplaces '---- is a thief. Former premier Siwi Kurondo said 'I'm Pangu, I don't change', although it was perhaps a personal grudge he expressed in shouting at Minggende market

¹⁶ A Public Accounts Committee investigation later revealed Okuk's alleged misuse in 1981 of K30,000 of government warrants for helicopter travel, nominally to check out sectoral projects (*Post-Courier*, 20 June 1983) and pilots and villagers alike stated that the trips involved the distribution of beer.

'Tambakey man nogut. Em i hambag man stret' (E = 'Tambakey is a bad man. He is a real humbug').

The corruption issue was raised by Pangu supporters in quiet talk around the fringes of meetings and markets. Apart from accusations of waste, however, a libellous allegation was made by one endorsed Pangu candidate that Okuk had received a block of apartments in Sydney as a 'kickback' for the purchase of Dash-7 aircraft for Air Niugini; Okuk himself publicly denied it. Most Pangu candidates avoided overt confrontations, perhaps for fear of causing a breakdown of public order, because aggressive confrontations - in the style used by Okuk in 1977 - frequently incite violence in Simbu. To stir up conflict gratuitously is bad politics. Okuk was sufficiently niggled to mention in his speeches those who had broken up his meetings, but put them down saying that they 'appeared crazy'.

Barunke Kaman's campaign merits attention. For a campaign base he used his coffee-buying camp among a new wife's family in southern Sinasina, an otherwise pro-Nilkare area. Kaman resented Nilkare for receiving Pangu endorsement, but Okuk was his prime target and he campaigned hard throughout the province. Kaman's angry style almost parodied Okuk, whom he attacked at every opportunity, but when he heckled him by the roadside Okuk laughed and drove off. Nilkare said that in Simbu if you attack opponents directly then people will walk away. One Simbu graduate judged that ^{Kaman's} ~~his~~ approach was 'uncool'; villagers thought him either very brave or obsessed. Villagers reported him appearing at one central Simbu village men's house at night, supporting Somare but primarily attacking Okuk as 'a trickster, a destructive spoiler, who if elected would only think of himself and his family's business, Tokma'. They said Kaman's shouting shook the house, frightening people; they also asserted that attacking people behind their back was bad form.

A Simbu educationist said that there were two competing ideas circulating among Kuman language speakers. They wanted Okuk - as a Highlander - for prime minister, he said, but were angry with him because he was campaigning all over the country and they did not see him in Chimbu. They also remembered the good life under Somare, and blamed Okuk for the economic deterioration since he took office. They felt Okuk had done nothing during his 10 years in parliament. 'They are divided on this, it is not clear at all. They are confused in their bellies, and it's up to the people now' (interview, 24 May 1982).

Campaign generosity, mentioned above, reached extraordinary heights in 1982. The provincial candidates emphasised pseudo-traditional, fictive kinship relationships, which were essentially those of patron and client. Thus Okuk delivered funds for a

cattle project, or a beast, to big peasants, who would thereupon have to deliver political support in return. Okuk's relationships were strongest with older men who were incapable of entering national politics but who had links with local candidates and hopefully could influence voters, and with sitting Open members who had benefited from sectoral funds. Okuk cemented these links by holding parties, to which he supplied beer (worth K500-1,000) and several pigs or perhaps a cow, and towards which the local people had then made a smaller contribution in order to maintain their own dignity. Local Open candidates usually gave some beer as well, to assert their status. 'In each Open electorate', Okuk later told me, 'we gave out K20,000 for old leaders to distribute as campaign expenses. K7-10,000 went to (incumbent) Opens. Nothing was given to individuals, so there was no bribery to vote'. Barunke Kaman said that Okuk gained votes where he gave through local big men and thrice said that 'the way to get elected is what you give and who you give it to'. Nilkare and others used similar procedures on a smaller scale, and some candidates gave money in private rather than openly.

A common factor for all candidates, Open and Provincial, was the beer party, now institutionalised; to be taken seriously a candidate had to spend at least K5,000. An SP brewery worker said Nilkare was buying 200 cartons of beer a week during the campaign, worth about K2,500 at wholesale prices. Yet Simbu villagers claimed immunity to electoral blandishments, saying they will take the beer and vote for the man of their choice. Hyden's description of elections in Tanzania as times when peasants can gain something from politicians (Hyden 1980) applied well in Simbu. Yet a cultural mechanism is often tripped by such hospitality whereby the donor is seen as a 'good' generous man (K = *yagl wagai*), and hence deserves a vote. However, if beer is taken from several candidates the political effect may be nil. Most of the beer is given after nomination, when the potential candidates have finished the crucial preliminary jostling within clans, so for Open seats the direct effect of such 'treating' might well be minimal, although it probably solidifies clan voting. The need for beer made it easier for wealthier Provincial candidates to enter clientship relations with Open candidates.

More than any other candidate, however, Okuk's generosity was on a scale likely to be counter-productive. He often had 'party' relationships - in both senses - with five or more candidates in each Open seat and was also away in other provinces during the campaign, so he simply could not keep up with the demand. He was being booked for three places at once in the run-up to the poll. Some people expecting to see him and to consume his beer were disappointed; Okuk overreached the limits of how much direct contact can be maintained by one person in a society based upon face-to-face interaction. He gave five new vehicles to National Party campaign organizers and candidates in

Simbu, and twelve reconditioned ones to supporters. When one of these was involved in a fatal accident the bereaved angrily blamed Okuk for the lack of any compensation above the compulsory Third Party insurance payment. Clan warfare broke out, and eleven more people were killed.

Apart from sectoral funds used for blatantly electoral purposes, Okuk also distributed up to K20,000 to each district, funds which the councillors thought were his but which were actually government money. Councils which did not receive these funds were irritated. Some cautious officials made sure they kept the funds unspent in district offices, but elsewhere payments for roadworks were made at four times the standard rates. The casualness with which resources were used and abused astonished Simbu and expatriates alike, especially when Okuk's staff wrote off two prestigious ministerial vehicles and merely obtained replacements from the government. The fatalities in one such accident told against the candidate.

Okuk's most spectacular innovation was to give out 4,000 cartons of beer on the eve of the election liquor ban from Kundiawa airstrip, following an all night string band competition. I had never seen him in traditional dress, but on this occasion he wore the traditional apron and breach clout. Okuk's press secretaries spent the day assuring reporters that this was a traditional occasion. The story of the 'bare-bottomed MP' and the deputy prime minister's wife 'dancing bare-breasted' at the 'beer barrel election' was duly reported internationally, along with front-page photographs (*SMH*, 5 June 1982; *ABC Background Briefing*, 6 June 1982; *The Age*, 2 June 1982, Dorney 1990), but this was not an occasion for mockery. Okuk again asserted that as the son of a traditional Simbu leader he had a right to political power. Some 10,000 people came for beer, with Okuk like a traditional leader distributing huge piles of 'small pig' for supporters in each Open electorate and fifty cartons each for the police, Pangu supporters and the mostly expatriate Hash House Harriers. Some squabbling added to the tension, but the beer was seen as a normal part of campaigning. Some people said 'We are only getting our own' and others 'We'll take the beer, but vote Pangu' or 'National today, Pangu tomorrow!'

Apart from the attempted symbolism, Okuk dressed traditionally in order to be able to cite his use of custom (which is supported in the National Constitution, but has not had the necessary 'organic laws' passed to implement the recognition of custom) should he later need to defend himself against any possible charges under the Criminal Code of treating (corruptly providing food, meat, drink or entertainment in order to influence votes). Bribery (giving valuable considerations in whatever form) and the exercise of undue influence (threats or use of force obstructing the free exercise of voting rights by

an elector) are grounds for rendering a poll null and void. Okuk had read reports in which I had argued that gift-exchange for prestige purposes could be defended as customary, with generosity and display intrinsic to Melanesian leadership (Standish 1978a and 1978b). Okuk frequently made this point thereafter, although he was hardly a traditional Simbu.

Costing these extravagances and individual campaigns is enormously difficult. Most provincial candidates claimed at least K10,000 expenditure, plus goods in kind from businesses. Kaman claimed K30,000 expenses, Nilkare said K25,000 of his admitted K45,000 came from mortgages. The Okuk campaign extravaganza was on a quite different scale. On 26 August he told me the National Party had spent K1 million in total, of which K547,000 was his own: 'I am the party business!' He had spent, he said, K36,000 on helicopters and K48,000 on airlifting people and party papers. He had bought 7,000 cartons of beer at K7.80 (based on K5.00 half price at Lae and K2.80 transport costs), K54,600 total. Okuk said he then went to San Miguel and got the same discount, 'a good promotion for them'. Nilkare and Okuk each claimed the other had received free beer from different breweries. It was fortuitous that the two breweries in 1982 were in a marketing battle which matched the electoral tussle. Okuk said he had bought 208 pigs at K200 (K41,600), but in a memorable phrase said 'Pigs are a hassle. There's too much work in killing and cooking them. Beer is better'. In total, he said, he had spent 'perhaps K120-150,000 in Chimbu', to which I said 'I'd put it at a quarter of a million', and he replied 'When it's all added up, K240-250,000' (interview, 26 August 1982).

Access to funds, whether government money or from comprador relationships with foreign capital, was clearly important in the high-profile and expensive campaigns in the Chimbu elections. Most candidates spent between K5-15,000. This was not unique to Chimbu: in other provinces sitting members spent K40-50,000. As Ballard (1989) notes for the Southern Highlands, the biggest spenders were not necessarily elected, although there is a perceived need for candidates to spend as much money as possible during a campaign. Not all Simbu winners were wealthy in their own right by contemporary standards; wealth helps, but is not essential.

Whatever Okuk's total expenditure, how was it financed? He said that businesses told him to come back for donations after he won, whereas his campaign manager Peter Kuman said they had, 'like Somare', got a lot of money from businesses (interview, 22 August 1982). Much of the funding came from commercial bank loans or overdrafts against his own assets. Perhaps the banks felt they had no choice but to lend to him. Okuk did have his own sources of funds, but the campaign devastated his businesses.

He used the takings from his businesses, the Chimbu stores and the goldmine, and advance rent from the coffee factory. He had sold a house in Port Moresby, a commercial building and five town-houses - one to Premier Siune's provincial government after the exertion of some pressure - and was trying to sell the Tokma coffee factory. He said he had borrowed K64,000 against 'my company' ('IMK'), K440,000 against 'this company' (Universal Brands Marketing), and K50,000 from one bank and K15,000 from another, totalling K569,000. Two months after the poll the banks were chasing him for interest on personal loans he had guaranteed for fellow National candidates, and were seeking repayment of overdrafts. He sought more funds to 'pay my way on top again', which would take him three years, and then he would have another crack at the prime ministership. When he got it, he said, he would soon retire to spend the time he felt he owed his family (interview, 26 August 1982).

The Ombudsman Commission, headed by Ignatius Kilage, had issued guidelines which proposed that parties should not accept any 'cash contribution or other form of financial assistance' exceeding K1,000 from citizens, and none from non-citizens or groups effectively controlled by non-citizens. He reminded candidates of the existing Organic Law on Leadership, but there remained no legislative backing to prohibit donations to candidates and parties. The Ombudsman's guidelines stated that the constitutional provisions are designed to prevent individuals and companies, both national and foreign, from gaining influence over leaders whose decision-making might thereby be compromised by conflict of interest (PNG Ombudsman Commission 1982a and 1982b). The guidelines did not discuss pressure from politicians compromising businessmen, which Australian businessmen in Papua New Guinea sometimes call 'the bite', although this does not invalidate the concern properly expressed by the Ombudsman. In Chimbu in 1982 both business people and politicians appeared to have compromised each other.

There was minimal strife when the result emerged, a victory for Nilkare; about a dozen people protested at the electoral office. On 28 June a sombire Okuk told journalists 'I accept defeat without bitterness' (*SMH*, 29 June 1982). Several women had cut off finger joints in a traditional mourning gesture at Okuk's loss, which he related to me with quiet pride, saying that he had appealed for calm. 'After the election it was the time for revolution, people were so upset. I was the responsible one ... the true nationalist' (interview, 26 August 1982). Aided by the declaration of the entire Chimbu Province as a 'Fighting Zone' under the Inter-Group Fighting Act, 1977, the voting period was fairly quiet. By contrast to 1977 and 1980, there was negligible violence.

The most striking contrast with the 1977 results was the increase in political mobilisation, with the vote up 30 per cent to 96 per cent of those enrolled (Table VIII:6). Nilkare almost doubled his 1977 vote to win with 22,287 votes or 22.2 per cent of the total. Okuk, despite his many northern opponents, increased his 1977 vote by 2,470 to 19,379. But the two southern seats, Gumine and Karimui-Nomane, had provided Nilkare with an additional 11,391 votes out of a total there of 16,120. So the *bomai* strategy, aided by the fragmented northern vote, won him the election.

A week before voting started, Okuk told me that if he lost, he was happy to become a villager, because he had 'tried every trick'. Three months later, he said he had been over-confident, and should have put somebody up to split Nilkare's Gumine vote. He said 'John is a good man, I can talk to him. But he should do it honestly', not by splitting the northern vote, for which he blamed the national Pangu organiser, Barry (later Sir Barry) Holloway (interview 26 August 1982). Holloway denied there had been a definite Pangu strategy in Chimbu, and gave a picture of confusion (interview 27 August 1982). Okuk's former campaign manager, Peter Kuman MP, was blunt. The reason for Okuk's defeat had not been the state of the economy, he said, but 'the hacking up of those three or four Gumines because of the premier' (interview, 22 August 1982). One question asked by Okuk's supporters and opponents alike was why he had not stood for an Open seat; Nilkare thought it was 'because he didn't want to lose face' (interview, 25 August 1982). Okuk failed with a petition asking a Court of Disputed Returns to declare the election void, or declare himself elected, on the grounds that Wera Mori (who gained 10,953 votes) was under-age and ineligible to stand.¹⁷ The judgement stated that Nilkare had 'clearly obtained the will of the majority and that it would be wrong for him to be penalised for Mr Mori's behaviour' (Andrew 1983; *Post-Courier*, 8, 16, 17 and 18 February 1983).

Parties, beer or brotherhood?

Was there a party vote? In the crudest measure, that of the party allegiance of winners, Chimbu voters did not follow the apparent national swing towards Pangu, in that they elected two National Party candidates, an Independent and one Melanesian Alliance, and one each from United, Pangu and PPP. Some winners changed party affiliation up to twice after the post-election blandishments of Okuk and Nilkare, showing how flimsy were their party allegiances. In the provincial poll, Okuk and Nilkare both gained votes widely, with concentrations in the north and south respectively. Nilkare's solid southern vote implies a degree of sub-provincial consciousness and unity throughout an

¹⁷ Okuk initially planned to raise malpractice by electoral officials, and collected dozens of statements around the province, but decided not to use this material - which I have read - on legal advice.

area which was roughly co-terminous with the Golin and Salt-Yui language areas (Map II.3). Many of his 6,167 votes in other electorates would have been influenced by the 'bomai' talk, as well. Nilkare's northern votes were probably based on the economic situation and Pangu's popularity, mobilized by well chosen and highly competent local campaign staff. Nilkare was a fine Kuman orator, whereas Okuk gave all serious speeches in Tokpisin, despite requests for Kuman from some in his audiences. Nilkare's reminders of the good times under Somare appeared to strike chords, especially with older people. An experienced expatriate observer before voting stated 'Pangu - if there is such a body as Pangu in Chimbu - seems to have a lot of support'.

Okuk's Highlands regionalism also seemed to many Simbu observers to have wide appeal, especially to younger people. If his regionalism had been an over-riding appeal there would need to have been a wide spread of votes for him, even in areas where there were local candidates. He got almost no votes in much of the southern sector, and clearly lost most votes in some areas, such as Nambaiyufa or the Upper Chimbu, where in 1982 he was being challenged by local candidates. His Highlands appeal did not work in such areas.

Cultural mechanisms of reciprocity of the type utilized by those giving out beer, or pork, at elections are widely acknowledged in Papua New Guinea. The Chief Ombudsman, Ignatius Kilage, argued in 1982 that 'Nobody gives for nothing in PNG - you have to pay it back, somehow'.¹⁸ Okuk's massive expenditure on beer might not have won him commensurate support and perhaps, ultimately, went against him. If a Highlander spends so much money he may be perceived as being so big that he is beyond the normal exchange system, demonstrating such 'strength' that there is no possibility of 'equivalence', to use Read's (1959) terms. Gifts which are so large and undirected are effectively unrepayable and hence, arguably, do not incur an obligation, so that the recipient can take without feeling obliged to make a return. One provincial minister said simply 'It's all *gris*' (E = bribery, in this context) and many recipients denied being influenced. Certainly Okuk's massive expenditure on beer, subsidized as it was by discount prices, raised some questions, even amongst villagers who supported him. One who had heard the allegations of corruption, stated '*Nogut em moni bilong mipela*' (E = It's bad if it's our money). The sight of Okuk casually buying a carload with a K1,000 cheque had shocked him profoundly. I asked Okuk if his beer presentations had been a mistake, and he replied elliptically 'I gave it to everyone, including Pangu.' I then suggested that if it was given on such a large scale, personal ties of reciprocal obligation would not apply; I noted his response as follows

18 ABC, *Background Briefing*, 6 June 1982.

'Okuk took it in and agreed silently' (interview, 26 August 1982). Perhaps a 'mega big-man' is no longer a big-man.

There was a precolonial tradition that if a leader was too powerful, perhaps too violent or exploitative of his own people without bringing them sufficient return, or simply causing them too much trouble, he could be killed at the behest of his own people (W. Bergmann, interview 1978). Okuk was mortally wounded politically in Chimbu in 1982. The election was a contemporary version of Highlanders manipulating clan and tribal loyalties, as well as modern resources, to bring down a leader.

Parochial loyalties, which can be summarized as 'brotherhood', probably provide the best key to the 1982 Chimbu Provincial election. Observers and participants alike expected clan loyalties to continue to dominate voting behaviour in future elections.¹⁹ All candidates used kinship loyalties both real and fictive, and manipulated ideologies of custom. This 'traditional' approach has a modern rationale. In 1982 the greatest number of Simbu people voted for the local man who could demonstrate he was most likely to bring them benefits,²⁰ just as they had in 1972 and 1977. This happened especially clearly in the Open seats, where (unless there were two or more local candidates) once again voting was in solid blocks for the local man. 'That's our way', said a villager from Mintima, 'party people are strange'.

The most striking instance of this corporate solidarity writ large was Nilkare's vote in the south, a *bomai* alliance which he kept together as long as the election, despite the divisive Open campaigns raging all around. Nilkare had been endorsed locally in a modern arrangement with a traditional rationale, arising from a peculiar set of circumstances which meant that no other local aspirant could undermine him against the northerners. His wealth and great political skills assisted him in gaining and keeping *de facto* endorsement, and then he was aided by Pangu Pati nomination, Somare's personal support and the poor state of the economy. Nilkare, it seems, was elected as a result of a combination of these factors. Okuk lost because his strongest support areas were divided between better educated young men of a later generation, who, even if they were unlikely to scale the political heights themselves, were determined at least to knock Okuk off his pinnacle.

19 For a splendid analysis of village level politics in Chuave, where clan solidarity is not necessarily shown in council elections, see Warry 1987.

20 In the case of the Regional/Provincial victories of Okuk, the benefits might have been a boost to the Simbu's pride rather than material gain, except in a few local instances of compensation from roadworks.

Party mobilization helped some candidates, and beer helped solidify both recent party bonds and real or quasi-kinship relationships. Ideologies of brotherhood operated strongly, helping some and hindering others. The recent political history of the province had a profound impact. Nilkare's campaign could not have been so strong without the unity of purpose in the south which derived from the violence of February 1981, solidarity which in turn arose from the operation of a belief in the transplantation of kinship loyalties and values into wider arenas. Rather than the use of party labels, or beer and money, it was - as Okuk had feared in 1981 - the mobilization of Simbu values of clan and tribal brotherhood, transformed into a new (and temporary?) southern quasi-ethnicity arising from the intrusion of provincial matters into the national elections, which ultimately blocked Okuk's path as a politician in Simbu.

Conclusion

From 1977 to 1982 Chimbu was a trouble spot, yet it was not unique in Papua New Guinea (Standish 1983b). Several other points emerge from the history summarized here.

With decentralization, people with superior resources such as national ministers can readily gain strategic dominance in provincial political arenas, even to the extent of determining how provincial funds are to be spent. While not necessarily 'kleptocracy' ('rule by thieves', Andreski 1968) at times politicians' use of public resources can be both self-interested and reckless. Facilitated by decentralisation and the failure of competent procedures of scrutiny, non-elected people can gain enormous influence over provinces, which are vulnerable to economic misjudgement and even serious fraud. With economic change, rapid population growth and improved communications, factors which all serve to bring people into closer contact, competition and conflict emerge on a wider scale and more intensively than previously. Contemporary politics is so intense that political murder is considered to be a real possibility. Where a motive exists for mobilizing particularist ascriptive loyalties, then it is likely that despite the risks someone will do so. This both reflects and contributes to a reduction in the capacity of the state and a decline in its legitimacy. The state had been weakened in Simbu by steps intended to decentralize power into the hands of the people, and at times Tinker's (1965) model of a 'broken-backed state' seems appropriate.

All these factors were part of the struggles to gain and maintain power in Chimbu. Yet the province was not a disaster zone in 1982. Despite some electoral abuses not discussed here, the elections were conducted fairly smoothly. Simbu leaders appeared to have stepped back from unchecked political conflict. A new generation of political

candidates entered the lists, and were able to speak out boldly and freely. Many received enormous support at the polls, and six of the seven Chimbu MPs were replaced in a democratic election.

Clearly Simbu politics reflected particular personalities operating within a culture which at times admires aggression, but to say this only tells part of the story. A particular trait survives only if it has some utility and social conditions facilitate it. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the 1982 election was the rejection by the public of those candidates whose style was most aggressive and whose generosity the most overblown. Other aspects of the various Simbu leadership models were also appealing, and just as Nilkare exercised his charm, he was known to be on a mission of retribution in the name of a super group.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION: CULTURAL CONTINUITY IN POLITICAL CHANGE

In seeking to examine the interaction between precolonial indigenous politics and the introduced state, this thesis has explored four subsidiary questions, namely 'how do the politically ambitious get into power?', 'how do men become politicians?', 'how do politicians maintain power once they have it?', and 'are the answers to these questions different for the four major phases - precontact, colonial, decolonizing and post-colonial?'

Throughout the colonial and early post-colonial periods the Simbu people utilised their own institutions - indigenous social structures, ideologies and political techniques - in the pursuit of political office and power within the new institutions introduced by the state, thereby creatively adapting them to Simbu institutions. Such adaptation occurred in the early colonial period when political control nominally rested with the Australian administrators, in the late colonial period, when democratic institutions were introduced at the local and national levels, and in the post-colonial era when provincial governing bodies were created by the independent state. As new political arenas opened to new generations of Simbu leaders, new political resources became available for use within these new arenas and for transfer into older spheres of competition. Successive political generations emerged in Simbu, as has also been noted for the Eastern Highlands by Uyassi (1978) and Pamela Denoon (1979), who identified distinct roles in each phase for leaders they called traditional big-men, modern big-men, big peasants and rural capitalists.

As part of political competition, tactical political unity could develop among the various arenas, from clans to whole segments of the province. But first, candidates had to couch their political appeals appropriately in terms of Simbu culture. This was needed even to obtain the support of their own kinship groups, which could not automatically be assumed. The high value placed in Simbu political culture on wealth, status, prestige and power has been noted. All these contribute to a prominent person's renown, but they are not automatically interchangeable. The Simbu studies show that it is possible to have power without prestige or great wealth, and wealth without prestige or power. Renown,

in particular, is not easily achieved, and could be considered the highest value by Simbu people. The use of wealth, be it personal or that of others in the kinship group or that of the state, may contribute to the prestige of an individual and ultimately to his or her renown. Finally, prestige and renown are not automatically translatable into political office or the maintenance of political power.

Political activity requires the manipulation of these values, and especially ideologies concerning the nature of leadership and the solidarity of kinship groupings. In the Simbu models of precolonial times, groups required leaders who could be tough, generous and wise, and Simbu argue that these qualities were held by the sons of leaders. There were subtleties to this stereotype, however. Depending on circumstances, different attributes could be required of leaders, such as aggressive battlefield prowess or the diplomatic skills of peace-making.

In the colonial era, the capacity to produce great wealth for ceremonial exchange was important, along with the political skills to deal with the colonial administration and thus to benefit from working in the nexus between state and clan.

In the the phase of decolonization, education was needed to gain essential knowledge of the workings of the state and the capitalist economy. At this time the anti-colonial assertiveness of younger men had considerable appeal. Clearly, however, unrestrained anger frightened people. Regionalist appeals to a pan-Highlands identity were in local terms neutral, in the sense that they transcended internal Simbu divisions and rivalries, but were not always efficacious.

In the post-colonial period the political use of resources obtained from outside the Simbu political economy increased enormously in scale. State office assisted politicians to amass huge personal assets and income, much of which was fed back into Simbu political competition. Just as precolonial leaders had benefitted from their roles as intermediaries between groups and had a range of exchange partners far wider than most 'ordinary men', so the leaders in subsequent phases brought to bear within their groups benefits obtained from their outside connections.

Politicians have sought to create renown through manipulative skill and generosity using the resources of corporations and the state. As shown in this study, massive blandishments were gladly accepted by villagers, but this did not automatically translate into the scale of political support necessary to secure national political office. The primary divisions between people remained the vertical social cleavages of kinship. In using these structures political candidates transcended embryonic class divisions, but to achieve political success they had also to transcend kinship divisions even while

maintaining a solid base of support in their own clan and tribe. To gain such a breadth of support required the capacity to appeal to values held more widely than just the support of a clan, tribe or even language group. This was something which Iambakey Okuk did in 1972 and 1977, and which he repeated again in 1982 to a marked degree.

Given high expectations in the many publics in the different arenas, the retention of political power required different skills and ideologies from those used in gaining office; staying in power proved beyond almost all politicians. In only three instances in the period of this study did national level politicians manage to gain re-election in the same seat, Ninkama Bomai in 1972, Iambakey Okuk in 1977 and Robert Yabara in 1982, a pattern which changed in 1987.¹ The continuing strength of local particularistic loyalties as expressed in bloc voting patterns, combined with the ethos of inter-group competition and the ambitions of an increasing number of externally qualified younger men of ambition, eventually brought down all national politicians in the period studied, no matter how well or badly they had served the broad electorate or their own kinship groups.

There were cultural factors at play here. All the well educated Simbu politicians who emerged in the 1970s had had to leave Simbu for significant periods to obtain schooling. But that formal education was not sufficient for success and could prove a hindrance. This was especially true of those who, having been reared outside the province, misread Simbu models of leadership badly or were inflexible in their use of such models.

On occasion, new alliances based on wider geographic units were formed in order to carry out political competition through the mechanisms of the ballot box and state and thus to gain power. In the 1980 and 1982 elections the rhetoric heralded new ethnicities, but these proved to be short-term, functional alliances only.

To mobilize wide support required not just brashness or massive generosity, but subtlety and genuine personal linkages with groups from which support was sought. Large-scale organizations such as political parties were not relevant unless their usefulness could be harnessed through the mediation of personal linkages. There certainly were limits to both the number of politically viable friendships which a politician could sustain and the extent to which credits and obligations incurred by the use of other people's resources were seen as valid and thus requiring reciprocation in the desired form, political support. Okuk had reached those limits by 1977, and over-

¹ In the 1987 election Peter Kuman, who successfully transferred from Kundiawa Open to win the Provincial seat, and also with the expenditure of huge sums of public money intended for roadworks (*SMH*, 31 July 1987) helped four of the five other Open members to gain re-election.

reached them by 1982; ultimately he was dragged down by a traditional type conflict, enlarged onto the huge, province-wide, arena.

Despite the different scale of the political arenas in different political time periods described here, and the rapidly increasing resources which became available, the political techniques and strategies used were essentially the same. The first colonial leaders had bases in their own clans which they used within the state sphere. They also brought state resources to bear within the clan to strengthen their position there. In the middle colonial era, once again, skills developed from contacts made as church workers, policemen, interpreters and aid post orderlies were translated into political resources to obtain local prestige and leadership. In the late colonial era, councillors and businessmen gained access to resources which they sought to use to expand their political support base in their own kinship groups. In the decolonizing era, education opened access to positions in the state and to increased funds from business activities, which again were used in political campaigning. This latter process flourished in the post-colonial era. At each stage, the use of new knowledge, skills and the capacity to 'seize the time' were demonstrated by successful leaders.

The four election studies revealed strikingly the arrival of new cohorts of young political actors with new skills and experiences and hence political resources. The statistical material on the backgrounds and occupations of candidates is summarized in tables IX.1 and IX.2, which encapsulate key evidence for the emergence of new political resources as each political arena grows through political time. In each election social and economic changes were demonstrated by the new waves of candidates themselves and the kinds of attributes thought likely to appeal to the electorate, namely the personal backgrounds and occupations of the candidates who for the most part were supported by their different clan and tribal groups.

Table IX.1 shows that candidates and winners in national elections from 1972 onwards were of about the same age at the time of the respective elections, but that in the national contests average education levels rose sharply in 1977 and stayed high. This was because of the coming to maturity of a new cohort of Simbu, and because education was obviously seen as a requirement to operate in the national arena and even to gain access to the resources to stage a campaign. For the Provincial Assembly election of 1980, candidates were of the same average age range, but the winning candidates were older. Candidates and winners in that election had average educational attainments much lower than those of candidates in the 1977 elections. Clearly what was considered as important in the much smaller Provincial Assembly electorates was the capacity to manipulate values and gain solid support from traditional groups in contests which were

seen in inter-tribal or even inter-clan terms. Given the high levels of previous political experience of the 1980 Provincial Assembly candidates and winners, these men (for all but six of the 245 candidates were men) were also clearly established political figures within the small scale of kinship units. The scale of the electorate thus had a determining effect on the kind of candidates who contested and how they succeeded.

A comparative examination of the occupations of candidates in the four elections reveals similar patterns (Table IX.2). In successive national elections from 1972 to 1982 there was a marked decline in the proportion of 'peasants' among candidates. There was an overall rise in the proportion of businessmen, which peaked during the coffee boom of 1977, when Simbu was awash with cash and beer. This pattern of increasing numbers of businessmen standing and succeeding in national contests was not repeated in the 1980 Provincial Assembly election, however; proportionately fewer men of business were attracted to stand that year and only a very small proportion won. In each national election there was a steady increase in the number of 'white collar' workers, in government employment especially. In the Provincial Assembly elections of 1980 the proportion of candidates in salaried or 'white collar' employment was lower, although the proportion of that group who won in that election was higher. Given the low average educational levels of the winners, it is clear that these salaried people included fewer professionals (such as teachers) in comparison with the 1977 and 1982 elections.

In some respects, the 1980 Provincial Assembly candidates' profile was similar to that of late colonial era candidates, except that there were many more of them (and many had stood in elections before) and the contests were more heated. Something like this was predicted by the Ombudsman, Ignatius Kilage²

the elections might bring some leaders who would at least be consistent, but knowing Chimbus, I am sure that these old blokes will bulldoze their way in (personal communication 1978).

In the event, two thirds of the winners had stood previously and one third of the previous Assembly members were re-elected, which for Chimbu is a high figure.

Despite the overall 'changing of the guard' in Simbu politics, and the entry of new resources into political competition in wider arenas, the key ideological appeals to group solidarity - whether in state politics or warfare - remain, and the process of translating

² Kilage became Administrator of Chimbu Province during the suspension of the Simbu Provincial government from 1984-86. He spent some energy in this period doing groundwork for his campaign in the 1987 national election contest for the Chimbu Provincial electorate, in which he came second. He was knighted after being chosen as Governor-General in 1988. Sir Ignatius died in office of liver cancer at the very end of 1989.

resources from one arena or sphere into another is creatively used in each new period. These are the continuities in Simbu political practices, just as there are continuities in political beliefs within the range of concepts found within Simbu people's variegated political models. Despite all the political changes over the decades, there has been continuity in Simbu political culture. Moreover, my observations of more recent developments confirms my belief that such continuity has persisted beyond the cut-off date of this study. Thus, for instance, the Simbu Provincial Government was suspended from late 1984 for maladministration of public funds for a period of 16 months. Both the Premier and the Administrative Secretary were convicted. In the years since there have been two new premiers and many other changes in the cast of characters but the range of political activities and the use of state resources as described has extended dramatically and successfully, particularly in the 1987 national election in Chimbu (see footnote 1 above).

This leads to the central question of this study concerning the interaction between precolonial indigenous political institutions and the introduced state. What this study has demonstrated is the utilization of Simbu values within the new arenas created by the state and the use of new political resources deriving from the state within Simbu political arenas, competitions and conflicts. The process was thus one of interpenetration. It could even be argued that the introduced state has been co-opted into Simbu politics, or been colonized by Simbu political values.

This conclusion has some implications for the debate over the nature of the state, and in particular to speculation over how states have spread throughout the modern world. Possibly driven in part by pride and resentment at their societies being described as 'stateless', some of my UPNG students asserted in 1972 that there had been states, or state-like institutions, in the Western Highlands before colonial contact. Such assertions tend to support Fried's (1967) case that states could emerge autochthonously, as home-grown institutions, rather than, as Krader (1968) has argued, through outside stimulation, and in particular by conquest. This study points towards a combination of Fried and Krader's arguments. Certainly, if Simbu and other Papua New Guineans use their own political institutions to indigenize a state which was initially a colonial artifact, then it has become their own state and is no longer merely a colonial imposition.

Relevance for Papua New Guinea and the Third World

The lessons from this Simbu story are of some relevance to PNG as a whole and to the Third World generally. Based as it is on an unusual combination of local focus and time

depth, this analysis points to the need for an understanding of local politics in order to comprehend political values and strategies at the national level in the Third World. Such studies of political change over time are essential also for an understanding of the social context of human development projects in rural areas, and in particular the mechanisms of politics surrounding large-scale resource projects. The origins of the recent dispute surrounding the Bougainville Copper Mine in PNG have been analysed by Filer (1990), who showed how a new political generation among the Nasioi people refused to accept the settlement imposed on the 1960s generation of leaders. Eventually their violent movement against the mine subsumed the provincial government and in early 1990 a province-wide identity was mobilized which was based on resentment against the PNG state and the mainlanders. This, in turn, led to the humiliation and withdrawal of the national police and security forces, followed by a nationally imposed blockade and a unilateral declaration of secession, after which Bougainville unity seems to have weakened. The processes of generational change and consequent political division evident on Bougainville echo those of Simbu, as demonstrated above.

Concepts such as cohort and traditional ethnicity as used here are essential to the study of Third World politics, and have direct relevance not just for the governments and peoples involved but also for foreign donor governments and investors. In PNG many isolated rural areas contain valuable deposits of oil, gold and copper, upon which the state is dependent. Their political arenas change when these resources are discovered and exploited. New actors stride onto the political stage and ultimately even isolated rural areas can affect national stability, which in turn can have international consequences. An understanding of the political processes in operation is essential for comprehension of the Third World and engagement with it.

By linking local-level political change with that at the national level, this study helps fill a significant gap in the literature of PNG politics. The analysis of decentralization, in particular, points to the dangers of over-ambitious institutional engineering which does not take into account political culture, available human resources and financial foundations. Chimbu is only one of PNG's provinces, but it is not unique. Without generalizing and projecting aspects of Simbu onto the entire PNG polity, it is notable that political activities and values similar to those described here have been manifest in the national government and several provinces. The Simbu Provincial Government suspension from 1984 was the first, but only one of ten of the nineteen provincial governments to have been suspended for maladministration.

Since decentralization, the desired mobilization, sensitization and improved co-ordination have not often occurred in any province. There were more unhappy results

than pleasing ones. There were more politicians, but greater resentment of them. The creation of the provincial arenas was intended to promote political participation. In Chimbu, given the divided social structure, decentralization promoted intergroup conflict, and, perversely, served to isolate elites from all but their close kin. Rather than sensitizing state operatives to local needs and inspiring bureaucratic energies, provincial government helped demoralize the public service and reduced its performance and capacity. Despite a few contrary examples, co-ordination did not improve. The state's power had been dissipated in Chimbu so, in the context of their instrumental view of the state, its legitimacy among villagers declined.

These matters were known in government circles and led Michael Somare and Iambakey Okuk, as well as several senior national officials in several provinces, to express fundamental doubts about the provincial government system; Somare described decentralization as good theory but poor practice (interviews, May 1980). Sir Julius Chan and Fr John Momis also spoke against the greed and selfishness of provincial leaders, without publicly analysing the reasons or suggesting remedies. Momis called provincial governments 'noisy babies' with 'loose bowels', but he failed to negotiate through parliament the legislation needed to allow for suspension. (This was ultimately achieved by his successor, John Ninkare.) Momis apparently hoped that with time the villagers would control the provincial politicians. But given the segmented social structure it is very easy for elites to coalesce in the state, even if this is not for the benefit of the population as a whole, by manipulating the ideology of corporate solidarity of their groups (see Lustick 1979).

Popular movements leading to reform in PNG are not likely to be spontaneous. It is the segmented social structure of Melanesian society which contributes to the often-noted instability in the country's national parliament, as indicated by frequent motions of no confidence, or threats of no confidence, which involve divisions within political parties and frequent 'crossing of the floor' by MPs seeking personal advantage. Members are elected according to their local support base, and are not beholden to political parties for their position in the electorate. Hence they are not subject to the discipline of a party, which frees them to put pressure on parliamentary leaders for individual gain as the price for their continued support. This has been openly admitted by all Prime Ministers of independent PNG.

Implications for Simbu

To conclude, I wish to comment on the reasons why Simbu politics are so narrowly focussed on the advantage of the individual and his group and to speculate on the future of the Simbu people, aided by some Third World perspectives.

The sheer poverty of Simbu heightens the centrality of the state in the economy of the area. Simbu is still a fragmented society with a warrior culture and a peasant economy. The colonial years were times of hope and, ultimately, disappointment. The widening of horizons raised expectations, which simultaneously devalued Simbu village hierarchies of wealth and status. The state is the largest modern sector employer and is crucial both for economic change and for the advancement of the individual.

This leads to what has been called the 'primacy of politics' (Spiro 1966), which is found in much of the Third World. With few avenues open for advancement, people wanting to advance themselves outside their clans or, paradoxically, within them, have virtually no choice but to move into government and/or politics. Highlanders in the 1970s and since have occupied proportionately few senior positions in the national bureaucracy than coastal people in the same age cohort, because of later colonization and schools development in the inland areas (Welch 1976). Few business people survive beyond being what Fegan (1981) calls 'dependent petty entrepreneurs'. In Simbu there seems to be a limit on the size of enterprises that one man can closely supervise in order to keep his workers honest. Politics - which primarily requires motivation and personal skills - has become the fastest way to wealth, status and power, as in Samuel Johnson's England. A senior national official in Simbu argued in 1980 with more wit than anthropological accuracy: 'Politics in PNG is just a cargo cult'.

People can do well in politics, in the name of doing good, and with so few other opportunities available many think the risks worthwhile (Ake 1978). Mechanisms of patronage and brokerage (Boissevain 1974) operate well in a context like Papua New Guinea, and the state itself is seen as something to be 'milked' rather than primarily the body which does the extraction. This last-mentioned process expanded even further in the national election for the Chimbu Provincial seat in 1987, which is beyond our time-frame. In a successful move to gain political support, some K280,000 of state funds were distributed by a Simbu minister for 'roads' which were never designed, although some bush tracks were cut (*SMH*, 31 July 1987). New resources were used, on a new scale, using an old mechanism. Incumbency does have advantages.

Successful patrons always ensure they get more than they redistribute. As Ake (1978) points out for Africa, state enterprises promote the interests of some of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, who may well become socialists, but competition is intense among what he calls the capitalist petty bourgeoisie. Although they often act together for their mutual benefit, their rivalry increases their insecurity and reinforces the desire to make hay while enjoying the sunshine of office. At provincial and national levels in

PNG, politicians and bureaucrats alike seek to control strategic pathways to investment for their own benefit.

Such behaviour has a cultural legitimation. As Ekeh (1975) argues, bleeding the state is not seen as immoral if done by one's own kin, because the 'moral' public is the primordial one, while the state is alien and hence fair game. Given the limited discretionary resources inherited by the post-colonial state, there is little a politician can achieve on the ground in the limited term of a parliament. The cleverest politicians thus use any means available to keep enough people happy in the hope of achieving re-election. But as most fail, political life is exciting but short for all but the toughest and shrewdest.

In this context, there is little chance for participatory democracy. As Ake (1978) notes, the insecurity of politicians and public servants leads to a more oppressive state. Where ethnic divisions are deep, countries allow the ritual of political choice while seeking to reduce effective participation by taking controversial issues such as public employment out of the political arena, a process Kasfir (1976) calls 'departicipation'. In Simbu and some other parts of PNG, this model does not apply fully. Public employment has been 'provincialized', thereby, ironically, reducing the control by governments over staff. Government decision-making has become divorced from rural people, a tendency reinforced by the ideology held by educated people that villagers need leadership from formally trained people such as themselves (Young 1976). Yet education alone is an insufficient base for a political career. Rather than judge candidates on competence in government or their espoused policies, villagers vote primarily for their own kinsman, who has been encouraged to nominate because of his clan membership, but also because of his capacities as a manipulator of resources. Accordingly, this is what he will concentrate upon.

This is an unproductive circle. Villagers express disgust at self-serving political figures while showing envy at their success; this inspires even the most vocal critics to do the same if they get a chance. Their conduct, in turn, demoralizes public servants who cease to perform effectively. Both groups become unpopular and villagers who receive little from the state now mythologize the colonial era and the first Somare government. With little motive to cooperate with a state which does not help them, they use self-help methods in highway robbery or large-scale fighting. Local groups and alliances are fairly evenly balanced, which prolongs what Siwi Kurondo as premier called 'our little civil wars'. After a few decades of peace, they have called the bluff of the state, which now lacks effective might. Politicians and officials retreat to the relative safety of the townships. Despite the sorry tale told here, the incidence of violence is still

patchy. The state may be weak, but this is not anarchy. There are other major problems to be dealt with, as well. Possibly more people have died of typhoid fever in recent years than were killed in fighting. Perhaps it is remarkable that there was not more open political and ethnic conflict in the past decades.

It is worthwhile examining three courses open to rural people in a context like Simbu. The first is the 'exit' option (Hirschman 1978), already taken by some 35,000 Simbu people. For them, much migration is circular because they return home periodically for family reasons to retain land rights, for ceremonies and festivals, and for retirement and burial among the clan. Cash remittances are occasionally sent home, but the exit option mainly benefits the emigrants - and only some of them succeed. Most Simbu people choose to stay on their natal territory and have to work harder because it is mostly the able-bodied young adults who have left. This large-scale movement of people creates pressures in the coastal cities and other areas however, and has reached crisis proportions for the national government, which has implemented several 'states of emergency' in urban areas.

A second possibility is the organization of a coherent mass movement of 'little people' against the 'fat men'. Having described African politics in terms similar to my analysis of Simbu, but with a Marxist overlay, Ake (1978) argues that a peasant revolution is not only possible but likely. Mass movements require sophisticated cadre leadership which usually comes from the educated bourgeoisie, as has been argued by Hobsbawm (1959) amongst others (including Lenin and Mao). Peasant revolutions are usually precipitated by a major threat from the state or dominant group (Scott 1976). Simbu people do not perceive such a threat.

There is little or no class action in Simbu politics and society, yet Marx is helpful here. He found 'peasants' a most unsatisfactory category, because they are neither paid workers nor capitalists (Marx 1852), and he raged at the local particularism and pursuit of self-interest by French peasants, especially over land (Duggett 1974-75). The disunity of Simbu clanspeople, who are only part-time peasants, and who already own their own land, render them immune from revolutionary appeals. Given the vertical segmentation of Highlands society, the competitiveness of the political culture and people's attachment to their land, I believe that a mass organization is unlikely, and that divide-and-rule tactics could defuse such movement. Coherent action would be hard to provoke, unless arms of the state provide a catalyst which unites opposition. Even on secessionist Bougainville there was not a mass movement.

A third scenario, based on impressionistic data but with African analogues, is that of popular withdrawal from the demands of the state and the modern economy, leaving

the spoils of power to those able to wallow in them. Participation in cash-cropping declines when prices are consistently low (Townsend 1980). Hyden (1980) found the same in Tanzania. He argues that both capitalist and socialist roads to modern industrial development demand more of people than does subsistence life. When they want to, the peasants, and also the educated migrants in towns, use what Hyden calls the 'economy of affection'. This concept is related to Ekeh's primordial 'moral public' (1975) and to the Papua New Guinea '*wantok* system', and essentially consists of kinship or ethnic networks of patronage and other forms of reciprocal obligation. The state is now seen by rural people essentially as an imposition - despite the idealism of the development ideologues (Hyden 1980; Samoff 1979). Hyden further argues that peasants use various passive means of non-cooperation to avoid 'capture' by the state and that in fact their autonomy means they do retain some bargaining power.

This withdrawal occurred in Simbu during the 1980s economic slump while governments did little except to survive. In a sense it was mutual, because the activity of extension services, with the exception of maternal and child health care teams, had largely ceased. In politics, however, the new big-men still risk much in order to win and play status games with public resources. No move for structural change is likely to come from them. Village people expect little, but look on in occasional anger. Their subsistence livelihood is basic, diseases flourish and they vent their frustrations in ancient feuds, sometimes by way of the ballot box. Yet I do not expect any major upheaval. While I hope I am too pessimistic, I predict that low-level and unproductive conflict will continue to fester in Simbu. As Horace Walpole said, the world is a comedy for those who think, a tragedy for those who feel.³

'Planti senis ikamap pinis, tasol mipela Simbu bihainim iet rot bilong ol tumbuna'.⁴

³ Attributed to Walpole on various occasions, for example 16 August 1776 (OUP 1980:563).

⁴ E = 'There have been many changes, but we Simbu still follow the ways of the ancestors' (former village court magistrate Waine Gabriel, who as a small boy went with his sister as she followed Taylor's patrol through Naregu tribal territory in 1933. Interview, May 1987.)

APPENDIX 1: TABLES

Table II.1:
Chronology of the colonial period, Chimbu

1930	Penetration of the Karimui area by Leahy and Dwyer.
1933	Taylor, Spinks and the Leahy brothers pass through central Chimbu area.
1933-35	Missionaries arrive. Stations established at Dimbi (later Mingende), Denglagu (Catholic), Kerowagi and Ega (Lutheran). Two Catholics killed. Government builds Chimbu-Wahgi Post (Kundiawa).
1935-42	Police posts established at Chuave, Goglme and Awagl. First village headmen appointed. First health and education services started.
1942-46	Civil administration suspended, replaced by ANGAU. Many workers recruited for wartime work in eastern highlands.
1946	Village officials appointed.
1949-50	Start of Highland Labour Scheme recruiting. New missions arrive.
1953	Opening of vehicular road to Goroka.
1954	Promotion of smallholder coffee growing begun.
1957	Expansion of formal primary education.
1959	Election of first Chimbu local government council (Waiye). Others formed by 1965, with exception of Salt-Nomane (1970) and Bomai-Mikaru (1973).
1961	Kondom (of Waiye) selected for Legislative Council.
1964	Kundiawa Coffee Society formed and processing factory purchased, later renamed Chimbu Coffee Cooperative Ltd. First House of Assembly elections.
1966	Chimbu achieves District status.
1968	Second House of Assembly elections.
1972	Third House of Assembly elections. Chimbu Area Authority formed.
1973	Self-Government, 1 December.
1975	Provincial Government Drafting Committee formed. Independence, 16 September.

Source: Adapted from Howlett *et al.*, 1976:11.

Table V.1:
Chimbu Regional electorate 1972: details of candidates

Name	Age	Party	Occupations
Waru Degemba	24	Pro-UP	High school teacher
Mathew Numambo Siune	23	UP	Former bank officer, interpreter
Iambakey Palma Okuk	28	Pro-National	Driver/mechanic
Ignatius Kilage	28(+?)	Pro-Pangu	Priest
Gigmai Joe Bal	23	Ind.	High school teacher

Source: Field data

Table V.2:
National elections 1972, Chimbu: background of candidates and winners

IV.1: General Data	Open		Regional	
	C (n=66)	W ^c (n=7)	C (n=5)	W (n=1)
Age (average years)	36	35	25	28
Formal education (average years)	2	3	12	10
Women (%)	0	0	0	0
Previous candidacy ^a (%)	50	83	20	20
Prev. elected office ^b (%)	27	6	0	0
Prev. village official (%)	15	1	0	0
Re-elected (%)	—	29	0	0

Notes (a) Includes candidacy in local government and parliamentary elections.
 Data may be incomplete.
 (b) This includes candidacy in council and House of Assembly elections.

Source: Returning officers, supplemented by field data.

Table V.3:
National elections 1972, Chimbu: occupations of candidates and winners^a
 (rounded percentages)

	C (n=71)	W (n=8)
Small peasant ^b	11	0
Big peasant ^c	20	0
Coffee & trade store ^d	10	0
(Peasant total)	(41)	(0)
Store owners ^e	7	37
Coffee buyers ^f	7	0
Truckers ^g	3	13
(Businessmen total)	(17)	(50)
Public servants and clerks ^h	15	13
Teachers	7	0
Church workers ⁱ	10	12
(White collar total)	(32)	(25)
Blue collar ^j	10	13

Notes

- (a) Source: returning officers supplemented by field data (principal occupation).
- (b) Most rural people in northern Simbu grow coffee as smallholders, and are defined as peasants here because the economic activities are land-based and export-oriented. Some designated as 'subsistence farmers' by officials were in other occupations up until the election, such as teachers. 'Small peasant' as used here is a residual category used where no special data are available on the size of coffee holdings or other economic activities.
- (c) These men are known to have large coffee holdings, cattle/pig projects.
- (d) Coffee sales usually support the trade stores, which are frequently seasonal.
- (e) Proprietors of viable stores and legal liquor outlets.
- (f) Coffee buyers tend to be young and relatively well educated. Young men have less access to land than their elders. They may also grow coffee, run stores, etc.
- (g) Truckers are those hiring plant to Public Works, plus passenger/cargo carriers.
- (h) Includes some non-literate people such as aidpost orderlies and interpreters, as well as managers and clerks in private enterprise.
- (i) Includes non-literate catechists and evangelists and tertiary trained clergy.
- (j) Includes skilled tradesmen, labourers and drivers.

Table V.4:
Chimbu Regional electorate, 1972: final primary count (including absentees
(candidates' home electorates underlined)

Open Electorate (% vote of enrolled persons)	Waru Degemba	Matthew Numambo Siune	Iambakey Okuk	Ignatius Kilage	Gigmai Joe Bal	Informal (%)	Total
Chuave (53%)	<u>5913</u>	186	1240	525	371	4054 (33%)	12289
Gumine (74%)	1127	454	2000	1289	1774	5116 (43%)	11760
Karimui/ Nomane (77%)	479	230	286	129	292	7043 (83%)	8549
Kerowagi (45%)	1127	1334	1347	1301	801	814 (12%)	6724
Kundiawa (68%)	446	<u>1750</u>	<u>3631</u>	2555	1398	280 (2.7%)	10060
Mt. Wilhelm (32%)	303	976	2046	817	243	321 (6%)	4706
Sinasina (46%)	854	74	206	240	<u>2321</u>	4963 (57%)	8658
Total (55%)	10,249 16.4%	5004 80%	10765 17.1%	6856 10.9%	7200 11.5%	22591 (35%)	62,656

Source: adapted from figures prepared by Returning Officer, Chimbu Regional, R.J. Kelly, and *Report of Chief Electoral Officer.*

Table V.5:
Chimbu Regional electorate, 1972: result of the complete scrutiny

Final quota: 11,785

Names of candidates in order as on the ballot-paper	First count (%)	Second count		Third count		Fourth count	
		Rec'd		Rec'd		Rec'd	
Waru Degemba	10,249 16.4	143	10,392	250	10,643	230	10,872
Matthew N. Siune	5003 ^a 8.0	excl	—	—	—	—	—
Iambakey P. Okuk	10,757	690	11,447	816	12,263	433	12,696
Ignatius Kilage	6,856 10.1	340	7,196 ^b	excl	—	—	—
Gigmai J.N.Bal	7,200 11.5	109	7,309	279	7,588 ^c	excl	—
INFORMAL	22,591 36.1		22,591		22,591		22,591
Exhausted		3,724		5,843		6,924	
Total	62,656	5,006 ^{a*}	62,659	7,188 ^{b*}	62,651	7,587 ^{c*}	62,650

Source: Kelly, R.J. *General Return for Chimbu Regional Elections*, Kundiawa, 8/5/72, Table 6.

Note: At each count there are slight discrepancies. Thus a is 3 less than a*, b is 8 less than b* and c* is 1 less than c. The total number of votes in the count also varies. Since the columns tally horizontally and vertically, the error seems to lie in the distribution of preferences. The CEO's *Final Report* appears to 'correct' these discrepancies by adjusting the number of exhausted votes in each count and keeping the grand total constant. The margin of error (0.0009%) is insignificant, and certainly does not affect the result or the order of preference allocation.

Table VII.1:
Chimbu Provincial electorate, 1977: background of candidates

Name	Age	Party	Occupation
Peter Kumgi	31	UP (end.)	Agricultural officer
John M. Nilkare	30	Independent (Pro-Somare)	Chief Liquor Licensing Commissioner, businessman
Kobale Kale	32(+)	Pangu	Politician; businessman
Andrew K. Komdom	33	Country	Trader, ex-Aid Post Orderly
Ka' Bomai	27	Pro-UP	Savings and Loan Manager
Michael Danga	33	Pro-UP	Schools Inspector
Jerry K. Geri	30	Country	Political organiser, ex <i>kiap</i> ex-teacher
James Maima Yoba	27	Country	Teacher
Iambakey Okuk	33	National	Politician, businessman
Yuke Komba	30	Independent	Lutheran Pastor

Source: Returning Officers, supplemented by field data.

Table VII.2:
National elections 1977, Chimbu: backgrounds of candidates and winners

	Open 1977		Provincial 1977	
	C (n=95)	W (n=6)	C (n=10)	W (n=1)
Age (average years)	38	36	31	35
Formal education (average years)	9	8	11	10
Women (%)	0	0	0	0
Previous candidacy ^a (%)	27	33	20	100
Prev. elected office ^b (%)	24	33	20	100
Prev. village official (%)	9	0	0	0
Village court official ^c (%)	1	1	—	—
Re-elected (%)		0		1

Notes

- (a) Includes candidacy in local government and parliamentary elections.
 Data may be incomplete.
- (b) This includes council, parliamentary and interim provincial assembly membership.
- (c) Village courts commenced in 1977.

Source: Returning officers, supplemented by field data.

Table VII.3:
National elections 1977, Chimbu: occupations of candidates and winners^a
 (rounded percentages)

	C (n=105)	W (n=7)
Small peasant ^b	9	0
Big peasant ^c	13	0
Coffee & trade store ^d	2	0
(Peasant total)	(24)	(0)
Store owners ^e	11	14
Coffee buyers ^f	17	29
Truckers ^g	3	14
(Businessmen total)	(31)	(57)
Public servants and clerks ^h	22	14
Teachers	11	14
Church workers ⁱ	9	0
(White collar total)	(42)	(28)
Blue collar ^j	3	14

Notes

- (a) **Source:** returning officers supplemented by field data (principal occupation).
- (b) Most rural people in northern Simbu grow coffee as smallholders, and are defined as peasants here because the economic activities are land-based and export-oriented. Some designated as 'subsistence farmers' by officials were in other occupations up until the election, such as teachers. 'Small peasant' as used here is a residual category used where no special data are available on the size of coffee holdings or other economic activities.
- (c) These men are known to have large coffee holdings, cattle/pig projects.
- (d) Coffee sales usually support the trade stores, which are frequently seasonal.
- (e) Proprietors of viable stores and legal liquor outlets.
- (f) Coffee buyers tend to be young and relatively well educated. Young men have less access to land than their elders. They may also grow coffee, run stores, etc.
- (g) Truckers are those hiring plant to Public Works, plus passenger/cargo carriers.
- (h) Includes some non-literate people such as aidpost orderlies and interpreters, as well as managers and clerks in private enterprise.
- (i) Includes non-literate catechists and evangelists and tertiary trained clergy.
- (j) Includes skilled tradesmen, labourers and drivers.

Table VII.4: Chimbu Provincial electorate, 1977: interim count by open electorate
(Candidates' home electorate vote underlined)

	CHUAVE	GUMINE	KARIMUI- NOMANE	KEROWAGI	KUNDIAWA	SINASINA- YONGGAMUGL	CHIMBU PROVINCIAL TOTAL	(%)
Peter Kumgi	158	161	248	<u>4138</u>	387	37	5129	6.7
John M. Nilkare	2105	<u>4049</u>	680	2475	554	1609	11472	15.0
Kobale Kale	4026	449	2238	1535	992	<u>2787</u>	11962	15.6
Andrew K. Kondom	8	4	13	18	<u>794</u>	16	846	1.1
Kai Bomai	52	<u>3889</u>	4700	62	55	1498	10266	13.4
Michael Danga	21	2	206	<u>1289</u>	164*	9	1691	2.2
Jerry K. Geri	1985	6	325	9	26	397	2748	3.6
Maima Yoba	5	<u>3935</u>	21	639	37	820	5447	7.1
Iambakey Okuk	4333	284	165	3342	<u>7694</u>	819	16909	22.0
Yuke Komba	315	9	49	72	91	<u>4933</u>	5471	7.1
INFORMAL	946	409	2875	229	103	194	4756	6.2
INFORMAL (%)	(6.8)	(3.1)	(25.0)	(1.7)	(0.9)	(1.5)	(6.2)	0.5
TOTAL	13954	13197	11520	13808	11097	13111	76705	100
Votes cast as % of persons enrolled	76	55	85	69	40	46	58	

* Note: Michael Danga is a Kamenegu tribesman born in Kundiawa, but has settled with his father near Kerowagi, outside the Kundiawa electorate.

Source: Adapted from preliminary working figures prepared by Chimbu Provincial Returning Officers; the "Total" column, which comes from his statistical return does not quite tally with the sum of the Open Electorate votes.

Table VIII.1:
Simbu Provincial Assembly elections 1980:
background of candidates and winners

	C (n=245)	W (n=22)
Age (average)	37	42
Formal education (average years)	3	4
Women (%)	2	0
Prev. candidacy ^a (%)	72	15
Prev. elected office ^b (%)	40	50
Prev. village official (%)	6	0
Village court official ^c (%)	6	0
Re-elected (%)		27 ^d

Notes

- (a) Includes candidacy in local government and parliamentary elections. Data incomplete.
- (b) Includes council, parliamentary and interim provincial assembly membership.
- (c) Includes magistrates, clerks and peace officers.
- (d) From interim provincial assembly.

Source: Returning Officers, supplemented by field data.

Table VIII.2:
Simbu Provincial Assembly elections, 1980: occupations of candidates and winners^a
(rounded percentages)

	C (n=245)	W (n=22)
Small peasant ^b	23	9
Big peasant ^c	20	18
Coffee & trade stores ^d	5	5
(Peasant total)	(48)	(32)
Store owners ^e	12	14
Coffee buyers ^f	2	5
Truckers ^g	4	5
(Businessmen total)	(19)	(23)
Public servants and clerks ^h	14	10
Teachers	4	9
Church workers ⁱ	9	14
(White collar total)	(27)	(32)
Blue collar ^j	6	14

Notes

- (a) Source: returning officers supplemented by BS field data (principal occupation).
- (b) Most rural people in northern Simbu grow coffee as smallholders, and are defined as peasants here because the economic activities are land-based and export-oriented. Some designated as 'subsistence farmers' by officials were in other occupations up until the election, such as teachers. 'Small peasant' as used here is a residual category used where no special data are available on the size of coffee holdings or other economic activities.
- (c) These men are known to have large coffee holdings, cattle/pig projects.
- (d) Coffee sales usually support the trade stores, which are frequently seasonal.
- (e) Proprietors of viable stores and legal liquor outlets.
- (f) Coffee buyers tend to be young and relatively well educated. Young men have less access to land than their elders. They may also grow coffee, run stores, etc.
- (g) Truckers are those hiring plant to Public Works, plus passenger/cargo carriers.
- (h) Includes some non-literate people such as aidpost orderlies and interpreters, as well as managers and clerks in private enterprise.
- (i) Includes non-literate catechists and evangelists and tertiary trained clergy.
- (j) Includes skilled tradesmen, labourers and drivers.

Table VIII.3:
Chimbu Provincial electorate 1982: candidates

Name	Age	Party	Occupation
Iambakey P. Okuk	38	National	Politician/businessman; ex-mechanic
Peter Kumgi	36	Pro-Pangu	Agriculture lecturer
Wera Mori	25	United	Ex-soldier; ex-student (UPNG)
John T. Tombukon	34	Pro-Pangu	Ex-teacher (primary)
Gerry Ninbe	37	Pro-PPP (?)	Finance clerk
Riyong H. Yauwe	30	Pro-Pangu	Businessman; ex-teacher (secondary)
Joseph Mek Teine	26	Independent	Barrister/solicitor
Miuge Peter Kolkia [Karnis]	26	Independent	Research Officer (B.A.)
Joseph D. Kagl	35	Libral (<i>sic</i>)	Anatomist (UPNG)
John M. Nilkare	35	Pangu (end.)	Consultant; ex-kiap, magistrate and Chief Liquor Licensing Commissioner
Joseph Sil Nibabo	35	Pro-Pangu	Magistrate
Philip K. Nanme	37	Mel. Allce	Ex-soldier, political activist
Barunke Kaman	30	Pro-Pangu	Businessman; ex-Provincial Secretary

Source: Returning officers supplemented by field data.

Table VIII.4:
National elections 1982, Chimbu: background of candidates and winners

	Open		Provincial	
	C (n=135)	W (n=6)	C (n=13)	W (n=1)
Age (average)	33	28	33	35
Formal education (average years)	7	10	12	14
Women (%)	1	0	0	0
Previous candidacy ^a (%)	33	50	31	100
Prev.elected office ^b (%)	7	17	8	0
Prev. village official (%)	1	0	0	0
Village court official (%)	2	0	0	0
Re-elected (%)		1		0

Notes:

(a) Includes candidacy in local government, provincial assembly and parliamentary elections. Data may be incomplete.

(b) This includes council, parliamentary and provincial assembly membership.

Source: Returning officers, supplemented by field data.

Table VIII.5:
National elections 1982, Chimbu: occupations of candidates and winners^a
 (rounded percentages)

	C (n=135)	W (n=7)
Small peasant ^b	5	0
Big peasant ^c	5	0
Coffee & trade store ^d	3	0
(Peasant total)	(13)	(0)
Store owners ^e	14	14
Coffee buyers ^f	4	14
Truckers ^g	8	14
(Businessmen total)	(26)	(42)
Public servants and clerks ^h	33	29
Teachers	18	0
Church workers ⁱ	4	0
(White collar total)	(55)	(29)
Blue collar ^j	6	29

Notes

- (a) **Source:** returning officers supplemented by field data (principal occupation).
- (b) Most rural people in northern Simbu grow coffee as smallholders, and are defined as peasants here because the economic activities are land-based and export-oriented. Some designated as 'subsistence farmers' by officials were in other occupations up until the election, such as teachers. 'Small peasant' as used here is a residual category used where no special data are available on the size of coffee holdings or other economic activities.
- (c) These men are known to have large coffee holdings, cattle/pig projects.
- (d) Coffee sales usually support the trade stores, which are frequently seasonal.
- (e) Proprietors of viable stores and legal liquor outlets.
- (f) Coffee buyers tend to be young and relatively well educated. Young men have less access to land than their elders. They may also grow coffee, run stores, etc.
- (g) Truckers are those hiring plant to Public Works, plus passenger/cargo carriers.
- (h) Includes some non-literate people such as aidpost orderlies and interpreters, as well as managers and clerks in private enterprise.
- (i) Includes non-literate catechists and evangelists and tertiary trained clergy.
- (j) Includes skilled tradesmen, labourers and drivers.

Table VIII.6: Chimbu Provincial electorate, 1982: interim count by open electorate
(Candidate's home electorate vote underlined)

	CHUAVE	GUMINE	KARIMUI- NOMANE	KEROWAGI	KUNDIAWA	SINASINA- YONGGAMUGL	CHIMBU PROVINCIAL TOTAL	(%)
Iambakey P. Okuk	1929	1222	1468	4599	<u>6826</u>	3316	19379	19.3
Peter Kumgi	10	30	36	<u>5568</u>	412	93	6150	6.1
Wera Mori	<u>4786</u>	24	62	39	47	5995	10953	10.9
John T. Kombukon	18	<u>100</u>	92	<u>3047</u>	34	60	3351	3.3
Gerry Ninbe	<u>4397</u>	21	3350	44	48	455	8316	8.3
Riyong H. Yauwe	<u>5978</u>	5	826	18	8	22	6857	6.8
Joseph M. Teine	131	166	259	576	<u>1941</u>	893	3956	3.9
Miuge P. Kolkia	8	13	3	96	<u>2689</u>	51	2860	2.8
Joseph K. Kagl	5	45	20	<u>1103</u>	42	14	1229	1.2
John M. Nilkare	721	<u>11063</u>	5057	2162	882	2589	22287	22.2
Joseph S. Nibabo	11	<u>3314</u>	22	1412	113	65	4831	4.8
Philip K. Nanme	26	347	13	67	<u>886</u>	636	2136	2.1
Barunke Kaman	456	116	1400	527	<u>2310</u>	2831	7581	7.6
INFORMAL	36	54	94	128	134	78	(524)	
INFORMAL (%)	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5
TOTAL	18512	16520	12702	19386	16207	17098	99886 (valid votes)	

Source: Adapted from preliminary working figures prepared by Open Electorate Returning Officers. The 'Total' result is that published by *Times of Papua New Guinea* 2 July 1982

Table IX.1:
Chimbu elections, 1972-1982: background of candidates and winners
 (rounded percentages)

	1972		1977		1980		1982	
	C (n=71)	W (n=8)	C (n=105)	W (n=7)	C (n=245)	W (n=22)	C (n=148)	W (n=7)
Age (average)	35	34	37	36	37	42	33	39
Formal education (average years)	3	4	9	8	3	4	7	11
Women (%)	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0
Previous ^a candidacy(%)	48	75	27	43	29	68	33	57
Prev. elected office ^b (%)	25	75	24	43	40	50	7	14
Prev. village ^c official(%)	14	13	9	0	6	0	1	0
Prev. Village court official (%)	—	—	1	14	6	0	2	0
Re-elected (%)	—	25	—	14	—	27	—	14

Notes

- (a) Includes candidacy in local government, provincial assembly and parliamentary elections. Data may be incomplete.
- (b) This includes council, House of Assembly, National Parliament and Provincial Assembly membership.
- (c) Data maybe incomplete

Source: Returning officers, supplemented by field data.

Table IX.2:
Chimbu elections, 1972-1982: occupation of candidates and winners^a
 (rounded percentages)

	1972		1977		1980		1982	
	C (n=71)	W (n=8)	C (n=105)	W (n=7)	C (n=245)	W (n=22)	C (n=148)	W (n=7)
Small peasant ^b	1	1	0	9	0	23	9	5
Big peasant ^c	20	0	13	0	20	18	5	0
Coffee & trade stores ^d	10	0	2	0	5	5	3	0
(Peasant total)	(41)	(0)	(24)	(0)	(48)	(32)	(13)	(0)
Store owners ^e	7	37	11	14	12	14	14	14
Coffee buyers ^f	7	0	17	29	2	5	4	14
Truckers ^g	3	13	3	14	4	5	8	14
(Businessmen total)	(17)	(50)	(31)	(57)	(19)	(23)	(26)	(42)
Public servants and clerks ^h	15	13	22	14	14	10	33	29
Teachers	7	0	11	14	4	9	18	0
Church workers ⁱ	10	12	9	0	9	14	4	0
(White collar total)	(32)	(25)	(42)	(28)	(27)	(32)	(55)	(29)
Blue collar ^j	10	13	3	14	6	14	6	29

Notes

- (a) Source: returning officers supplemented by field data (principal occupation).
- (b) Most rural people in northern Simbu grow coffee as smallholders, and are defined as peasants here because the economic activities are land-based and export-oriented. Some designated as 'subsistence farmers' by officials were in other occupations up until the election, such as teachers. 'Small peasant' as used here is a residual category used where no special data are available on the size of coffee holdings or other economic activities.
- (c) These men are known to have large coffee holdings, cattle/pig projects.
- (d) Coffee sales usually support the trade stores, which are frequently seasonal.
- (e) Proprietors of viable stores and legal liquor outlets.
- (f) Coffee buyers tend to be young and relatively well educated. Young men have less access to land than their elders. They may also grow coffee, run stores, etc.
- (g) Truckers are those hiring plant to Public Works, plus passenger/cargo carriers.
- (h) Includes some non-literate people such as aidpost orderlies and interpreters, as well as managers and clerks in private enterprise.
- (i) Includes non-literate catechists and evangelists and tertiary trained clergy.
- (j) Includes skilled tradesmen, labourers and drivers.

APPENDIX 2

MODERNIZATION AND NEO-MARXISM

It is essential to locate the intellectual and scholarly context of the period of fieldwork for this study (1972-82). Great changes occurred in theoretical approaches to Third World studies, but of necessity the terrain of events dictates the path of analysis. I commenced my study with an interest in testing some of the broad propositions of the modernization school of political analysis in a rural area where literacy was low. Even in 1972, Western political science was sceptical of modernization theory (Huntington 1971; Cruise O'Brien 1972). A wave of dependency theory, rediscovered Marxist and neo-Marxist analysis swept the social sciences from the early 1970s, but did not reach PNG political studies until 1975-78. The 'statist' school found in 1980s African studies, so labelled by Chazan *et al.* (1988), with its somewhat prescriptive focus on strengthening the state, did not explicitly impinge upon PNG studies and was similarly not central to my concerns. Here I briefly evaluate the relevance of the modernization and neo-Marxist schools.

Early observers of decolonization and post-colonial politics were among the first generations of political scientists to emerge from the legal/historical origins of the political science discipline. While they broadened the scope of political studies, pioneers in Southeast Asian studies, for example, initially focused on nationalist politics and the politics of national elites (for example, Kahin ed. 1959).

In the 1960s, a major shift in approach followed with the attempted adoption of structural-functionalist approaches. In retrospect, it is possible to identify a 'political development/political modernization' school led by Almond (1960), Pye (1966) and Apter (1965). Incorporating the importance placed upon mass communications in the modernization process by scholars such as Deutsch (1961, 1966) and Lerner (1958), these writers argued that with increased political mobilization would come increased political participation and a growing capacity of political systems in the new states to cope with political demands, a change which was termed 'political development'. However, as James Townsend has said¹ the Princeton University seminars which formulated the political development notion were explicitly prescriptive, and sought to

¹ At a seminar in the Department of Political and Social Change, ANU, 12 April 1983.

identify what new states should aim *for*, rather than to describe what their political systems actually *do*. Like some sociologists of the era (Moore 1963), these writers tended to equate modernization with industrialization, and a 'developed' polity with the Western democratic model. Usually, despite occasional protestations to the contrary, 'traditional' society was contrasted with 'modern' society. The terminology was imprecise, and even Apter's (1965) jargon-laden book on 'the politics of modernization' avoids specifying the latter term.

Dodd provides the most comprehensive definition of 'political development' and its 'near twin' term, 'political modernisation', as embracing one or more of the following notions:

- (i) Political change necessary for the achievement of a specific objective, like American liberal democracy, a communist society or an Islamic state.
- (ii) A general process of change in the political sphere, closely related to other areas of society, which is conceived to comprise
 - (a) the expansion and centralisation of governmental power, and the differentiation and specialisation (and subsequent integration) of political functions and structures;
 - (b) increased popular participation in politics; and (c) increased popular identification with the political system.
- (iii) A political system's capacity
 - (a) to solve problems, developmental and other; and
 - (b) to initiate (and sustain) new policies for the society in which it operates, and to set up new structures or reform old ones, to carry out such aims.
- (iv) The ability to learn better and better how to perform political functions and to set up political structures. (Dodd 1972:12)

Sometimes, says Dodd, 'political modernisation' involves (ii), and 'political development' refers to (i), (iii) and (iv) (Dodd 1972:15).

As has often been pointed out (for example in Cruise O'Brien 1971, Higgott 1978 and 1983, Randali and Theobald 1985), structural-functionalist approaches use a static system model which does not deal with political conflict. Hence they support the *status quo* and its beneficiaries.² Pressure for increased equity, either in class or geographic terms, is regarded as destabilizing and therefore undesirable. Despite the focus upon the

² A similar bias was pointed out in critiques of behaviouralism in studies of western politics (Storing 1962), before these approaches became current in Third World studies.

capacity of the system to withstand pressure and survive, even that intellectual concern is also itself conservative.

That all social change was not progress was quickly shown in the 1960s. In an article influential among political scientists, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1963) showed that socio-economic change and movement often intensified what he called 'primordial loyalties', the ethnic markers of race, language, religion, caste and region. It became clear by the late 1960s that political mobilization can lead to violent political conflict, rather than democratic competition (Melson and Wolpe, eds 1971). When the available political rewards are finite and fixed and politics is seen as a zero-sum game then the presently dominant forces may try to perpetuate their control of the benefits of politics at the expense of the subordinate forces. Similarly, the present outgroup/minority/losers may use harsh tactics and strategies to try to reverse positions. So Third World politics is serious; in the words of the Australian folksingers, Redgum, 'If you don't fight, you lose!'

One result was the discrediting of civil politics and political parties. Rather than political development being an inevitable process which brings institutionalization, Huntington (1965) observed that political mobilization can occur without institutionalization. He argued that this led to what he called 'political decay', involving ultimately political violence, threatened or actual *coups d'etat*, secession and harsh praetorian politics. Having diagnosed this crisis of legitimacy, Huntington subsequently (1968) suggested restrictions upon the 'input' side of politics and participation, rather than concentration upon the 'outputs' - that is, the instigation of more authoritarian rule. For, as Dodd (1972) points out, increased participation must increase demands on a political system, which, while it is still developing, will overstretch its capacity before it has developed the specialized and centralized structures needed to cope with new demands. Dodd thus highlighted a contradiction in the very concept of political development.

By the end of the 1960s the optimistic vision of the political development/modernization school had been discredited if not disproved by events. Many democratic post-colonial regimes in Africa were frail, corrupt and lacked a popular base. They were being succeeded by military regimes in partnership with bureaucrats which, like their predecessors, were 'not on the whole tyrannical, but bumbling' (First 1970:465).

The political development concept was hard to 'operationalize' (E = use), especially at the local level. Very few studies utilized its concepts, the hopes of Bay (1967) notwithstanding. One such study was Hyden's (1969) work on the West Lake area in

rural Tanzania. Despite the TANU party's well-organized efforts at village-level political mobilization, Hyden's valiant attempt to measure factors such as mobilization and regime-legitimacy by questionnaire required tendentious interpretation, and his resulting book is both theoretically and empirically flimsy. As Hyden later noted (1980), with further experience he abandoned the modernization approach. Meanwhile, solid empirical studies in the British tradition continued (for example, Leys, ed. 1969). While in the field I found little guidance in the political development literature.

From the early 1970s many sociologists followed Latin American economists in tracing the international linkages behind the problems of Third World societies (Oxaal *et al.*, eds 1975). Studies of colonialism and decolonization provided sweeping generalizations about imperially induced dependency and the 'development of underdevelopment' at the periphery (Frank 1970). This increasingly complex and explicitly neo-Marxist literature analyzed the emergence of new capitalist classes in response to the introduction of a variety of capitalist modes of production (listed in Foster-Carter 1978). Convoluted 'professorial Marxist' (Parkin 1979:x) writing absorbed the energies of political scientists along with sociologists, geographers and others. They ignored the issues explored by the political development school, which they abused as liberal, bourgeois and positivist. There were few detailed case studies in the neo-Marxist mode - with Leys's (1975) analysis of post-colonial Kenya an honourable exception. Perhaps, after working through the theory, few had any time, funds or energy left for fieldwork. In a major revision of his Kenya study, which is highly relevant to the argument of this dissertation, Leys later explicitly rejected economic reductionism, and acknowledged having previously devalued the importance of precolonial social formations in the process of class formation in independent Kenya (Leys 1978).

For PNG studies, concepts of rural dependency and stratification appeared in a paper on 'terminal development' (Howlett 1973b), followed by an 1975 analysis of the formation of the big peasantry, an emerging rural elite, which Gerritsen (1981) identified as working through interest groups. Gerritsen alerted PNG's social scientists to class formation processes. From 1975 on I sought to confirm or disprove their relevance to Simbu politics. I concluded that factors of class (defined in Marxist economic terms) were not crucial to political activity, and indeed that political and economic positions were often determined by fortuitous factors such as education which controlled entry into the bureaucracy (as Sklar 1979 found in Africa). Class had not been mobilized in political conflict in Simbu. In PNG, as in Africa (Fatton 1988), there appears to be developing a ruling class, selected originally because of factors such as education, which does not have an autonomous economic base, but which uses resources derived from the state and used in patronage networks to sustain their position. It may be too soon in PNG to see if there

is some closure of access to this privileged ruling group and continuity amongst ruling elites. Yet members of this group do provide high quality educational advantages to their offspring, just as the first generation of university students were themselves often the children of colonial government workers, police and church leaders.³

The debate about class formation is relevant to Simbu, however, particularly since factors other than economic bases of class are now widely recognized. Shivji (1976), for example, argues the importance of what he calls the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' in Tanzania. Samoff (1979a; 1979b) and Sklar (1979) stress the importance of education and bureaucratic and political position (which are themselves in turn partly determined by education) in the entry of individuals into the colonial and post-colonial elites and dominant classes. Such factors have not been taken seriously into account in some of the neo-Marxist literature on PNG (Amarshi *et al* 1979; Fitzpatrick 1980).

Although more detailed empirical work on class formation in PNG is under way (Fahey 1984), and more sophisticated theoretical approaches have been spelt out (Stewart 1986), the theory is usually not married with a detailed exploration of current politics (even in Stewart's 1989 study of Goroka elections). Like Turner (1984), I have criticized in detail (Standish 1984a) the early work of two neo-Marxist writers, Donaldson and Good, on the Eastern Highlands, an area adjacent to Simbu. The politically relevant part of that argument is summarized now⁴ and a further critique of their work is given in Appendix 4 on stratification before independence.

Good and Donaldson's work has done little more than to categorize a small group of 'rich peasants' - some of whom also are, or are becoming rural capitalists. The arrival of a 'new administrative class', part of the 'educated petty bourgeoisie, is mentioned (Good 1979:152-58), but not discussed, however, nor is the political role or *modus operandi* of the rich peasants explained. However Good and Donaldson argue that the rich peasants dominate provincial and even national politics, and have tacit alliances with actors in the latter arena. Although Good once mentions 'regionalism' and 'tribalism' (1979:98), and with Donaldson probably correctly asserts that ethnicity and class interweave so that ethnicity can offer support for the rich peasants and rural capitalists (Good and Donaldson 1980: 42), these perceived interactions are not explored. They do not develop these hints on the role of ethnicity and tribalism⁵ or even of education and

3 As I noted while researching early student's attitudes (Standish 1966).

4 Their recent volume on agricultural production (Donaldson and Good 1988) reworks several of their earlier papers and has an even less political focus, so is not discussed here.

5 Based largely on work in Africa, Good (1975) regards the tribe as a colonial construct.

networks formed at school, in clubs and so on. Nor does Stewart (1989) explore bases of political action other than class, despite a passing reference to kinship, perhaps because of the central emphasis upon economic factors as determinant. A neo-Marxist, class-based interpretation of local politics is inadequate for Simbu, because it is unidimensional. The far wider range of factors involved in Simbu politics is the subject of this thesis.

While there may be embryonic classes in formation, and people who clearly operate in accord with their economic interests, and who sometimes act together with people sharing similar economic interests, as I demonstrate here, they do not often unite in politics and act as class members on behalf of those classes. All the bases for support used in political activity in rural areas must be examined, and in whose interests leaders act. This must be based upon an interpretation of what people actually do, rather than what a model prescribes they should do. The existing 'grand theory' did not address the analytical issues in local-level politics in 1970s Simbu.

APPENDIX 3

FIELD METHODS

As with much political anthropology, this study uses an extended-case or 'situational' method (van Velsen 1969). While the political dramas or situations it analyses occurred mostly in the provincial capital rather than in villages their observation nonetheless required close acquaintance with the actors and the cultural context. To study political change required lengthy field work - 27 months in Chimbu alone over nineteen visits between 1972 and 1987.

Some of my material is arranged in ways similar to those used by Bond in his study of decolonization in the small town of Uyombe in Zambia (1976). He uses an 'extended case method' and also presents his material through descriptions of 'situations' and 'events'. His study covers a considerable time depth and, significantly, he presents conclusions similar to mine about generational cleavage and the importance of education in different political generations.¹

Given my provincial focus, most of my data were collected in the provincial capital, Kundiawa. Usually when in remote corners of the province I stayed in men's houses or occasionally with Simbu and other national public servants, but usually I lived at an ANU field base among the Burukngaumo clan of the Naregu tribe at Bamugl hamlet. This forms part of the scattered Mintima 'village' located some 8 km west of Kundiawa township along the main Highlands Highway - which was renamed the Okuk Highway in 1986. My closest men friends in Bamugl most nights in my house discussed the day's events in village and town; occasionally I visited the Bamugl community men's house, or that in the Kombaku settlement of Yuagle where a councillor lived. My direct knowledge of Simbu village life and intra- and inter-clan affairs is largely based on this core experience, which profoundly influences my interpretation of village perceptions of provincial and national politics.

My principal research techniques were

- (a) personal observation of public events, sometimes with notes taken on the spot;
- (b) interviews with candidates, politicians and officials, noted in detail soon afterwards, sometimes with details noted during the talks or tape-recorded;

¹ These factors were identified for the Eastern Highlands of PNG by Uyassi (1978) and Pamela Denoon (1978) and, for Simbu, also by Brown (1979).

- (c) gathering the impressions of Simbu people and non-Simbu residents; and
- (d) noting comments as they arose in talks with village people around Chimbu.

Provincial level politics was conducted in the *lingua franca*, Tokpisin, and for interviews I used Tokpisin or English. Although I recognized enough Kuman language words to know the general topic of public speeches, vernacular speech was translated for me into Tokpisin by a field assistant or a local volunteer.

After two attempts at administering questionnaires, I abandoned this, the usual methodology of elite studies (Higley *et al.* 1979), as impractical. I chose not to conduct formal surveys of political attitudes or awareness for three reasons: cost, lack of time to organize, and shortage of suitable interviewers; the problems of sample selection and the difficulty in Simbu society of speaking privately with single individuals (conversations can become public group performances); and the danger that the questions themselves would influence opinion (cf. Edelman, 1972). When the level of awareness of events being studied, such as an election, was itself under scrutiny this last point was crucial.

Ordinary Simbu people tend to be careful not to make critical comments within the hearing of other Simbu, for fear of arousing hostility or other problems. Even an apparently factual question may not be a simple matter, because privacy is rare. Ask someone how many pigs he owns and any answer is likely to be of dubious value unless you see all the claimed pigs.² Similarly, there can also be some caution with outsiders, and a polite tendency to provide opinions thought to be acceptable to them (Foster 1965). The Gallup poll tradition does not reach peasant society.

By the time of the 1977 election I was well known and political actors and strangers alike often approached me for discussions in which I avoided giving opinions. So my research is informed by direct inputs from hundreds of people from all areas of the province and by observation over time of the expressive behaviour of thousands. The only measurable political behaviour was electoral voting, because usually in council or provincial assembly meetings votes were taken 'on the voices' or by a show of hands so quick that few details were recordable. Actual field conditions can pose compelling problems for research in the behaviouralist tradition of political science.

² He will probably owe more than he owns; his creditors may be listening, and be prompted to recall their debts.

Highlands politics is very often the process of assertion by the boasting, dominating male who thrusts himself into the limelight. This work takes a male's perspective by focusing on public politics beyond the village, which is effectively men's politics. This is almost unavoidable for a male person in a society notoriously deeply divided on gender lines (Meggitt 1964; A.M. Strathern 1972; Brown and Buchbinder 1976). Hence this study is inevitably part of what O'Brien calls the 'malestream', in that its 'subject matter reflects male concerns, deals with male activity and male ambitions and is *directed away from* issues involving, or of concern to, women' (cited in Theile 1986:30, Theile's emphasis). Some older women church leaders took a leading role in men's house discussions, but these were virtually the only discussions about politics I had with Simbu women, despite frequent contact as when tending their children's sores. My fieldwork was not *totally* directed away from issues concerning women, but its gender bias reflects my own culture and its era, as much as it does Simbu political culture.

APPENDIX 4

SIMBU STRATIFICATION BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

Social stratification implies continuity of wealth and status through time, preferably over generations. Variations in Simbu men's wealth have been noted by various observers, and villagers themselves are quite explicit on the economic differentials involved. Brown (1972:41) says that the Simbu have no ranking system for men, but recognize as the lowest status 'rubbish' or 'nothing' (*yogo*) men. The biggest category consists of those whom Brown calls 'ordinary' men' (T = '*man nating*'). These solid, respectable citizens each have one wife, a house for her and a few pigs, and take part in festivals. The term *yagl wagai* was given to me in Mintima for a solid citizen whose talk is sound; the literal translation is 'a good man'.

Above them Brown distinguishes those 'prominent men' who take a very active part in various activities, who number perhaps 20 per cent, and finally 'big men', the top 5 per cent (Brown 1972:41-2). She does not discuss the economic base of such prominent and big men, or, in this context, the number of their wives, but rather concentrates on their political roles. Brown's proportions, incidentally, are similar to the figures the missionary Vicedom collected in the Hagen area for polygynists, men with one wife and the bachelors whom he equates with 'slaves' (A.J. Strathern 1971:206). Andrew Strathern, like others, rightly warns against an automatic equation of polygyny with political status, but it is one indicator of status used by Simbu themselves. Additional wives produce wealth which enables the external exchanges and intra-group generosity expected of a leader which provide prestige. Asked about the names for prominent men, Mintima informants used the expression *diragl pondo* for a man of wealth, particularly shell valuables and feather plume headdresses. *Pondo erenongo*, they said, was the term used for someone with lots of *bisnis*, producing things which can be eaten (including vegetable foods and pigs) and cash crops for sale. Their terms for leaders are given in Chapter III. They thus differentiated between different kinds of wealth and status, and their associated prestige.

At the bottom of the hierarchy are those men with no wife, no pigs (or none they are in charge of), no houses and no operative gardens. Mature unmarried men are today in Tokpisin called '*rabis man*' (E = rubbish men) and are often regarded as lazy and worthless. They do not participate in exchanges. As in early colonial times, and before,

such men are often today attached permanently to big men as workers and supporters. Brown also mentions that they number no more than 10 per cent of men; many are attached dependants of those 10 per cent of big men or their kin. Nilles says they were 'mostly feeble-minded members of the community', and adds that their services were rewarded with food and shelter, although sometimes their employer 'bought' them wives (Nilles 1953:22 and pers. comm. 1976). However, it is unlikely that truly feeble-minded or badly crippled men could marry, or even do much effective work. Reay (1959) says that in Kuma such men are looked after in their sister's household. I knew one Simbu deaf-mute who did 'women's work' (gardening and child-care) for a prominent family, effectively as a servant, and I have seen in Naregu tied work of the kind Nilles described. This involved non-agnates who might be avoiding some sort of strife at home. It differs from the large and cheerful 'working bees' which leaders occasionally organize and reward with a meal, or the mutual assistance arrangements between individuals involving the reciprocal exchange of labour.

Social stratification has been discussed recently in the Highlands context using a neo-Marxist paradigm (Good 1979; Donaldson and Good 1981). They appear to argue that contemporary economic differentiation and status differentials result from the interaction of traditional (meaning precolonial) society with the capitalist mode of production under colonial rule (meaning imperialism). Such differentials are not new in the Highlands, as noted in some political science writing (Gerritsen 1981; Standish 1973c; 1976b; 1976d; 1978) as well as ethnographic studies. Differentials did not result from imperialism, although they were deliberately heightened by some officials from the earliest colonial days (Ian Downs in PMB 607).

Reay noted the presence in Kuma of paid foreign [guest] workers from Chimbu in early colonial times, which was then a long established practice (pers. comm. 1976; Reay 1984). This was also described contemporaneously in central and eastern Chimbu by Patrol Officer B. McBride (1952): 'Most wealthy natives employ at least one native and in some cases two or three. Most village officials have, or have had, these employees, but still work in the gardens themselves'. At that time such paid work by men from other language groups had been under way for some years, and was no doubt facilitated by pacification. It continues.

In areas under intense government influence in the late 1940s the increased availability of shell for payment helped these apparently explicit transactions. At that stage the missions used trade goods, not shell, so the source was the government, which had deflated the value of shell greatly (I. Hughes 1977b). McBride said the workers were happy, and some even joined their employer's household. This occurred beyond

the area from which the government station staff had bought foods with shell. The increased production was incorporated into traditional exchanges (McBride 1952). In this way village officials, and others with shell, converted their rewards from government activities into prestige credits. This was an adaptation of a precolonial practice and was not capitalist. The utilisation in the local political economy of state resources, rather than of capital or income based initially upon control of the means of production, continues in Simbu.

The primacy of the state in social change and class formation processes in Papua New Guinea is not emphasized in their early work by Good and Donaldson, although it is perhaps overemphasized by Fitzpatrick (1980) in his nationwide study. Good explicitly follows Amin in saying that peasant societies develop where traditional society is sufficiently hierarchical that certain strata of the old leadership have enough social power to appropriate large tracts of tribal land (Good 1979:109 citing Amin 1974:366-67). Donaldson and Good appear to follow Leys in his middle, Marxist phase (1975). Their attempt to integrate hierarchies into their Highlands model is inadequate. They assert that

the present ruling class in the Eastern Highlands grew out of a long and complex interaction of pre-capitalist and capitalist forces and social relations of production. Notably in the Highlands, it was big-man control of land and labour [*sic*] which enabled him to "seize the time", to take advantage of the (limited) opportunities presented to him by colonialism. The security of many members of the present ruling class is rooted within the ancillary "traditional" mode of production. (Donaldson and Good 1981:167)

These assertions are not based on extensive field work, not even on the detailed fieldwork of others (such as Howlett 1962 and Grossman 1979).

In fact documented evidence does not exist for such statements regarding the Eastern Highlands, not even in subsequent work (Stewart 1986). In the Eastern Highlands, as around Simbu, a man's rights to use pockets of land owned by the clan were usually passed to his sons, and the continued existence of these rights depended upon him utilizing the land. Land could be transferred between individuals, free or for a consideration, temporarily or permanently. Howlett's (1962) intensive study does not mention differential land holdings by big men, or their control of land. Grossman's (1979) study on 'cattle bosses' in Kainantu also does not support Donaldson and Good's assertion.¹

¹ Grossman (1979) indicates that cattle bosses gained control of land in the name of groups, specifically for cattle projects. This did not cancel previous rights of individuals to the land fenced

In 1958, before coffee plantings dominated central Simbu, Brown and Brookfield found in Naregu wide variations in land holdings, from 0.08 to 2.44 acres per individual plus dependants (1959:30-1). This was nowhere near the scale of the activities which Good and Donaldson imply. Brookfield says he and Brown did not compare land holdings with political status or other wealth (personal communication 1975). Criper's field area suffered even more acute land shortage. He points out that a big-man with several wives will have more dependants to feed, and more sons upon whom eventually to settle land, so his holdings can fragment into small units (Criper 1967). As noted in Chapter III, Bergmann stated that leaders did not own or control the land. More recently, much has depended on a man's energy.² Nor do Hide's Sinasina data support Donaldson and Good (pers. comm. 1980). In Simbu, clan members may have helped the more prominent and dynamic individuals to fence land for major cattle projects, sometimes to assert clan ownership over poor quality land that was, or had been, under dispute. However, some cattle projects were broken up in the later 1970s when the contributors of land objected to the damage being done by cattle to the soils, and they recovered their parcels of land. Land contributions are thus conditional.

New wealth through cattle and coffee are discussed elsewhere in this study, but in the absence of accurate measurements of land holdings before the new projects, or pre-existing records of statements that precolonial leaders could control land for themselves, or even proof that it was the existing leaders who took control of land rather than a new generation of activist businessmen, Donaldson and Good's generalisation is unjustified. Although Howlett has conducted more recent fieldwork around Goroka, and Stewart (1986) has investigated the new 20 hectare coffee schemes, the contemporary situation there has not been described in ways which support their assertion.

The picture is less clear on the matter of labour, control of which can be in part a political matter, and is imbued with complex social obligations such as indebtedness on account of bridewealth. Nilles (1953:21) says that fellow clansmen relieved the early village officials of the ordinary work of Simbu farmers, and he indicates that this was new. As mentioned, some labour arrangements went beyond the scope of kinship connections and were basically economic. Indeed, many Simbu businessmen and politicians today prefer not to employ relatives, in order to avoid what they see as excessive demands and conflicting obligations. Brown in the mid-1970s noted that

fenced in. Some cattle bosses already had high stature, while others used the cattle project to gain prestige.

² Ian Hughes (1966) reports one energetic individual in Kere, Sinasina, gaining control of a wide range of gardens just as coffee came to his area. Hughes does not indicate that he had high political status. Rather, he was an unusually acquisitive and energetic man.

many young Simbu had used their education to gain well paid government employment, thus widening the sources of prestige and status. Interestingly, she said 'There seems to be a growing class of business and professional people who take little or no part in group ceremonies or political activities' (1979:113). The opposite process is common, however. 'Power at the local and national levels is increasingly used to reinforce economic status leading to the emergence of a rural elite as well as an urban elite', with 'certain government agencies' seen as 'the main stimulus' (Howlett, *et al.* 1976:6). This study give instances of these mechanisms, but more sustained research is required on the precolonial and colonial situation, as well as on contemporary society, before any firm conclusions can be made about links between stratification and the state.

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