

Chapter Four

Clan-Finding, Clan-Making and the Politics of Identity in a Papua New Guinea Mining Project

Dan Jorgensen

At Independence in 1975 the famously diverse peoples of Papua New Guinea (PNG) became citizens of a country without any particular sense of national identity apart from an unevenly shared colonial history. Creating such an identity was one of the tasks the state felt obliged to shoulder from the beginning, and adopting the language of tradition was one means of doing so. While there is a rhetoric of localised 'custom' (*kastam*) in popular discourse, the state takes care to package its version of tradition as a bundle of values specific to no particular place but putatively shared by all. Dubbed the 'Melanesian Way' (Narokobi 1980), this generic tradition forms the basis of a post-colonial ideology that seeks to consolidate or overlook differences in the interests of creating a national culture (Philibert 1986, Otto 1997).¹

Much has been written about the formation of national cultures in the Pacific (for example: Keesing 1989; LiPuma 1995; Wanek 1996: 111–33), and I do not intend to add to this literature here. Instead, I am more interested in examining what happens when the state's ideas about tradition enter into policy and its implementation. In particular, I wish to show how the articulation of the ideology of tradition with local practices turns on the twin issues of legibility and recognition, and how this conjunction plays out in the formation of local identities.

In his book, *Seeing Like a State*, Scott (1998) argues that a precondition for the implementation of state plans is the establishment of what he calls 'legibility'. Legibility enables systematic state intervention in the affairs of its citizens, and creating legibility entails state simplifications of social practices in the form of a standard grid whereby these can be recorded and monitored. Originating from above and from the centre, legibility requires the invention of units — citizens, trees, houses, villages, and so on — that are rendered visible in the interests of

¹ In this respect the official discourse on PNG tradition differs from the notion of *adat* (custom), as elaborated by the Dutch in Indonesia, by taking pains to avoid features that would distinguish one set of citizens from another — a fact that has an unexpected relevance for the matters discussed here.

control. The reciprocal of legibility from the point of view of those affected by state projects is recognition. Recognition turns upon the ways in which a state's citizens make themselves visible to the state in a way that gives them some purchase on the state's decisions and operations.

With the issues of legibility and recognition in mind, I begin this paper with a brief account of tradition as formulated in PNG national discourse, drawing attention to certain of its more important ideological characteristics. I move from this to a consideration of the ways in which official tradition takes shape as policy with regard to the resource development projects that have become such a prominent feature of recent PNG history. I then turn to the examination of the dynamics of legibility and recognition in the context of a particular mining project and how these figure in the production of new identities. Finally, I conclude with a short survey of what we know about similar processes elsewhere before offering some observations on what this tells us about the role of state-formulated tradition as a guide to determining rights in land for the purpose of concluding mining agreements.

Development, The Melanesian Way, and The Eight Aims

Whatever PNG lacked by way of common tradition at Independence was more than made up by an enthusiasm for development (*development*) in all regions of the country, and many of the new state's claims to legitimacy were based on promises that all Papua New Guineans could expect development to come their way. If one were to ask *where* the Melanesian Way led, the answer would be, *to development*, but on authentic Papua New Guinean terms. While short on specifics, the notion of a Melanesian path to development did more than simply espouse an essentialised identity based on values of community and the continued viability of tradition: it claimed modernity as a Melanesian project. Thus the end of Australian rule did not mean the end of the prospects of development that had figured so prominently in Australia's own justification of its tenure in PNG, and dreams awakened in the colonial era would not vanish, even if the colonialists did.

In attempting to reconcile generic notions of tradition with modernist hopes,² the ideology of the Melanesian Way also grappled with one of the worries that preoccupied planners and politicians in the state's early days, namely, the tension between egalitarian goals and the reality that development often produces inequality. A solution adopted by the Constitutional Planning Committee was to turn the platitudes of the Melanesian Way into policy guidelines in the formulation of the 'Eight Aims' (or Eight Point Plan). Widely publicised (for example, Somare 1974) and incorporated into the Constitution, the Eight Aims set forth principles meant to guide development through the use of 'Papua New

² What Geertz (1973: 240–1) described as the essentialism-epochalism dilemma.

Guinean methods'. Espousing a populist egalitarian ethos, the document calls for

more equal distribution of economic benefits, including movement toward equalisation of incomes among people and toward equalisation of services among different areas of the country ... [and] an emphasis on small-scale artisan, service, and business activity, relying where possible on typically Papua New Guinean forms of organization (CPC 1974 cited in Fitzpatrick 1980: 203).

Critics have been quick to point out the romanticised myths underlying this ideology (Filer 1990: 9), and many have noted its tendency to mask growing inequalities between rural people and the national elite (Fitzpatrick 1980: 202ff). It is, however, fair to say that the early post-Independence era was marked by an attempt to realise the romantic ideal by implementing these principles in terms of a 'small is beautiful' development policy.

Under the aegis of this commitment to agrarian populism, the state launched a series of schemes promoting rural smallholder production. Such policies did little to generate the revenues needed to finance government programs, however, and a World Bank report in the late 1970s laid the groundwork for a major shift towards capital-intensive enclave projects to develop the country's mineral resources. From the beginning of the 1980s onwards, the state's development strategy mandated the inauguration of numerous mining projects that were to become the mainstay of the national economy.³

Mining, Tradition, and Legibility

The shift to large-scale mining development marked a departure from the egalitarian program of the Eight Aims, and fostered regional disparities between prosperous mining enclaves and an increasingly impoverished rural sector. Despite this, traces of the ideology of the Melanesian Way remain in key aspects of the state's dealings with its citizens in areas affected by such projects. The role of the state in mining projects is a dual one in which it strives to deliver a secure contract environment while safeguarding local interests.⁴ It is in this latter capacity that the ideology of tradition enters into the picture by providing the outlines of a template for establishing legibility.

PNG law declares subterranean mineral rights to be a state prerogative, but this doctrine has had to come to terms with the fact that virtually all land in

³ The major exception to this pattern is the Bougainville mine at Panguna, which had already become a key revenue earner by this time. Problems surrounding this mine later led to a rebellion and war that resulted in closure of the mine and caused a range of other problems still being addressed through the Bougainville Peace Process.

⁴ In recent years the state's role has been further complicated by the fact that it has acted as an equity partner in mining projects, giving rise to more than a suspicion of conflict of interest.

PNG is held under customary forms of tenure — a situation that obliges the state to broker negotiations with local people in order to identify ‘landowners’. In this climate the state has been at pains to formulate a template of customary land tenure informed by its ideology of tradition. The logic underlying this approach is best summed up in a recent review under the imprimatur of PNG’s Law Reform Commission. After sketching the principles of segmentary lineage systems familiar to most anthropologists, the author concludes that:

In Papua New Guinea landownership is vested in descent groups — tribal or clan segments. All clan members are co-owners. This gives individuals the right to use land but not to alienate it. Thus, land ownership is part of the identity of a group. It is an inalienable right, passed from the ancestors into the guardianship of successive generations (Toft 1997: 14).

This generic model of clan-based land tenure guards against worries over land alienation by calming fears that local people will be dispossessed by transnational capital because it ties land rights to traditional groups. Ideologically, it fosters a manageable contract environment while affirming tradition, and that means development in the Melanesian Way. The strategy is to mediate between two kinds of corporate entities — mining companies and landowning clans — and its technical prerequisite is to establish the legibility of customary tenure by making clans visible.

Legibility and Recognition in Nenataman

As Filer has pointed out, a popular ideology of landownership has become a general idiom through which local people make claims against the state for everything from compensation to the provision of government services (Filer 1997, 1998; see also Ballard 1997). Where mining projects are contemplated or are already underway, the discourse of landownership has provided local people with a powerful bargaining chip in demanding the restoration or extension of dwindling government services, by raising the possibility that they can block projects by withholding consent until at least some of their demands are met. In such a context discussions that at first sight appear to be about property must be understood to be at least as much about the broad political relationship between the state and its disgruntled citizens (Jackson 1989, 1991).

This point brings us to an important feature of mining negotiations, for landowners’ issues are often less about threats to their enjoyment of land than securing recognition that will confer access to benefits that — it is fervently hoped — will flow from mining operations once they are underway (King 1997; Filer 1998). The stakes for local people increase when possible royalties, compensation payments, employment and business development are added to the mix of anticipated benefits.

This context sets up a situation in which there is a tension between the state's need to identify clearly legible landholding units and local people's efforts to establish recognition of their claims to a share in the wealth generated by mining operations. That tension can be illustrated with reference to the proposed Nena/Frieda mining project.⁵

Situated on the boundary between the East and West Sepik provinces, the Nena/Frieda prospect is located in a valley known locally as Nenataman — a thickly forested valley in the rugged foothill ranges south of the Sepik River (Figure 4-1). As with many other mining projects, the mineral deposits at issue are found near the top of local mountains, some of which lie along border zones between adjacent ethnic groups (Figure 4-2).

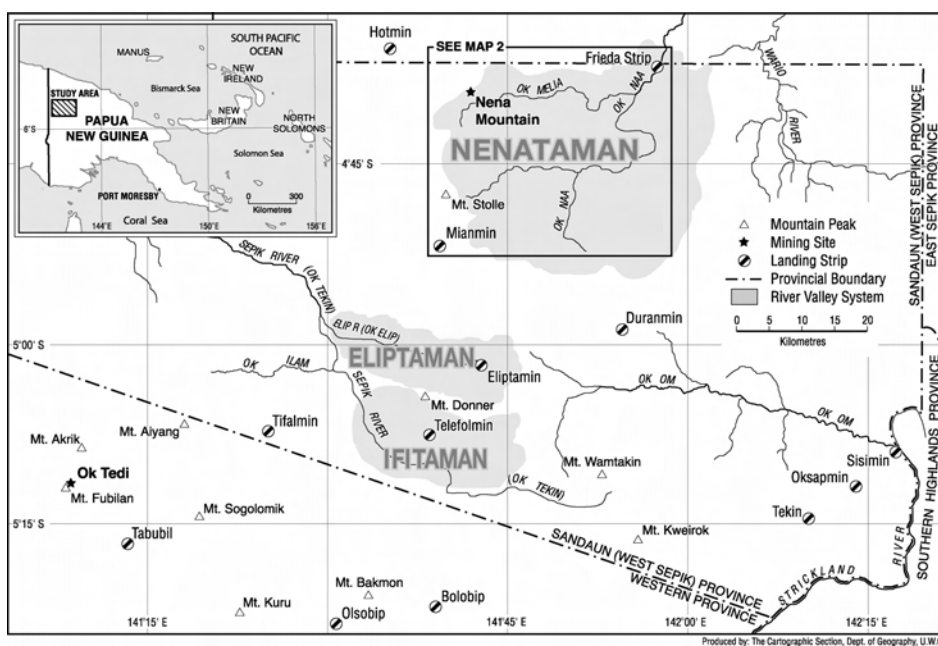


Figure 4-1: Nenataman location map.

Not surprisingly, this location has given rise to disputes about whose land this is — a situation intensified and complicated by the pattern of land use and the history of settlement in the region. Nenataman is inhabited by a scattered and ethnically mixed population of shifting cultivators who supplement gardening with wide-ranging hunting, collecting, and sago making. The valley has been the site of dramatic shifts in settlement and population for at least 150 years, when Telefolmin from the south began expanding into Nenataman at the

⁵ This project is presently (2006) on hold, and its future is unclear. In this regard it is in fact very much like most other mining projects whose course is rarely certain, especially at the outset. Despite the fact that a mine has yet to materialise at Nena, the dynamics of the present case are instructive in understanding other projects currently on line.

expense of the original inhabitants, the Untoumin. Over a span of about 50 years the Untoumin were raided by Telefolmin and the nearby Miyanmin with the result that most were annihilated and the remainder either scattered or incorporated as captives into Telefol and Miyan settlements. After the destruction of the Untoumin at the turn of the century, Telefolmin and Miyanmin raided each other intermittently until just before pacification around the end of the 1950s. At present, the main settlements in the Nenataman area include: the Telefol villages of Wabia and Ok Isai; Miyan hamlets belonging to Wameimin parish; Bapi, the sole surviving Paiyamo village; and a handful of small Owininga hamlets to the northwest.

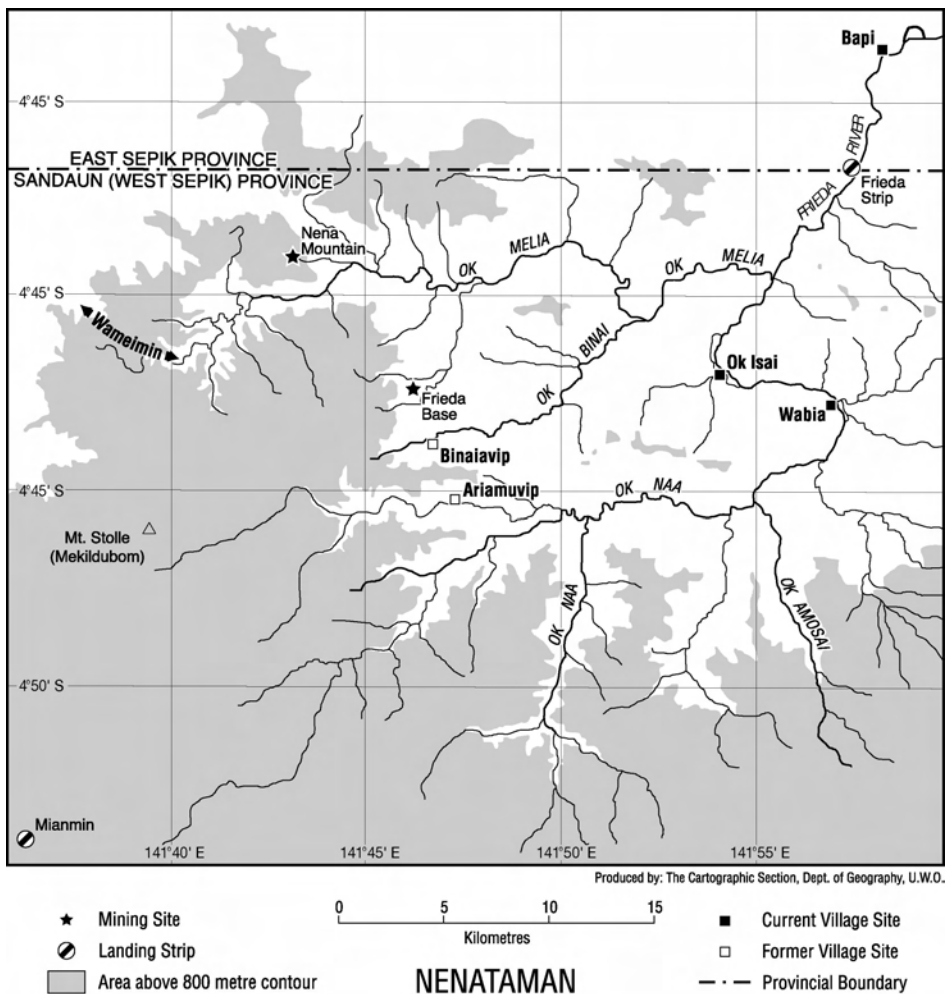


Figure 4-2: Topographical and site map of Nenataman.

The fact that Nenataman has been a contested zone for most of its known history, and the location of the main mineral deposits along its borderlands, are only two of several factors blurring attempts to demarcate territorial boundaries. For Telefolmin of Wabia and Ok Isai, the situation is further complicated by the fact that they settled the valley as colonists assisted by Telefolmin from the Eliptaman and Ifitaman valleys to the south (Figure 4-1). Local ideas of entitlement permit claims of access to the descendants of those who fought to clear the valley's previous inhabitants, and Telefolmin in Eliptaman and Ifitaman now invoke these principles to press their interests.

This general fluidity is accentuated by aspects of Miyan and Telefol social organisation, for although relatively fixed villages provide the structural backbone of settlement, these villages competed for personnel and were relatively open in their recruitment. Kinship is reckoned cognatically, and as it was always possible for individuals to claim affiliation along a diverse range of ties, it is arguable that this kind of organisation facilitated a kind of demographic warfare that was endemic to the region before contact (Jorgensen 1997; Gardner 1998, 2004). Finally, men employed in mineral exploration sometimes tended stands of sago in the prospect area, and Telefolmin recognise such activity as entitling one to claims in the area worked.

Although this untidy picture is probably not unusual for a number of areas in PNG, it represents a nightmare for those interested in drawing lines, circumscribing claims and identifying landowner groups. When it became clear that the prospects of mining in the area were good, the government, the developer (Highlands Gold, now Highlands Pacific), and the recently formed Frieda Mine Landowners' Association⁶ sought to clarify the situation by mobilising the apparatus of legibility: making maps, conducting censuses and collecting genealogies.⁷

Both the government and the developer were hoping for some sort of solution to the apparently intractable problems associated with determining claims, but local fears of failing to gain recognition fuelled an increasingly contested atmosphere as the prospect of being excluded from a benefits settlement loomed larger on local horizons. What emerged in response to attempts to create legibility was a strategy of seeking recognition through a series of experiments in clanship. Here it is important to underscore the novel nature of the enterprise, since Telefolmin have no clans.

⁶ The name of the association draws upon the official name of the main river draining the Nenataman valley, the Frieda River. Highlands Gold subsequently opted to change the designation of the site to Nena in an attempt to recognise local usage.

⁷ Don Gardner, George Morren, Rune Paulsen and I worked as consultants on this project (Jorgensen 1997).

Telefolmin from Eliptaman and Ifitaman pressed their claims by virtue of genealogical ties to the current inhabitants of Nenataman, driven in part by the obvious significance genealogical material held for the developers and the government. Some Nenataman Telefolmin began talking about 'clans' (*klen*) defined by 'pure'⁸ patrilineal ancestry, and others went a step further by insisting that only those claimants with an unbroken line of descent from the original raiders on *both* paternal *and* maternal sides should qualify as landowners.

These local attempts at gaining recognition through clanship failed for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that these solutions would have excluded sizeable numbers of Nenataman's current inhabitants from any settlement. In the end, however, a novel resolution was proposed: the resurrection of the Untoumin as a clan. Spurred perhaps by the exclusionary claims of the partisans of 'pure' Telefol descent and invoking their own claims of prior occupation, a coalition of people descended from Untou captives declared themselves to be a 'clan' and successfully gained recognition as the registered landowners in the Nena/Frieda prospect. The resulting grouping embraces people otherwise identified as Telefolmin, Miyanmin, or Paiyamo.⁹ As such, the Untoumin might be said to comprise a peculiarly 'international' sort of clan, since they include speakers of three different languages drawn from two unrelated language families.

The reinvention of the Untoumin has several incongruities, not the least of which is that as a putatively customary group, the Untoumin have no distinct body of shared custom nor any sense of common identity prior to the search for landowners at Nena. Further, with the apparent exception of claims to land upon which mineral deposits have been identified, the Untoumin seem to have no property in common.¹⁰ While common descent names were sometimes recognised across ethnic boundaries, these never formed the basis for any kind of group and entailed no sense of common interests.¹¹

Whether or not the Untoumin are to be regarded as a 'traditional' entity, their recognition as landowners poses more immediate political problems in the project area. The reincarnated Untoumin are dispersed among several villages

⁸ The English word 'pure' had become adopted into the local vocabulary of discussions about land and mining — an interesting development in its own right.

⁹ The latter resided in Bapi village (Figure 4-1) and were putatively related to the Untoumin.

¹⁰ It is important to note that claims over land for purposes of mining have had no discernible effect on land use for traditional purposes such as gardening.

¹¹ For example, the Miyan Temselten are said to be 'the same' as the Telefol Atemkayakmin, a claim based on a perception of cognate features of the names themselves (from *atem*, a kind of frog) and suggestions that these commonalities derive from shared ancestry in the remote past. In warfare it was permissible for Telefol Atemkayakmin to kill and eat Miyan Temselten, and vice versa. By contrast, Telefol custom categorically rejected the possibility of cannibalism among Telefolmin or, indeed, bloodshed (though this occasionally took place). The notion that Temselten and Atemkayakmin shared common land rights by virtue of a shared name would have been as unthinkable in pre-colonial times as it is today.

but form the whole of no community. Put differently, the postulated Untou clan asserts differential claims by inscribing a division between 'members' and their co-villagers.¹² As a consequence, this version of clanship runs the risk of destabilising any broad consensus on mining agreements by excluding neighbours and kin from entitlements in each of the communities where so-called Untoumin live — thus ensuring that each village in the project area is internally divided between 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

Despite these difficulties, however, the Untou solution offers definite attractions from the point of view of mining developers and the state. It promises to transcend the ethnic divisions between Telefolmin, Miyanmin and their neighbours — divisions that have shaped contention over claims to Nenataman. Further, the fact that membership in the clan is genealogically fixed eases worries about the vagueness of defining landowners and beneficiaries. From the corporate point of view, limiting entitlements is necessary to limit liabilities. Finally, while PNG land courts have failed to settle on whether conquest or original occupation should receive priority in land claims (Zorn 1992; Westermarck 1997; Marco 2000), the Untou solution has the appeal of respectable antiquity by reaching back to a past pre-dating the arrival of any of the currently extant groups — a notional 'Nenataman Ground Zero'. Viewed from the perspective of anxious developers in the present, this holds out the prospect of locating a solution to the distribution of benefits in the distant past — an impulse that clearly owes much to the desire to avoid the unpredictable hazards of contemporary mining politics.

Clanship as Legible Tradition

One of the ironies of the Untou solution is that it is more likely to meet the needs of some claimants for recognition than it is to ensure a secure contractual environment for the mine: far from recognising something one might be tempted to call 'customary land law', it tacitly endorses the creation of politicised identities and attendant drawing of factional lines. This is ultimately the unintended outcome of policies conceived in the light of the ideology of the Melanesian Way. As a version of the Melanesian Way writ small, the search for 'traditional landowners' imagines a depoliticised world in which disagreements about mining entitlements have already been settled in advance through the customary usages of the ancestors.

¹² Although I lack the space to develop the point here, one of the muddles nouveau Untou identity poses is this: the claim that they are the original landowners is countered by the view of others that Untoumin were hosted and sheltered by Telefol and Miyan victors, whose readiness to incorporate Untou women and children into their families enabled their survival. The point is obviously a contentious one.

Whether as national ideology or as doctrine governing mining agreements, such ideas have a distinctly mythical quality.¹³ Components of this myth are the notion that the various parties entering into such arrangements do so with a minimal disruption of local cultural and social forms. But the state's commitment to customary tenure is framed in terms of the state's own ideas of what customary tenure looks like. This is the presumption of clanship — the idea that land is traditionally held by descent groups identified as clans — and this is the crucial part of the template that renders local land tenure legible (Filer 1997: 165; Gabut 2000). Finding landowners thus becomes a matter of *finding clans*. For local people success in the mining game depends upon transforming the fluid history of occupation in Nenataman into legal recognition of legitimate customary title. This is an exercise in the creation of legal fictions fulfilling the state's need to delineate landowners for the purposes of concluding mining agreements, and a solution hinges upon formulating identities in a way that satisfies the state's interests in legibility by *making clans that the state can 'find'*.

In Nenataman local people invented clans — indeed, they invented several varieties of them — in a way calculated to match the expectations of the government and the mine developer, albeit in ways far removed from traditional ideas about the relation between land rights and collective identities. But the Nenataman case is not an isolated anomaly, as a reading of other instances in similar circumstances reveals (see Golub, this volume).

Official preferences for defining land rights through clanship show a remarkable ability to elicit local responses that produce landowning clans on demand. For example, among the Onabasulu of Mount Bosavi, Ernst found that previously fluid identities had been crystallised in objectified 'clans' tailored to the needs of the state and multinationals engaged in resource development. Designed to position their members advantageously vis-à-vis rival claimants to benefits arising from the Kutubu oil project, these clans are 'largely an artifact of a certificate-based incorporation process' and do not predate the era of petroleum development (Ernst 1999: 88). Writing of the Foi, who are also candidates for benefits arising from the Kutubu oil project, Weiner discusses the effects of the same incorporation process:

The Foi were ... forced to adhere to the convention of incorporation in order to be in a position to deal with both the government and Chevron Niugini. The effect of this is to rigidify the boundaries of a social entity whose most centrally important feature was its porousness and flexibility (Weiner 1998: 10–1).

Such processes are even more striking in cases where there is no system of traditional descent groupings of any kind. For example, from within the Nena

¹³ See Filer (1990) on popular myths surrounding the Bougainville rebellion.

project impact area, the Sawiyanoos of the Left May River traditionally have no clans, lineages, or other such groups (Guddemi 1997: 634). Yet Guddemi reports that among the Sawiyanoos a flexible land tenure system built around a diverse range of cognatic and other relations has been reframed in less than a decade in terms of principles of patrilineal descent: in response to mineral exploration, rival claimants have produced new kinds of arguments about land and are generating ad hoc patrilineages in the process (ibid: 636). While he is careful not to suggest that such views are illegitimate, Guddemi points out that the emphasis on patrilineality represents a hardening of lines and a closing off of a spectrum of claims that were customarily recognised in the pre-mining era, and he argues that a key role in this shift is played by government officers whose preference for patrilineal descent is all too evident. In the words of one man, 'I used to run around on the land of my wives, but I stopped doing that when the government explained that it was rubbish' (ibid: 640). So it is that while there have been no formal negotiations concerning mining and land rights in the Left May, the Sawiyanoos' formulation has changed 'as official ideologies begin to intervene in the ways land is used and thought about' (ibid: 641).¹⁴ The competition to have one's claims to potentially lucrative compensation arrangements recognised has tipped the scales in favour of the creation of corporate descent groups where none had existed before.

Further afield, Hviding (1993) describes a system of 'representational kinship' concocted by New Georgians around Marovo Lagoon in negotiations with a mineral exploration company. Consciously departing from their flexible pattern of land rights through 'highly pluriform principles' (ibid: 803), local people produced simplified models of descent-based landownership in the interests of facilitating recognition of their claims (see also McDougall 2005). Similarly, Burt (1994) reports that among the Kwara'ae of Malaita, local people found themselves under strong pressure to formulate land tenure in terms of membership in unilineal descent groups, despite a fundamentally cognatic kinship orientation. Although no mining activity was at issue in this case, it seems clear that in the Solomons too, governments prefer clans.

In these and similar cases it seems evident that the state-mandated machinery of legibility calls into being what one might call 'special purpose clans'. Yet surely there is something strange in all this. Much of what we know from detailed land tenure studies in Melanesia suggests that an untidy jumble of multiple overlapping claims is at least as common as clearly demarcated clan estates with similarly unambiguous lists of members (Lawrence 1967; Ogan 1971; Burt 1994). Despite this, I would argue that the state favours an image of clan-based tenure because such a view combines the ideological virtues of the Melanesian Way

¹⁴ Guddemi makes reference to a paper on mining and land rights by the East Sepik Province's Assistant Secretary for Lands, who claims a generality for the practice of 'Patriarch lineage' (ibid: 641).

with the attractions of a lawyerly desire for clarity. As part of the matrix of legibility, the presumption of clanship embodies a fantasy of a world in which once-and-for-all determinations of rights and commitments are possible without the need for continual readjustments to shifting political alignments.

It is not hard to understand the appeal of such an imagined world, particularly in view of PNG's rocky history of landowner-developer relations in the mining sector. But the presumption of clanship and its simplifications have not always made things easier, as witnessed by the daunting problems of distribution at Kutubu (Weiner 1998), Hides/Gobe (Kameata 2000; Marco 2000) or Porgera (Biersack 1999: 276–7).

Conclusion

Papua New Guineans have proven to be adept at fulfilling the expectations of legibility, and seem quite capable of inventing clans if they turn out not to have any to begin with. While such expedients can give rise to tensions with potentially explosive results, as I have suggested in the case of Nenataman, it must be admitted that dissension over the distribution of mining benefits can arise in any number of ways. Unsystematic tracking of the PNG mining scene suggests to me that those left out of formal settlements seem to have a way of making their needs felt (for example, Mount Kare), and are often capable of pursuing alternate avenues of redress. Likewise, Golub (this volume) argues that insisting too doggedly on fidelity to traditional organisational forms may, at Porgera at any rate, miss the point, since the real problem may be how to forge an effective bridge between the needs of local people and developers (see also Goldman, this volume). Taking such factors into consideration suggests that invented clans may be serviceable as an element in a kind of organisational Pidgin for PNG's mining industry. It does, however, seem prudent to caution against forgetting that such exercises may produce bridges that are too rickety and jerry-rigged to bear much weight, particularly if the cost of cutting a deal is the creation of a pool of dissatisfied neighbours who are unlikely to view their exclusion as legitimate. Invoking notions of tradition or custom will carry little weight if we lose sight of the fact that clan-finding is often ineluctably bound to clan-making.

In an important paper hearkening back to the days of anthropological debates on loose structure, Roy Wagner challenged the notion that there are social groups in any meaningful sense in the New Guinea Highlands.¹⁵ Instead, he argued that local people use names as a form of social creativity to generate sociality, shifting their application as circumstances warrant. He also said that:

¹⁵ See also Keen (1995, 2000) who provides an excellent critique of Western group-based metaphors for identity in an Australian context. See Gumbert (1981) for an early discussion of the mischief anthropological models of groups caused in terms of Indigenous land claims.

If we approach the matter with the outright intention of finding groups or with an unanalyzed assumption that groups of one sort or another are essential to human life and culture, then nothing will keep us from finding groups (Wagner 1974: 102–3).

Insofar as he is right, we can count on two things: it will always prove possible to find clans (or other such groups) if one tries hard enough, particularly if local people have a stake in making this possible; and such entities are likely to prove less stable and substantial than government officials (or mining executives) might like. Reconfiguring identities may turn out to be more traditional than we are likely to credit, but this lesson should not be misread: as the history of Nenataman demonstrates, traditional times were times in which identities, communities and whole populations came and went with breathtaking rapidity. This is scant comfort for those who hope that looking to the past will resolve disputes about who is entitled to what, for nobody knows better than Melanesians that the past is almost infinitely arguable. To the extent that local people are able to achieve recognition by fabricating new versions of who they are, the Melanesian Way may indeed be alive and well, but in a way guaranteed to raise questions, rather than settle them.

References

- Ballard, C., 1997. 'It's the Land, Stupid! The Moral Economy of Resource Ownership in Papua New Guinea.' In S. Toft (ed.), op. cit.
- Biersack, A., 1999. 'Porgera — Whence and Whither?' In C. Filer (ed.), *Dilemmas of Development: the Social and Economic Impact of the Porgera Gold Mine 1989–1994*. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press.
- Brown P. and A. Ploeg (eds), 1997. *Change and Conflict in Papua New Guinea Land and Resource Rights*. Special Issue 7(4) of *Anthropological Forum*.
- Burt, B., 1994. 'Land in Kwara'ae and Development in Solomon Islands.' *Oceania* 64: 317–335.
- Ernst, T., 1999. 'Land, Stories and Resources: Discourse and Entification in Onabasulu Modernity.' *American Anthropologist* 101: 88–97.
- Filer, C., 1990. 'The Bougainville Rebellion, the Mining Industry and the Process of Social Disintegration in Papua New Guinea.' *Canberra Anthropology* 13(1): 1–39.
- , 1997. 'Compensation, Rent and Power in Papua New Guinea.' In S. Toft (ed.), op. cit.
- , 1998. 'The Melanesian Way of Menacing the Mining Industry.' In L. Zimmer-Tamakoshi (ed.), *Modern Papua New Guinea*. Kirksville (MO): Thomas Jefferson University Press.

- Fitzpatrick, P., 1980. *Law and State in Papua New Guinea*. London: Academic Press.
- Gabut, J., 2000. 'Land Tenure and Land Registration in Papua New Guinea.' Paper presented at the conference on 'Problems and Perspectives on Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea', University of Queensland, 10–14 September.
- Gardner, D., 1998. 'Demographic Raiding and Social Relations in the Northern Mountain Ok Region in Historical Perspective.' Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, 2–6 December.
- , 2004. 'A Proctological History of Miyan Identity.' In T. van Meijl and J Miedema (eds), *Shifting Images of Identity in the Pacific*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Geertz, C., 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.
- Guddemi, P., 1997. 'Continuities, Contexts, Complexities, and Transformations: Local Land Concepts of a Sepik People Affected by Mining Exploration.' In P. Brown and A. Ploeg (eds), op. cit.
- Gumbert, M., 1981. 'Paradigm Lost: An Analysis of Anthropological Models and Their Effect on Aboriginal Land Rights.' *Oceania* 52: 103–123.
- Hviding, E., 1993. 'Indigenous Essentialism? "Simplifying" Customary Land Ownership in New Georgia, Solomon Islands.' *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 149(4): 802–24.
- Jackson, R., 1989. 'New Policies in Sharing Mining Benefits in Papua New Guinea: A Note.' *Pacific Viewpoint* 30: 86–93.
- , 1991. 'Not Without Influence: Villages, Mining Companies, and Government in Papua New Guinea.' In J. Connell and R. Howitt (eds), *Mining and Indigenous Peoples in Australasia*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Jorgensen, D., 1997. 'Who and What is a Landowner? Mythology and Marking the Ground in a Papua New Guinea Mining Project.' In P. Brown and A. Ploeg (eds), op. cit.
- Kameata, R., 2000. 'Evolution of Land Group Mechanism, Huli Agnatic Descent and the Implications of the ILG Act.' Paper presented at the conference on 'Problems and Perspectives on Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea', University of Queensland, 10–14 September.
- Keen, I., 1995. 'Metaphor and the Metalanguage: "Groups" in northeast Arnhem Land.' *American Ethnologist* 22: 502–527.

- , 2000. 'A Bundle of Sticks: The Debate over Yolngu Clans.' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6: 419–36.
- Keesing, R., 1989. 'Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific.' *The Contemporary Pacific* 1: 19–42.
- King, D., 1997. 'The Big Polluter and the Constructing of Ok Tedi: Eco-imperialism and Underdevelopment Along the Ok Tedi and Fly Rivers of Papua New Guinea.' In G. Banks and C. Ballard (eds), *The Ok Tedi Settlement: Issues, Outcomes and Implications*. Canberra: Australian National University, National Centre for Development Studies and Resource Management in Asia-Pacific (Pacific Policy Paper 27).
- Lawrence, P., 1967. 'Land Tenure Among the Garia.' In I. Hogbin and P. Lawrence (eds), *Studies in New Guinea Land Tenure*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- LiPuma, E., 1995. 'The Formation of Nation-States and National Cultures in Oceania.' In R. Foster (ed.), *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Marco, J., 2000. 'Kirapim Dust Tasol.' Paper presented at the conference on 'Problems and Perspectives on Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea', University of Queensland, 10-14 September.
- McDougall, D., 2005. 'The Unintended Consequences of Clarification: Development, Disputing, and the Dynamics of Community in Ranongga, Solomon Islands.' *Ethnohistory* 52(1): 81–109.
- Narokobi, B., 1980. *The Melanesian Way*. Boroko: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.
- Ogan, E., 1971. 'Nasioi Land Tenure: An Extended Case Study.' *Oceania* 42: 81–93.
- Otto, T., 1997. 'After the Tidal Wave: Bernard Narokobi and the Creation of a Melanesian Way.' In T. Otto and N. Thomas (eds), *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Philibert, J., 1986. 'The Politics of Tradition: Toward a Generic Culture in Vanuatu.' *Mankind* 16: 1–12.
- Scott, J., 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Somare, M., 1974. 'We Bilong Yusim Et Poin Plen.' Konedobu: PNG Government Printer.
- Toft, S., 1997. 'Patrons or Clients? Aspects of Multinational Capital-Landowner Relations in Papua New Guinea.' In S. Toft (ed.), op. cit.

- (ed.), 1997. *Compensation for Resource Development in Papua New Guinea*. Boroko: Law Reform Commission of Papua New Guinea (Monograph 6). Canberra: Australian National University, National Centre for Development Studies (Pacific Policy Paper 25).
- Wagner, R., 1974. 'Are There Social Groups in the New Guinea Highlands?' In M.J. Leaf (ed.), *Frontiers of Anthropology*. New York: Van Nostrand.
- Wanek, A., 1996. *The State and Its Enemies in Papua New Guinea*. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Weiner, J.F., 1998. 'The Incorporated Ground: The Contemporary Work of Distribution in the Kutubu Oil Project Area, Papua New Guinea.' Canberra: Australian National University, Resource Management in Asia-Pacific Project (Working Paper 17).
- Westermarck, G., 1997. 'Clan Claims: Land, Law and Violence in the Papua New Guinea Eastern Highlands.' *Oceania* 67: 218–233.
- Zorn, J., 1992. 'Graun Bilong Mipela: Local Land Courts and the Changing Customary Law of Papua New Guinea.' *Pacific Studies* 15(2): 1–38.