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The Chinese in Papua New Guinea's past, present and future

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Collections of essays derived from a conference or workshop often reflect the disparate interests of the contributors and organisers while introductions to such collections typically provide a degree of coherence and justification by outlining an encompassing foundational origin story. This collection emerged from a workshop held at James Cook University (JCU) in Cairns in early November 2020 that was funded with the explicit aim of enhancing research capacities within the social sciences and humanities at JCU. This partially explains the number of JCU contributors to the collection.

The workshop had a rather ambitious title: *Re-Visualising the Past, Imagining the Future: Race, Governance and Development in Papua New Guinea*. Such ambition reflected the initial aim of the workshop, which was to consider the importance of a vast collection of documents, patrol reports, diaries and transcripts of interviews, and more than 600 material culture artefacts donated to JCU in 2018 by former officer of the Australian administration in Papua New Guinea (PNG), L. W. Bragge. This assemblage of archives and artefacts derived from Bragge's more than 45 years of living and working in PNG after he took up a job as a patrol officer in 1961. A further aim was to develop a research programme based on the Bragge Collection that would explore histories of Australian

governance, race relations and development in PNG building on prior work on the colonial archives (McPherson, 2001). We thought a project on the role of patrol officers in the de-colonisation of PNG in the period between 1945 and 1975 might provide an interesting perspective into the archives of the period.

There was some debate about such a project. It was suggested that the emphasis on patrol officers' archives like the Bragge Collection could be seen as another example of colonial studies emphasising the European experience. One response was to move the emphasis of the proposed workshop beyond existing accounts of Australian colonial governance and race relations.¹ We argued that such works often deployed an approach that focused on the dualism of white Australian and black Papua New Guinean interactions and inter-cultural zones of exchange. Building on prior work (Bashkow, 2006; D'Arcy, Crowl & Matbob, 2014; Smith, 2012a, 2013b; Wood, 1995) we proposed that the workshop would move beyond such limited framing of colonialism and post-colonialism. It would do this by exploring how interactions, governance and development in PNG were also structured in response to the presence of the Chinese in PNG. Such a Chinese-centric re-imagining of PNG history would help destabilise understandings of PNG's colonial history as just a black and white experience. Further research on the Chinese presence in PNG's colonial histories would help develop new ways of reading both the Australian colonial archive and the personal archives of patrol officers like that created by Bragge. Such an emphasis promised to make the Chinese more central to any accounts of the colonial and post-colonial histories of PNG. The workshop emerged as a response to the broader absence of the Chinese in histories of PNG. There also seemed to be a lack of such material in accounts of Australian colonial and post-colonial relationships with PNG (a point developed below).

We thought the colonial records related to New Guinea might offer some promising leads on Chinese voices, perspectives and actions but there were some limits to such a project. In the colonial era, Asians and Chinese were not the dominant concern of patrol reports and other records and many of New Guinea's archival records were destroyed during World War II (WWII). Moreover, following German colonisation of New Guinea in 1884, it was

1 A related response was to develop a research project that would explore how the patrol officers' daily activities were linked to ongoing global and national political debates about the colonial and de-colonial implications of such activities. These debates often centred on what political institutions could best secure post-colonial independence and modern citizenship.

primarily New Guinea, and not Papua, which received Chinese and Asian immigrants. At the time of its Federation, the Australian Commonwealth Government passed the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, which sought to prevent and tightly control Asian immigration to Australia. This act was applied to Papua when it became a territory of Australia with the result that virtually no Asians were allowed into Papua until the mid-1950s. What this meant is that the Papuan colonial archive was defined by a complete absence of Chinese and Asians until the 1950s.

New Guinea's history in reference to Asians was different to Papua's. After World War I (WWI), in 1920, German New Guinea became a Mandated Territory of the League of Nations under Australian control, and the Australian Immigration Restriction Act was then used to profoundly restrict Chinese and Asian movement into New Guinea. The governance of New Guinea (and Papua) was a fundamentally racialised process (Wolfers, 1975) and the Chinese in New Guinea were incredibly significant subjects of such racial ordering. The process of regulating the Chinese generated a large body of archival material, especially concerning their movement between states and their living conditions in New Guinea.

Beyond the archive: Towards the politics and power shifting of the Chinese in PNG

As we moved towards finalising the workshop it became clear that our participants had effectively expanded the range of topics to be addressed well beyond the archival emphasis developed by the initial proponents of the workshop (Henry, Wood & Backhaus).² Most of the papers presented at the workshop provided accounts of contemporary Chinese in PNG and their experiences of politics, power, and difference. By detailing the agency of the Chinese, and those they engaged with, presenters foregrounded a distinctly interactive analysis of social relations, conflicts and politics, but did so without abandoning analysis of power differences and inequalities. Many of the papers provided detailed descriptions of the multiple, and different, scales of integration of the PNG Chinese into the wider world and highlighted the continually transforming, contextually specific nature of this integration over time. Another feature of the workshop (and this

2 Chris Ballard and Jude Phillip presented papers on patrol officers and colonial collectors, but their papers unfortunately did not become part of this collection.

collection) was that differences between domains such as local, national and global did not always function as central analytical concepts (Gulliam & Huysmans, 2019). Some participants avoided assuming they could present one political domain—such as a state or regional geo-politics—as usefully distinguishable from another realm of politics located in a ‘local’ everyday world of Chinese in PNG. They refused to place agency in powerful state or corporate elites ‘outside’ the past or current colonies and ‘beyond’ the reach of those living in the colonies.

Such arguments also emerged in workshop discussions of the colonial state and the idea of multiple or partial sovereignties. Rabaul, the capital of New Guinea, was an important site for Chinese engagement with, and the enactment of, forms of government, state power and sovereignty that were different to those deployed by the Australian colonial regime. Crucial here was the role of the Chinese state—represented by the Nationalist Government and later by the Communist government (see Liu, 2011; Liu & Van Dongen, 2016)—and the United Nations as the overseer of Australia’s trusteeship. Post-WWII, New Guinea was never simply just an exclusively white Australian colonial government, but at times it was an interactive site for competing claims by states to influence policies relevant to the Chinese in New Guinea. The Australian colonial government’s practices and policies in reference to New Guinea Chinese were partly formed in response to the perceptions of, and pressures created by, the UN and the Chinese state. Other states such as Indonesia, India and Russia were also at times influential (Inglis, 1972). To summarise, the Chinese in New Guinea were the subjects of multiple governments rather than just a monolithic Australian colonial government.

Given such arguments, analysis based on the centrality of national sovereignty or methodological nationalism seemed, at times, to limit insights into the history of the Chinese in PNG (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Some participants were trying not to privilege the nation-state and its institutional order in their analysis. Instead, they wanted to explore the role of non-state forms of trans-local or diasporic power (Gilroy, 2000). They descriptively highlighted how states, such as New Guinea and Australia, were themselves shaped by global and trans-national forces that limited their ability to decide policy and control migration flows. Such contributions reiterated the point that the experiences of the Chinese in PNG have always been deeply influenced by trans-national connections and perspectives that are not just defined by nation-states (Smith, 2014).

While recognising the undoubted power and influence of often imperial-like configurations of states and corporations, some presenters took the view that the influence and power of these configurations was defined, debated and transformed in specific, always local, contexts of interaction. Power shifts have been less clearly observed or are less visible within strands of the PNG-specific literature (Pan et al., 2019; Pan, 2014; Connolly, 2020). Perhaps power shifts, like many other developments in PNG, cannot fit easily into a single clear narrative, but emerge as outcomes of political conflict and contradictory processes.

On the other hand, some participants were interested in developing arguments about a distinct shift in power to the state of China in PNG. In this collection, this view is reflected in Chin's argument that China is now a dominant influence on PNG politics and Hayes's concern that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the dream of Chinese global hegemony could intensify that dominance. Insofar as both are political scientists it is possible their response to the question of Chinese dominance in PNG reflects an international relations approach to explaining the Chinese in the Pacific as opposed to the more ethnographic approach adopted by other contributors to this volume.

Emphasis on the power shift to China tends to focus attention on the regional and geopolitical levels of analysis rather than on specific countries or accounts of specific interactions. Except for D'Arcy, Matbob and Crowl's (2014) recent collection, work on Asian and Chinese engagements and power shifts with the Pacific can make PNG seem a marginal figure in debates about Chinese expansion (Crocombe, 2007; Wesley-Smith & Porter, 2010; Smith & Wesley-Smith, 2021). Talk of the 'Pacific' or 'Asia-Pacific' or 'Indo-Pacific' highlight the vast scale of the strategic interests at stake in the power shift to China, whereas an emphasis on PNG material offers a narrower, less dramatic sense of geo-political relevance, crisis or conflict. This may be because the Pacific continues to be a site of unresolved conflict between China and Taiwan for recognition, whereas PNG recognised China in 1976. It may be that China's direct investment and expenditure via the BRI does not actually convert into the kind of influence expected in the power shift accounts. The fact that answers to such questions are often hard to find, or infrequently provided, implies there has been a kind of epistemological marginalisation of PNG in debates about power shifts between states in the Pacific, their projects of empire, their geopolitical strategies and their visions of a Chinese future. We think this should change.

Histories of the Chinese diaspora in PNG

In the workshop some participants argued that current debates about the shifting spaces and locations of power ('look North', 'take back PNG') could, and should, be re-thought by considering the histories of movement that crucially constituted the experience of all diasporic Chinese in PNG. Such histories multiplied the places of origin of the Chinese in PNG and diversified their social differences and ongoing connections with multiple nation-states, regional trade networks and claims to citizenship.

These movements in and out of what we now call PNG have a long history. Early Chinese visits to PNG date back to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) (Waley-Cohen, 1999, p. 53). The Chinese who arrived in PNG were part of a long history concerning other overseas Chinese and their treatment by the Chinese state and recipient communities. Manchu rulers of the later Qing state (1644–1911) regarded overseas Chinese as being subjects of China and the localities in which they resided were seen as 'part of China's domain' (Gamer, 2012). Elements of this kind of thinking still have influence today in the Chinese state's attempts to incorporate the diaspora into itself and in this way 'terminate diaspora dispersal' (Gilroy, 2000, p. 124).

The history of Chinese movement in and out of PNG intensified with German colonisation of New Guinea in 1884. Chinese indentured labourers emigrated there to work in the emergent tobacco and copra industries. By 1895 many of those indentured labourers had died and most of those who survived returned home once their term of service had ended. The Chinese in New Guinea during this time mostly came from Sumatra (ruled by the Dutch), Singapore (ruled by the British), Hong Kong (ruled by the British), Malaysia and Australia (Biskup, 1970; Ichikawa, 2004, 2006; D'Arcy, 2014; Firth, 1976). Therefore, they were a mix of ethnic Chinese who were born into the overseas community in their adopted locale, perhaps from families who had lived there for generations, or they had left China for those adopted locales then re-migrated to New Guinea. In 1886, Chinese porters from Australia were recruited into a scientific expedition in New Guinea. This is believed to be the first example of trans-migration from Australia to New Guinea by the Chinese (Biskup, 1970). From 1898, Chinese migrants were beginning to settle in Rabaul, Kokopo, Kavieng, Lae and Madang. At this point, we also see the emergence of the first distinction between old Chinese and new Chinese (Biskup, 1970). This dualistic framing, which still exists

into the present day, was originally intended to distinguish those Chinese who were from existing overseas Chinese communities (they were the old Chinese) from the newer arrivals from mainland China (Hokkian: *singkeh* or 'new chums'). As Ichikawa (2006) explains, multiple terms have been used to try to encapsulate some of the different peoples within this diverse group including *huaren* (ethnic Chinese), *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese) and *huayi* (Chinese descendants). Such terms reflect the significant diversity of the prior residential locations, and associated experiences, of the Chinese in New Guinea.

In 1920, German New Guinea became a Mandated Territory of the League of Nations, under Australian control as part of the Versailles Treaty following WWI. Under the Australian regime, Chinese residents who had migrated to New Guinea before 1922 were classified as 'alien residents', while those arriving after that date were only permitted limited stays in the territory (Wolfers, 1975). These policies made family reunification or chain migration from China exceedingly difficult. Many of the Chinese living in New Guinea at this time were single men, now unable to invite Chinese women to join them in New Guinea as their wives. Hence, some Chinese men married New Guinea women. Children born from these marriages were often educated and socialised as Chinese, within the Chinese community (Wu, 1982).

In the mid-1950s, changes to the Immigration Restriction Act in Australia meant that it was now possible for Chinese migrants to become Australian citizens. Many New Guinea Chinese took this option, regarding it to be a good opportunity given that their business and educational links were now more oriented towards Australia. In addition, some were concerned over what might happen to them when PNG inevitably gained its independence from Australia (Wu, 1982). Chinese communities in Indonesia, Burma and other newly independent Asian and African states were subject to violence (Mark, 2012, p. 65; Chang, 1980). Fears over PNG's post-independence stability, and possible ethnic violence, led some Chinese in PNG to migrate to other countries, most frequently, Australia. Others stayed but remained concerned about what may lie ahead (Wu, 1982; Ichikawa, 2006). In some cases, older Chinese in PNG who had sent their children to school and higher education in Australia found themselves alone in PNG when, rather than returning home, their children preferred to find work and settle in Australia. Therefore, the parents migrated to Australia to be reunited as a family unit. For others, Australia was the preferred location for living out

their elder years especially as economic, social and political security within PNG became more fractious following Independence (Ichikawa, 2006). A slumping *kina* post-independence, and increasing crime rates, were also push factors driving out-migration from PNG (ibid.).

From the 1970s onwards, PNG also attracted a wave of ‘new Chinese’ migrants from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China (Chin, this volume, 2008; Smith, 2014). These new groups added to the diversity of the Chinese in PNG, based on their former site of residence as well as home provinces in mainland China, which now extended beyond Guangdong and Fujian to include cities like Shanghai and Beijing. The new Chinese appeared in provinces across PNG, including Western Province and Sanduan, rather than the urban centres (such as Port Moresby, Rabaul/ Kokopo and Lae) favoured by the old Chinese. The ability to become a PNG national, thereby being free to conduct business inside of PNG, was a major pull factor for migration (Ichikawa, 2006, pp. 123–7). The departure of Australia from PNG after Independence opened up ‘economic niches’ for overseas Chinese, other Asians and the more recent newcomers from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) (Smith, 2012a, 2013b). PNG could also be used as a ‘stepping-stone’, allowing re-migration to Australia, New Zealand, Guam or further afield. Hence, PNG remains a destination for Chinese migration flows, both in and out, sojourner and settler.

The Chinese in PNG were never a single homogenous group, but a complex series of historically and culturally unique groups with different origins, languages and histories (Chin, this volume, 2008; Ichikawa, 2003, 2004; Inglis, 1997; Smith, 2014; Wu, 1982, 1994, 1998). Describing and analysing the histories of these Chinese and their interactions was the complex task we found ourselves immersed in during the workshop. We found ourselves re-thinking who the Chinese in PNG were and what types of geographies of power, politics and sociality were implicated in their movement in and out of colonial and post-colonial PNG. All the chapters in this collection show how Chinese lives in PNG have always involved complex conjunctions of local, state and trans-national interactions and relations.

Developing power, resources and the Chinese in PNG's future

In addition to issues of how to think about the past and its impact on Chinese identity, agency and history, the workshop also explored a variety of colonial and post-colonial projects that promised to develop a good future for an independent state of PNG and its citizens. We were interested in the Chinese engagement with development, broadly understood as a set of influential ideas, policies and projects concerning the relationships between elements of PNG's past, present and its imagined future.³ While development is often understood to imply a linear sense of a purposeful and progressive unfolding of events over time, the projects we considered, especially those concerned with natural resource extraction, did not always develop in this manner.

In our discussions, colonial and post-colonial developmental logics and projects, along with their material outcomes, were often described as transformative and unstable sites of wealth creation, conflict, compromise, exploitation and resistance. We also questioned the assumption that the current PNG nation-state was the natural and necessary organisation for the creation of a modern society. Presenters highlighted how the colonial and post-colonial states of PNG did not always have the ability and resources to deliver the full promise of modernity. They also highlighted the multiple forms of capital and corporate organisation that the Chinese created in their various economic activities in PNG. Here participants refused to assume that there was one dominant form of capitalism or market organisation that would ensure development in PNG.

The accounts that emerged in our workshop outlined different histories concerning PNG's future to those found in still influential narratives of progress, modernisation and linear continuous development towards key goals. A number of the chapters outlined processes of development that involved generating new forms of domination and inequality. Another topic involved the post-colonial collapse of the PNG nation-state as a political institution that could effectively create equitable development. Our attention was often centred on popular criticisms linking the Chinese and the current corruption of the PNG state. For example, Malaysian Chinese influence

3 This interest in development is evident in the chapters in this volume by Gessler, Foale et al., Kuo and Hayes.

in PNG's forestry sector has forged an association between the Chinese, the corruption of the PNG government and the exploitation of PNG natural resources. Such associations echo earlier colonial representations of the Chinese as a racialised, fetishised body that is systematically linked to money (as in Gessler's chapter where some Chinese are defined as 'money face'), corrupt business deals and capital accumulation that is impossible to comprehend or fully explain. Other associations position the Chinese as possessing extra-ordinary powers and knowledge of business, political influence and money-making in ways that are opaque and hidden. These powers are often considered both unhealthy and dangerous—they have long been presented as a disease within the European white body politic (Anderson, 2002) and now the same imagery is applied to the PNG body politic. Earlier talk of 'tough and clever Chinese' who are 'culturally adapted to the requirements of business in cultural frontier situations' (Rowley, 1967, p. 13) has been recently supplemented by talk of a 'Chinese mafia' in PNG (Windybank, 2008, p. 36) and criminal gangs (Wani, 2018).

The November 2021 riots in the Solomon Islands were a reminder that Chinese people in PNG are also intermittently, but regularly, subject to incidents of violence that are partly linked to stereotyping of Chinese.⁴ There are certain important, yet to be documented, vulnerabilities and emotional intensities involved in daily life under such conditions of permanent threat. Wu notes that when PNG was preparing for self-government in 1973 some Chinese believed 'that if they did not make plans well ahead they might be stranded in isolated towns (Rabaul was a major one) when a riot suddenly erupted' (1982, p. 147). There was a view that while the Australians would send troops to rescue expatriates some thought that given what happened to the Rabaul Chinese in WWII it would be 'Europeans first and Chinese second: by the time it was the turn of the Chinese they could already have been slaughtered' (Wu, 1982, p. 147). Jumping forward about 50 years to 2021, Matbob observed that over recent years 'there have been numerous attacks on and killing of the Chinese in PNG' (2021, p. 457). Such attacks generate extensive commentary in PNG's social media, but relatively little interest from scholars. In November 2019, when two Chinese storekeepers were murdered in a remote logging camp in the Western Province of PNG some comments by Papua New

4 See: Walden, Max, Seselja, Edwina, & Graue, Catherine. (2021, November 24). Protesters teargassed as they call for Solomon Islands Prime Minister to step down. *ABC News*. www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-24/protesters-demand-solomon-islands-prime-minister-step-/100647536. For other accounts of earlier riots see: Allen, 2008; Smith, 2012b; and Chin, 2010.

Guineans implied that these murders were an appropriate response to the Chinese exploitation of the region's forests and landowners (Wood & Brooksbank, 2021). Such violence, and its justification, are some of the negative consequences of merging critical representations of the Chinese with their role in PNG's development.

Our participants negotiated these kinds of difficulties of adequately representing the Chinese in PNG by adopting a diverse range of approaches. Perhaps it is true those with the greatest knowledge of the state of China (Hayes) and the Chinese in PNG (Chin and Gessler) are more critical of the Chinese than other contributors. But this apparent outcome is also a function of the topics chosen by our authors—something we now address.

Chapters and perspectives

Our account of the Chinese in PNG begins with Section 1 of this volume: 'The Chinese in PNG: Their travels and multiple histories'. This examination is opened with a discussion by Rosita Henry, Daniela Vávrová and Laurie Bragge of what might be discoverable in the colonial archive about the Chinese in the Sepik region as represented in patrol reports and other material in the Bragge Collection. In their chapter, Henry, Vávrová and Bragge explore how writing histories from such sources requires developing a unified analysis of both archival records and artefacts (Henry, Otto & Wood, 2013). They argue that artefacts and archives are different aspects of the same entity or event and are to be treated symmetrically. Notwithstanding differences in their material forms, regulatory institutions and social relations, an archival record should be analysed as an artefact and an artefact can be understood as an archival record. Hence, the narratives of the Sepik elders recorded by Bragge have become 'archival artefacts' understood to be materialised images of events and their effects. These artefacts hold narratives about the Chinese, Europeans and people living in the Sepik region. Henry, Vávrová and Bragge make an original contribution to our understanding of the Chinese in PNG history by opening up the possibility of Sepik histories of the Chinese. They note that while rich ethnographic data on Sepik social life and culture can be found in the Bragge archive, based on personal accounts by Sepik elders, the lives of Chinese migrants to the region are relatively less well documented. Henry, Vávrová and Bragge

provide us with one of the first accounts of how the Chinese appear in the archives of European patrol officers. In doing this, they lay the foundations for further research into the multiple histories of the Chinese in PNG.

In Chapter 3, Michael Wood and Vince Backhaus argue that Australian histories of the decline and end of the Immigration Restriction Act have tended to ignore perspectives and voices from the colonies such as New Guinea. More specifically these have ignored Chinese voices. The voices from the colony that Wood and Backhaus highlight rely on forms of liberal thinking circulating at that time. Wood and Backhaus argue relations of discrimination were transformed by liberal ideas and practices circulating within the PNG colony and beyond. This liberal thinking was mobilised to de-racialise policies regarding the New Guinea Chinese, but other aims linked to these debates involved the removal of the Chinese from PNG and its future. The chapter highlights the tension within liberalism; on the one hand, it is concerned both with creating equalities based on enhancing human capabilities by making access to such capabilities less dependent on race, gender and class, while on the other hand it promotes forms of equality based on a sameness that, in this case, reproduced substantive inequalities linked to the removal of the Chinese from PNG and their assimilation into Australian culture. The chapter shows how liberal ideas circulating in different media between Chinese and Europeans sometimes came into conjunction to effect change or at least put change on the agenda. In such an account, liberalism is treated as a bundle of highly responsive and changing ideas and linguistic conventions that define specific political technologies of social ordering (such as Hasluck's re-naming of minorities) and which, as they travel, transform some of the terms of debates and policies concerning the Chinese.

Wood and Backhaus also argue that both the history of the Chinese in PNG and the development of the colonial state are fundamentally about urban infrastructure. Current accounts of the role of the Chinese in Australian projects of state building are too confined to the policing of borders, regulated crossing and social categorisation. Wood and Backhaus suggest that a greater focus on state building and urban infrastructure may highlight additional important roles of the Chinese in PNG colonial history.

One of the most pleasing and significant outcomes of the workshop was that some participants with a variety of PNG affiliations became aware of their own historical connections to events that were outlined in various presentations. Participants such as Vyvyen Wong and Kulasumb Kalinoe

are both examples of this happenstance and they have enriched the volume with reflective vignettes. Both have commented on their experience of such processes and these comments emerge as part of their own histories of their relationships with, and experiences of, PNG.

Such contributions reflect a move away from nation-state models of the agents, bearers and makers of history towards diasporic (Rienmenschmitter & Madsen, 2009) or sojourning (Ichikawa, 2006) histories. These histories, as reflected in Wong and Kalinoe's contributions, emphasise spatial and temporal distances, movement, dis-junctures and conjunctions, and, sometimes, forced movement and exile. Their stories are more personal than state centric in emphasis and reflect our contributors' complex movements and entanglements with multiple places of belonging and residence. Along with the chapter by James Chin, Kalinoe's and Wong's accounts provide bridges between the Chapter 2 by Henry, Vávrová and Bragge, and Chapter 3 by Wood and Backhaus, about pasts represented in archival records, and the rest of the chapters in this collection, which are concerned with developments that have occurred between 2000–2020 and are less constrained by reliance on archival sources.

Kulasumb Kalinoe is a lawyer and anthropology PhD student at JCU working on intellectual property issues concerning material collected by Bragge from her home communities in the Sepik region. She has developed a PhD project that would engage appropriate parts of the Bragge archive with the current descendants of those whose histories he recorded during his work as a patrol officer in the Sepik. The project could involve these communities' developing protocols for regulating public access to this material. Kalinoe will explore and perhaps actively instigate ways Sepik memory owners might engage with the Bragge Collection to create their own histories of colonialism and their past. She will explore how new colonial and post-colonial histories and memories might be re-imagined by custodians and owners of the archives by developing 'archival affordances that depart from those associated with imperial rule' (Basu & De Jong, 2016, p. 5). In her reflective vignette, Kalinoe reflects on the nature and value of the archived interviews with Sepik elders that Bragge collected, one of which Henry, Vávrová and Bragge refer to in their chapter.

Kalinoe argues that the Chinese who came to New Guinea a long time ago are now recognised as belonging to specific provinces and hence are part of the PNG nation-state. Such recognition by other Papua New Guineans is only one component of what is a far more complex and contradictory

set of understandings. Nonetheless, Kalinoe stresses the existence of a widely recognised sense of a rightful, possibly de-racialised, place-based Chinese belonging in PNG (Ang, 2022). Kalinoe is effectively inviting us to rethink our understanding of Chinese in PNG by taking seriously the PNG dimensions of this Chineseness.⁵ She argues that such understandings of the ‘PNG Chinese’ or ‘Sepik Chinese’ are already well developed within Sepik affiliated communities. What also needs to be further explored is how these Sepik Chinese self-define, or otherwise make, themselves Papua New Guineans in their own right, just as they simultaneously make themselves ‘Chinese’ and ‘Australian’. In raising such issues Kalinoe’s reflections, and other contributions in this volume, highlight the need to move away from dualistic to multiple understandings of Chineseness in PNG.

Vyvyen Wong, was born in Rabaul in East New Britain Province, the last of nine children born to James and Winnifred Wong. James’s father, who was from Fujian Province in China, originally came to New Guinea on his own, but later sent for his Chinese wife, who gave birth to James and his siblings in Rabaul. Winnifred’s father also left a Chinese wife behind to travel to New Guinea for work, but she did not end up joining him in New Guinea. Thus, Winnifred is mixed Chinese and Melanesian. In her reflective vignette, Wong discusses her childhood growing up as part of the Chinese community in Rabaul, her understandings of race relations among the Chinese and the impact of Australian administrative policies and processes on the lives of her family members. Her discussion of her father’s application for Australian citizenship provides an example of the practical application of such policies and debates regarding PNG Chinese that are raised by Wood and Backhaus in their chapter. Wong’s text highlights the relative absence of detailed ethnography of Chineseness in contemporary PNG that provide new insights into race as involving mechanisms of privilege and power. Wong’s account of her family is an argument for types of racial analysis that pays attention to those of mixed Chinese and Papua New Guinean heritage (Fozdar & McGavin, 2017; Goddard, 2017). Her family has long grappled with the legacies of the power and privilege of more racially ‘pure’ Chinese, Papua New Guineans and white Europeans. Wong’s account points to how these legacies continue to matter (and not matter) in contemporary times.

5 Some phrasing in the section derives from Hendriks (2017).

James Chin's chapter in this collection further develops his interest in the Chinese living in PNG. He updates his now classic 2008 article on the Chinese in Port Moresby. Both works are full of lively anecdotes delivered in an engaging style. Chin's work is part of a broader body of research on Chinese living in urban PNG. Much of the first wave of this research began in 1970s and focused primarily on Rabaul (Wu, 1982; Cahill, 2012). The second wave has focused more on Chinese life in Port Moresby and the emergence of the most recent 'new Chinese' in PNG generally (Chin, 2008; Ichikawa, 2006; Smith, 2014).

In his chapter, Chin argues that the mainland Chinese have now become a dominant economic and political force in PNG. They dominate the local Chinese community and rival Australia for influence in national politics. He also makes suggestions about what might happen in the future. He thinks the PNG elite will play Australia and China against each other and that China is seen as 'more flexible' and less concerned with issues of corruption than Australia. Chin argues that China will replace Australia as the most influential external actor in PNG politics. While PNG will move closer to China on political issues, it will remain more aligned with Australia culturally. He argues that these power shifts within PNG reflect the rise of China on the global stage (Chin, 2021). Chin's chapter concludes Section 1 of the volume.

Chapter 5 by Simon Foale, Cathy Hair and Jeff Kinch opens section two of the book, which examines 'The Chinese as transformers of PNG and its political economy'. Their chapter outlines the role of Chinese traders in the fisheries sector via a case study of the market for sea cucumber. Their chapter demonstrates how the trade is structured by differences in the value Chinese buyers and PNG producers attribute to sea cucumbers. The Chinese regard sea cucumbers as a type of high value food that imparts vitality to consumers. In contrast, producers do not typically consume their product and regard it as without value. The market is also crucially defined by the fact that Chinese control all elements of the supply chain from the buyer to the Chinese consumer and that this market chain is profoundly opaque to non-Chinese. The chapter by Foale, Hair and Kinch emphasises a persisting, perhaps intensifying, sinification of all relevant aspects of the supply chain, paying particular attention to transactions at the point of sale. At the same time, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of regulations on this trade by the PNG National Fisheries Authority. This is compounded

by the lack of interest in the sea cucumber market by environmental non-governmental organisations, meaning the impact of this trade on sea cucumbers is unclear.

Foale, Hair and Kinch's chapter transitions the book into discussions of current Chinese investment in natural resource extraction in PNG. Their chapter is followed by chapters from I-Chang Kuo and Shaun Gessler, who provide accounts of social relations in the Basamuk nickel processing factory that is part of the Ramu Nickel mine. The conjunction of these three chapters points to the possibilities of a comparative analysis of Chinese capital in PNG. If Foale, Hair and Kinch highlight the dominance of the Chinese throughout the supply chain, Kuo's chapter points to the different ways Chinese practices of industrial relations in PNG, and hence the price of labour, have been effectively trans-nationalised. Furthermore, Foale, Hair and Kinch's account of sea cucumber markets provides a contrast to Gessler's account of the Chinese–PNG interactions in food markets. In Foale, Hair and Kinch's account, both buyers and sellers of sea cucumber appear relatively happy with their trade partly because sellers can realise high financial returns from the sale of sea cucumber which, to them, is a low value product. In contrast, PNG sellers in the Basamuk food market are not able to establish a fair price for what they think is the true value of their product. All three chapters provide interesting insights into the development of markets influenced by the Chinese in PNG.

In his chapter, Kuo uses a labour process compromise theory to examine how industrial relations are influenced by Australian-imported standards and indigenous cultural values. The mine is run by a Chinese state-owned enterprise and was, until recently, the largest investment by China in any project in the Pacific region. The chapters by both Kuo and Gessler build upon a considerable body of prior research on the mine (Imbun, 2017; Leach, 2011; Smith, 2013a, 2013b; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2014). Kuo develops an account of Chinese–PNG work relations as they emerge within the company's industrial relations practices concerning promotion, training, health and safety. Utilising neo-Marxist theoretical perspectives developed in work relations studies and comparative material derived from China and Africa, Kuo provides one of the first accounts of industrial relations in a Chinese factory in PNG. He outlines how compromises between Chinese management and PNG staff were generated in contexts where power was sometimes complexly dispersed rather than tightly structured and where protocols and expectations could be restructured. In developing his discussion, he highlights how officials from the PNG state were at times

influential and at other times absent and also highlights how representatives from the Chinese government played little direct role in the company's resolution of industrial disputes or disputes with landowners. Kuo offers a subtle account of dispute resolution that highlights some of the limits of the Chinese ability to dominate or exploit PNG workers.

Gessler's chapter provides the first detailed account of Chinese engagement with a market in PNG, the Marmar marketplace outside of the Basamuk nickel refinery. He examines how different understandings of market practices inform the way Chinese male buyers and PNG female sellers interact in the marketplace and how their interactions reproduce forms of sociality that are gendered, often antagonistic and at times racialised. For Gessler, the Chinese buyers come to the market with a price-centred understanding of market transaction as involving a commodity where it is appropriate to haggle and barter. The female sellers do not accept these practices and seek to define a social relationship where the price is accepted without further negotiation. As a result of these differences, market transactions fail to create a shared moral economy that can work across inter-cultural differences and inequalities. Rather, they become sites for the generation of conflicting values, stereotyping and forms of denigration and resistance.

Kuo and Gessler both make a significant contribution to understanding how the Chinese communicate with speakers of other languages. Kuo shows how the Basamuk nickel refinery is the origin place of a new male-only workplace pidgin in PNG. Through their focus on communication and what Gessler calls 'foreigner talk', both make an important contribution to our understanding of the production of cultural imaginaries at the level of interaction and linguistic practices that scaffold understandings of, and by, Chinese. In this, they build on and significantly develop the insight that Graeme Smith brought to his earlier analysis of the Chinese in PNG, which was significantly based on his own command of the Chinese language. The importance of these new forms of linguistic interaction highlighted by Gessler and Kuo is further developed in a commentary provided by Alexandra Aikhenvald.

Aikhenvald provides us with the first overview of the linguistic practices that emerge from attempts by Chinese and PNG speakers of other languages to communicate with each other. Relying on the preliminary data found in Gessler's and Kuo's chapters, she also contextualises her analysis of developments in PNG within the wider global literature on the Chinese

engagement with pidgins, Creoles and foreigner talk. Having provided us with the necessary conceptual and comparative background, she makes explicit the significance of the workplace pidgin at the Basamuk nickel refinery outlined in Kuo's chapter. She does this by arguing it is unique in that no other Chinese-based pidgins have been documented in PNG. She further highlights this uniqueness by reviewing the relatively small number of accounts of Chinese workplace pidgins that have developed in other parts of the world. She wonders why we have no record of other Chinese pidgins in PNG and suggests that the emergence of Tok Pisin may have made a Chinese-based pidgin redundant. It is also possible that other Chinese pidgins in PNG may have been ignored and never recorded. She argues that up until the 1980s, Papua New Guineans may have perceived the Chinese as less relevant to their social and political relationships than the Europeans. Hence, there was little need to develop other forms of communication with Chinese beyond Tok Pisin.

Aikhenvald also considers Gessler's account of gendered foreigner talk in the Marmar market, which is adjacent to the Basamuk nickel refinery. This foreigner talk occurs only between Chinese men who buy food and PNG women who sell food to the men every morning when their shift ends. Aikhenvald highlights the use of mock Chinese by the women. She argues that while foreigner talk involves a specific form of convergent accommodation between two parties, mock Chinese involves the opposite by attributing a negative value to a mocked target. In drawing out such implications of Gessler's and Kuo's work, Aikhenvald outlines how there needs to be further research on the often racialised understanding of the Chinese as linguistically and socially inferior. As she notes, more research is needed to fully document these different types of meanings currently linked to the Chinese living in PNG. Such meanings help constitute the politics of difference in PNG today.

Anna Hayes's chapter outlines the increasing influence of China in the region but does so through the lens of the BRI and the intensifying geopolitical competition between the United States (US) and China, noting the implications of both for PNG's politics. Hayes argues the BRI, as part of Beijing's 'China Dream' grand strategy, seeks to transform the international system into a Sino-led international order, thereby replacing the US as the world's leading power. In addition, given the Pacific region is viewed as the southern extension of China's desired Maritime Silk Road, and its geostrategic location within Island Chain theory, the region is increasingly being drawn into this contest, alongside Australia. Hayes follows Hillman

(2020) in thinking the BRI constitutes Chinese imperialism that seeks to defy international rules and norms and concurs with Schuman (2020) that the BRI is the reestablishment of the tribute system via a China-centric trading system.

Following O'Dowd (2021, p. 415) Hayes also argues BRI investments may further exacerbate PNG's challenges with corruption, public sector management and poor governance, as well as questionable development projects and a lack of transparency and accountability over both loans and projects. Hayes outlines how high interventionist development models applied within China have resulted in cronyism, land grabs, local disempowerment and poor environmental outcomes, noting similar models may be applied in PNG. She highlights how PNG's landowners have already been identified as a 'problem' for Chinese investment in PNG because they truly do have rights over their land, unlike in the PRC. By exploring such possibilities, Hayes provides an astute and thought-provoking account of the negative effects of the BRI and the Chinese state's increasing influence on PNG's governance. Certainly, she and Chin both highlight how the PNG government's engagement with the BRI is occurring in the context of rapidly intensifying geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific region between the US and China, with Australia drawn into the contest. This is generating considerable political, economic, strategic and, increasingly, academic interest. Hayes usefully concludes our collection because her chapter asks: what is the future of China in PNG?

Concluding thoughts

In putting this volume together, our key concern has been to encourage focused research on histories of different Chinese peoples in PNG. We have challenged the treatment of the Chinese as a single homogenous group and have sought to foster recognition that there is great historical, political and cultural diversity among the people in PNG who have been 'orientalised' under the single category of Chinese.

We hope that the collection of chapters we have curated here will serve as a reminder of the importance of the Chinese in PNG's history and future. We also hope that the collection will be seen as invitation for others to create their own unique, 'irreducible' (Fanon, 1967) histories of their time with, or as, Chinese in PNG. This may not fully explain, nor fully predict, the

yet to come world of the Chinese in PNG, but more stories of the past and present Chinese presence in PNG will certainly help us to better understand PNG's future as it emerges.

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