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**“Investigating Corruption in Papua New Guinea through the Patron-Client Structure:
The Citizens’ Perceptions”**

Thesis submitted by

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From inception to submission, those involved in co-authorship would have done so in one of the following ways: the creation and/or co-creation of ideas; sharing of these ideas and knowledge; and providing constructive advice that improved the overall design, structure, and central arguments of published manuscripts and the thesis.

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This research was conducted in line with Ethics Approval Number H8078.

Dedication

This PhD thesis is dedicated firstly to the memory of my loving father Caspar Winn, who passed away on 29 March 2022. He was my primary educator, benefactor, and best friend. And secondly to my mother, Esther Winn, who has been a constant source of support, love, and encouragement. This is for all their sacrifices and years of commitment in my education to ensure I could reach the pinnacle of my academic achievement.

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The completion of this PhD thesis could not have been possible without God, who is the source of life, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. I therefore wish to acknowledge my God according to the wise counsel of King Solomon: “For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2: 6, *KJV*). I will keep on trusting Him for my future.

In researching and writing this thesis, I have accumulated many personal and institutional debts. This journey started 18 years ago at the University of Papua New Guinea’s Political Science Department. While doing my honours program between 2004 and 2006, I begun to develop a serious interest in scholarship and academia. This inquisitive desire for knowledge was groomed by Professor Allan Patience, late Dr Henry Okole, late Dr Alphonse Gelu, late Dr Ray Anere, Dr Orovu Sepoe, and Professor James Chin. I am forever grateful for their intellect, wisdom, and exemplary scholarship. To those academic giants whose shoulders I once stood on, but have departed to another life, rest well.

In December 2017 while I was preparing for my higher degree research studies, I met Dr Maxine Newlands at the PNG Impact Conference at UPNG. Two years later in 2019, I commenced my MPhil program under Dr Newlands’ and Associate Professor Simon Foale’s tutelage at the College of Arts, Society and Education (CASE) at James Cook University, which was later converted to PhD in 2021. I would like to express my utmost gratitude to both Dr Newlands and Associate Professor Foale as my co-principal supervisors, for their overwhelming support of my PhD program, for their patience, motivation, and excellent intellect and scholarship. I could not have asked for better advisors and mentors for my PhD project during one of the most difficult periods for researchers globally.

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Abstract

Corruption is deeply entrenched in Papua New Guinea's (PNG's) administrative and political systems. This study was an investigation into government and political corruption in Papua New Guinea (PNG) using the conceptual framework of patron-clientelism as a means for better understanding of corruption across cultural boundaries. The key findings were informed by several data sets, including focus group and survey data, which identified individual opinions by PNG nationals connected to the field of study. The study identifies a gap in the literature that has often been blurred or ignored where previously research on corruption placed emphasis on the institutional (political science and management) approach, and less on the cultural and traditional moral economy debate (anthropological approach). This thesis argues that studying corruption across cultural boundaries is important for understanding why corruption is still a main concern in PNG despite decades of anti-corruption reforms.

Through these investigations, the research addresses three core questions: 1) how do traditional and non-traditional reciprocity practices, such as *wantok* and big man systems, and bribery/gift-giving, exacerbate and catalyse corruption within Papua New Guinea's public service?; 2) what are the processes by which traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity are co-opted into formal institutions, serving as an alternative governance structure in Papua New Guinea?; and 3) how pervasive is clientelism in PNG's administrative and political environments?

This research used the qualitative meta-ethnography approach (Noblit & Hare, 1988) through the interpretivist paradigm and content analysis of text file data. Document analysis, an online survey, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to generate data. The snowballing method was used to recruit participants. Research subjects ($N=83$) were sampled from selected Port Moresby residents: government and private sector employees, retired senior public servants, university students, and informal sector vendors. There were 41 survey participants, and eight focus groups consisting of a total of 42 participants (with an average of four to eight participants per focus group). Participants were asked questions relating to government transparency, rule of law and rule bending, recruitment and appointment systems, public contracts, bribery, nepotism (particularly through the *wantok* system), favouritism, gift giving, and use of discretionary powers.

Overall findings from the people interviewed found corruption to be widespread at all levels of society, but more so in the public sector. Almost all respondents (99 percent – this includes respondents from focus groups who were also individually asked questions) believed that

corruption is either problematic or highly problematic in the public sector. In addition, 62 percent of respondents believed that most public servants have received bribes or kickbacks in one form or another through informal exchanges (mostly petty corruption), while 52 percent thought most politicians have been bribed by businesses or firms for political favours (grand corruption). The research also found that both traditional and non-traditional practices of reciprocity are deeply entrenched and intertwined in PNG's public sector. For instance, corruption, exacerbated by *wantokism* and big man system has infiltrated the entire system of government. Case studies discussed in Chapters Four and Six highlighted some of these traditional and non-traditional reciprocity practices and the way they promote corruption, particularly with the use of land as a conduit to steal money from the state. Most participants said *wantok* system has many negative effects and is a barrier to transparency and accountability. Likewise, the big man system was viewed negatively by the participants and seen as a barrier to PNG's development. The big man system is premised on the patronage culture where individual or group interests are prioritised over public interests.

One aspect of this research that is perhaps unique to PNG is the distinction between Melanesian reciprocity and actual corruption and bribery. That is, Melanesian or traditional reciprocity becomes bribery when the government official accepts a gift as an individual but shifts the obligation to reciprocate onto the state. The state is actually reciprocating and not the corrupt individual or individuals.

This study is the first in recent years to develop original work, but more importantly, it is a study researched and written by a PNG scholar with PNG subjects. It therefore constitutes an original contribution to the scholarly literature on government policies, will contribute to a better understanding of corruption in PNG from an anthropological perspective, and will therefore be useful for designing anti-corruption agendas that are appropriate for PNG. Understanding traditional reciprocity norms such as *wantok* and big man is an important step in investigating clientelistic networks embedded in PNG's state institutions, between big men and their *wantoks* or associates, which was perceived as a potential trigger for corruption.

Keywords: Big man system, Corruption, Informal systems of reciprocity, Papua New Guinea, Patron-Client Politics, *Wantok* system

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Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
AAS	Australia Awards Scholarship
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AND	The Australian Democracy Network
ANU	The Australian National University
ANZOG	The Australia and New Zealand School of Government
AUD	Australian Dollar
CACC	Central Agencies Coordinating Committee
CASE	College of Arts, Society, and Education
CIF	Corruption Investigative Framework
CMC	Computer mediated communication
COI	Commission of Inquiry
COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CR-FC	Court Registry-Case File
CSTB	Central Supply and Tenders Board
DAL	Department of Agriculture and Livestock
DDA	District Development Authority
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DLPP	Department of Lands and Physical Planning
DNP&RD	Department of National Planning and Rural Development
DoD	Department of Defence
EHM	Economic hit man
EMTV	Papua New Guinea's premier TV station
FB	Facebook
FGD(s)	Focus Group Discussion(s)
FSI	Financial Secrecy Index
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GO	General Orders
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
HDR	Higher Degree Research

HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
ICIJ	International Consortium of Investigative Journalists
INA	Institute of National Affairs
IPA	Investment Promotion Authority
ISR	Informal systems of reciprocity
JCU	James Cook University
KCH	Kumul Consolidated Holdings
KEL	Kurkuramb Estates Limited
KIL	Kopana Investments Limited
LLB	Lease-lease-back
LLG	Local-Level Government
LPV	Limited Preferential Voting
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MP(s)	Member(s) of Parliament
NASFUND	National Superannuation Fund
NCD	National Capital District
NCW	National Council of Women
NEC	National Executive Council
NFACD	National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	National Integrity System
NPC	National Procurement Commission
NRI	The National Research Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFG(s)	Online Focus Group(s)
OLDRL	Organic Law on the Duties and Responsibilities of Leadership
OLICAC	Organic Law on the Independent Commission Against Corruption
OLOC	Organic Law on the Ombudsman Commission
PFMA	Public Finances Management Act
PGK	Papua New Guinea Kina

PI	Principal Investigator
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PM	Prime Minister
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
RA(s)	Research Assistant(s)
SABL(s)	Special Agriculture Business Lease(s)
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SEOs	State-owned-entity/ies
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprise/s
SWT	Salary and Wage Tax
TI	Transparency International
TJN	Tax Justice Network
UN	The United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPNG	The University of Papua New Guinea
US	The United States of America
WB	World Bank
WMHL	Wahgi Mek Holding Limited
WMPL	Wahgi Mek Plantations Limited

Note

The use of brackets ([...]) in the thesis denotes words added by me for emphasis other than the original author or citation.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

*“The king establishes the land by justice, [b]ut he who receives bribes overthrows it”
(Proverbs 29:4 – The Holy Bible, New King James Version).*

1. Introduction

Corruption is a serious issue in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and has become more pronounced in the past two decades because of malfeasance and poor governance. Research and reports have all pointed to the societal, institutional, and global impacts of corruption. In 2016, the US State Department noted that corruption posed a major threat to global prosperity, and it undermines the rule of law, weakens state institutions, and denigrates human dignity (US Department of State, 2016). Definitions, causes of, and solutions to corruption in research and reports have relied on mainstream Western views, with less emphasis on the cultural context. This presents a significant gap in the understanding of corruption in non-Western cultures, particularly where the state is weak. PNG is a post-colonial state, which is linguistically and culturally highly diverse, with over 800 distinct languages spoken. In addition, the majority of Papua New Guinean citizens are subsistence and artisanal farmers exercising customary land rights and a mode of economic personhood that is deeply embedded in the traditional gift economy (Gregory, 2015). This, in many ways, results in ongoing tensions with the possessive individualism that is more common in economies dominated by capitalist market logics. This cultural and socio-economic environment poses distinct challenges to the exercise of state power and the effective functioning of state-wide financial, administrative and political institutions. Investigating corruption in this complex cultural and political system therefore challenges the researcher to examine these key elements carefully and critically. A strong system of patron-client politics can easily flourish in this type of environment as this research will demonstrate.

In this present research project, I investigate government and political corruption in PNG using the conceptual framework of patron-clientelism as a means for better understanding corruption across cultural boundaries. Traditionally, a patron-client system involves the distribution of selective benefits to individuals or groups in exchange for political support (Gherghina & Volintiru, 2017; Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). Clientelism refers to the “personalised and discretionary exchange of goods or favours for political support” (Gonzalez-Ocantos & Oliveros, 2019, p. 2). “This assumes the existence of [reciprocal] exchanges between patrons (parties) and clients (voters) with the help of brokers (party organisations). In this scheme, the exchange takes the form of resource allocation or access (from parties to voters) and of electoral support

(from voters to parties)” (Gherghina & Volintiru, 2017, p. 115). A politician having direct access to voters (for support and loyalty) using bribes (distribution of resources) and manipulation is a good example. Scott (1972) defined this relationship “as a special case of dyadic (two person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron” (Scott, 1972, p. 92). To further explore the nexus between patron-client politics and corruption, the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP), considered to be one of the most corrupt institutions in PNG, will be a key focus of this study. Perceptions garnered from participants regarding the issue of land administration in the DLPP will be used to analyse any features and patterns of patron-client politics to see whether these features act as a catalyst for corrupt behaviour in the department. If there is significant evidence to justify this assumption, inferences could be made of other state institutions in PNG.

A review of published research, an online survey, and focus group discussions were used to gather and process data. Participants ($N=83$) were sampled from three categories: 1) employees in both the public and private organisations; 2) groups of PNG people who are either unemployed or self-employed; and 3) selected students from the University of Papua New Guinea.

This study is the first in recent years to develop original work, but more importantly, it is a study researched and written by a PNG scholar with PNG subjects, and therefore will make an important contribution to the scholarly literature and deficits in government policies, contribute to a better understanding of corruption in PNG’s unique cultural and political context, and will be useful for designing a culturally-and politically-informed anti-corruption agenda in PNG. Understanding traditional reciprocity norms such as *wantok* and big man is an important step in investigating clientelist networks embedded in PNG’s state institutions, particularly between contemporary big men and their *wantoks* or associates, a dynamic that must be at the centre of any productive analysis of corruption.

1.1 Background, knowledge gap, significance, research questions and hypothesis

Corruption is a highly contested concept, with no universally accepted definitions. Although the term exists, there is no agreement upon what its meanings are. Definitions of the term are finite, and have inherent issues whether they be conceptual, practical, or operational. Corruption also takes many forms, but the two main categories are petty corruption and grand

corruption. The present research uses both categories of corruption, however where noted, each is referenced in case studies and data analysis. De Schutter (2016, p. 6) offered a basic outline of the definitional issues:

Petty corruption [everyday corruption/minor favours] includes exchanges of small amounts of money or favours (i.e., bribes) and most often involves local government authorities or community leaders, such as village chiefs. Grand corruption takes place on a large-scale, systematic basis and pervades all levels of government, including the highest levels. Because of the sums [of money] involved, grand corruption is often linked to money laundering schemes and in many cases has international ramifications. In both forms, corruption always involves the acquisition of money, assets, or power in a way which escapes the public view; is usually illegal; and is at the expense of society as a whole either at a grand or everyday level.

Corruption is generally understood as misusing or abusing public office for private gain. This conventional definition, according to some scholars, fails to capture the context in which corruption occurs in cross-cultural environments. There is paucity of information or literature that specifically studies the relationship between patron-client politics and corruption in PNG. The few studies that were conducted (Barcson, 2015; Kurer, 1993, 2007; Walton, 2009, 2015, 2016, 2019; Wood, 2018) have situated their discussions within the ambit of electoral politics model and institutional or management politics without accounting for corruption as a function of patron-client politics. Specific cultural, socio-economic, and political features associated with patron-client politics were not investigated fully. Therefore, Walton (2015, p. 15) suggested that “there is concern that the [conventional] definition [World Bank, United Nations, Transparency International] fails to recognise the cultural, economic, and social factors that frame transactions labelled corrupt”. Other critiques pursuing a similar line of argument include Bukovansky (2006), Gupta (1995), Haller and Shore (2005), Harrison (2007), and the Tax Justice Network (2019).

The role of culture is emphasised on the basis that cultural determinants embedded in PNG’s strong communal system could partly, but not entirely, aid corrupt behaviour. As Walton 2016 (p. 216) suggested, “in the shadow of a weak state a traditional culture of reciprocity and communality can serve to justify corruption” (Walton, 2016, p. 216). Although Walton acknowledged this assumption, he did not offer an expanded argument. In the Pacific Islands, culture (e.g., *kastom* in PNG and Vanuatu, *fa a* in Samoa, and *mweaka* in Kiribati) is a constant and

present throughout their history, while words like state and governance tend to be associated with the ‘outsiders’ (Larmour, 2012). These outsider concepts refer to something that is absent or deficient, as in stateless societies or so-called weak states. “So, culture is seen as something solid and present, and the state as something insubstantial and absent” (Larmour, 2012, p. 36). The present research investigates in detail this gap involving reciprocity and exchange in cross-cultural environments where state institutions are found to be weak. This weakness is in part a problem of inefficient and poor governance, which, according to Teskey et al. (2021), is instigated by the entrenchment of informal structures of governance that tend to “trump” the formal rules. “Behind the facade of the state, it is informal socio-economic networks, cultural norms and expectations, and the exercise of personal power that shapes governance and inhibits transparency” (Teskey et al., 2021, p. 3).

While much emphasis is on Western oriented definitions of corruption, less effort is put into understanding corruption in a cross-cultural setting. This view is supported by Walton (2009) in his study of rural people’s perception of corruption in PNG, and Tiki (2018) who investigated perceptions of bribery versus gifts within selected public sector departments in PNG. “Yet, surprisingly, very little research has been conducted on understanding local perceptions of corruption in PNG. Much has been written about events or systems, which can be considered as contributing to corruption. However, there has yet to be a concentrated effort on understanding local perceptions of corruption” (Walton, 2009, p. 1). This, perhaps, is a challenge researchers were faced with when inquiring about corruption because current corruption research is focused more on data that is open and easily accessible (Lasslett, 2017; Schoeneborn & Homberg, 2016; Torsello & Vernard, 2016). Lasslett (2017) argued that as a result, the

...scholarly landscape dealing with corruption has tended to focus more on accessible areas of inquiry, including definitional debates, macro-measures of corruption levels, gauging its economic impacts, and frameworks for evaluating anti-corruption initiatives. Less urgency has been given to the task of producing robust empirical data that document the precise motivations, institutional structures, actor networks, illicit repertoires and terrains of impunity that underpin grand corruption schemes (Lasslett, 2017, p. 30).

A review of the broad literature on corruption and patron-client studies indicates limited research on how patronage politics has impacted corruption, particularly in weak states’ institutions. Academics and anti-corruption agencies writing on corruption continue to ignore nuanced aspects of patronage politics and its contribution to corruption. To date, clientelism in

PNG, and its impact on governance, has received scant attention (Wood, 2018). Walton (2013a) argued that it is important for academics to be critically aware of the importance of culture in reframing debates about corruption in PNG and the Pacific. Walton (2015) moreover argued that defining corruption as ‘abuse of public office for private gain’ is inadequate because it fails to consider the different cultural, social, economic, and political conditions in weak states and even in some strong states. Walton (2016, p. 216) concluded that “in the shadow of a weak state a traditional culture of reciprocity and communality can serve to justify corruption”.

Clientelism is widely associated with corruption, poor governance and underdevelopment (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002; Hicken, 2011; Wood, 2018). Some studies provided an analytical framework for interpreting the relationship between patron-client politics, corruption and good governance (Tiki, 2018; Tiki, Luke & Mack, 2021). For instance, Tiki (2018) wrote about the perception of bribery in selected government departments in PNG and cites patron-client politics as partly responsible for actions (bribery) labelled as corrupt.

Sarker (2008) investigated the impact of patron-client politics and its implications on (good) governance in the context of Bangladesh, which is important as it demonstrated that corruption and patron-client politics are symbiotic, and their entrenchment in the bureaucracy undermines reforms, good governance, and development. Therefore, discussion on good governance and corruption in any cross-cultural or post-colonial context will still involve interrogating clientelism, which one way or another influence corrupt behaviour. The approach taken by Sarker (2008, p. 1417) “[to] elucidate how the pervasiveness of patron-client politics has eroded the noble attempts and/or stopped the policy makers from undertaking good governance measures” perhaps provided important lessons, which can be transferred to PNG as an analytical framework for interpreting relationships between clientelism, corruption and good governance. Both Bangladesh and PNG were former post-colonial states. Their political cultures are underscored by neo-patrimonialism where political leaders privatise state power as a means to accumulate and distribute wealth to their clients. Arguing in a similar vein, Araral et al. (2019, p. 580) viewed neo-patrimonialism as “a type of regime that facilitates corruption or the abuse of public power for private gain”. Beekers and van Gool (2012, p. 1) defined neo-patrimonialism “as a type of regime in which ruling elites use the state for personal enrichment and profit from a public administration that is patently unstable, [unresponsive], inefficient, non-transparent and that fails to distribute public resources to large segments of the population”. Personalisation of power, political fragmentation, political decay, and underdevelopment and socio-economic stagnation (exacerbated by decades of corruption) have become defining features of their

(Bangladesh and PNG) clientelist systems. The state, the parliamentary democracy and capitalism that evolved following colonial rule provided an opportunity for clientelism to embed itself in these postcolonial structures. Ghai (1997, p. 303) found that “the parliamentary system in PNG has been influenced more by traditional notions of clan leadership and reciprocity than by the Westminster convention”. Stewart and Strathern (1998) treaded on a similar path, noting that:

[PNG’s] Westminster-style democracy has provided avenues for emergent leaders [indigenous capitalists] to enter into politics, and the emphasis on wealth and its distribution as a means of attaining and legitimising political power has given a particular cast to the activities of politicians generally, who need wealth both to gain votes and to reward supporters. Such local imperatives have driven the national political machine to provide sectoral funds for direct distribution by politicians in their electorates, bypassing the public service channels. Democracy has thus been diverted into patronage, and strong policy-based political parties have not emerged. (Stewart & Strathern, 1998, p. 132).

Cox (2009) wrote in the same vein as Sarker (2008) by making a distinction between active citizenship and passive clientelism and how accountability and development is promoted or supplemented in Solomon Islands. The main idea in Cox’s research is the connection between clientelism and good governance, yet there is no indication of a relationship between clientelism and corruption, considering the broadly similar cultural context in Solomon Islands. Wood (2018) conducted similar research where reference is made of the patron-client politics ‘trap’ in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea and how this ‘trap’ affects development in both countries. According to Wood (2018), poor governance and poverty [underdevelopment] cause clientelism, and clientelism causes poor governance and poverty [underdevelopment]. “Taken together, these facts point to a trap, one in which clientelism is preventing countries from developing, whereas at the same time, countries’ underdevelopment is contributing to the clientelist politics that they suffer from” (Wood, 2018, p. 487). International literature associated with patron-client politics, development, and governance has flourished, but without a clear link between patron-client politics and corruption (Hicken, 2011; Wood, 2018).

Other researchers (Barcson, 2015; Kurer, 2007; Singer, 2009; Wood, 2016) have conducted research on patron-client politics and its relationship to elections, with limited acknowledgment of the relationship between patron-client politics and corruption in the administration of elections. Kurer (2007), for instance, observed the tendency of PNG voters to align their votes

to politicians who employed the patron-client politics approach to lure votes. Kurer's primary assumption was based on the impact of voter-politician connection and how it affects democracy and governance but fails to identify whether this voter-politician relationship approach promotes corruption in the election processes. Wood (2016), Singer (2009), and Barcson (2015) have conducted similar research and, like others, made limited reference to the role of clientelism in promoting corruption in cross-cultural environments like PNG, where the state is particularly weak. Teskey et al. (2021, p. 4) noted that in PNG, "there is an absence of broader-based political parties, political parties are fluid, party membership is based on patronage and not ideology, party is less important than the party leadership (personality), and politicians and their constituents continue to view the state as an instrument for directing scarce resources towards their localities and core supporters". While this appears to be the case, Teskey et al. (2021) provided little indication that there exists a nexus between patronage and corruption.

The perception of corruption and its consequences on governance and anti-corruption reforms has occupied much of the literature on corruption studies. However, like the above-reviewed literature, there is limited analysis of the relationship between patronage and corruption. Walton (2013a, 2013b, 2015, 2016, 2019) had attempted this by discussing corruption and how it is perceived and defined in the PNG context, and how it affects governance. These studies by Walton were conducted in PNG, but there is little reference to corruption and the patron-client relationship. Walton employed the institutional approach of political science by engaging with formal aspects of government institutions and, therefore, deviated from an anthropological view which can provide valuable and important insights about patron-client systems. The present research will pursue both the institutional and anthropological views of corruption, thus building on previous corruption studies done in PNG.

Bureaucracy is at the heart of formal institutions (offices) of the state. Günay (2008) analysed the nexus between clientelism and bureaucracy, and clientelism's effect on Weberian values of bureaucracy. Günay (2008, p.2) found that "in the context of public administration, clientelism is the practice whereby politicians and/or bureaucrats, instead of serving the wider collective interest, give in to particularistic demands and distribute divisible benefits (namely public resources, i.e., public contracts, administrative jobs, state aids, local infrastructure investments, etc.) to individuals or groups of individuals in exchange for political support or power". However, Günay did not specifically analyse the research questions within the context of corruption and patron-client influences in the bureaucracy other than making a distinction between

clientelism and the formal bureaucracy as well as between clientelism and the informal bureaucracy. Kurer (1993) took a similar approach when discussing clientelism, corruption, and allocation of resources. In this research, Kurer relied heavily on the organisational and business or economic model, seeing corruption as a rent seeking behaviour, with less emphasis on cultural, socio-economic, and political factors as likely triggers of corruption. This review of the literature demonstrates there is a knowledge gap between a universalist understanding of corruption and how it is explained by examining patron-client structures in the unique cultural context of PNG. As such, the present research will investigate this limitation as a contribution to corruption studies in political science and anthropology.

The research outlined in this thesis is significant because it addresses the problem of contextualising corruption in a particular cultural context. Causes and definitions of, and solutions to, corruption vary between different settings or contexts. As Kurer (1993, p. 260) noted, “the effect [and causes] of corruption [including its definitions and solutions] varies with the nature of political system [context]”. It is, therefore, important to use context specific cases and approaches for better understanding of government corruption in a society that is culturally and linguistically diverse, ethnically and politically fragmented, and where state and economic capabilities are weak. Under these circumstances, people are more aligned to their tribal, kinship or linguistic boundaries than the state. According to Teskey et al. (2021), although the state is legally present across the country through the three levels of government (national, provincial, and local), services provided by the government are limited, especially in rural areas. Therefore, “citizens tend to view the state as a somewhat distant and none too relevant concept” (Teskey et al., 2021, p. 3).

The present research analyses the impact of patron-clientelism on corruption within the context of both the modern Weberian (state) system, and traditional and non-traditional reciprocity norms of *wantok* and the big man systems, as well as bribery and gifting found in PNG society. Bribery and gifting (gift gifting) are universal practices. Although they may appear similar in meaning, there is a stark contrast between the two, especially when applied within the context of government ethics. The question is: “when is a gift a bribe? (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017). According to Nadler and Schulman (2006), a gift is something of value given without the expectation of return; a bribe is the same thing given in the hope of influence or benefit. The distinction between the two concepts will be explored more critically, particularly from an anthropological perspective, in Chapter 5.

This study also attempts to tackle a problem as complex as government and political corruption in a society where a strong traditional culture of reciprocity intersects with burgeoning individualism. The *wantok* and big man systems are most often used as an excuse to justify corrupt actions and behaviour in PNG. There is little current research into how people perceived informality networks and systems across cultural environments as being responsible for exacerbating corruption. This thesis will explore this, make some contributions to the scholarly literature and deficits in government policies, and improve our understanding of the cultural and systemic process across state institutions in PNG, and other cultural contexts within the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Three primary research questions addressed in this thesis are:

- 1) How do traditional and non-traditional reciprocity practices, such as *wantok* and big man systems, along with bribery/gifting, exacerbate and catalyse corruption within Papua New Guinea's public service?;
- 2) What are the processes by which traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity are co-opted into formal institutions, serving as an alternative governance structure in Papua New Guinea?; and
- 3) How pervasive is clientelism in PNG's administrative and political systems?

I have suggested three hypotheses and will test them through the proposed research questions. These hypotheses are:

- 1) Traditional and non-traditional reciprocity norms, such as *wantok* and big man systems, and bribery/gifting, exacerbate corruption and thrive in weak state institutions in PNG;
- 2) The fusion between traditional and non-traditional reciprocity norms and modern managerialism creates a unique hybrid management structure in PNG's public service; and
- 3) The embeddedness of traditional and non-traditional reciprocity norms in PNG's political and administrative systems makes clientelism pervasive.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The principal aim of this research was to investigate corruption in PNG through the lens of patron-clientelism as a means of contextualising corruption across cultural boundaries, a gap that has often been blurred or ignored in the literature. It is assumed that both traditional and non-traditional practices of reciprocity are entrenched in PNG's public service, have become

institutionalised and accepted as part of the Weberian rational-legal system, and consequently create confusion that exacerbates corruption. There are three specific objectives which are derived from the three proposed research questions.

Objective one was to analyse the impact of traditional and non-traditional reciprocity norms, such as the *wantok* and big man systems, and bribery/gifting, on modern managerialism or the formal Weberian system in PNG's public service. This analysis was based on the assumption that these informal reciprocity practices are embedded in PNG's public service and tend to mimic formal practices, which consequently catalyse and exacerbate corruption.

The second objective was to examine the process by which traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity, such as the *wantok* and big man systems, and bribery/gifting, are co-opted into the modern managerialist or Weberian system, possibly creating an alternative or hybrid management structure within PNG's formal governance system.

The third objective was to analyse the embeddedness of traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity in PNG's public service, and to investigate how pervasive clientelism is in the public service.

1.3 Overview of chapters

There are eight chapters in this thesis (Figure 1.1). Chapter one provides an insight into this study, which highlights key concepts, the main theoretical basis that brings forth the research gap, the significance of this study, and research questions and hypotheses. The aims and objectives of this research are also highlighted in the introductory chapter. In chapter two, a review of key literature pertaining to this study is provided. The purpose of the literature review is to discuss the existing body of knowledge related to this research, suggest its relevance, and importantly establish the knowledge gap. By highlighting the current knowledge gap, I aim to show where my research fits into the current body of literature dealing with this subject, and how this research will contribute to original insights. Research methodology, which includes description and rationale for selecting the study site and research techniques, are discussed in chapter three. Chapter four discusses two models used in this study: 1) the patron-client model, and 2) the corruption investigative framework. These models are useful in simplifying the representation of complex realities such as the hierarchical nature of everyday social exchanges (sociology), factional systems and local leadership structures (anthropology), and party politics, patronage systems, and electoral politics (political science). Chapter five discusses corruption and patronage narratives using stories gathered from FGDs and surveys with PNG

people. In particular, the concepts of bribery and gifting are explored within the PNG context, with the key question being: when does a gift become a bribe? In chapter six, an institutional case study is discussed as a prelude to data analysis and discussion; the DLPP was selected as the institution for this case study. Chapter seven provides an analysis and discussion of data. This chapter will give an indication as to whether the research questions and hypotheses have been adequately addressed. Chapter eight concludes the research, including outlining research limitations and directions for future research.

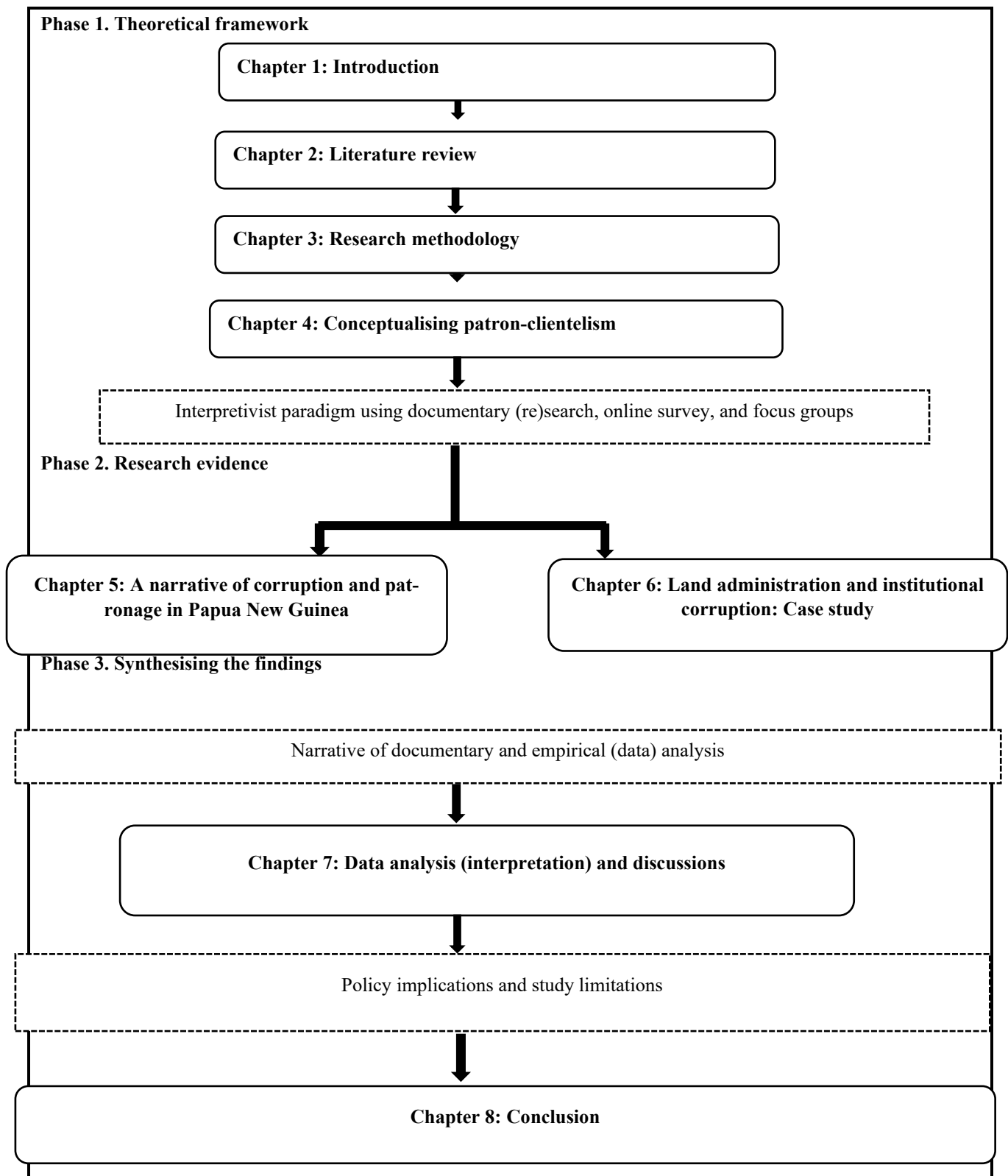


Figure 1.1: Thesis structure (adopted from Nimbtik, 2016, p. 17 with adjustments)

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

2 Literature review

Corruption and patron-client politics are symbiotic (and therefore inseparable), especially in post-colonial states like Papua New Guinea (PNG) whose administrative and political environments are underscored by clientelist practices such as rule bending, nepotism, allocation of government contracts, pork barrelling, cronyism, neo-patrimonialism, and gift giving/bribery. Three common denominators must be present for corruption to occur: 1) economic goods (monetary or asset form) with significant value; 2) existence of a network and systemic pattern of conduct; and 3) disposal of economic goods facilitated by self-interested actors who are capable of creating enduring institutional cultures, repertoires, and processes that are favourable to corrupt forms of activity (Lasslett, 2017).

According to Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002, p. 40), pork barrelling involves “appropriations of public funds for geographically targeted projects that do not serve the interests of any large portion of the country’s citizenry [or electoral constituents], and that bypass usual funding procedures”. Such clientelistic practices are entrenched within formal systems and tend to mimic formal rules – for instance, existing within an established bureaucracy – and, therefore, produce dysfunctional administrative structures over time. As Lomnitz (1988, p. 54) observed, “as the state apparatus expands and its economic functions become more encompassing, the informal networks of reciprocal exchange and patronage invade the formal system and mimic its power structure”. This literature review, therefore, synthesises scholarship on patron-client politics and corruption with reference to PNG.

The key aim of this research was to investigate the ideas of corruption and patron-client politics, particularly as to whether incorporation of the patron-client practices (normally embedded in informal societal structures) into formal institutions of state do affect corruption in PNG. This research uses several case studies involving land administration and management of land titles in the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP) in PNG to analyse the patron-client model. Data from the present research supported findings from past research and reports that corruption is systemic and is deeply entrenched in the DLPP (Gridneff & AAP PNG Correspondent, 2010; Joku, 2010; Levantis, 2016; McDonnell, 2017; NRI, 2007; PNGi Central, 2020; *Post-Courier*, 2020; Rai, 2020; Vari, 2017; Wangi & Ezebilo, 2017). Therefore, the DLPP was perceived as the most corrupt government institution in PNG.

Corruption and patron-client politics are inextricably intertwined in PNG's bureaucracy and political system. The following three cases, among many others, epitomise the nature of this intertwining relationship between corruption and patron-client politics. These include: 1) Okuk's pork barrel politics of the 1980s (Standish, 1983); 2) the Mujo Sefa bribes (Philemon, 1997); and 3) nepotism and cronyism in the Southern Highlands provincial government (Dix & Pok, 2009).

The first case involves pork barrel politics. The late Iambakey Okuk, a former PNG independence leader and deputy prime minister, was an illustrious, but cunning and shrewd politician. The style of politics employed in Simbu during his political tenure between 1972 and 1977 provides a clear case of pork barrel politics. For instance, "Okuk found employment in the corporation and in the government [using his political connections] for both political allies and former opponents. [In service delivery], he played pork barrel politics to the extent of moving expenditure already planned for the upgrading of the Gembogl road and then he claimed political credit for the roadwork and compensation payment involved" (Standish, 1983, p. 79).

The second case illustrates the challenges of holding together fractured coalition governments, (a key feature of PNG's unstable parliamentary democracy), which always involved bribes and misapplication of public funds. On 27 November 1997, former prime minister of PNG, the late Bill Skate, was alleged to have authorised K27,000 (about AUD23,344, based on 1997 exchange rate of AUD1=PGK1.1566) of public money to be paid as bribes to four ministers in his cabinet. This allegation was leaked in a secret tape by Mujo Sefa, a Melbourne based businessman and former aide to Bill Skate who handed the tape to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) after a fallout with Skate. This transaction was alleged to be inducements intended to keep Skate's government intact going into the 1997 national election in PNG (Philemon, 1997, November 27, p. 1). Veenendaal and Corbett (2020, p. 71) noted that "the strategic use of ministerial portfolios or indeed cash bribes by prospective Prime Ministers to win the support of parliamentary colleagues is linked to the prevalence of clientelist practices because many MPs see the formation of government as an opportunity to recoup the money spent on their previous election campaign, or indeed fill their coffers in anticipation of the next one".

The third case highlights nepotism, politically induced appointments, and cronyism. In 2006, it was revealed that one provincial government in PNG, namely Southern Highlands, had its provincial payroll system inflated with twelve ghost names. The recruitment of these 'ghost

officials' appears erratic, dubious, and systematically corrupt. Through political favours and nepotism, these people had cost the state millions of dollars (Dix & Pok, 2009).

What is common in these three corruption cases is that the actors involved are connected through networks that extend beyond the confines of law, rules, and policies. Carvajal (1999) suggested that "large-scale corruption is supported by *power networks*" and saw corruption as a "*social network* phenomenon" based on a relationship of complicity (Carvajal, 1999, pp. 335-336). Corruption is a social network phenomenon because the structure of its social network is determined by exchange relationships between individuals or units. Exchanges are governed by three factors including: 1) the direction of the exchange; 2) the type of resources exchanged; and 3) the mode of exchange (Lomnitz, 1982).

Although there are well intentioned rules, regulations, and standards in PNG's public service, the very nature of patron-client politics (including its reciprocal characteristics) means that public officials face competing demands from kinship groups to share any state benefits and wealth that are under their control. Many PNG politicians and leaders advance culture or tradition (specifically its modern interpretations) as a justification for corrupt behaviour (Barr & Serra, 2010; Dix & Pok, 2009; Jing & Graham, 2008; Salmon, 2017; Wood, 2016). Two specific cultural norms manifested in the rational-legal system that have been used and abused overtime are the *wantok* system (the term *wantok* meaning "one talk" or speaking the same language in *Tok Pisin*) and the big man system. "In practice [*wantok* system] refers to tight, reciprocal social networks or what anthropologists call segmentary societies" (Dix & Pok, 2009, p. 248).

In the traditional PNG context, a big man was someone who was considered to be wealthy, a great warrior, an effective peace mediator and orator, a generous giver, and to have great hunting, cultivating, and fishing skills. In its modern expression, "the big-man is renowned as an economic entrepreneur, the master of material displays" (Roscoe et al., 2019, p. 176). These two informal systems of reciprocity are apparently characterised by big man politics in PNG, which become more pronounced during elections (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017; Lomnitz, 1988; Walton & Jackson, 2020). Dix and Pok (2009, p. 247) suggested that "the *wantok* and big man traditions manifest themselves in PNG's political arena as a system by which elected leaders and bureaucrats use public office as an opportunity to accumulate wealth and therefore status. [Consequently], the *wantoks* of these officials expect the spoils of the office to confer direct benefits".

There are regional variations of corruption, according to context, type, and strength of institutional structures, and political and economic opportunities. “Underlying variations in participation and institutions will not determine every detail of a country’s corruption problems: personalities, events, crackdowns and reforms, and popular responses can all play roles” (Johnston, 2005, p. 38). Bureaucracies that apply the institutional approach to the study of corruption use mainstream Western oriented definitions, causes, and solutions of corruption. However, this approach has inherent limitations that fail to account for people’s perceptions toward socio-economic and cultural conditions in PNG (Walton, 2009 & 2015). Papua New Guineans are more concerned about the moral implications of corruption and not its legality (Kanekane, 2007). The prevailing view is that there is a moral obligation to use one’s official title and office to benefit the family, *wantok*, and friends, despite it being illegal. The illegality of *kastom* (PNG/Melanesian word for custom) and traditional gift-giving, as dictated by formal rules and laws, was, however, seen as a ‘moral failing’ by Kanekane (2007) because *kastom* and traditional gift-giving have moved away from their traditional sphere of influence. Huntington (1968) suggested that modernisation breeds corruption in developing countries in several ways. One of the main ways is that new and alien norms tend to influence the behaviour of indigenous elites who then use it as a yardstick to judge or measure their own society. Consequently, “behaviour which was acceptable and legitimate according to traditional norms becomes unacceptable and corrupt when viewed through modern eyes” (Huntington, 1968, p. 60).

“Something regarded as corrupt in one culture, or sub-culture, might not be regarded as corrupt in another” (Larmour, 2008, p. 227). Some anthropologists “refuse to give a definition [of corruption] by the researcher (observer). [Instead], they prefer to use the definition given by the observed” (Torsello & Venard, 2016, p. 35). Therefore, what is observed using the emic approach in one cultural or social context may not be the same in another context. Corruption is framed within the context of reciprocity, “one that is not attuned to modern institutions” (Dix & Pok, 2009, p. 240). Anthropologists refer to this approach as cultural relativism (Alatas, 1968; Boas, 1887; Brown, 2008; Lowie, 1917).

The subsequent subsections of this chapter review literature relating to patron-client theory and corruption to provide an understanding of issues and theoretical insights. In particular, ideas derived from the institutional approach to the study of corruption based on mainstream Western views, and the anthropological view of corruption will be reviewed. The latter emphasises the role of culture as one probable cause of corruption in contemporary administrative contexts. For instance, the moral economy approach, initially advanced by Scott (1976), and later

emphasised by de Sardan (1999), which highlights sources of cultural logics in framing corruption will be discussed alongside traditional reciprocity systems in cultural settings like PNG.

2.1 Patron-client theory: An overview

Literature on patron-client theory in the social sciences is well established. The best-known accounts of this theory include the Roman rule over the Hellenes and peoples of North Africa (Badian, 1958), and Saller's (1982) comprehensive review of the origin of the patronage system, particularly in empires or civilisations in Asia (China), Europe (Roman empire), and Africa (North Africa). Badian (1958) saw Roman and Hellenic social relations as an expression of "a patron and client relationship [based] on the model of domestic bargains arranged between a protective superior and a steward for benefits in kind" (Badian, 1958, p. 117).

There is no precise definition of patron-client theory because of its features relative to other categories of socio-economic, political, and cultural relations. It must be noted that although the terms patronage, political patronage, clientelism, and clientelist politics are often used interchangeably, this study will rely on the use of the term patronage, which incorporates both the political (including public administration) and anthropological elements of the concept. Weingrod (1968, p. 379) distinguished between the political science and anthropological definitions as such:

[In political science], patronage refers to the ways in which party politicians distribute public jobs or special favors [sic] in exchange for electoral support. [In anthropology, patronage is described as] the analysis of how persons of unequal authority, yet linked through ties of interest and friendship, manipulate their relationships in order to attain their ends (Weingrod, 1968, p. 379).

The present research employs both the political science and anthropological usage of patronage, which will be elaborated further in the subsequent sections. Cases and institutions referred to in sections of the present research involves "dyadic contracts" between actors of unequal statuses, who participate in both the formal and informal institutions, and as political patronage whereby state or government institutions are utilised or employed as incentive creating mechanisms. To this end, Weingrod (1968) attested that anthropology's interest lies in social interaction or relationship between people, and to a political scientist, patronage is the feature of government. "Specificity is required not merely for reasons of clarity, but also since defining patronage in one way or the other determines how issues are posed" (Weingrod, 1968, p. 380).

Three definitions that provide a concise view of the patron-client theory are those by Boissevain (1966), Kaufman (1974), and Scott (1972). According to Boissevain (1966):

Patronage is founded on the reciprocal relations between patrons and clients. By patron, I mean a person who uses his influence to assist and protect some other person, who then becomes his 'client,' and in return provides certain services to his patron. The relationship is asymmetrical, for the nature of the services exchanged may differ considerably (Boissevain, 1966, p. 18).

Kaufman's (1974) definition of the patron-client theory is a synthesis of Powell (1970), Scott (1972), and Lande (1973), which can be identified using the following characteristics:

a) the relationship occurs between actors of unequal power and status; b) [the patron-client relationship] is based on the principle of reciprocity; that is, [the relationship] is a self-regulating form of interpersonal exchange, the maintenance of which depends on the return that each actor expects to obtain by rendering goods and services to the other and which ceases once the expected rewards fail to materialize; c) the relationship is particularistic and private, anchored only loosely in public law or community norms (Kaufman, 1974, p. 285).

Scott (1972) defined the patron-client relationship theory as:

A special case of dyadic (two person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron (Scott, 1972, p. 92)

The patron-client theory in the social sciences has found expressions in sociology, anthropology, and political science (Schmidt et al., 1977). The multi-disciplinary nature of this theory in the social sciences makes it a useful tool for analysing corruption. In my view, all three disciplines are useful for studying patronage and corruption in PNG. For instance, studies of localised leadership patterns and structures by anthropologists in traditional PNG societies, sociologists trying to identify and define traditional modes of exchanges in traditional PNG context, and political scientists relying on these two systems in analysing electoral and political behaviour during elections in PNG are well documented (Ketan, 2004; Sahlins, 1963; Standish, 1983). Using these three social sciences disciplines, the present research sought to understand

why the traditional forms of leadership, traditional patterns of exchange, and traditional governance structures continue to confront modern Western managerial systems (including administrative and political) in a negative way in PNG. Uberti (2015) supported this idea by drawing on insights from economics, sociology, and anthropology to develop an account of the relationship between corruption, cultural norms, and patron-client politics in developing countries.

More light will be shed on the patron-client theory in discussion chapter four, with the aid of patron-client models and a case study to help with our understanding of patronage and government corruption in PNG.

2.2 There is no one-size-fits-all definition: Finding a theoretical fit

Corruption is a universal problem without a universal definition, and its causes and solutions vary across politics and cultures. As Gould (1991, p. 467) noted, “corruption has no single definition. It varies from region to region and remains largely contextual”. Much has been written in defining corruption, yet much is still unknown about the protean nature of corruption. It is a complex phenomenon (World Bank, 1997). Several scholars have noted that corruption is both a local and global issue across many transnational boundaries (Carvajal, 1999; Chayes, 2017; Friedrich, 1963; Haller & Shore, 2005; Lambsdorff, 2009; Lasslett, 2017; Lee & Guven, 2013; Munhoz, 2008; Philip, 1987; Rose, 2018; Rotberg, 2009; Seleim & Bontis, 2009). Different cultural, historical, socio-economic, political, environmental, and structural factors bear directly on how corruption is viewed and defined across countries and regions. Despite the importance of corruption, there remains significant confusion and ambiguity regarding its nature and definition (Rose, 2018).

Two most used definitions of corruption are:

1. the abuse (or misuse) of public office for private gain (World Bank, 1997); and
2. the abuse (or misuse) of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2021).

However, these definitions have been criticised for being too narrow and exclusive of the private sector (Tax Justice Network, 2019), and are “problematic and far too restrictive” (Haller & Shore, 2005, p. 8). The World Bank’s definition “reduces corruption simply to a problem of dishonest individuals or ‘rotten apples’ working in the public sector. It also reduces explanations for corruption to individual greed and personal venality so that our focus – to extend the

metaphor – is on the individual apples rather than the barrel that contains them” (Haller & Shore, 2005, p. 2). Meanwhile, as Bussell (2015) noted:

Even the term ‘the abuse of public office for private gain’ offers little insight into how to distinguish between different forms of abuse; yet, analysing the diverse forms [of abuse] is often at the heart of analyses of corruption. Thus, we need a more comprehensive consideration of variation within the concept of corruption (Bussell, 2015, p. 22).

Corruption is a slippery and protean concept that is challenging to define. Therefore, the debate – that of whether to define corruption as an analytical category focusing narrowly on individuals and not the system as a whole – is far from closed. However, most anthropologists tend to agree that the World Bank’s definition is either far too restrictive or has become increasingly misleading (Haller & Shore, 2005).

Given the ambiguity in definition, how does one account for the systematic nature of institutional and transnational corruption? To answer this question, one needs to objectively consider the systemic and systematic nature of corruption found at all levels. The Tax Justice Network’s (TJN, 2019) definition perhaps provides the best theoretical fit.

At heart, corruption undermines the integrity of rules, systems and institutions that promote the public interest, and undermines confidence in those rules. Corruption is a systemic problem. But definitions such as Transparency International’s “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain,” or the World Bank’s “the abuse of public office for private gain” are usually interpreted quite narrowly, encouraging excessive focus on individuals and transactions, rather than on the system. But whole societies can become corrupted. Indeed, it is not hard to argue that the entire global financial system has become corrupted, above all by offshore activity. Corruption, [therefore] is the abuse of public interest and the undermining of public confidence in the integrity of rules, systems and institutions that promote the public interest (TJN, 2019).

This definition adequately addresses the whole systems approach that is seen to be lacking in most delineations. It essentially accounts for both the institutional politics approach, which focuses on the “interplay of formal institutions and social practices that, together, constitute a society’s system of public order” (Rogow & Lasswell, 1963, p. 67), and the emic approach in anthropology in which “the researcher investigates how local people think and how they perceive the world in which they live” (Torsello & Venard, 2016, p. 35). More recently, Sassen (2014, p. 13) offered the term “predatory formations” to describe this mingling of structure and

culture – specifically the “mix of elites and systemic capacities with finance as a key enabler”. Predatory formation is basically an idea or force that is driving social destruction, damage, and corruption in society. The destructive forces of this predatory formation include a number of factors including people and their attitudes and motives, institutional structures, finance, culture and the law. Where there are loopholes in the law, it leaves the institutions vulnerable to abuse and plunder. In PNG for instance, the *wantok* system is most often used as a ‘scapegoat’ for corruption. Therefore, the *wantok* system is immediately framed in the minds of people as a negative force that is causing institutional decay. For instance, Lakoff (2004) gave an account of political campaigns that built *frames*, which represent powerful mental structures that shape the voters’ worldview.

What is clear from the literature is that corruption is embedded within many cultures and societies. Political power is fertile ground for corrupt practices, including in PNG. Sub-section 2.3 looks at how corruption and patronage feature within formal state institutions in PNG through the institutional analysis approach.

2.3 Corruption and patronage in Papua New Guinea: An institutional approach

An institution can be defined as an entity that is governed by rules and laws, which in turn governs the behaviour of individuals or actors. An institution is comprised of “rules that influence the strategies of state and social actors. This definition fulfils two essential elements that a definition of [an institution] must have: (1) rules, and (2) the behaviour (or strategies) they structure” (Pilapil, 2006, p. 90). Weber’s (1946, 1947, 1978) archetypical rational-legal bureaucracy captures this definition, which highlights the importance of six features inherent in formal institutions, including 1) vertical hierarchy, 2) division of labour and specialization, 3) rules and regulations, 4) competence, 5) impersonality, and 6) formal and written communication. These rules are idealistic and not many people follow all of them all the time. When bureaucratic corruption does occur, it is because one or several of these Weberian elements are not observed, at least theoretically. “Formal institutions define the principal structure of incentives that actors confront when engaged in corrupt transactions” (Uberti, 2015, p. 323).

“Attention to political institutions has increased in literature on legislatures, public policy making, local government, and political elites. [This is evident] in studies of the origin of the state and the development of national administrative capacity. [The institutional approach] is present in studies of formal organisations, particularly in studies of [the role of] organisations in the implementation of public policy” (March & Olsen, 1984, p. 734). Pilapil (2006) suggested that:

The institutional approach to the study of politics refers to those “institutions [that] are concerned with the making, implementing, and adjudicating of policies, binding for all members of a given polity (if democratic, then these political institutions would include the access for the contestation of these policies). Thus, this definition of political institutions incorporates the quality of stateness (binding decisions for all), of government (law-making, law-implementing, and law-interpreting organs) and of politics (the struggle on who would have the right to make or to influence binding policies) (Pilapil, 2006, p. 93).

Institutional analysis of corruption and patron-client politics involves studying formal institutions and behaviour of actors, including related questions around sources of authority. Max Weber (1947) identified three types of legitimate authority including traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. The legal-rational authority is the basis of modern democracies and is useful in studying institutional politics, governance, and corruption. “The Weberian concept of bureaucracy places the office at the heart of legal-rational authority” (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017, p. 1013). Although Weber had pioneered analysis of these authority sources, there was other work that succeeded his. For instance, Coser (1971) suggested that in reality, there are variations and overlaps found in each authority source. The legal-rational model remains relevant to studies of corruption in PNG, as it is an archetypical model that suggests what the actual behaviour of institutional actors should be and how they should govern in the formal space. Because the legal-rational authority requires an official space to give it meaning, this places the office at the heart of legal-rational activity. As Graycar and Jancsics (2017, p. 1013) explained, “Under Weber’s rational-legal system, all officials follow rules and fit into formal roles that are different from the personal, family, and friendship roles that shape the society. They are supposed to treat each client impartially and equally, ignoring social issues and personal ties”. This authority system governs the behaviour of society and those occupying formal institutions in a society, particularly in democratic settings.

Cross-cultural institutional studies are a good departure point that helps compare one institutional context with another to identify the inherent features of their administrative, political, and governance systems. For instance, two studies from Bangladesh, which are relevant to this research, display patron-client characteristics that resembled PNG’s administrative and political environments. These studies demonstrate how patronage affects good governance and, therefore, public service performance (Islam, 2001; Sarker, 2008). Common patron-client themes were identified in both studies, which include pork barrel politics, cronyism, lack of impartial contract enforcement, lack of interest (political will) in establishing rule of law and

order, and lack of interest (political will) in establishing an efficient and effective public service.

Patron-client structure was identified as the fundamental building block of Bangladeshi society (Islam, 2001). From traditional exchange involving wet rice production to contemporary exchange within its governance structures, Bangladesh has exhibited a clear example of a political system that over-relies on its patron-client structures. This tendency contributes to a weak state and stagnation in socio-economic development at the periphery of Bangladeshi society. Patronage politics was identified as a key factor that bears negatively on governance and development in Bangladesh (Sarker, 2008). Both studies concluded that patron-client politics is entrenched in the political and governance systems of Bangladesh. Within the Pacific, PNG included, there is evidence linking pervasiveness of clientelist politics with corruption (Duncan & Hassall, 2011). However, blame cannot be placed entirely on clientelist corruption for all the supposed development shortcomings of countries like Bangladesh or PNG. The former colonial powers, mostly of the global North still have a lot to answer for, across the global economic periphery. The intensity of exploitation and the scale of unequal exchange between the global South and the global North remains a significant feature of the world economy in the post-colonial era; rich countries continue to rely on imperial forms of appropriation to sustain their high levels of income and consumption (Hickel et al., 2021).

2.3.1 Moral economy of bureaucracy

The moral economy of bureaucracy is defined in the present research as the “contested space” whereby elements from both the indigenous governance structure and the modern governance structure intersect (Figure 2.1). It resembles a dual political system (Cammack, 2007) in which patrimonial politics exist next to, and feed off, modern bureaucracies (Beekers & van Gool, 2012). Weber (1978) viewed this type of structure as a separation between modern systems of rule based on legal-rational bureaucracy and traditional systems of rule based on patrimonialism, where political (or public office) is appropriated for private ends (as cited in Beekers & van Gool, 2012, p. 3). Ugyel (2014) saw this bureaucratic hybridity as an administrative structure that combines elements or features of a combination of different organisational structures. In public administration, this type of bureaucratic hybridity was viewed by Christen and Lægreid (2010) to mean any of the following:

A quasi-governmental organisation that exists at the interface between the public and private sectors, the mixture of market and hierarchy, the combination of political advocacy and service provision, the mixture of different structural forms inside an organisation, or different cultural elements such as professional cultures in different parts of the government (as cited in Ugyel, 2014, p. 109).

This contested space becomes institutionalised or legitimised through for example, the production of sets of resources – both tangible and ideational, which corrupt actors would employ to further their own ends. The institutionalisation or legitimisation of tangible or ideational resources that produced this hybridised bureaucracy can be seen through acceptance or tolerance of everyday practices such as bribery, gift-giving, and favour seeking that circumvent due processes. This implies that “the fundamental divide between the public and private spheres does not exist to the extent assumed in the discourses of good governance. Instead, [moral economy values such as] personalised relationships and ingroup favouritism are part and parcel of everyday practices of [corruption, which is seen as a perversion of good governance]” (Beekers & van Gool, 2012, pp. 3-4). The moral economy of bureaucracy combines elements across both the formal administration and the informal patronage system. This is the space where the formal and the informal values intermingle. Beekers and van Gool (2012, p. 4) noted that many post-colonial developing states have experienced “an emergence of hybrid political cultures in which public norms of modern good governance came to exist alongside cultural practices of indigenous good governance”. This raises a fundamental question: what are the key drivers of hybridity in this contested space? This contested space represents PNG’s modern bureaucracy. Some responses to this question are provided in the discussions on bribery and gifting in Chapter Five. The present research also explores everyday practices of bribery and gifting within a cross-cultural context, and how these practices define clientelistic behaviour in PNG’s public sector.

The PNG version of everyday practices that are considered as drivers of corruption are the *nere tere* culture, the *wantok* or *save pes* culture, and the ‘*kola (Coca-Cola)*/lunch money’ culture. These are ideational practices that are now widespread and exert considerable influence on the administrative system – mostly within the “contested space”. These ideational concepts are discussed in Chapter Five (5). The below statement by a research participant in the present research highlights this entrenched culture of informal reciprocity within the contested space:

In my opinion, corruption is not unique at the top level of government. It starts from the grassroots level and goes up the structure. Because those at the top practice it, those below find it convenient to engage in corruption. For instance, in my village, if I want to enrol my son in school but there are no more spaces, I have to give some ‘*Coca-Cola* money’ to the headmaster to have my child enrolled. From the village to the town, it is the same. If I had already purchased a plane ticket, but there are no spaces, I have to give some ‘*Coca-Cola* money’ to the ticketing officer to create a space for me to travel. When I arrive in the city, it is just the same. Everywhere, there is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

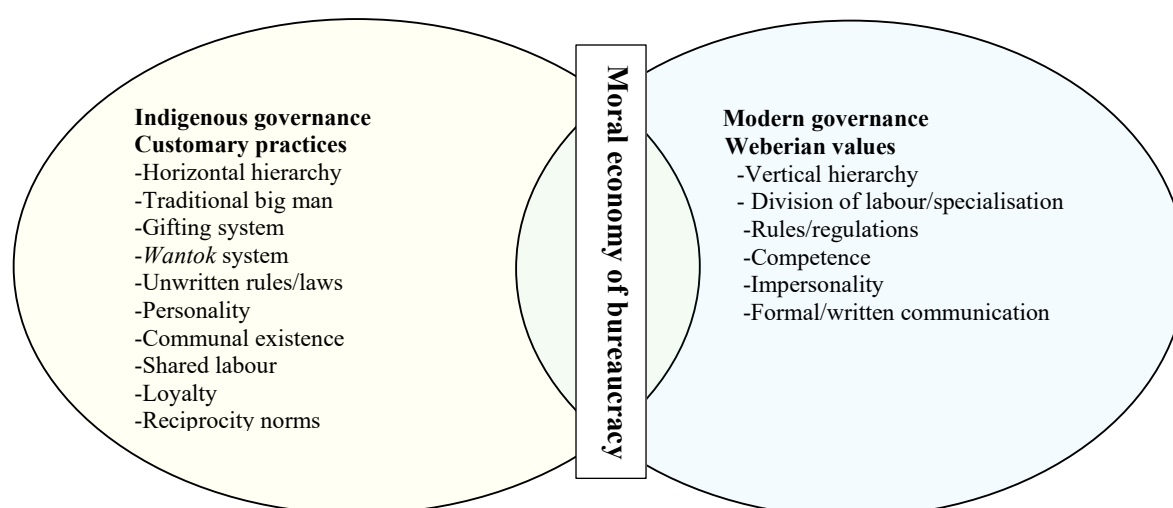


Figure 2.1: A moral economy of bureaucracy model

Source: Author’s own work

According to Christensen & Lægreid (2010, p. 407) “public organisations are becoming increasingly complex and hybrid as they try to attend to numerous and sometimes conflicting ideas, considerations, demands, structures and cultural elements at the same time”. Public officials are caught between culturally accepted norms and their professional expectations. Given these two parallel spheres, public officials tend to walk a tight rope which often results in ethical dilemma and conflict of interest (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016). That is, within this hybridised structure, state actors (politicians, public servants, and bureaucrats) are performing dual roles – one as custodians or representatives of their kin, clan, tribal, ethnic, and societal groups, and the other as agents of the state, or the emergence of a ‘dual political system’ (Cammack, 2007) in which local patronage practices feed off modern governance forms, and

vice versa (Beekers & van Gool, 2012). This moral economy of bureaucracy demonstrates how cultural expectations through such ideals as the “collectivity culture, culture of gift giving and acceptance, extended family system, ethnic loyalty and unfettered respect of the aged downplay professional bureaucratic and ethical principles” (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016, p. 279).

Papua New Guinea’s public service and political institutions are mired in a conundrum due to an ideological confrontation between the formal and the informal structures of governance, and the formal and the informal roles of state actors. This clash of ideals and values created a hybrid space that straddles both the formal and informal spaces (Figure 2.1). This space is more or less an Achilles heel of public administration and politics in PNG. Most times, outcomes of administrative and political decisions are conceived through questionable means/processes, particularly when dealing with public funds and contracts. Some major financial commitments and public contracts or tenders do not always follow cabinet and parliamentary processes, national and provincial procurement guidelines, and public finance management processes prior to approval. Approval processes were sometimes circumvented. The PNG government’s national procurement system, for instance, has always been rife with nepotism (*wantokism* – *wantokism* is used to mean the philosophy or idea of engaging in a *wantok* system), big man influence, manipulation, and abuse of office and power. Data from the present research indicated that 81 percent of the participants either agree or strongly agree that government contracts are awarded to a friend’s business based on friendship connections, while 75 percent either agree or strongly agree that business permits are awarded based on established networks. The inference from these data is that PNG’s public procurement and contract system is consumed by patronage and embedded personal connections within the public sector. That is, PNG has a highly personalised/patronised public procurement and contract system (Figures 2.2a and 2.2b, and Figure 5.2). Politics, business, and corporate interests have all penetrated the public sector to the point where awarding of public contracts through influence peddling has become the norm rather than the exception.

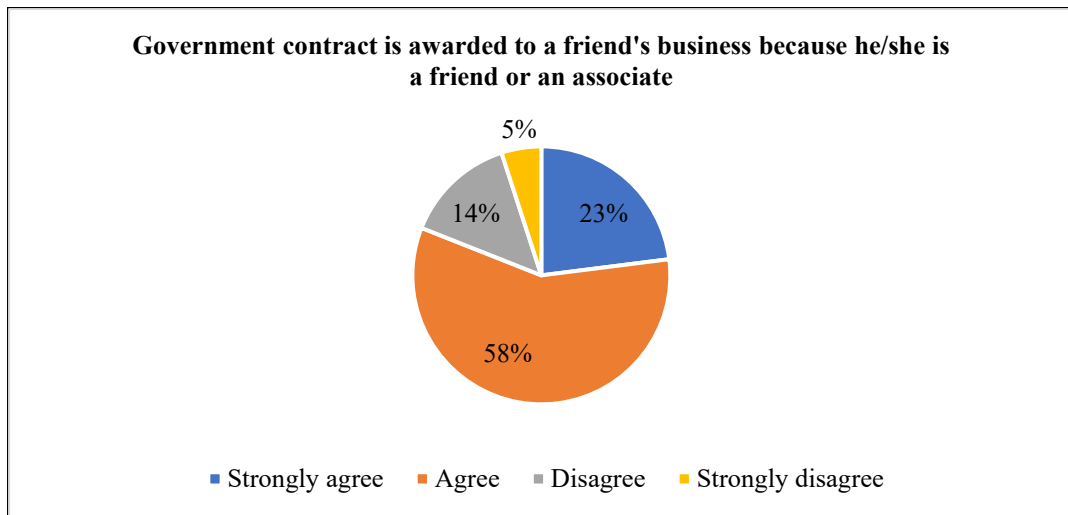


Figure 2.2a: Awarding of government contract to a friend’s business

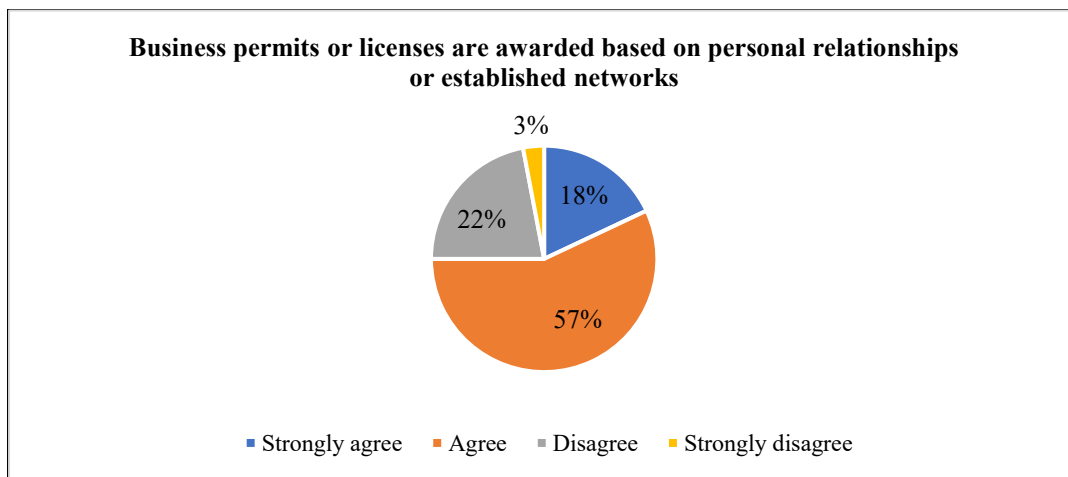


Figure 2.2b: Awarding of business permits or licenses based on personal relationships or established networks

According to Paul Barker, Director of the PNG Institute of National Affairs, “corruption in public procurement is still a big concern for companies. Some companies would not even bother to apply for tender because they would have to deal with corrupt ‘back door’ government officials [and politicians]. That has been their modus operandi over the years” (as cited in Esila, 2019). Probity and good governance are seldom applied throughout the tendering process. To illustrate the concept of “moral economy of bureaucracy or bureaucratic hybridisation”, this research refers to a court case involving the State and Joel Luma (CR (FC) No. 36 of 2019). The Papua New Guinea National Court of Justice heard that Joel Luma (the accused/defendant), who was the Secretary for the Department of Works, was alleged to be involved in abuse

of public office contrary to s. 92(1) of the PNG *Criminal Code* (abuse of public office by an official). He was later charged as guilty.

Between 8 September 2009 and 20 December 2011, the State alleged that Luma had abused his office by approving 44 contracts to the value of K9,594,860.79. However, the final verdict after variance with indictment found that Luma approved only sixteen contracts valued at K4,309,000, and not 44 contracts valued at K9,594,860.79. Despite this amendment, Luma's actions overall did not comply with established processes and standards under the *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1995 and the Central Supply and Tenders Board (CSTB), the precursor of the National Procurement Commission (NPC). Luma had split these 44 requisition claims submitted by the contractor for three main reasons: 1) to ensure he operated under his approved financial limit as departmental head of K300,000; 2) to avoid going to the CSTB; and 3) to minimise the risk of exposure. The complicity committed by Luma under these financial commitments amounted to abuse of office and authority.

The National Court heard that all these 16 contracts were made to only one local contractor, namely Road Stoa Limited, for the supply and delivery of a road construction material to eight provinces in the country. Luma had also met with owners and officials (brokers) of Road Stoa Limited on several occasions. The context of this alleged complicity is provided in Appendix 2.1. In sum, two essential elements of national procurement and tender processes were not complied with including: 1) there was no tender process in accordance with the *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1995; and 2) no application was made to the Central Supply and Tenders Board (CSTB) for a certificate of inexpediency from the tender process (*The State v Joel Luma*, 2019). Furthermore, the accused kept his subordinates under duress, while summoning them to expedite the approval process for each of the 16 contracts.

The National Court of Justice (the State) has proved beyond reasonable doubt [on 8 April 2021] that the accused in abuse of his office approved 16 minor Works' contracts in favour of Road Stoa Limited to a value of K4,309,000, without proper procurement process, prejudicial to the rights of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. Therefore, the accused is guilty of abuse of office contrary to s. 92(1) of the Criminal Code [relating to false claims by public officials] (*The State v Joel Luma*, 2019).

2.3.2 Toward an understanding of corruption in Papua New Guinea

The Western tradition of political analysis places excessive emphasis on the processes of state formation and the formal institutions of government (Gledhill, 1994), thereby creating a lacuna within the anthropological analysis of the state. “The anthropological work is rarely used by management [and political] scientists working on corruption” (Torsello & Venard, 2016, p. 34).

Literature dealing with the importance of anthropological work on corruption in PNG have received scant attention. Instead, corruption studies have focused more on management practices, behaviour of state actors, and institutional environment. The managerial approach that has permeated the other disciplines, including political science and psychology, do not see culture as something to evaluate seriously or empirically. Anthropologists have always maintained a focus on economic personhood (ever since Mauss, 1950), which is why neoliberal/managerial approaches that insist on erasing all consideration of modes of economic behaviour that are different to possessive individualism are challenged by anthropologists. To better understand corruption in PNG, it is necessary to move away from the excessive emphasis on institutions, and instead contextualise and frame corruption research within local socio-political, cultural, and environmental settings.

Papua New Guinea is characterised by a parochial political culture and high levels of political and bureaucratic corruption. “In the shadow of a weak state a traditional culture of reciprocity and communality can serve to justify corruption” (Walton, 2016, p. 216). The modern state in PNG is shaped partly by colonialism, pre-existing traditional reciprocity norms and governance structures, patron-client practices, and neo-patrimonial sentiments. The state has therefore, become more complex overtime, and far from a ‘natural polity’. The cultural and linguistic divides, and ethnic fragmentation mean that people are more aligned to their tribal boundaries than state boundaries. Colonialism itself was not a homogenising process (Barcham, 2007). It failed to fully penetrate the geographically rugged and culturally heterogenous society. Given this gap, the elements of the hybrid bureaucracy were already shaping modern political governance. Australia’s colonial policies failed to prevent indigenous cultural and traditional practices of reciprocity from creeping into the modern administrative system that it helped established in PNG. Ironically, colonialism had created an indigenous elite class, who tended to mimic Western capitalist values over time by incorporating local customs and cultures into formal or official roles. When Australians left in 1975, the emerging indigenous elite class

“sought to use their newfound political power to reshape state power to extend accumulation [of wealth]” (MacWilliam, 2013, p. 239). By using and personalising this new form of political power, these indigenous elites consolidated their authority as big men – a trait typical of neo-patrimonial rule.

Defining corruption as abuse of public office for private gain is inadequate because it fails to consider the myriad different cultural, socio-economic, political, and environmental conditions many so-called weak states are operating in. Moreover, this definition would suggest that corruption is only situated within the domain of public institutions and performed by state actors, exclusive of the roles that private institutions, non-state actors, and international institutions play (Shaxson, 2011 & 2018). Therefore, trying to define corruption using only one approach, while overlooking other alternatives would mean definitions remain vague and ambiguous (Walton, 2015).

Corruption perception studies represent people’s views about corruption. Much has been written about corruption perception, including in PNG (Cook and Winn, 2012; Olken, 2009; Peiffer, 2017; Transparency International, 2019; Walton, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2019; Walton & Peiffer, 2017). Table 2.1 highlights some key literature pertaining to corruption perceptions.

Table 2.1: Summary of key corruption perception studies

Author	Study title	Summary
Cook & Winn (2012)	Demanding more: Citizens share their views on better politics and better government – findings from focus group discussions with citizens in Papua New Guinea.	Perception of government corruption in PNG is high among participants, who saw corruption as the main reason for poor government performance and lack of service delivery.
Olken (2009)	Corruption perceptions vs. corruption reality	Examining corruption perception versus the accuracy of reported information regarding a road project in an Indonesian village. Corruption persisted because citizens lacked accurate information about corruption.
Peiffer (2017)	Message Received? How messages about corruption shape perceptions	Negative messages of the widespread prevalence of corruption affected people’s perception of corruption and suppressed their

		confidence in anti-corruption work. Positive messages about the government's successes in controlling corruption, however produced an opposite effect – it increased people's confidence in supporting anti-corruption work.
Transparency International (2019)	Corruption Perceptions Index	The most widely used global corruption ranking experts and businesspeople used annually to measure corruption perception in a country's public sector.
Walton (2009)	Rural peoples' perceptions of corruption in Papua New Guinea	A study that tried to accurately identify and portray the myriad of different perceptions rural Papua New Guineans have of corruption.
Walton (2013a)	Is all corruption dysfunctional? Perceptions of corruption and its consequences in Papua New Guinea	Investigating rural Papua New Guineans' perceptions about the dysfunctional and functional consequences to different forms and scales of corruption. Most perceived corruption (mostly grand corruption) as dysfunctional. However, marginalised people considered small-scale (petty) corruption as functional as long as it benefited them.
Walton (2013b)	An argument for reframing debates about corruption: Insights from Papua New Guinea	The current understanding of corruption perception of PNG was led by academics and researchers, who leaned more towards Western views, and were less devoted to studying and understanding local perception of corruption.
Walton (2019)	Governance and corruption in PNG's public service: Insights from four subnational administrations	Assessing the perceptions of selected public servants in PNG, and why they might support or resist corruption and poor governance. Overall, many public servants acted outside of their official roles

		because they were ill-informed about existing laws and rules that regulated their behaviours.
Walton & Peiffer (2017)	The impacts of education and institutional trust on citizens' willingness to report corruption: Lessons from Papua New Guinea	Better educated citizens and their trust in government institutions can play a role in shaping PNG citizens' perceptions about and responses to different kinds of corruption.

Papua New Guineans have their own understandings of corruption and its consequences, which obliges us to question the dysfunctional nature of corruption (Walton, 2013a). There is a need for anti-corruption bodies to distinguish between petty corruption and grand or official corruption when dealing with marginalised citizens in PNG. In some quarters, it is debatable whether these corruption perception studies are based on 'facts, objectivity, and experiences', or are they merely composite indexes compiled by 'armchair experts' and international institutions who might lack adequate knowledge of the observed and their contextual experiences. Most times, anti-corruption institutions and researchers operate from the assumption that petty and grand corruption produces similar negative consequences. Marginalised citizens see petty corruption as functional as long as it benefits them, as opposed to its dysfunctional nature seen by the educated masses. Therefore, anti-corruption bodies must critically respond to constraints faced by poor and marginalised people when operating in weak states like PNG (Walton, 2013a).

Corruption, according to one former Prime Minister of PNG, is both systemic and systematic. Corruption is systemic because it has invaded the whole processes of policy and decision making thus drowning the system, and systematic because it is organised (EMTV, 2020). The systemic and systematic qualities of corruption are embedded into the entire system and now accepted as a norm. It is becoming more chronic in the public service than the private sector. Walton (2019) investigated this problem in four provincial administrations in PNG and found that the public service is still riddled with corruption despite decades of financial aid and reforms. He concluded that there is little empirical data about why public servants might support or resist corruption and poor governance in PNG's public service. Data on public servants' performance is also lacking, so it is unclear how one can determine how functional or dysfunctional PNG's public service has been. This has undermined efforts to institute appropriate anti-corruption reforms and policies.

Two notable drivers of corruption in PNG are bribery and gift giving, which will be explored further in Chapter Five. There are sections of laws – for instance in The Organic Law on Duties and Responsibilities of Leadership, The Organic Law on the Ombudsman Commission, the *Criminal Code Act* 1974, the *Proceeds of Crimes Act* 2005 and the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act* 2020 – that distinguish between gifts and bribes, and how law is applied when bribery occurs. However, enforcement of these laws has been weak. Therefore, bribery and gift-giving require some attention because there is no clear demarcation for when a ‘gift’ becomes a bribe, and hence becomes corrupt. “In the absence of welfare state, the *wantok* system provides important social protection for many citizens. It also means that public servants are pressured to provide unofficial favours to their *wantoks* [at the same time they may be tempted to accept bribes that supplement their meagre wages]” (Walton, 2019, p. 3). Distinguishing bribery from traditional reciprocity in the Melanesian cultural context is vital for understanding bribery in Melanesian countries, including PNG, where culture still plays a very powerful role in state-society relations. While investigating perceptions of bribery and gift-giving from selected senior bureaucrats within key government departments in PNG, it was found that bribery was perceived to be a norm in PNG’s public service. This is because it is often confused with gifts in the Melanesian cultural context, and these cultural values potentially blur the distinction between bribery and gifts, and may compromise public service activities, where traditional cultural values are not distinguished and distinct from public sector values (Tiki, 2018; Tiki et al., 2021). In both of these studies, three perceived reasons of bribery were given, including bribery as fast-tracking or expediting of work (political expediency), bribery as quick-money (grease-the-wheel), and bribery as living-sustenance (influence peddling).

Influence of culture on corruption that impacts governance in public institutions is one notable omission in mainstream literature dealing with corruption. Three key issues must be considered when making cultural inferences, including culture and patronage as causes of corruption (Uberti, 2015), cultural relativism (Alatas, 1968), and structural violence (Farmer, 2004; Hickel, 2014; Hirschfeld, 2017; Sassen, 2014). Critics, in defence of culture, have used colonialism as a prism to analyse post-colonial legacies of exploitation (Alatas, 1968; Farmer, 2014; Galtung, 1969, 1971; Hickel et al., 2021; Hirschfeld, 2017). For instance, Western capitalist culture, through colonialism, has created a divisive and elitist class structure in what were once strong albeit patriarchal societies. After colonialism ended, informal systems in the peripheries, such as the *wantok* system, tend to evolve and mimic capitalist values, creating an unintended

opportunity for these informal practices to be used as an excuse for corruption. Robson (2004) claimed that “[w]hile contemporary manifestations of corruption cannot be explained by colonialism *per se*, it is worth emphasising that colonial regimes left institutional legacies which shaped the subsequent form and extent of corrupt practices” (as cited in Ampratwum, 2008, p. 79). However, blaming culture (both Western and non-Western) as the main cause of corruption can lead to a form of social engineering, which would deny the fact that not all cultures have negative connotations according to cultural relativism – what is good (or bad) in one context cannot be replicated in other settings. But these statements must be treated with care as some cultures, for instance the *wantok* system in PNG, can serve as a conduit through which corruptive actions may transpire. Corruption can be both intentional or purposeful, and accidental. Accidental corruption may involve gift-giving and favours to family and friends, which are acceptable norms in traditional settings, but may be deemed unacceptable in formal settings where rules should be observed. Purposeful corruption occurs when Western schemes, such as development aid and colonially contrived resources laws, have been poorly applied and taken advantage of by corrupt officials for their own interests.

There have been few studies that attempt to identify the different perspectives and approaches in which corruption is studied in PNG. This leads to poor anti-corruption programs, as Walton (2013b) found. Existing literature is occupied with mainstream Western interpretations of definitions, causes, and solutions to corruption (Huffer, 2005; Larmour, 2006; Walton, 2016). “Most political science perspectives on corruption have been criticized as being largely ethnocentric. Even in instances where political science has tried to account for cultural diversity, its formulations [of definitions, causes and solutions of corruption] have favoured Western perspectives” (Bodruzic, 2016, p. 366). Some definitions of corruption pay less attention to cultural differences (Bukovansky, 2006; de Sardan, 1999; Gupta, 1995; Haller & Shore, 2005; Harrison, 2007; Nye, 1967; Torsello & Venard, 2016; Walton, 2015). However, Nye (1967) “argued that there are two standards, even in developing countries – one more indigenous, and the other Western, and claimed that the latter is used most in public roles” (as cited in Bodruzic, 2016, p. 366).

2.3.2.1 Collective action and principal-agent problem analyses

The collective action and principal-agent problems are important theories used in corruption studies (Marquette & Peiffer, 2018; Peiffer & Alvarez, 2014; Peiffer & Marquette, 2015; Persson et al., 2013). The collective action problem was first coined by economist Mancur

Olson in 1965, “who asked how and why individuals decide to collaborate as a group, given individual’s self-interest often fails to coincide with that of the wider collective” (DeMarrais & Earle, 2017, p. 185). According to Ostrom (1998), “individuals can ‘free ride’ and benefit from non-excludable collective goods without necessarily contributing to them, as public goods can be destroyed by all” (as cited in Walton & Jones, 2017, p. 3). The principal-agent theory “deals with a specific social relationship, that is, delegation, in which two actors are involved in an exchange of resources. The principal is the actor who disposes of a number of resources” (Braun & Guston, 2003, p. 303). But the principal may not possess skills “of the appropriate kind to realise the interests (for example, has money but not the appropriate skills” (Coleman, 1990, p. 146). “In this sense, Coleman is right to speak of an “extension of self” (1990, p. 146) of the principal by way of delegating some tasks for execution by other actors [clients] who seem better capable to do so” (Braun & Guston, 2003, p. 303).

In PNG, the collective action and principal-agent problems are further complicated by the de-centralised system of government, and the relationship between state and society (Peiffer & Walton, 2018; Walton & Jones, 2017). “State-society relations have meant that the potential for corruption is a part of a collective action problem in some places and a principal-agent problem in others” (Walton & Jones, 2017, p. i). This essentially means that both concepts vary between places and are shaped by “historical, political, administrative, cultural and social factors” (Walton & Jones, 2017, p. 2). Corruption, therefore, must be studied using a comparative approach due to variations within and between different polities.

2.3.2.2 Political and structural barriers to reform

Overcoming the collective action problem in a heterogeneous society such as PNG is challenging on institutional reforms if reporting mechanisms are weak, or there is no willingness (or incentives) to report corruption. For instance, the recently passed *Whistleblower Act 2020* lacks appropriate incentives, compensation, and protection for people willing to report corruption. Peiffer and Walton (2018) approached this challenge by transferring the methodology used in a 2015 experimental survey in Indonesia (Peiffer, 2017) to study the collective action problem in PNG. The PNG survey used anti-corruption messages as a means of awareness raising about the detrimental effects of corruption. The idea was to empower citizens to become agents of change and influence. In their study, Peiffer and Walton (2018) tested the impact of exposing anti-corruption messages to respondents in PNG, how this might affect their attitudes about corruption, and their willingness to report corruption. Generally, the findings suggested that

respondents who were exposed to messages about negative consequences of corruption were more likely to report it than those that were not. Most times, reforms backfire because people in highly corrupt contexts believe that it is normal to take what they can from the state, in the process invoking the collective action problem. Also, when there is the possibility for retribution in response to someone reporting a colleague or superior for corrupt actions, corruption simply does not get reported. The avoidance of conflict is perhaps culturally stronger in Melanesia (PNG included), than in Western societies such as Australia. The non-reporting of corruption to avoid conflict in some societies plays an important role in the perpetuation of corruption in the public service.

Walton and Peiffer (2017) conducted research on the impact of education and institutional trust on citizens in PNG who are willing to report corruption. They observed that willingness to report corruption was generally associated with increased levels of education and the trust that citizens have in anti-corruption institutions. Drawing on a household survey conducted in PNG between 2010 and 2011, three contributions are offered to this debate. 1) It examines the impact levels of education and institutional trust have on citizens' willingness to report corruption. 2) It explores whether the interaction between education and institutional trust influences willingness to report corruption. 3) It establishes the platform which academics and policymakers may access and rely on to encourage reporting. PNG is an important case in this research "because, like many developing countries, it is considered to be suffering from acute corruption, and there is little clear evidence that citizens are able or willing to address it" (Walton & Peiffer, 2017, p. 518).

Funding and sustaining anti-corruption institutions in PNG has always been a problem. Failure of anti-corruption reforms is a direct result of meagre funding from governments to important oversight bodies, which bodies are meant to ensure that accountability and transparency are observed in state institutions. According to Matthew Damaru, the head of PNG's National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate (NFACD): his directorate had been starved of funding. From an annual budget of K1.2 million a few years ago, the directorate was now getting just K350,000 for its operations (Waide, 2021). Walton and Hushang (2017, 2020) provided an overview of this problem by assessing budget allocation to key anti-corruption agencies between 2008 and 2019. They found a steady decline of funding to key anti-corruption organisations due to lack of political will and commitment. According to Matthew Damaru, lack of funds means fraud cases outside Port Moresby cannot be investigated. This broken link in law

enforcement needs to be fixed by the government, but it appears unwilling to do so (Waide, 2021).

Anti-corruption reforms and interventions continue to prove ineffective in PNG because there is lack of enforcement from anti-corruption bodies, coupled with high costs of corruption (Walton, 2016). Solutions and measures that aid in addressing corruption in PNG were usually met with contextual challenges unique to its socio-political, economic, and cultural institutions. Therefore, fighting corruption in PNG requires an understanding of socio-political, cultural, historic, and economic issues (Walton, 2016).

2.3.2.3 The global financial system, capital flight and state capture

Walton (2013b) argued that it is important for academics (and researchers) to be critically aware of the importance of culture in reframing debates about corruption in PNG and in the Pacific region more broadly. While this is true, it is also crucial not to lose sight of other external factors at play. To suggest that culture is the only cause of corruption would be a form of social engineering that downplays the role of much larger drivers of corruption globally including global inequality and poverty, both contemporary and historical. There are structural factors, such as neo-colonialism and the legal and financial systems that maintain global wealth disparity, that must be accounted for. The concept of structural violence that emerged from colonial and neo-colonial experience of the 1960s might be seen as a likely driver of exploitation, poor governance, poverty, and perhaps corruption in post-colonial states (Hirschfeld, 2017). This concept was first published by Galtung (1969, 1971). “In its original formulation, structural violence specifically referred to the violence of imperialism, or the collective suffering imposed by wealthy ‘core’ countries on poor ‘peripheral’ [or developing] countries” (Hirschfeld, 2017, p. 157).

Further, corruption has gone global, moving beyond the boundaries of the institutional definition associated with the World Bank and Transparency International (i.e., the employment of public office for private gain) (Bullough, 2020; De Vrieze, 2021; Hiatt, 2007; International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), 2020; The West Report, 2020; Zelikow et al., 2020). Globalisation – including the expansion of global trade, business activities, and financial transactions – has yielded both positive and negative impacts on developing states. International relations between government officials and other state and non-state actors (both internal and external) with unscrupulous intent are well-documented globally and have been reported within PNG (Walton & Dinnen, 2016). Walton and Dinnen (2016, p. 23) noted that “as the

processes of economic globalisation have brought increased opportunities to the Pacific, they have also helped increase interactions and deepening entanglements between organised crime and political actors”. International villains, such as terrorists and organised criminals “have formed virtual pacts with corrupt leaders who systematically rob their own citizens of not only their wealth and assets but also their future” (Thachuk, 2005, p. 143). Powerful international cartels and corporate elites use locally connected ‘economic hit men’ (EHM) to influence political and economic decisions in developing countries (like Panama) and to exploit and plunder their resources for profit and power (Perkins, 2004). According to Perkins (2004), these hitmen, who are highly paid professionals and usually operate covertly (sometimes masquerading as government advisors), cheat cash-poor, resource-rich countries worldwide out of trillions of dollars (as cited in Perkins, 2007, p. 1). Frequently, those involved operate through legal loopholes to facilitate activities (for instance, funnelling large sums of money to offshore bank accounts) that may be classified as corrupt. They also “undermine the political and economic institutions of the state through the corruption and bribery of police, immigration, custom officials, and the judiciary” (Wilson, 2020, p. 417). A similar study of EHM, compiled by Hiatt (2007), provides another dimension of the world of transnational crime and corruption, exploitation, dependency, debt, and money laundering. As De Vrieze noted:

In today’s globalized world, corrupt actors bribe across borders, harness the international financial system to stash illicit wealth abroad, and abuse democratic institutions to advance anti-democratic aims. Emerging research and investigative journalism projects such as the Pandora Papers have documented the extent to which legal and regulatory deficiencies in wealthy countries offer corrupt actors the means to offshore and launder illicit money. This dynamic in turn strengthens the hand of those autocratic leaders whose rule is predicated on the ability to co-opt and reward elites (De Vrieze, 2021, December 9).

In May 2014, a prominent PNG based Australian lawyer was secretly interviewed by a private investigator regarding PNG politicians (and professionals such as accountants and real estate agents acting as conduits) who were involved in laundering large sums of ‘dirty money’ into Australia. In the interview, which was aired by Australia’s SBS dateline on 23 June 2015, lawyer Greg Sheppard suggested that the only way to bribe foreign politicians was to pay “small dribs and drabs”, ensuring that transactions are commercial in nature, to avoid raising suspicions (SBS Dateline, 2015). In a similar case, in October 2021, an undercover investigation by Global Witness revealed “a palm oil executive [being] secretly filmed describing the

payment of bribes to public officials in exchange for logging permits and access to land in Papua New Guinea” (Mongabay Series, 2021 October).

The Tax Justice Network (2020) examines how offshore tax havens promote corruption through its annual Financial Secrecy Index (FSI), which was first published in 2009. Using this financial secrecy index, TJN has found that “an estimated \$21 to \$32 trillion of private financial wealth is located, untaxed or lightly taxed, in secrecy jurisdictions around the world” (TJN, 2020). In one of its more recent findings, TJN has estimated that countries are losing on average a total of \$427 billion in tax each year to international corporate tax abuse and private tax evasion. Of this, \$245 billion is directly lost to corporate tax abuse by multinational corporations and \$182 billion to private tax evasion (TJN, 2020). The ICIJ recently uncovered “confidential records of 14 offshore service providers that give professional services to wealthy individuals and corporations seeking to incorporate shell companies, trusts, foundations and other entities in low- or no-tax jurisdictions. The entities enable owners to conceal their identities from the public and sometimes from regulators. Often, the providers help them open bank accounts in countries with light financial regulation” (ICIJ, 2021 October). Another ICIJ report of Russia’s oligarchs noted that:

The flight of Russia’s wealth has been supported by big banks and a global industry of professionals who specialize in providing rich clients with shell companies, trusts and other secretive vehicles. By some estimates, close to 20% of [Russia’s] wealth is stashed in offshore jurisdictions like Cyprus, the Seychelles, the British Virgin Islands – even the United States (Woodman, 2022).

These cases suggest that corporate interests and EHM, masquerading as politicians, national executives of both public and private institutions, senior bureaucrats, lawyers, accountants, and consultants, are employing this predatory behaviour against national interests. Frequently, those involved are capitalising on institutional weaknesses that failed to detect their illegal activities, such as money laundering.

One useful concept in understanding transnational clientelism and corruption is ‘state capture’. State capture can occur either through kleptocratic or oligarch rule, or through strategic corruption (Low & Bennett, 2022). The concept of state capture was first used in post-Cold War Soviet Union to describe the influence of powerful oligarchs over the breakaway economies of Eastern Europe. As Hellman et al. (2003) noted, state capture in the Eastern European economies involved influence and capture exerted by powerful captor firms that shape and affect

formulation of the rules of the game through private payments to public officials and politicians. State capture refers to a type of systemic political corruption – that is, “...the actions of individuals, groups, or firms in both the public and private sectors to influence the formation of laws, regulations, decrees, and other government policies to their own advantage by means of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials” (Pradhan, 2000, p. 1). “The World Bank defines state capture as the exercise of power by private actors – through control over resources, threat of violence, or other forms of influence – to shape policies or implementation in service of their narrow interests” (Australian Democracy Network, 2022, p. 10). The Australian Democracy Network (ADN) further noted that:

State capture can occur when corporations, powerful families or religious sects accumulate a critical mass of control over democratic checks and balances, hollowing out public institutions for private benefit. Over time, the usual methods of policy reform, legal challenges, or elections become increasingly ineffective at dislodging the captors (ADN, 2022, p. 10).

Power, whether it be political or economic (or both), tends to be concentrated “in the hands of economic [and political] elites to influence policy making to their own benefit” (Crabtree & Durand, 2017, p. 1). The Australian Democracy Network (2022) identified six modes of influence used in state capture, including: 1) financial intervention in politics; 2) lobbying and personal influence; 3) revolving doors and personal exchange; 4) institutional repurposing; 5) research and policy making; and 6) public influence campaigns (ADN, 2022).

These modes of influence and state capture underscored by clientelist practices are evident in PNG as the present research will show. For instance, when asked about the proportion of politicians who accept bribes or gifts from contractors, businesses, and corporations in return for political favours, 75 percent of the survey respondents believed that either most or all politicians accept bribes and gifts. Within the public service, 72 percent of the respondents said that either most or all contractors or businesses bribed public servants with gifts (cash and kind) in the hope of receiving government favours (contracts). By the same token, 69 percent of the respondents thought that either most or all public servants took bribes and kickbacks from individuals and businesses in return for providing government services. The high incidences of bribery perceived by the respondents indicated that individuals, businesses/private contractors, and corporations have a significant amount of influence, particularly monetary influence within the administrative and political environments (public sector) in PNG. In terms of how political

power is wielded, and used for lobbying and personal influence, 77 percent of the respondents perceived that either most or all politicians tend to monopolise and manipulate power and authority for their own ends. Personalisation of political power is a key feature of neo-patrimonialism, particularly in post-colonial developing states, where, after independence, “new leaders [indigenous elites], as well as their *wantoks*, quickly exploited the [modern administrative] system to facilitate corruption, especially through nepotism [*wantok* system] and political patronage” (Dix & Pok, 2009, pp. 248-249). Regarding provision of personal favours by politicians, 91 percent of the respondents believed that either most or all politicians provide personal favours involving public funds and resources to their key clients, followers, and supporters. When asked if personal interests guide legislation making in parliament, 82 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that politicians or legislators are making laws that did not reflect national interests, that is, legislation making is guided by personal interests. Election is an important tenet of democracy. When asked about election processes and its outcome, 99 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that candidates and businesses influence voters and government officials to get desired election outcomes by manipulating state institutions and due processes. Tables 2.2a and 2.2b highlight participants’ responses relating to the discussions on clientelistic practices and state capture in PNG.

Table 2.2a: Elements of clientelistic practices and state capture in PNG

Proportion of politicians who accept bribes/gifts and kickbacks from contractors or businesses in return for political favours		Proportion of contractors who give gifts (cash/kind) to public servants in the hope of receiving government contracts/favours		Proportion of public servants who took bribes/kickbacks in return for providing government services		Proportion of politicians who personalised or monopolised political power and authority	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	23	All	18	All	7	All	13
Most	52	Most	54	Most	62	Most	64
Some	25	Some	28	Some	31	Some	23
None	0	None	0	None	0	None	0
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

Table 2.2b: Elements of clientelistic practices and state capture in PNG

Proportion of politicians who provide personal favours to their key followers, supporters and clients		Personal interests guide legislation making in parliament		Candidates and businesses influence voters and government officials to get desired election outcomes by manipulating state institutions and due processes	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	48	Strongly agree	18	Strongly agree	64
Most	43	Agree	64	Agree	35
Some	9	Disagree	14	Disagree	1
None	0	Strongly disagree	4	Strongly disagree	0
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

While the modes and practices of state capture highlighted by the ADN (2022) may be specific to a particular cultural, political or economic context, there is general applicability to other contexts. Taking Australia for instance, although it is wealthier, very similar processes of state capture are at work, particularly in its mining industries. In resource rich post-colonial states where influence exerted by transnational corporate actors is significant, state actors are most often compromised either because resource laws have legal loopholes, or laws are simply overlooked.

Observers have suggested that state capture in PNG can be seen in large resource-extraction projects such as the petroleum, mining, and logging industries, which are dominated by select foreign interests licensed by the state (Dix & Pok, 2009; Laurance et al., 2010). For instance, while Solomon Islands and PNG are among the largest exporters of tropical logs in the world, the forestry industry is largely controlled by foreign companies (namely, from China and Malaysia), with some of the logging done illegally and often at unsustainable levels (Nicholas et al., 2021). Apart from internal state capture and predation by politicians, and bureaucrats and technocrats (elites), state capture can also be instigated by internal non-state actors. For instance, internal non-state actors such as representatives of landowner groups interacting with project developers (external agents) and state officials could contribute to state capture and inequality either through rent seeking (or sharing) and competition (Grzymala-Busse, 2008). As Minnegal and Dwyer (2022) noted:

As an extractive industry consolidates in a green field, particular men may emerge as leaders, acting to negotiate relations between members of their own community and

representatives of the state, the companies, and neighbouring communities. To the extent that such men are recognised and feted by outsiders, so they are vulnerable to becoming complicit in, or submerged by, an ethos of inequality that, initially, they sought to manage on behalf of their constituents (Minnegal & Dwyer, 2022).

Corruption is a cross-cutting issue and affects politics, business, and international relations. “Without critically examining the role that businesses [and the whole of offshore financial systems] play in corruption, the anti-corruption industry (despite some of the victories it has achieved) will fail to holistically address corruption” (Walton, 2013c, p. 161). One of the most important reasons why anti-corruption efforts had limited effect over the last 30 years is that they have been state-centric, whereas corruption is a fundamentally transnational phenomenon. This is demonstrated well by the Pandora Papers (De Vrieze, 2021, December 9), among many other examples. There is a clear relationship between local political actors and international proponents of transnational crime (McFarlane, 2001; Walton & Dinnen, 2016). The nature of transnational criminal activities and strategies have changed dramatically in recent years. Indeed, corruption has mutated due to developments wrought by the fast pace of globalisation (Thachuk, 2005). As McFarlane (2001) noted:

Criminal activities are supported by specialist accountants, lawyers, financial advisers, bankers, and chemists, as well as corrupt or compliant politicians, judges, government officials, law enforcement officers, members of the military, businessmen and even priests. The underlying motive for criminality is often simple – power and money (McFarlane, 2001, pp.133-134).

“Organised crime, particularly in areas of wealth creation in the Pacific, often requires the involvement of a network of politicians and other elites extending well beyond national borders” (Walton & Dinnen, 2016, p. 23). This idea was further supported by theories of scales and network, which suggest that organised crime (in the Pacific) is best understood by applying both theories simultaneously because “organised crime constitutes networked relations that are significantly shaped by administrative and political scales” (Walton & Dinnen, 2020, p. 521).

Existing literature suggests that the institutional understanding of corruption has made limited claims about how culture and tradition has featured in bureaucratic, administrative, political, and transnational corruption. One approach that can be used to better reflect informal (cultural) practices that may have an influence on formal institutions of state is the moral economy approach, which is further explained in the following sub-section.

2.4 The moral economy of corruption: an anthropological view

One of the leading analysts of moral economy is Scott (1969, 1976). The term “moral economy” or “the moral economy of the poor” was a concept associated with the poor peasants’ right to subsistence as a moral claim (Scott, 1976). The concept’s central claim was that “whatever their civil and political disabilities, the poor had the social right of subsistence. Hence, any claim on peasants by elites or the state could have no justice when it infringed on subsistence needs” (Scott, 1976, p. 33).

Moral economy is a principle of societal organisation, which implies that a poor peasant’s main survival attribute is based on the support provided by a “range of networks and institutions outside the immediate family, which may, and often do, act as shock absorbers during economic crises in peasant life” (Scott, 1976, p. 27). Networks and institutions closest to the poor peasant including kinsmen, friends, the village, and the village patron (chief) are important networks/institutions that he or she could utilise in economically difficult circumstances, in times of illness, or during crop failures/disasters (Scott, 1976). The peasants rarely depend on the state because the state is too distant, and they are also ambivalent about the support provided by state institutions (Scott, 1976, 2009).

However, the kin or friend relationships may accommodate exploitation between kin or friends who have access to resources of subsistence and those who do not (the poor peasants). Scott argued that the elites or patrons “must not invade the subsistence reserve of poor people; its maximal formulation was that elites had a positive moral obligation to provide for the maintenance needs of their subjects in time of dearth” (Scott, 1976, p. 33).

Scott’s (1969) analysis of corruption in developing nations is a precursor to his ‘moral economy’ approach that he employed to evaluate corruption. Scott utilised the moral economy approach to further analyse the political behaviour of poor peasants operating in conditions of scarcity and poverty, and how the poor peasants’ political behaviour and their conditions of subsistence influence rebellious acts, including actions relating to corruption. Scott’s principal argument was that “understanding the family household is key to social, economic and political behaviour of all peasants not just in Southeast Asia” (as cited in Haggis et al., 1986, p. 1436). The concept gained traction in the late 1990s after De Sardan evaluated how corruption is embedded in cultural practices based in Africa through what he called cultural ‘logics’. Corruption

was shown to be socially embedded in these logics; logics of negotiation, gift-giving, solidarity network, predatory authority, and redistributive accumulation (De Sardan, 1999).

Recently, the concept of moral economy has been applied to other aspects of PNG society, economy, and the state. The moral economy of marketplaces in PNG has both an economic and social disposition: economic because it generates income for the people (traders), and social because it is a meeting place where social relations are formed. It is also a place where morality of exchange and gift-giving takes place (Busse & Sharp, 2019; Sharp, 2019). The moral economy of land and its relationship with the people is an important element of the PNG society and people, whose lives revolve around it, and where economic, social, and cultural relations take place (Ballard, 2013; Martin, 2018). Sykes (2018) wrote about the moral economy of transnational PNG households and how PNG citizens living in Australia were able to earn a living there, while still maintaining their connections to their ancestral homeland in PNG. Maintaining social morality through communication is an essential feature of social and familial connections. The moral economy of mobile phones in PNG demonstrates shifting relations between the consumers, phone companies, and the state as the regulator; all have their own ideas about what is good for them (Foster & Horst, 2018).

The foregoing examples of traditional moral economy in PNG society demonstrate that economic and social exchanges, gift-giving, and social and familial connections are important tenets of morality in a society that thrives on strong, communal bonds. In this context, it is easy to encounter ‘moral failing’ as Kanekane (2007) attested, where traditional morality (*kastom* and gift-giving) could easily give way to corrupt practices (for instance, bribery) within the modern political and neo-liberal economic institutions.

“The benefit of De Sardan’s (1999) analysis is its ability to account for the impact of cultural practices on corruption, while not simply placing blame with culture. Moreover, it helps to explain the embeddedness of corruption in administrative practices” (Bodruzic, 2016, p. 372). Two prominent examples of cultural logics, or informal systems of reciprocity (ISR) are the *wantok* and big man systems, which are unique examples of moral economy and solidarity networks found in PNG and the neighbouring Melanesian region (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017; Lomnitz, 1988; Walton & Jackson, 2020).

2.5 Informal systems of reciprocity (ISR)

Informal systems of reciprocity (ISR), or “informality” is practiced by all countries around the world. Even modern industrialised societies and their institutions do not escape from

informality (Lomnitz, 1988). Lomnitz (1988) regarded “informality” not only as a residue of traditionalism, but as an intrinsic element of “formality” insofar as it is a response to the inadequacies of formalisation” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 42). Graycar and Jancsics (2017) suggested that ISR, such as gift giving, is a universal phenomenon and plays a crucial role in maintaining and sustaining social networks and bonds. According to Lomnitz (1988, p. 46), “[the] prevalence of informal exchange will depend, among other things, on the relative scarcity of the goods and services exchanged, and on the strength of the controls and cultural inhibitions in the formal system”.

Informal systems of reciprocity (ISR) are forms of social security systems. According to Walton and Jackson (2020), “ISR are informal social networks underpinned by reciprocal obligations linking families, friends, colleagues and associates. During times of crisis these networks can provide critical support, ensuring that people have somewhere to sleep, food to eat, and access to other essential resources” (Walton & Jackson, 2020, p. 1). Within the formal setting (government/bureaucracy), ISR can also influence the distribution of state resources (Walton & Jackson, 2020). Lomnitz (1988) also suggested that “[networks] of reciprocity and patron-client relations have been shown to play an important role within these disadvantaged sectors [socially and economically disadvantaged sectors], in articulating their members [socially and economically disadvantaged members] to the formal market system and in creating an informal social security system to survive” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 42).

Although an ISR can be beneficial in advancing needs of group members in the short run, it can also exacerbate improprieties such as bribery and corruption in the long run, particularly within the formal systems of government. This is a very confronting dilemma in countries such as PNG whose ISR are embedded within the state structure. The following passages support this statement:

ISR can present significant challenges for practitioners, particularly when public servants and other elites direct state resources to their own ISR networks and exclude people outside these cliques. In countries where the state is weak, ISRs (sic) can present an even greater dilemma, as they can undermine state laws and rules and lead to various forms of corruption that inhibit reliable and impartial service delivery (Walton & Jackson, 2020, p. 1).

When corruption permeates the State (sic), political office becomes the most promising avenue for gaining access to resources for local ‘redistribution’. Political leaders build

prestige and following through the allocation of grants, development projects, infrastructure services, and other resources to their constituencies. State ‘gifting’ becomes a means for constituting political ‘bigmanship (Kombako, 2007, p. 24).

The major resource of the middle class is the control of public and private administration; thus, the system of reciprocal exchange of favours amounts to a system of mutual solidarity essential to the survival of the networks that comprise the middle class (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 44).

Lomnitz (1988) suggested some key points in which informal modes of exchange are entrenched or subsumed within the formal sector, and which are important in understanding the conflict between these two spheres, including:

1) the more a social system is bureaucratically formalised, regulated, planned, and yet unable to fully satisfy social requirements, the more it tends to create informal mechanisms that escape the control, of the system; 2) informal modes of exchange grow in the interstices of the formal system, thrive on its inefficiencies, and tend to perpetuate them by compensating for shortcomings and by generating factions and interest groups within the system; and 3) informal activities are socially embedded transactions that obey a symbolic-cultural logic that differs from (and often clashes with) economic rationality or the formal ideology of the state (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 43).

Given the prominence of informal systems entrenched within the formal realm, it is important to understand the structure and function of each system as they relate to one another (Lomnitz, 1988; Walton & Jackson, 2020). Walton and Jackson (2020) argued that practitioners need to understand and respond to the diverse ways in which the *wantok* system shapes public administrations. Supporting this, Lomnitz (1988) said that “[given] the growing importance of informal exchange in the formal sectors of the modern societies, it follows that understanding the cultural rules governing kinship and friendship may be more essential than ever for gaining an insight into the operation of the economy and of the state” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 43). In the following sub-sections, two key elements of PNG’s informal systems of reciprocity will be examined. These include the *wantok* and the big man systems, which are key components of corruption as the present research found.

2.5.1 *Wantok* system

Why is the *wantok* system worth investigating? It is important because *wantoks* operating as networks or closed niche groups within state institutions have formed systemic clientelist groups that utilised the state to further their own interests. The present research suggests that groups or clusters of such close knitted *wantok* ties (clientelist structures) are the harbinger of corruption.

There are several definitions of the *wantok* system, but one that provides a succinct summary is from Mannan (1978).

The *wantok* system can be loosely defined as the system of relationships (or set of obligations) between individuals characterised by some or all of the following: (a) common language (*wantok* = one talk), (b) common kinship group, (c) common geographical area of origin, and (d) common social associations or religious groups (Mannan, 1978, p. 200).

The term *wantok*, literally translated, means one talk, and *wantokism* is used to mean the philosophy or idea of engaging in a *wantok* system. It is an idea that is used widely in PNG, as well as the wider Melanesian jurisdiction, to connote people from the same kinship, or tribal or ethnic group sharing the same or similar language. *Wantok* system is primarily based in linguistic bonds that affiliate people together in systemised social networks that extend beyond one's own kinship boundaries to include other kinship groups who, though they have different languages, speak the same national lingua franca called *tok pisin* (pidgin).

De Renzio (2000) suggested that the *wantok* system constitutes a source of social capital. It is also an informal source or system of reciprocity (ISR) found in PNG (Walton & Jackson, 2020). Informality, in this context involves an informal exchange of goods and services within a formal social [and bureaucratic] system. "Informal exchanges include bureaucratic favours (connections), clientelism, different forms of corruption, and the parallel system [shady economy] of production and marketing" (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 42). Lomnitz (1988) suggested that reciprocity is the source of informality in developing nations. Fangalea (2009, p. 15) viewed *wantok* as "a system that places high value on people related biologically, linguistically, culturally, and regionally". In short, *wantok* is seen to be a kinship-based, safety-net system "that provides traditional people with a sense of identity that predated (and likely still overshadows) any supra-identity" (Dix & Pok, 2009, p. 248). According to Tanda (2011, p. 7), "*wantok* system is a relationship of sharing, supporting, protecting, providing, and caring that reaches out to meet the needs, wants, and desires of individuals and groups, who are related. It is a system that

focuses on maintaining kinship relations, so that provisions for relatives take...priority over those who are not related”.

Despite the benefits of *wantok* system as an important safety net in PNG, it has also come under increasing scrutiny. The *wantok* system provides both incentives and disincentives (De Renzio, 2000; Monsell-Davis, 1993). Some incentives provided by the *wantok* system include a safety net (social insurance, social comfort, social welfare, and social security) for individuals and households, the opportunity for cooperation and mutual trust, and a form of reciprocal obligation. However, *wantok* system is a disincentive for business start-ups, or other economic incentives that provide income. It can disincentivise entrepreneurship, often creating an intolerable burden on relatives with limited incomes. It can lead some people to steal from their employers, or take bribes, which subsequently creates a burden of continual assistance leading to stress and conflicts.

There is another aspect to this dynamic relationship between the ‘lazy sponging *wantok*’ and the wage earning *wantok* – that is, the implicit threat from the person making the demand (for favour, free goods etc.) that if they do not receive what they ask for, they will punish the wage earner. This threat of punishment stems in part from a sense of resentment about the inequality that is being created by the wage earner, perhaps because the people making demands on wage-earners feel unable (or unqualified) to do the work wage-earners are doing. This creates a combination of dependency and resentment in the demand-sharing relationship.

A central pro-social function of the *wantok* system is that it provides important forms of economic protection for citizens (Dinnen, 1996). But the *wantok* is also a conduit through which resources are misallocated and is the cause of corruption in the public service (Payani, 2000), or a mechanism that facilitates corruption in certain circumstances. For instance, a study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggested that *wantok* is a conduit for opportunity creation by unscrupulous persons to subvert the procurement process through corrupt conduct (OECD, 2010).

However, the *wantok* system can be beneficial when used appropriately. It is, at heart, a system of gaining access to what one needs, whether it be job, food, contracts, money, or other essential assistance. But it involves soliciting support through both transparent and dubious means, by way of *wantok* relations. When used inappropriately, it can negatively affect people and institutions. In PNG, access to jobs, contracts, greater wealth, or higher positions can be based on

who you know and not what you know (Tanda, 2011). At the same time, it is worth observing that there is overlap with garden-variety forms of nepotism as practiced in other countries.

The *wantok* system could be seen as a mutual insurance system that binds society together through solidarity networks (Fafchamps, 1992). In preindustrial societies, solidarity bonds manifest themselves in many ways, such as in labour provision or manpower assistance, helping sick relatives, gifting, caring for or adopting another family's unfortunate children, food transfers, and other such communal obligations necessary for subsistence (Fafchamps, 1992). The solidarity network, like the *wantok* system is a form of mutual insurance. "The person receiving assistance is not expected to give back something equivalent to what is received. What is expected [but is not always the case] from the recipient is simply to help others in return" (Fafchamps, 1992, p. 148).

The traditional function of the *wantok* system in PNG serves the kinship lineage and operates within that traditional and cultural space. Relationships, such as blood relatives, extended families, trade partners, and tribal war cohorts, are important kinship terms used to identify group membership (Tanda, 2011). In essence, the *wantok* system is a type of social safety net that safeguards one's blood line. It serves two key additional roles: 1) making one accepted as a member of society; and 2) sharing resources and wealth amongst societal members. The system is inbuilt into the culture, and people are born and raised with it as an accepted norm.

The *wantok* system is not unique to secular practices and institutions, but has found its way into religious institutions, thereby affecting Christian dogma and principles (Arua & Eka, 2002; Tanda, 2011). Theologically, the *wantok* system has begun to lose relevance in keeping moral order because the embedded moral fibres that once held traditional PNG society have been frayed by the (immoral) practices of bribery and political corruption. There is a significant shift in the way *wantok* system is applied between the traditional and modern structures of governance. Its moral utility in the traditional society has consequently been subjected to misuse and abuse in the contemporary world, including within the heart of religious institutions, by clergymen and their following (Tanda, 2011). The *wantok* system has undergone a metamorphosis where people of all cultures, races, classes, and languages blend, do business, socialise, and compete against each other, creating an environment where the *wantok* system is abused (Tanda, 2011).

The *wantok* system, according to Nanau (2008), is a network of cooperation, caring and reciprocal support, and a shared attachment to locality and *kastom* (custom). It consists of a web of

relationships, norms, and codes of behaviour. Social networks and relations, which are dynamically complex and reinforcing, demonstrate the richness of patron-client relations woven into the fabric of Melanesian societies. The positive image of the *wantok* system, as required by custom across Melanesian societies, is well documented. However, the *wantok* system has also become part of the unintended, disruptive forces that militate formal governance structures (Dix & Pok, 2009; Nanau, 2008; OECD, 2010; Payani, 2000). According to Dix and Pok (2009):

The concept of *wantok* has gone beyond its traditional boundaries; particularly in urban or transnational settings, where a *wantok* may also be a multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic social, or professional network. With the modernisation and nationalisation of politics in PNG came the growth of the public sector and capital; subsequently, new leaders, as well as their *wantoks*, quickly exploited the system to facilitate corruption, especially through nepotism and political patronage (Dix & Pok, 2009, pp. 248-249).

To build a *wantok* system network in a blended society, a channel has to be created first, which can occur through the offering of bribes, doing favours, and/or giving gifts (Tanda, 2011). The *wantok* system is an important concept that PNG people generally use to socially construct their identity, and to relate with each other (McGavin, 2016). For instance, the notion of *peles* (village) is used by Papua New Guineans to construct their sense of identity as belonging to a particular tribe, culture, and village, where there is a sense of social inclusion and communal cohesion (McGavin, 2016). Despite the increasing influences of westernisation, globalisation, urbanisation, and migration, *peles* remains steadfastly at the centre of Papua New Guinean social identity construction (McGavin, 2016). However, there is a caveat that too much dependence on this social identification system can be easily overshadowed by the need to serve one's own *wan peles* (literally, person from the same village) while working in formal institutions. Over time, the concept of *wantok* system has been expanded broadly to different social and geo-political contexts, thus taking on an "infinite elasticity" (Kajumba, 1983, p. 3). As individuals migrate away from their villages and toward urban centres, the more *wantoks* they acquire, and new relationships and *wantok* identities are forged (Kajumba, 1983). In towns, where you have much greater levels of 'difference' (i.e., you are communing with people from all over the country), people respond by expanding the (kinship) parameters within which a person can be considered a *wantok*. Elaborating on this idea, Schram (2015) wrote that:

When people perform *wantok* status, they juxtapose village and town as inversions. They thereby create familiar relationships in uncertain situations, but also posit intimacy as inimical to the idea of modernity as embodied in towns. This suggests that the *wantok* idiom draws upon a particularly segmentary logic of relatedness in which solidarity is relative to difference of varying scales. In so doing, *wantoks* transform the nature of the kinship ties which inform them (Schram, 2015, p. 3).

As Schram (2015) went on to note, *wantok* has become a term of use and abuse by elites and big men (politicians) in the Pacific, who rely on it to forge new tribal and linguistic identities in formal institutions, consequently promoting corruption and clientelism. This means that *wantok* has extended beyond its tribal space. It is a political symbol of the contemporary big man, referring more to political elites and their associates within the urban space than the more traditional community system that used to have big man and his humble following (Dix & Pok, 2009).

2.5.2 Big man system

Political discourse pertaining to the role of ‘big woman/bigshot woman’ has not been investigated at any significant length by scholars interested in government corruption and politics in PNG. “The role of women in politics – and extending across government, business and other positions of leadership – has often been overshadowed by massive cultural and structural factors associated with a predominantly patriarchal society in the country” (Winn, 2022). About three quarters of PNG societies are patriarchal, where “women hardly speak up in public when it comes to land decisions, as men own the land and therefore make all the decisions regarding their land” (Koian, 2010, p. 27). Big women were reported among the Trobriand and Massim societies of Milne Bay, the Kove and Kaulong of New Britain, the Nagovis of Bougainville, the Mekeo of Papua, and the Lavongai of New Ireland (Chowning, 1979; Kaiku & Kaiku, 2008; Lepowsky, 1990). However, most matrilineal systems are also deeply patriarchal. Men often (brothers and maternal uncles) still predominantly lead in these matrilineal systems when it comes to land ownership and allocation. In Bougainville for instance, “a woman’s decisions are conveyed through a brother or an uncle who speaks on her behalf and is trusted to convey her decisions at meetings attended by men only” (Koian, 2010, p. 28).

The preponderance of men in politics and business has always placed women leaders and entrepreneurs in a precarious position. The concept of ‘big woman in politics’ or ‘bigshot woman’ was recently coined in reference to the emergence of a new class of PNG women leaders in

urban spaces (for instance, the late Janet Sape, a successful businesswoman, and a onetime political candidate) who exuded zeal and confidence alongside her male counterparts in politics, business and public service. Beyond that, majority of the womenfolk in rural areas continue to be subservient to their husbands and male relatives.

Many PNG women have a passive voice in society and are politically timid or inactive. Most times they tend to disagree or do not support woman candidates or leaders in politics, government, and business. The domineering role of men means that women become targets of domination, and therefore, are easily influenced by the male members of their communities. National institutions representing women are weak, or dysfunctional. Winn (2022) noted that:

Measures that attempt to ensure women could have the opportunity to fairly compete or create a voice are presently weak. For instance, the PNG National Council of Women (NCW) – an institution created under the Department of Community Development and Religion to drive awareness and mobilise women’s voice – struggled to establish itself during the first decades following independence due to funding limitations, poor coordination, and lack of political will to ensure its success (Winn, 2022).

Gender inequality, limiting socio-cultural conditions, and other structural factors, such as political competition, lack of political will, and money politics are factors women leaders in PNG had to contend with. Lack of broad political support, especially from male legislators to pass special measures (temporary special measures) in parliament had reduced the chances of women to be fairly represented. These factors tend to push women leaders and their role in government, politics, and business to the periphery, consequently placing the onus of leadership on big men. Therefore, the discussion on ‘big women/bigshot women’ narrative in PNG politics, and their role in corruption (for instance, Gorukila, 2020; Kuku & Lyons, 2021) is intentionally left out in this research. However, it is an important area that needs further enquiry.

Ethnographic research on leadership types, especially in the Pacific and PNG, is well documented (Brandewie, 1971; Brown, 1987, 1990a, 1990b; Godelier & Strathern, 1991; Ketan, 2004; Lederman, 1990; Lepowsky, 1990; Martin, 2010; Rubel & Rosman, 1976; Sahlins, 1963; Sand, 2002; Standish, 1978; Stewart & Strathern, 1998). These studies draw from extensive anthropological fieldwork that documented the basis of traditional leadership styles and roles that are performed across the Pacific, Melanesia, and PNG.

“Big man [*bikman*] is a pidgin-English expression. The term is applied to the leader of a group who is endowed with certain capabilities and skills which enable him to be effective in attaining important group goals” (Brandewie, 1971, p. 194). “The key to understanding the position of big men in New Guinea societies lies in understanding their role in exchange. Big men constitute the nodes of exchange systems” (Rubel & Rosman, 1976, p. 117). In Melanesia, the big man is “reminiscent of the free-enterprising rugged individual of our own [Western] heritage. He combines an ostensible interest in the general welfare with a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation” (Sahlins, 1963, p. 289). Dix and Pok (2009) suggested that traditional big man status was gained through personal effort or self-ascription in the relatively meritocratic big man system found in most parts of pre-colonial Melanesia. As Sahlins (1963) observed, the rise of a big man in Melanesia is earned through his own effort. To gain a following, “a man must be prepared to demonstrate that he possesses the kinds of skills that command respect – magical powers, gardening prowess, mastery of oratorical style, perhaps bravery in war and feud” (Sahlins, 1963, p. 291). A traditional Melanesian or PNG man ascribed to be a big man by cultivating superior hunting, fishing, and gardening skills, being genuinely generous, having exceptional oratorical and peace mediating skills, and above all, being a great warrior. “In contrast, today, the big man’s status is often achieved through attainment of elected office or education, but more often than not requires entrepreneurship in the private or public sector (Dix & Pok, 2009, pp. 247-248). With modernisation, a new big man has emerged in contemporary PNG society, exhibiting new styles of leadership traits through wealth brought about by colonial experiences. Whilst some contemporary big men became wealthy through honesty and hard work, others became big men through dubious means by utilising the state’s resources for themselves, their families, and followers. This is where contemporary dynasties, such as the Somaes and the Chans, were created in PNG.

The ethnographic work by Sahlins (1963) has helped understand traditional political and economic systems in the Pacific region, suggesting how leaders have emerged in pre-colonial settings. Those who cannot become big and rich or assume chiefly positions are tagged as poor and, therefore, become followers.

The key to understanding the position of big men in PNG societies lies in understanding their role in exchange (Rubel & Rosman, 1976). Rubel and Rosman (1976) argued that big men constitute the core of the exchange system, debating from an ethnographic perspective. Departing from the pre-colonial settings, I propose that this argument is relevant in contemporary

settings, except that the once traditional big man has now metamorphosed into a new entity due to colonial and post-colonial experiences. As Martin (2010, p. 2) noted:

the emergence of the term ‘Big Shot’ represented a type of person so different from the kind of man ideally described by the *Tok Pisin* term *bikman*. The emergence of the term [Big Shot] marks a local acknowledgement of the fact that new types of social practice are becoming possible (and to a lesser extent that older types of practice are no longer sustainable) and it marks a particular negative moral evaluation of these possibilities.

Traditional big man practice in pre-colonial PNG societies served noble intentions with values of respect, loyalty, and reciprocity that formed a strong social cohesion. However, post-colonial experiences have put this primordial value under immense pressure, leading to clash of values between tradition and modernity. “As such, it is a specific Melanesian instance of a global phenomenon in which new kinds of social relations and re-negotiations of moral obligations taking place in the context of post-colonial disillusionment and global processes of neo-liberal economic restructuring are commented upon through the emergence of new terms that take their power from the creative subversion of older well established local expressions” (Martin, 2010, p. 2).

One such new term or concept is *crypto-capitalist*, which refers to how wealthy individuals and corporations in many countries around the world (most of which are capitalist) are busy hiding money ‘offshore’ every day through structures that are too complex to trace easily or cheaply. The prefix ‘crypto’ simply means ‘hidden’ or ‘hiding’, but there are various reasons people want to hide their money. Mostly it is to avoid revealing how the money was obtained, or to avoid taxes (tax evasion). In this context, one could call any act of hiding money ‘*crypto-capitalism*’, irrespective of whether the person hiding it is residing in a capitalist or non-capitalist jurisdiction. A PNG or Melanesian *crypto-capitalist* (big man) is someone who is trying to live a double life of elite possessive individual and traditional reciprocator. The typical example is a politician who is maintaining his political base through the usual modes of largesse but also has offshore bank accounts and often one or more houses offshore (for instance, Cairns and other Australian cities have a few of these) which he uses to hide his true wealth from demanding *wantoks*.

The *wantok* and big men systems are inextricably linked in PNG’s political system. “Today, the *wantok* and big men traditions manifest themselves in PNG’s political arena as a system by which elected leaders and bureaucrats use public office as an opportunity to accumulate wealth

and therefore status, and by which these officials' *wantoks* expect the spoils of office to confer direct benefits" (Dix & Pok, 2009, p. 247). In a similar vein, Mana (1999, p. 6) highlighted the nexus between petty corruption and culture, noting that "much of the petty corruption that occurs at the provincial and district level has a cultural base. The social bonds of tribal loyalty and kinship inherent in Melanesian culture have made their way into the management of public resources and other functions of the public administrative system. The *wantok* system is a classic example of this and involves doing favours for friends and mates who belong to the same family, tribe or region". By examining the participation of big men in exchange, Dix and Pok (2009) intended to illuminate the way in which big men come to power, maintain themselves while in power, and compete with other big men, until eventually their importance declines. Understanding the big man concept is an important step in investigating clientelist networks embedded in PNG's state institutions, between big men and their associates, which was perceived as a potential trigger for corruption.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

3 Research Methodology

The year 2020 was a very challenging time for the research community. Researchers that have their pre-pandemic (hereafter COVID-19) research methodologies designed for the traditional face-to-face interactions were caught unprepared. The sudden emergence of COVID-19 has significantly transformed their research plans and experiences. The following was what one online research blogger has observed:

In mid-March 2020, many researchers are scrambling to find ways to re-design their in-person focus group research during the current coronavirus pandemic crisis. In doing so, these researchers are taking a close look at moving from in-person discussions to an online mode that allows for some semblance of in-person groups by way of face-to-face, real-time interaction, i.e., synchronous video conferencing. For some (if not, most) of these researchers, the online face-to-face mode is a new experience and, as such, researchers are uncertain on how to proceed on two key facets of research design: 1) the online service or platform they should use, and 2) best practices when conducting online synchronous [and asynchronous] group discussions for research purposes (Research Design Review, 2020).

This research project was also affected because the traditional face-to-face interaction, which was the main technique for data collection, was disrupted. The principal investigator (PI) had to identify the most relevant approach to ensure that the present research is not compromised. The discussions that follow in this chapter present a revised research methodology in response to the unforeseen impact of COVID-19. Restrictions on international travel between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) meant that traditional face-face-face interviews between the principal investigator and potential participants in PNG were unlikely. The travel restrictions immediately impacted the ability to collect data via face-to-face interviews, but an extension on the travel ban shattered any hope of implementing the initial research plan. Having considered all available options and to avoid compromising the research, the focus was shifted from field-based face-to-face interviews to online interactions using the most relevant online interactive tools available to both the principal investigator and the participants. Three online data collection tools were employed by the principal investigator to collect data: 1) the online survey generated by Google Forms; 2) the facilitator assisted face-to-face focus group discussions (FGDs) using WhatsApp video calls; and 3) online focus group discussions (OFGs) using a

closed Facebook group. The OFG, through a closed Facebook group, was also the main platform used by the principal investigator to recruit online participants. Participants from the facilitator assisted FGDs were recruited by two Port Moresby/PNG based research assistants (RAs) engaged by the principal investigator. Each of the techniques utilised is further elaborated in sub-sections 3.1 to 3.7.

3.1 Research location

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is in the South-western Pacific, north of Australia, and includes the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, together with several islands to the north and east. The country has a modified Westminster model of parliamentary democracy – a legacy of both the British and Australian colonialism between the 1880s and the early 1970s. It has a unicameral chamber, with 118 elected members of parliament. PNG gained its political independence from Australia in 1975. There are twenty-two provinces including the National Capital District (NCD), which is a municipal administrative authority that houses the seat of national government and Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea (Figure 3.1). The area of study is in Port Moresby, which is also the administrative centre of the NCD. The NCD has three electorates including Moresby Northwest, Moresby Northeast, and Moresby South.

The specific sites selected for participant recruitment for the facilitator assisted focus group discussions were the Waigani and Boroko suburbs situated within the Moresby Northwest electorate. The Moresby South and Moresby Northeast electorates were overlooked as potential recruitment sites for four main reasons: 1) logistical limitations; 2) these two electorates were considered hotspots for criminal activities; 3) the principal investigator is not familiar with the environment; and 4) restrictions induced by COVID-19. Figure 3.2 shows the participant recruitment locations within Port Moresby.

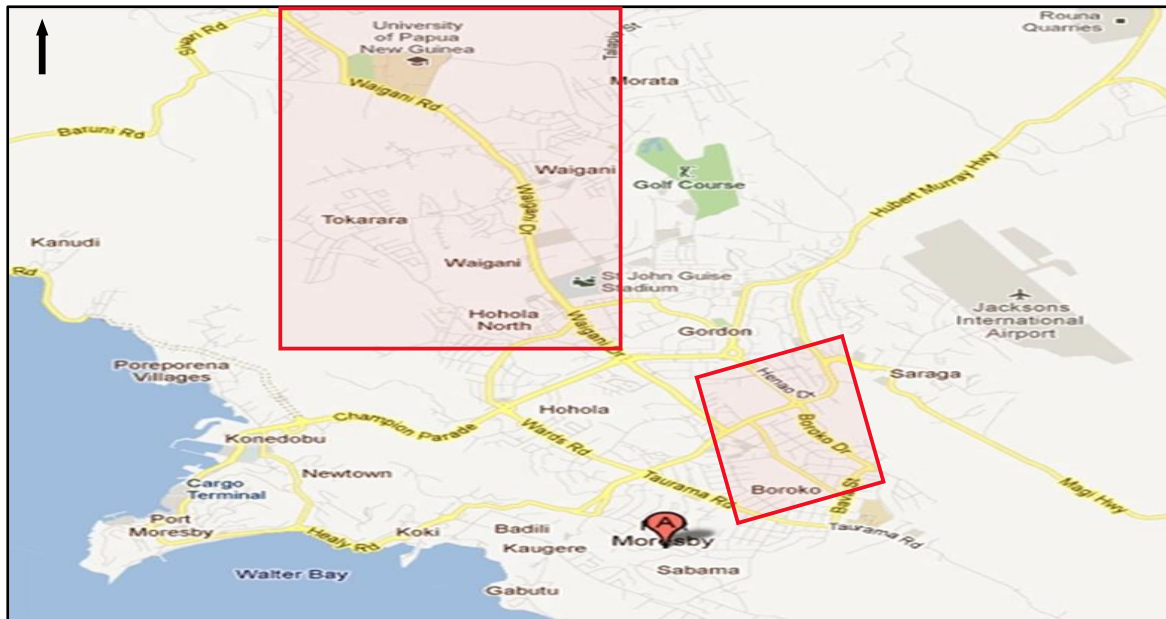


Figure 3.2: Map of the focus group recruitment sites

Source: <https://masalai.wordpress.com/2011/08/17/thoughts-on-ncdc-housing-for-minister-ken-fairweathers/>

The study site was selected for five reasons. The first reason is that the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP), is in Port Moresby, which is the case study institution that is of interest to this research. The second reason was the reliability and capacity of communications technology in Port Moresby compared to other parts of the country. Online data were collected from senior public servants and private sector employees who had lived and worked in Port Moresby. It was anticipated that each of the online participants would be adept with communications technology or online communications platforms. At the time of this research, most of the forty-one participants (that took part in the online survey) had taken up studies in Australia under the Australia Awards Scholarship program. Thirdly, focus group discussion participants were drawn from easy to reach people in Port Moresby, including university students, and those who were unemployed or self-employed, and living in urban suburbs that were easily accessible to the facilitators (RAs). The fourth reason was that Port Moresby is an area that is familiar to the principal investigator and his FGD facilitators (RAs). Therefore, mobility and logistics were managed within the limited budget allocated for this research. Logistics with regards to finance was the main inhibiting factor that limited the scope of the research to only Port Moresby. The fifth reason, which changed the whole research plan, was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel and social interactions were very limited and, therefore, affected the scope of this study.

3.2 Respondents' information

The data analyses and discussion of findings presented in chapter seven (7) were obtained from bureaucrats in middle management roles, mid-management private sector employees, university students at various stages of their study from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), and people who were either unemployed or self-employed within the informal sector (Table 3.1). Demographic information of each category of the research participants is provided in Appendix 3.1. In total, 83 people ($N=83$) were sampled or involved in this research (Table 3.2). Although the sample size is small, it represents a diverse and rich blend of perceptions held by Papua New Guineans about corruption from both the formal and informal institutions. A number of recent studies in PNG focusing on corruption perceptions were used as background information (Walton, 2009, 2013a, 2013b; Walton & Jones, 2017; Walton, 2019). The present research blends together views and experiences from the public and private sector employees, university students, and individual Papua New Guineans, something that little recent research has focused on.

Table 3.1: Participant recruitment by method, category, and size (recruitment method)

No.	Methods	Category	Number	Percentage
A	Online focus group discussions (Facebook)	The OFG was the method used for both the recruitment of online participants and the discussion. There were 41 survey participants.		
	A closed FB group was created. Invitations were sent to potential participants. 53 participants accepted the invitations and group membership.	Overall	41	100 (%)
		Public servants	17	41
		Private sector	15	37
		Self-employed/Unemployed	9	22
B	Online survey participants – Google Forms	The majority of the participants were employed either by the government or private institutions. Around 20 percent were self-employed/unemployed.		
	Only 41 out of the 53 participants were able to participate.	Overall	41	100 (%)
	Private Messenger messages were sent to each participant, followed by emails containing the Google Form link, consent form, and information sheet.	Public servants	17	41
		Private sector	15	37
		Self-employed/Unemployed	9	22

C	Facilitator assisted FGDs (WhatsApp video calls)			
	Recruitment was done by two	Overall	42	100 (%)
	research assistants based at	Students (UPNG)	22	52
	UPNG, Port Moresby. They	Self-employed/unemployed	15	36
	used a participant demographic chart for recruitment.	Employed	5	12
	All interviews were conducted at UPNG. The principal investigator moderated remotely from JCU, Australia via WhatsApp video calls.			

Table 3.2: Overall participant recruitment (sampling size)

No.	Method	Category	Number	Percentage
	Qualitative	Overall	83	100
A	Online survey	Employed	32	39
		Self-employed/Unemployed	9	11
B	Focus group discussions	Students (UPNG)	22	26
		Self-employed/Unemployed	15	18
		Employed	5	6

3.3 Sampling framework

The essential components of a sampling framework in research consists of a population, a sampling frame, and the sample size (Figure 3.3). A research population generally consists of a larger collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific (or social) inquiry (Explorable.com, n.d.). A sample is derived from the population to test or study because it is often too expensive and time-consuming, “so that the results of studying the sample can be generalised back to the population” (Marshall, 1996, p. 522). Sample refers to a representative subset of a population (Majumdar, 2008).

The need for sampling units of analysis in a population is determined by several factors including: 1) time to collect information from all the units; 2) resources (budget/money) to collect information from all the units; 3) geographic location of all the units; and 4) the necessity or

relevance of collecting information from all the units based on research questions and objectives (Byrne, 2001; Majumdar, 2008; Marshall, 1996; Northrop & Arsneault, 2008).

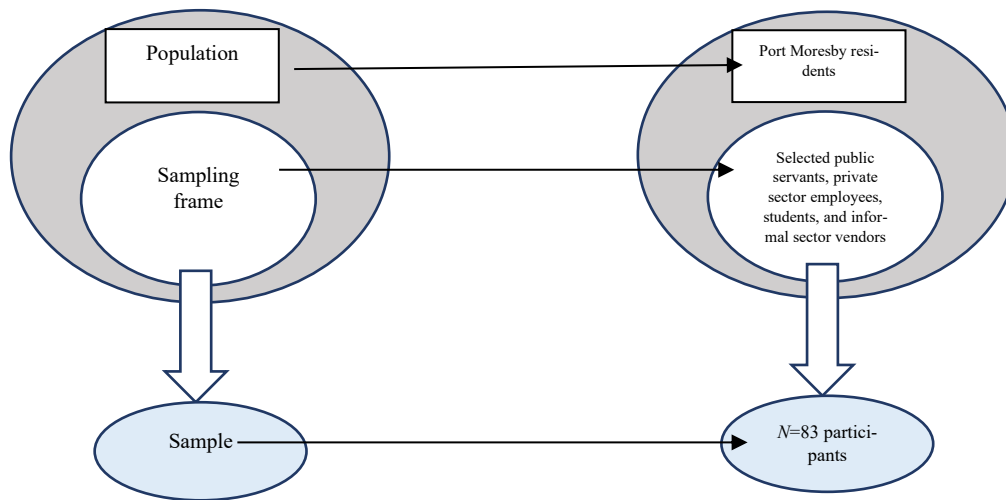


Figure 3.3: Sampling framework

Source: Adopted from Montelo & Sutton (2006); Dewi (2007) (emphasis added)

Questions about sample size are subjected to certain conventions, particularly in line with the need for collecting or surveying sufficiently large samples for producing representative quantitative data. For a given sample size, the more socially- or culturally-informed the research design, the better the data. Optimum sample size depends on how much variation in responses (data saturation) a researcher can reasonably expect to occur within that sample. However, as alluded to earlier, sample size can also be constrained by time and money.

In the present research, the selection of the sample size was determined by cost, convenience (geography), time, and most importantly, the impact of COVID-19. Marshall (1996, p. 523) observed that in qualitative research, “the number of required subjects (participants) usually becomes obvious as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation)”. Overall, the sample size in the present research ($N=83$) appears to fit this description, and shows consistent patterns across a diverse range of questions about the perception of corruption.

The principal investigator used the non-probability sampling methods of self-selection and snowball sampling (Table 3.3). The non-probability sampling method was selected because it is affordable, convenient and poses no evident risk to the representativeness of the data. The sampling frames used included both formal and informal sector participants in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (see sub-section 3.2, ‘Respondents’ Information’, and Figure 3.3).

Table 3.3: Non-probability sampling method

Non-probability sampling			
Self-selection sampling		Snowball sampling	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Reduces time	Self-selection bias	Can be used where identifying units is difficult	Harder to determine sampling error
Participants are committed	Less representative sample	Lack of recruitment options makes snowball sampling the only option.	Harder to make generalisations
			Sample maybe less representative

Source: Adopted from Sharma (2017) (emphasis added)

3.4 Facebook as a research tool: Rationale

Facebook “has become a significant part of daily life for nearly 1.4 billion people around the world” (Kosinski et al., 2015, p. 543). In 2020 when the research design and methods were developed, the active monthly users of Facebook were around 2.5 billion people worldwide (Facebook Inc., 2020), making Facebook a leading platform for Internet accessibility to much of the world’s population. However, while many researchers have explored Facebook’s influence on individuals and societies, “its potential as a powerful research tool – for both online and offline research in the social sciences – has been largely overlooked” (Kosinski et al., 2015, p. 543). “The popularity of Facebook has led researchers to seek ways of using the social media platform in their empirical research” (Medley-Rath, 2019, p. 1765). “The use of Facebook as a tool for recruitment [and data source] is not new” (Biedermann, 2018, p. 27). A review by Thornton et al. (2016) “found that the number of studies using Facebook as a recruitment tool is increasing rapidly, due in large part to its cost-effectiveness and rapid connection to potential participants” (as cited in Biedermann, 2018, p.27). Similarly, Forrestal et al. (2015) suggested that “new technologies continue to push the boundaries of collaboration, bringing together geographically dispersed people into a single, virtual space. Combined with budget pressures, the availability of high-speed Internet and online communication platforms encourage opportunities to use virtual focus groups” (Forrestal et al., 2015, p. 1). “Online social media offer great potential for research participant recruitment and data collection” (Thrul et al., 2017, p. 106). Facebook is considered by some researchers as a useful tool for recruiting research participants

(Frandsen et al., 2014; Ramo et al., 2014; Ramo and Prochaska, 2012; Topolovec-Vranic & Natarajan, 2016). Besides participant recruitment, Facebook also "offers great potential as a data collection tool in a variety of studies" (Thrul et al., 2017, p. 106).

Studies on Facebook as a research tool by Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2015) and Stancanelli (2010) concurred that "the rapid development of the Internet and various social network applications enable researchers to employ virtual communications formats to capture research participants' understanding of a social phenomenon of interest" (Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2015, p. 1). In a similar vein, Kosinski et al. (2015) further emphasised that "Facebook is rapidly gaining recognition as a powerful research tool for the social sciences. It constitutes a large and diverse pool of participants, who can be selectively recruited for both online and offline studies" (Kosinski et al., 2015, p. 543). However, using emerging technology and online platforms, such as social media, for research can have limitations. One such limitation is the concern for the breach of human ethics (Lunnay et al., (2014). Despite this, breaches of human ethics did not end up being a concern with the approach taken in this study. The research in this thesis is covered by JCU Human Research Ethics Permit number H8078.

3.5 Research design and techniques

Computer mediated communication (CMC) or cyberspace research involves the use of internet, computers, smart phone technology, and other communication devices that made online data collection possible. The CMC is conducted through several avenues, among them synchronous and asynchronous avenues. Online focus groups (OFGs) are essentially a computer mediated 'communication event' (Terrance et al., 1993, p. 53), which attempts to mimic a face-to-face interaction format. "Online social media offer an opportunity to conduct OFGs both synchronously and asynchronously using a technology platform that research participants are already familiar with" (Thrul et al., 2017, p. 107).

The difference between the synchronous and asynchronous methods is that synchronous studies are conducted as a real-time discussion, whereas the asynchronous method can occur at the participants' convenience (Thrul et al., 2017). Synchronous studies closely mimic the real-time conversations of in-person groups (Smithson, 2008). Synchronous OFGs usually take two forms, including chat or text based OFGs and webcam or video audio based OFGs. Examples of chat based OFGs are Google Hangouts and Facebook Messenger. Audio-visual applications include Skype, Facebook Video Chat, WhatsApp Video Chat, and web-conferencing applications, such as Zoom. These resources are now being used more frequently, because the

integration of microphones and webcams into digital technologies (e.g., desktops, laptops, tablets, smart phones) has become the default practice (Lobe, 2017).

On the other hand, asynchronous OFGs use listservs or discussion forums that allow participants to respond at their own pace (Rolls et al., 2016; Thrul et al., 2017; Tuttas, 2015). “Asynchronous focus groups involve a certain time lag between researcher’s posting the question and participants posting their answers” (Lobe, 2017, p. 3). Examples of asynchronous CMC, as noted by Lobe (2017), include digital platforms such as “e-mail, newsgroups, mailing lists, bulletin boards, web logs (blogs), forums and other web resources” (Lobe, 2017, p. 3). The use of CMC emerged in the late 1990s, when cyberspace became an important aspect of gaining access to virtual or online communities (Jacobson, 1999; Mann & Stewart, 2000; Ward, 1999).

The main strength of an OFG is that it is cost-effective, time efficient, and boundaryless (Brüggen & Willems, 2009; Kerr & Murphy, 2004; Murgado-Armenteros et al., 2012). As Lijadi and Schalkwyk (2015) noted, an OFG “reduces cost and remove the time and geographical constraints as participants can log in anytime, anywhere, and when it is convenient for them” (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2015, p. 2). However, the OFG’s main weakness is that its usage is only limited to those participants who have internet access and are able to use it effectively (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2015).

3.6 Online survey: Google Forms

Google Forms is a good example of an asynchronous OFG where participants work at their own pace. It is a web-based survey administration software created by Google for research purposes. In this research project, a survey was created using Google Forms and selected participants were invited to participate. Participants who had agreed to participate were sent emails containing an information sheet, a consent form, and the link containing the Google Forms survey questionnaire. The purpose and aim of the research were provided to the participants through the information sheet. As part of the human research ethics requirements, a consent form was also provided to seek participants’ consent. Once the participants were in receipt of the weblink that contained the survey questions, they were able to start working at their own pace, but were given a deadline for when the live survey link would close. Google Forms is a very useful tool created by Google where researchers can use to collect data through online surveys.

Google Forms was one of the two main data collection methods that were used in this research. Participants for this online survey were recruited through a closed or private Facebook group

titled “Corruption Research in Papua New Guinea 2019-2022”. Figure 3.4 shows the Facebook group and membership numbers, which was 53 at the conclusion of recruitment and data collection processes. Out of the 53 members, invitations were sent to only 49 participants through private Facebook Messenger messages. The reasons for the other four members not participating are provided in the inclusion-exclusion criteria (Table 3.4). All 49 invitees accepted the invitations, after which the principal investigator solicited each of the participant’s email addresses. The Google Forms link, consent form, and information sheet were then sent to the participants via email. However, only 41 respondents consented and completed the survey (Table 3.5); eight invitees did not participate for unknown reasons.



Figure 3.4: Facebook Group – Corruption Research in Papua New Guinea (2019-2022)

Source: Facebook (2021). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3769928059700855>

Table 3.4: Inclusion-exclusion criteria for online survey

Online Survey: Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria	
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Adept in internet usage	Lack of internet proficiency
Reliable internet connectivity	Unreliable internet connectivity/capacity
Ability to meet survey deadline	Time and conflict with work schedules
More free time	Little free time
Access to technology	No access to technology

Table 3.5: Overall composition of the online survey

Gender		Employment			Age	Marital status		
Male	Fe- male	Govt	Pri- vate	Self/unem- ployed	cate- gory	Married	Single	Other
26	15	17	15	9	Mix	24	12	5
Total: 41								

3.7 Focus group discussions: WhatsApp smartphone video application

Online focus groups were held using the application, WhatsApp. According to Stewart and Williams (2005), “many of the earliest documented uses of online focus groups for research took place in the late 1990s and were based on asynchronous group discussions via email and web-based message boards” (as cited in Chen & Neo, 2019, p. 2). Brügger and Willems (2009) and Tuttas (2015) noted that “as technology evolved, researchers experimented with more immediate forms of conducting online focus groups, including virtual discussion rooms, and online video conferencing platforms” (as cited in Chen & Neo, 2019, p. 2). The use of this online technology in the present research was compelled by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the research community to a great degree.

In this research, WhatsApp smartphone video calls were used between the principal investigator (moderator), based at James Cook University, Australia, and two facilitators, with eight focus groups consisting of 42 participants based in Port Moresby, PNG (Table 3.6). This is an example of a synchronous, real time discussion method. The focus groups were held at one of the Political Science Department staff meeting rooms at UPNG.

With restrictions on some non-essential activities by the PNG government being relaxed, it allowed the two field-based facilitators to conduct limited face-to-face focus group discussions with Port Moresby urban participants (Table 3.6). The principal investigator moderated the discussions remotely through WhatsApp video calls with the facilitators and FGD participants in Port Moresby. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, each FGD was limited to an average of five people. Before each interview, the facilitators and participants were advised to observe the COVID-19 protocols, including adhering to the social distancing rule, wearing of face masks, and hand sanitising before and after each FGD. The inclusion-exclusion criteria in Table 3.7 provided the basis for the FGD participant recruitment.

Table 3.6: Overall composition of the focus group discussions (FGDs)

FGD type	Gender	Age category	Education	Employment	Marital status	No
UPNG (Waigani)	Male	18-24	University	Students	Single	12
UPNG (Waigani)	Female	18-24	University	Students	Single	10
Waigani	Female	Mix	0-12	Self-em- ployed/unem- ployed	Mix	10
Boroko	Male	Mix	0-12	Self-em- ployed/unem- ployed	Mix	10

Table 3.7: Inclusion-exclusion criteria for the focus group discussions (FGDs)

FGDs: Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria	
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Willingness to participate	Little free time
Have more free time	Disability or social anxiety
Can afford time to participate	Conflict of interests with family & community leaders
Possesses common knowledge of current events/gov- ernment systems.	Lack common knowledge of government and politics in PNG
Willingness to access public transport	Without easy access to transport

3.8 Limitations of research techniques

Some practical and technological challenges were identified during the process of data generation with the use of cyberspace research, particularly with the use of OFGs. These include missing social cues, absence of effective moderator guidance, high costs of mobile phone data, and lack of Wi-Fi connectivity and capacity, including web conferencing facilities such as the Zoom technology. These challenges were encountered particularly with the facilitator assisted face-to-face focus group discussions using only a smartphone for WhatsApp video calls between the principal investigator (PI/moderator), and the research assistants (RAs/facilitators) and research participants. Reid and Reid (2005) observed that “the lack of non-verbal cues in online environments is commonly referred to as challenges” (as cited in Chen & Neo, 2019, p. 2).

Although discussions occurred simultaneously between the PI, and the RAs and research participants in real time, the PI could not effectively observe vital social cues projected by the participants. The smartphone used by the RAs for the WhatsApp video calls was placed in a central static position and, therefore, prevented the PI from observing discussions around the group, as would be the case in traditional face-to-face FGDs. In the process, some vital social cues, such as non-verbal communication, para-verbal communication, visual cues, emotional cues, and contextual cues that would have enhanced the richness of transcribed text-file data, were not observed. The moderator-participant attachment with regards to the way questions and prompts would have been asked, and the responses and cues that would have been generated by the respondents were also missing. Woodyatt et al. (2016) found that it would be “more difficult for the facilitator to probe and follow up on participant responses” (as cited in Chen & Neo, 2019, p. 2). Brügger and Willems (2009) noted that “this could be due in part to the barriers for the researchers to gain impressions about the participants” (as cited in Chen & Neo, 2019, p. 2). Adams-Hutcheson and Longhurst (2017) further noted that the absence of the facilitator meant that there is a physical and emotional distance between the participants and the facilitator. Table 3.8 shows a comparison of several research techniques for online research, and the existence or non-existence of different types of social cues in each technique (Lobe, 2017). The smartphone-based WhatsApp mobile video call technique is an example of an audio-visual online social context cue. Except for para-verbal communications, which were recorded together with the audio data, all other social context cues during the video calls were not observed or recorded by the PI. This was complicated further by lack of video recording functionality in the WhatsApp app. Field notes from the RAs provided scanty descriptions of each of the FGD in relation to social cues. Missing data were from some research questions that the FGD facilitator had overlooked, and from some participants who had skipped some sections of the interview to relieve themselves.

Table 3.8: Comparison of various online groups according to social context cues

Social context cues	Face-to-face groups	Text-based online groups	Audio only online groups	Audio-visual online groups
Non-verbal communication	Easily observed and can be video recorded	Non-existent	Non-existent	Mostly limited to current speaker
Para-verbal communication (“um”, “er”, etc.)	Easily observed and can be audio recorded	Easily observed	Easily observed and can be recorded	Easily observed and can be recorded

Visual cues	Easily observed and can be video recorded	Non-existent	Non-existent	Easily observed and can be recorded
Emotional cues	Easily observed and can be written in field notes	Difficult to be observed	Limited, but can be written in field notes	Limited, but can be written in field notes
Context cues	Easily observed and can be written in field notes	Non-existent	Limited, but can be written in field notes	Limited, but can be written in field notes

Source: Lobe (2017)

The virtual presence of the PI (moderator) through WhatsApp video calls was not as effective as would be the case with face-to-face interaction with the participants. Some parts of the interview guide have prompts or backup questions. Although the RAs (facilitators) have ensured that participants were prompted further for certain responses, the PI felt that the way questions were asked were sometimes either too leading or lacked clarity; therefore, generating responses, which in several instances, were irrelevant to the aims and objectives of this research. This was particularly observed with unstructured open-ended qualitative questions. While physical moderator guidance was lacking, the data generated were sufficient for the research to proceed to the next stage of analysis.

The WhatsApp smartphone based FGD was perhaps one of the most expensive techniques used in this research. In all the eight FGDs, the PI's video calls ended prematurely either halfway or three quarters of the way through each of the discussions because the mobile phone data re-charged to one of the RA's smartphone was depleted before the interviews were concluded. This research had a tight budget, and it was not possible to recharge the RAs smartphone with extra data for the remainder of each discussion. Despite this financial setback, the audio data was of very good quality. The virtual pre-interview training the PI had with the two RAs also proved to be useful.

The main reason why WhatsApp video calls used mobile data plans rather than Wi-fi was because of unreliable Wi-fi connectivity and capacity at the interview venue. Similarly, the RAs could not use web conferencing facilities like Zoom because the Wi-fi speed was poor and there were no conferencing facilities at the interview venue. However, the WhatsApp video call app's main advantage was that it is popular and free, and it is easy to download, send messages, and make video calls (Chen & Neo, 2019).

The only challenge with the online survey was the unresponsiveness of some participants. This was complicated further by the slow turnaround between when the Google Forms questionnaires were posted and, the expected closing date of the live interviews. Consequently, the PI had to extend the closing deadlines twice. The PI's post-survey follow-up was not successful with some participants.

3.9 Research instrument

The principal investigator used a semi-structured research instrument or interview guide comprising of two data collection techniques, which were the online survey and the focus group discussion (FGD). "Focus groups do not replace surveys, but rather complement them because focus groups can help interpret results of a survey" (Bernard, 2006, p. 233). Both techniques used the same survey instrument or questionnaire that consists of 74 questions. Of these 74 questions, 57 were closed-ended questions and 17 were open-ended questions. The questionnaire covered the following key themes including: 1) general corruption perceptions; 2) common practices within the administrative and political environments; 3) typology of patronage; 4) patron-client relations and cultural perceptions of corruption; 5) land administration and governance in PNG; and 6) tolerance, reporting, and institutional perceptions of corruption. The interview guide is provided in Appendix 3.2.

CHAPTER 4: Conceptualising patron-client theory through models and case studies

4.1 Patron-client relations model

“A theory is a body of concepts or variables that explain societal challenges and mostly underpin research studies” (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016, p. 282). Patron-client theory deals with reciprocal relations, or exchanges between a patron and a client. In the present research, the patron-client model is used to analyse corruption within the public sector across cultural boundaries in a developing country, PNG. The patron-client or agent-client link to corruption was noted by Banfield (1975) as thus:

[An] agent is a person who has accepted an obligation to act on behalf of his or her principal in some range of matters and, in doing so, to serve the principal’s interests as [they] were his [or her] own. The principal maybe a person or an entity such as an organization [corporation]. An agent is personally corrupt if he [or she] knowingly sacrifices his [or her] principal’s interest to his [or her] own. He [or she] is officially corrupt if, in serving his [or her] principal’s interest, he [or she] acts illegally or unethically albeit in his principal’s interest (Banfield, 1975, pp. 587-588).

“Patronage is founded on the reciprocal relations between patrons and clients. Patron is a person who uses his [or her] influence to assist and protect some other person, who then becomes his [or her] client, and in return provides certain services to his or her patron. The relationship is asymmetrical, for the nature of the services exchanged may differ considerably” (Boissevain, 1966, p. 18). Models are useful in simplifying the representation of complex realities such as the hierarchical nature of everyday social exchanges (in sociology), factional systems and local leadership structures (in anthropology), and party politics, patronage systems, and electoral politics (in political science).

The patron-client political structures and other emerging entities of a sovereign state were part of the modern Westphalian state system established in 1648. The patron-client theory was first studied by anthropologists and sociologists, depicting interpersonal relationships in traditional agrarian cultural settings, and later borrowed by political scientists to study electoral clientelism and party politics (Schmidt et al., 1977; Scott, 1977; Weingrod, 1968). Some scholars (Clapham, 1982; Cruise-O’Brien, 1975; Fox, 1969) noted that “the origin of research on clientelism in in-depth anthropological and sociological studies [treated] political clientelism as a special case of a much more widespread pattern of social affiliation found in “traditional”

societies [for instance], from Southern Italy and Senegal to India” (as cited in Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 3). It is, therefore, an interdisciplinary theory and owes much to research and insights from these three main social sciences disciplines. Sociology relies on the use of exchange theory involving hierarchical social relations; anthropology uses factional systems and local leadership structures to explain social relations; and in political science, the theory found expression in party politics, patronage systems, and electoral politics (Schmidt et al., 1977).

Throughout history, the practice of patron-client relations was influential in forming and defining social relations and power structures between rulers and their followers. For instance, in medieval Europe, the transition from feudal to the enlightenment period, then to democracy and class politics, and from traditional to modern power structures were defined by the patron-client model. Documented evidence of the patron-client theory can be traced far back in European history, but it was only with the growth of feudalism in Western Europe and Japan that the theory became prominent (Badian, 1958; Bloch, 1961). The growth of feudalism in these regions had promoted a classed society based on relationships of personal protection and subordination between lord and peasant, which was the basis for social, economic, and political organisation (Bloch, 1961). Sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists have long known that people act together on the basis of friendship, deference, and informal bonds (Schmidt et al., 1977). The key units of action in any social or political activity are clusters of leaders and followers. When these clusters occur at the elite level, they are called cliques, and at the local level, they might be seen as vote banks, patron-client networks, or local factions. These types of relationships happen every day, and are exhibited in patron-client arrangements such as the mafioso boss and his kin and henchmen, religious teachers and their disciples, politicians and their voters, and landlords and their tenants (Schmidt et al., 1977). For instance, in the client-broker-patron exchanges in an election, the “general objective of a patron is to obtain the client’s political support, usually in the form of a vote, [which] is substituted for material benefits” (Veenendaal, 2017, pp. 565-566). There are “organizational hierarchies of exchange between electoral clients at the ground floor of the system, various levels of brokers organized in a pyramidal fashion, and patrons at the top” (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 8). These patterns of reciprocity suggest that asymmetrical relationships exist between people who possess uneven levels of power, and have different skill sets, knowledge, and resources as sources of influence. Uberti (2015, p. 328) noted that “patron-client relations are relations of exchange between individuals of unequal status: in the simplest model, patrons enjoy privileged access to state-created resources (e.g., property rights and economic rents), while clients gain access

indirectly through their personal relationships to patrons”.

Besides having its grounding in the social sciences, the patron-client theory also owes much of its orientation from development studies through the dependency and world systems theories that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, which described economic inequalities between the developed (centre) and the developing (periphery) nations (Amin, 1972, 1974; Dos Santos, 1970; Frank, 1966; Terlouw; 1992; Wallerstein, 1974). Lisimba and Parashar (2021, p. 1109) described classical dependency theory as the global capitalist system that is “composed of metropolises (developed nations) at the core while the satellites (developing nations) are at the periphery of the system. The states at the core claim the economic surplus generated by those at the periphery and, thus, this interaction perpetuates the development of the metropolis, while leading to the simultaneous underdevelopment of the satellite states”. The work of Jason Hickel and colleagues demonstrates the continuity of this system into the present (Hickel et al., 2022).

Kaufman (1974) noted that the dependency theory is premised on the assumption that generally, resources are scarce, and therefore are controlled or monopolised by a few elites, or clientele classes. These clientele classes perform internal control functions on behalf of the metropolitan powers (Kaufman, 1974). In its simplest form, the reliance of the clients on the patrons for support creates a dependency relationship. The patron-client theory is useful in highlighting discussions relating to such dependency relationships as “landlord-peasant relationship, of caudillos, personalism, and in analyses of ‘corruption’ in bureaucracies, business firms, and political organisations” (Kaufman, 1974, p. 285). The patron-client concept is used by social scientists to understand the complexities of the modern social life found in the real world, which could be studied at both the micro (local village politics) and macro (national and international political systems) levels (Kaufman, 1974).

Lisimba and Parashar (2021, p. 1105) employed the “dependency and world systems theory to examine [the China-Rwanda dependency model and the state of post-colonial development in Africa, and] how the global economic configuration operates through the hierarchy of core, semi-periphery and periphery among the states”. Lisimba and Parashar (2021) found that Rwanda’s post-colonial status as a developing nation, in addition to its landlocked status, resource-deficiency, and aid-dependency all provided ideal opportunities for Chinese patronage and investments to thrive (Lisimba & Parashar, 2021). Though China is not traditionally considered as one of the core states in the global capitalist system (dominated by Western capitalist states), it has emerged as a core state to many developing states. Therefore, “China’s voracious

appetite for natural resources and its quest for new markets are the two most cited reasons for its deepening [patron-client] engagements within Africa [including Southeast Asia and the Pacific]” (Lisimba & Parashar, 2021, p. 1112).

Veenendaal (2017, p. 561) while analysing foreign policies of small client states (e.g., Palau) vis-à-vis the international patron-client model found that “patronage-client linkage offers a more fruitful model to study the relations between small and large states than the existing literature does, because it recognises the element of exchange that such relationships entail”. Veenendaal (2017) noted that patron-client exchanges or relationships are characterised by four elements including 1) reciprocity, 2) unequal or asymmetric relationships, 3) based on compliance and demands, and 4) affectivity and loyalty. Some relationships between small and large countries are characterised by the four elements of patron-clientelism described above (Veenendaal, 2017). For instance, although two sovereign states like PNG and Australia may hold equal voting rights in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, outside, their relationships are often characterised by asymmetry in resources and capabilities (Veenendaal, 2017). In terms of reciprocity and compliance, “some larger states provide economic and military support to smaller states, and that small states often finetune aspects of their foreign policy with that of larger states” (Veenendaal, 2017, p. 565).

There are several definitions of patron-clientelism advanced by anthropologists and dependency theorists in the 1960s and 1970s (Boissevian, 1966; Kaufman, 1974; Lande, 1973; Powell, 1970; Scott, 1972). For simplicity and clarity, the present research will use the definition provided by Kaufman (1974), which is a synthesis from Lande (1973), Powell (1970), and Scott (1972). According to Kaufman (1974), patron-client relations involved two persons or entities in a dyadic exchange, with the following defining features:

- (a) The relationship occurs between actors of unequal power and status;
- (b) It is based on the principal of reciprocity; that is, it is a self-regulating form of interpersonal exchange, the maintenance of which depends on the return that each actor expects to obtain by rendering goods and services to the other and which ceases once the expected rewards fail to materialize; and
- (c) The relationship is particularistic and private, anchored only loosely in public law or community norms (Kaufman, 1974, p. 285).

I rely on this definition for the following reasons: first, most definitions differ on the two latter features (b and c) offered by Kaufman (1974). Despite the concept being asymmetrical, as most scholars have alluded to, not everyone agrees on the “degree of voluntarism associated with the relationship, and the degree to which customary or legal obligations enter into clientelistic transactions” (Kaufman, 1974, p. 285). Second, comparative political scientists, while discussing the concept, became aware of its general applicability to other contexts. Kaufman’s definition, therefore, highlights the functional aspect of the theory itself, which is “central to an understanding of how at least some political systems work, constituting in some instances the most important basis of interest articulation and socio-political control” (Kaufman, 1974, p. 285). The third reason, in relation to the second, is that it offers complementary and ‘across system analysis’ found in other reciprocity models such as the exchange model (Gregory, 2015; Mauss, 1990), principal-agent model, collective-action model, and dependency theory, among others (Kaufman, 1974). Therefore, the multi-disciplinary nature of the patron-client theory across political science, anthropology, sociology, development studies, and international relations makes it a useful tool for analysing and better understanding corruption across different cultural settings.

The definition of the patron-client model advanced by Scott (1972) perhaps provides a good point of departure for the theory to be operationalised in the real world. In this study, Scott (1972) suggested that patron-client relations do not only represent dyadic, but also multi-dyadic relations. But how does Scott (1972) distinguish between the different layers of patrons and clients under these structures? This question is very important to the present study because we must be able to clearly distinguish between different layers or clusters of actors, their status, their positions, resources, and relative inequality that symbolise the patron-client network. Patron-client relationships can exert both positive and negative outcomes. It is the latter aspect that is of concern to this research. According to Scott (1972):

The role of [the] patron ought to be distinguished from such role designations as broker, middleman, or boss with which it is sometimes confounded. Acting as a broker or middleman (interchangeable terms) means serving as an intermediary to arrange an exchange or transfer between two parties who are not in direct contact. The role of middleman, then, involves a three-party exchange in which the middleman functions as an agent and does not himself control the thing (resource) transferred. A patron, by contrast, is part of a two-person exchange and operates with resources he himself owns or directly controls.

Finally, the terms middleman and broker do not specify the relative status of the actor to others in the transaction, while a patron is by definition of superior rank to his client (Scott, 1972, p. 95).

Lomnitz (1988) highlighted the importance of social distance and relative power between the patron and the client. According to Lomnitz (1988), as “the differentials in power increase between the partners of the exchange, the services of the more powerful partner are increasingly reciprocated through demonstrations of gratitude and loyalty. Basically, then, power transforms inequality into subordination. The more powerful partner becomes a patron, and the less powerful one a client” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 47). The distinctions between a patron and client, as unique groupings that form both a singular patron-client and multiple vertical links, are represented in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

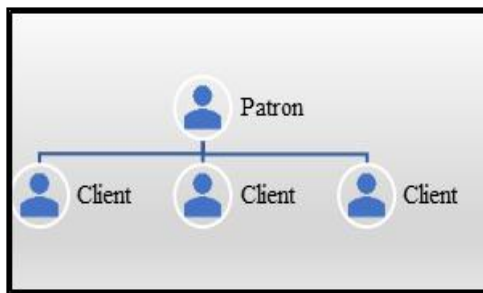


Figure 4.1: Patron-client cluster

Source: Adopted from Scott, 1972, p. 96

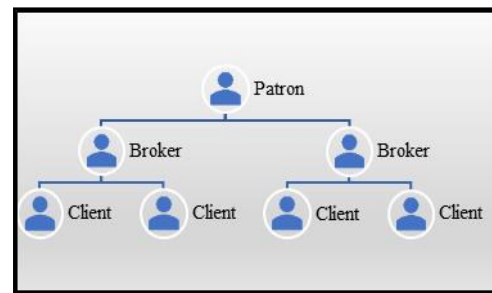


Figure 4.2: Patron-client pyramid

These two structures typify simple versions of the complex real-world social interactions that take place between different groups of actors or clusters of actors. Interactions based on dyadic or two-person interactions, when extended beyond the scope of the dyadic network, would culminate in a pyramidal structure. Social interactions, exchanges, and relationships in a patron-client cluster most often are horizontal, and in the patron-client pyramid, exchanges are usually vertical. Carvajal (1999) provided a distinction between these two structures as follows:

When the interested parties perceive an exchange as fair it is considered to be a horizontal exchange. It usually occurs among individuals of similar social standing or economical hierarchical level. Vertical exchanges provide the main channel for resource distribution through the network: capital and power flow downward [subordinates] and work and loyalty flow upward [superiors] (Carvajal, 1999, p. 336).

In a patron-client pyramid, clients or intermediaries who occupy middle positions in the structure are clients to the primary patron above, and are patrons to those below. In its most primary form, clientelist exchanges involved “pyramidal networks constituted by asymmetrical, reciprocal, and face-to-face relationships” (Auyero et al., 2009, p. 3). Scott (1972) further emphasised that:

If we are to broaden the analysis to include the larger structures that are related by the joining of many such links, a few new terms must be introduced. First, when we speak of a patron’s immediate following – we will refer to a patron-client cluster. A second term, enlarging on the cluster but still focusing on one person and his vertical links is the patron-client pyramid. This is simply a vertical extension downward of the cluster in which linkages are introduced beyond the first-order (Scott, 1972, p. 96).

A patron-client cluster is one in which many clients attach themselves to the same leader (Kaufman, 1974). “Clientelist pyramids, [or multi-dyadic structures] in turn, are said to be formed when leaders of various patron-client clusters themselves establish clientage bonds with still higher status actors” (Kaufman, 1974, p. 291). According to Lande (1977), “a dyadic relationship, in its social science sense, is a direct relationship involving some form of interaction between two individuals” (Lande, 1977, pp. xiii-xiv). The following case study provides an illustration of how this model is applied in the real world, and not necessarily on textbook analyses or definitions.

4.1.1 Case study 1: The Wahgi Mek Plantations Ltd. scandal

In practice, modern institutions (public and private), political parties, large businesses or corporations, labour unions, and interest groups are often penetrated by informal patron-client networks that undermine formal structure of authority. In politics, expression of patron-client cluster might find itself in the candidate-voter relationship during elections. In the public service, a patron-client pyramid might occur between a public servant, a contractor, and a politician. In a labour union, for instance, the union leader may act as an intermediary on behalf of the employees and the employer (either the state or a corporation). According to Lomnitz (1988), “informal modes of exchange grow in the interstices of the formal system, thrive on its inefficiencies, and tend to perpetuate them by compensating for shortcomings and by generating factions and interest groups within the system” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 43). For instance, Kaufman (1972) argued that political machines “permeate and corrupt other organisational sub-

systems, both economic and governmental, in order to obtain the resources necessary for internal compliance” (Kaufman, 1974, p. 304). A political machine is “any political faction which holds power for a considerable length of time” (Gosnell, 1933, p. 21). Golosov (2013, p. 460) defined political machines “as political organisations that mobilise electoral support by trading particularistic material benefits to citizens in exchange for their votes”. Guterbock (1980, p. 3) defined political machine as “a specific type of political party: one which has a tight, hierarchical organisation, includes party agents at the grassroots level and systemically distributes patronage among its members”. The key aim of the political machine is to build linkages between the party leaders (politicians) and the clients (voters).

The present research will use a PNG case study to illustrate how patronage facilitates corruption. Patron-client relations may be more complex in practice and, therefore, will not always fit theoretical definitions or analyses. In PNG, evidence from existing research showed that clientelistic models of distributive politics and neo-patrimonial frameworks have emerged within an ethnically fragmented population, and a parliamentary system lacking any kind of coherent party politics (Kurer, 1993, 2007; Lasslett, 2017). The socio-cultural and ethnic heterogeneity, and political fragmentation are some structural features of this fragmented and incoherent system, which partly determine the nature of political clientelism in PNG. As Van De Walle (2007, p. 51) noted, “ethnic heterogeneity does indeed affect clientelist politics”.

In 2003, a grant of K2 million for coffee farmers was fraudulently appropriated by two senior government bureaucrats and their associates or cohorts. A corruption investigation article by PNGi Central (2020) revealed that in 2002 a grant of K2 million, intended for use by coffee farmers in the Wahgi Mek coffee plantations in the Wahgi valley region, currently part of Jiwaka Province in PNG, was misappropriated. Applying the patron-client theory to a contemporary example, the present research intends to illustrate the way this alleged fraud was committed through the different clusters of actors having an interest in the farmers’ grant.

At the height of its operations, Wahgi Mek Plantations Ltd. (WMPL) was one of the biggest coffee companies in PNG and represented the interests of many coffee farmers in the Wahgi Mek coffee plantations in Jiwaka Province. It was a very successful coffee model when established in the mid-1970s. Unfortunately, the company had not been performing well over the years, due to internal conflicts between landowners, shareholders, and the company’s management. Some people were using the company to further their own interests. Lomnitz (1988) suggested that informal economic interests, once entrenched in the formal economy, may

mimic its power structure and exacerbate inefficiencies. “As the state apparatus expands and its economic functions become more encompassing, the informal networks of reciprocal exchange and patronage invade the formal system and mimic its power structure” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 54). Allegations of mismanagement of the company’s assets, funds, and properties were documented. One such allegation involved the siphoning of a K2 million grant by some senior public servants intended for the rehabilitation of coffee plantations in the Wahgi Mek valley in Jiwaka Province.

In 2003, a civil litigation was filed by WMPL as the first plaintiff, on behalf of its three main shareholders (i.e., South Wahgi Local-level Government, North Wahgi Local-level Government and Dick Hagon) and coffee farmers against Valentine Kambori; the former Secretary for the Department of National Planning and Rural Development (DNP&RD) as the first defendant, Wahgi Mek Holding Ltd (WMHL; I provide more details about this entity below) as second defendant, and others (Figure 4.3). At the start of the litigation, WMPL was 75 percent state owned and 25 percent private owned. According to the company’s shareholding structure, North Wahgi local level government (LLG) owned 37.5 percent, South Wahgi LLG owned 37.5 percent, and Dick Hagon, the company’s Managing Director and an established coffee entrepreneur owned 25 percent of the company’s shares (Figure 4.3).

Prior to the litigation, on December 2002, the DNP&RD was asked to allocate a sum of K2 million to the WMPL. The purpose of this funding was to rehabilitate coffee plantations in the Wahgi valley that were neglected due to landowner conflicts and management disputes, and to support rural farmers and their livelihoods. It is the responsibility of the government as the agent to provide sufficiently for its principals (people), and to protect their interests. According to Blau (1964), “the patron often is in a position to supply unilaterally goods and services which the potential client and his family need for their survival and wellbeing” (as cited in Scott, 1972, p. 94).

The basis of this complicity or impropriety, according to PNGi Central (2020), was the establishment of a small shell company called Wahgi Mek Holding Ltd (WMHL), which was incorporated on 23 January 2003. The formation of WMHL as a shell company was in response to an economic incentive being pursued outside of due process. In December 2002, a directive was issued by Joshua Kalinoe, the Chief Government Secretary to the DNP&RD to approve funding of K2 million for WMPL. But instead, the grant was transferred to WMHL. This case demonstrates that inefficiencies generated by the informal networks tend to weaken detection

and compliance mechanisms because they mimic the power structure within the formal institution, thereby creating opportunities for actors within these networks to collaborate secretly. Clearly, there was an economic incentive provided by the formal economy and, therefore, “[state] officials in charge of production and distribution [administrative power] become businesspeople, professional and service personnel engage in private [enterprise] to supplement their official incomes” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 53).

It was revealed by the National Court that WMHL “did not own or have any interest in any coffee plantations in the Wahgi Valley” (PNGi Central, 2020). Under this shell company, a completely new share structure was created that comprised of five actors, including Paul Ansphill, George Pera, John Poro, Paul Murung, and Mathew Kanua, all owning 20 percent of shares, respectively. On 13 July 2004, the share structure was amended when Ansphill and Pera decided to collectively transfer their shares to Kambori, the former DNP&RD Secretary. The new shareholding structure saw Kambori owning 40 percent, and Poro, Murung, and Kanua each owning 20 percent of the company’s shares as reflected in Figure 4.3. All five shareholders were public officers. After their share transfers to Kambori, Ansphill was appointed Director, and Pera the company’s Secretary. There were two reasons for the share transfers by Ansphill and Pera to Kambori including 1) to make Kambori the major shareholder of the company (WMHL), and 2) to secure benefit from Kambori’s bureaucratic privileges.

Kambori’s sudden acquisition of the 40 percent shares was interesting because as the bureaucratic head of the DNP&RD, he determines the release of government grants under the *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1999 for development purposes. Kambori’s inclusion as the major shareholder significantly changed the dynamics and power structure of WMHL vis-à-vis the guaranty of the release of the K2 million grant to WMHL. According to Lomnitz (1988), “[informal] exchanges tend to deal with commodities that are not freely available in the formal systems: rationed or restricted goods, access to decision makers, influence on administrative decisions, or more generally preferential treatment at the hands of the modern bureaucracies” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 43). In this case, the K2 million grant was a restricted economic good placed under the formal sector, via the DNP&RD. These actors wanted to extract maximum payoff from this scarce economic good, which otherwise was not found freely in the informal sector. As observed by Khan (1998), a critical factor determining the value of transactions between patrons and clients is their relative political, or in this case bureaucratic, power.

The five initial shareholders conceded that in order to facilitate this “illicit” economic transaction, they had to secure Kambori’s interests. Consequently, shares held by Ansphill and Pera had to be offloaded as bargaining rights (bribes) to secure benefit from Kambori’s bureaucratic privileges. Although Kambori was in a position to reject this bargain given his seniority and the negative implication that would ensue, he chose instead to accept the offer of a larger fraction of the shares (40 percent) because he wanted to maximise value for himself personally, while Ansphill and Pera were willing to accept smaller cuts for themselves. As Khan (1998) suggested, “exchanges within patron-client networks can only be value-maximising if the partners to the exchange want to achieve value maximization for themselves” (Khan, 1998, p. 23). The original shareholders of WMHL were seeking Kambori’s authority as the chief financial delegate of the DNP&RD as this is the only conduit through which the K2 million would be swindled. Khan (1998) provides a theoretical view of this patron-client rights (bribes) transferal and economic payoff as thus:

If clients are politically [or bureaucratically] weak, the patron is likely to extract the maximum economic payoff from the client in the form of a bribe commensurate with the right [bribe] being created or transferred. At the other extreme, if the patron is politically [or bureaucratically] weak, the client may instead be offering political [bureaucratic] support rather than an economic payoff (Khan, 1998, p. 25).

In 2003, the K2 million that was meant for WMPL was paid instead to a bank account that bore the name, Wahgi Mek Holding Ltd. In the National Court, Justice Hartshorn concluded that this was intentional and wrongful, and not an accidental mis-payment (PNGi Central, 2020). The court further judged that WMPL was victimised by way of crude swindling of funds by people with intentions to defraud. In the court proceeding, WMPL sought an order from the National Court to freeze the bank account of WMHL. On 30 June 2005, WMHL was de-registered from the registry of companies. Consequently, the National Court, ordered WMHL as the former constructive trustee to transfer the balance of the K2 million to the Registrar of Companies according to the *Companies Act* 1997 to be held on constructive trust for WMPL. This was a case of constructive fraud and, therefore, the money that was “wrongfully” transferred into WMHL’s bank account must be held on constructive trust for WMPL. In May 2013, the proceeding was dismissed by the National Court because the police prosecution team failed to submit adequate evidence to prosecute the alleged perpetrators. A balance of K622,847.99 was kept in trust when the proceeding was dismissed. On 29 April 2020, the National Court ruled

that WMPL was the rightful entity to receive the grant, the Registrar of Companies was ordered to pay the remaining balance to WMPL. The court could not order the perpetrators to reimburse the money spent because there was inadequate evidence that would incriminate them. Figure 4.3 highlights the multi-dyadic pyramid structure of the WMPL scandal, and how the patron-client model is applied to this contemporary case study (WMPL). The diagram (Figure 4.3) also illustrates how this scandal (or corrupt act) was committed through the different clusters of actors having an interest in the K2 million intended for the WMPL's coffee farmers.

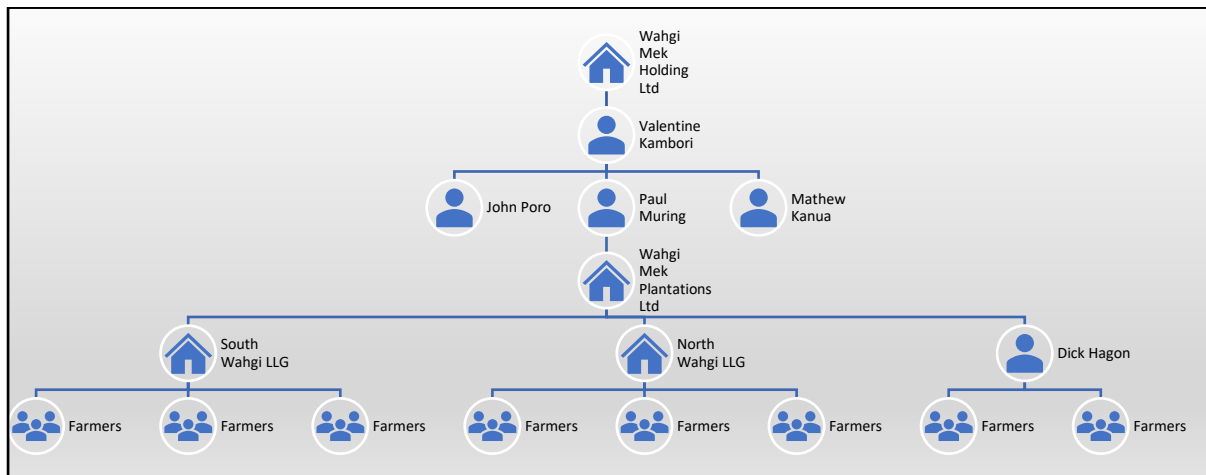


Figure 4.3: Patron-client pyramid of the Wahgi Mek Plantations Ltd. fraud case

Source: Author's own

How does this case demonstrate corruption within the patron-client structure? I answer this question by using the five generic characteristics of patron-client networks offered by Khan (1998). Khan (1998, p. 23) suggested that “the power or status of the patron [can vary in different contexts] and these differences may be important for understanding the types of exchanges taking place within different patron-client networks”. Khan (1998) further suggested that “it is this insight that makes patron-client networks interesting for the study of corruption” (Khan, 1998, p. 23). In such transactions, there are characteristics identifiable in patron-client networks that may influence the extent to which social interactions promote corruption. Khan (1998) identified five patron-client characteristics that define patron-client networks including: 1) objectives and ideologies; 2) number of clients; 3) the homogeneity of the clients; 4) the institutions through which patrons and clients [including brokers] interact; and 5) the relative political [and bureaucratic] power of patrons and clients (Khan, 1998, pp. 23-24). Briefly, each of these features are explained below:

Economists normally assume that actors in state and society will want to maximise value for themselves [if not guided by morals and ethics]. The numbers of potential clients can affect their success in organising collective action in bargaining with patrons. Homogeneity may determine the chances of successful collective action by different groups of clients. Institutions can influence both the demand for new rights (the flow of bribes to state officials) and as well as influencing the supply of rights [or bribes] (the flows of rights [or bribes] from patrons to those offering the bribes). The relative political [and bureaucratic] power of clients determines the type of payoff they can offer to the patron (Khan, 1998, pp. 23-24).

Kambori and Kanua were two senior government bureaucrats between 2002 and 2003 when the scandal occurred. Kambori was the Secretary for the DNP&RD, while Kanua was Secretary for the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL). Other actors involved in this scandal were also senior government managers during the same period. In terms of position of influence, Kambori seemed to be influential because he was a major shareholder with 40 percent ownership of MWHL, a very senior bureaucrat whose department (DNP&RD) is part of the Central Agencies Coordinating Committee (CACC), and he had financial delegation powers.

The main objective of the “first-order actors” (Scott, 1972) within the entire framework of the WMPL patron-client pyramid cluster is to maximise their personal interests and values. All five actors were senior government officers, their network cluster was small and thus homogenous (and manageable), they had been in their government roles for an extended period, they had formed strong social connections, and they knew the dynamics of government machinery well. The group’s homogeneity and social proximity made it conducive for patron-client transactions to thrive undetected. Transaction costs are determined by acceptance or rejection of the rights or bribes, and the size of the group. “The relative homogeneity of small groups demanding value-reducing rights maybe successful, while less homogenous larger groups demanding value-enhancing rights may fail” (Khan, 1998, p. 24). The creation of WMHL was a deceptive structure within the entire WMPL framework. It was the means through which these first-order actors (Kambori and his cohorts) furthered their own ends.

These actors had a common objective, and that was to enrich themselves at the expense of the state and society, and to the exclusion of the lower order clients or actors. The lower order clients or actors (the farmers) were probably unrelated to any of these bureaucrats (i.e., they exist in a different relationship than one finds with an aspiring member of parliament and his

or her constituents). As Khan (1998) noted, if the core objective of the actors was to maximise the value of the economic good for themselves, they would most likely act in smaller groups. According to Olson (1965), “if small groups with specific interests are more successful in organizing collective action, they may bribe or lobby more effectively than bigger groups” (as cited in Khan, 1998, p. 24). The number of actors involved in the top order cluster was small and, together with the group homogeneity, made collective action and bargaining between Kambori and his co-shareholders more advantageous. Each actor knew his role in their shell company and expected benefits that would be derived from this structure. In addition to this, Lomnitz (1988) suggested that “a condition of trust must exist between the partners because of the risks involved” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 53). Although Kambori appeared to be the top order actor with 40 percent of shareholding rights in the company, the power was mutually shared between all five actors based on common interests, experience, and knowledge as senior government officers. According to Lomnitz (1988), “[an] individual official has, in addition, a network of personal contacts where reciprocity is so rich and so pervasive that it constitutes a network of horizontal and vertical exchange relations that parallels the formal hierarchy” (Lomnitz, 1988, p. 47).

The lower order patron-client cluster in this case was the two LLGs, Dick Hagon and the Wahgi valley farmers. The two LLGs and Dick Hagon would also be regarded as brokers (middlemen), since they mediated between the farmers and the national government for grants. Within the wider WMPL framework, the heads of the two LLGs and Hagon would be patrons to the farmers. The K2 million, which initially was an inclusive public good, had been converted by the first-order patron-client cluster into an exclusive private good. Removing the first-order patron-client pyramid, the WMHL structure would normally resemble a patron-client cluster (Figure 4.1). For the lower order actors or clients, there was breach of trust and loyalty. Their expectation that the national government would provide effectively was not met because of fraudulent actions perpetrated by the first order actors. There was no reciprocity as the flow of the economic good was impeded through fraudulent actions of the first-order actors. This case is a typical example of the principal-agent problem, which is a form of patron-client relations. According to Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002), “[corruption] arises in government because agents [the four government officers] have occasion to put their interests ahead of duty to their principals [the three shareholders of WMPL and coffee farmers]. As office holders look after themselves, they sometimes act to the detriment of the citizens whom they are supposed to be working for” (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002, p. 16). Another useful model that also uses

clusters and pyramids to investigate and analyse corruption is the corruption investigative framework as explained below.

4.2 Corruption investigative framework (CIF)

The corruption investigative framework (CIF) is useful in analysing corruption within a clientelist political system (Lasslett, 2017). The CIF method identified by Lasslett (2017) is:

Facilitated through a set of elementary and advanced units of analysis that, as a whole, creates an investigative point for honing fieldwork and conducting data analysis. The elementary units include nodes (actors), ties (relations) and transactions. They are the most basic constituting components of corrupt scheme (Lasslett, 2017, p. 31).

“Corruption is a social network phenomenon” (Carvajal, 1999, p. 336). Corruption has also been studied as a form of social interaction (Peeters, 2019; Schoeneborn & Homberg, 2018; Warburton, 2001). “Corrupt transactions occur between actors as a result of social interactions” (Warburton, 2001, p. 222). Peeters (2019) identified a network as ‘a collection of nodes’ (or vertices). “As we are interested in corruption, the nodes represent actors or persons, and the edges represent relational ties of a certain type. Such networks are usually termed social networks” (Peeters, 2019, p. 1). The network architecture pyramid in Figure 4.4 below (Sub-section 4.2.1) resembles a simplified version of real-world social network structures, and as such, is a very useful model to understand social network phenomenon and network architecture. This model was inspired by ideas derived from the network analysis and social network analysis. In a study by Schoeneborn and Homberg (2018), they found “that the “successful” performance of corrupt transactions can be explained by the typified and scripted character of the social interaction itself” (Schoeneborn & Homberg, 2018, p. 50).

Network or social network analysis has been used across different fields, such as economic sociology, which depicts a way of studying the social mechanisms by which key market problems get resolved (Fligstein & Dioun, 2015). In geographic information systems (GIS), network analysis represents a fundamental spatial domain on which many phenomena (road networks, river networks, utility networks etc.) can be located and over which many activities move (Curtin, 2018). Social and behavioural sciences regard network analysis as a set of techniques with a shared methodological perspective, which allow researchers to depict relations among actors and to analyse the social structures that emerge from the recurrence of these

relations (Chiesi, 2001, 2015). Statisticians use statistical network analysis to focus on formal regularities in local relational structure, inter-relational dependencies found in analyses of social networks, understanding relationships that exhibit tendencies toward reciprocity or mutuality, and tendency for direct ties to accompany indirect ones (Marsden, 2005). In cognitive research method, network analysis is concerned with who communicates with whom within a group and with the analytic insights that come from considering the overall pattern of linkages within that group (Kronenfeld, 2005). Computer and network science sees network theory as an essential component of graph theory. A network consists of a graph [having either symmetric or asymmetric relations], and a graph has nodes and/or edges (Majeed & Rauf, 2020). Lastly, in sociology, which “depicts agents – individuals or collective – as embedded in webs of connections, [and the effort] to describe and explain the patterns exhibited in these connections” (Scott, 1988, p. 112). The main commonality in each of these network models is the relational links connecting each of these relationships or actor networks. In sociology, politics, and anthropology, social exchanges, and interactions (particularly unethical exchanges and interactions) involving people, and their association with formal institutions help explain the occurrence of corruption. But most importantly, “for a social system to exist, it must have active components that are instigating momentum [for corrupt transactions to occur]” (Lasslett, 2017, p. 31). Investigations of corruption can use network analysis to identify how corrupt relations fit into larger networks (Warburton, 2001).

The preceding assumptions that corruption functions as a social system supports Lasslett’s (2017) methodology of studying and investigating corruption as a social phenomenon through the corruption investigative framework. According to Lasslett (2017), CIF is a methodology designed to generate a systematic, transferable approach in studying grand corruption. It involves a more unified approach in the way data collection and data analysis are conducted (Lasslett, 2017). The method and techniques used by Lasslett to extract data pertaining to corrupt schemes and scandals are important in societies where there is a burgeoning application of patronage practices to governance and development. Entrenched within the formal structures of governance in these societies are neo-patrimonial practices, where elites (politicians, bureaucrats, and businesses) in high places use their power, authority, and wealth, which can reach from the state level down to the village level.

The advanced units of analysis capture the broader structures and processes of grand corruption, of which the elementary units form a part, under the CIF method (Lasslett, 2017). Under the structures and processes found in the advanced units are the network architecture,

transaction sequences, nodes (actor biographies), and commercial/political repertoires (Lasslett, 2017). Although data captured under transaction sequences, node biographies, and commercial/political repertoires are important, the present research will use the network architecture method because it better describes how patron-client relations work in societies that are characterised by neo-patrimonialism and clientelist practices, particularly within the construction and extractive industries where bribery and rent seeking are common.

4.2.1 Network architecture

Network architecture “focuses on the social network as an evolving totality, looking at the structured inter-relatedness between its constituting elements, and the concrete meanings these elements obtain as a result of the system to which they belong” (Lasslett, 2017, p. 32). Lasslett (2017, p. 32) further added that “the network architecture is a frame that instigates a strategic focus on the dynamics that emerge from forms of inter-relatedness that can only be concretely uncovered by looking at the broader whole”. Network architecture is clearly visible in patron-client systems that are underpinned by neo-patrimonial and clientelist practices as Lasslett (2017) illustrated below:

Politician A may act as a bridge between investors B, C and D, and the President [or the Prime Minister] of a nation. By acting as a conduit between the investors and a paramount decision maker, Politician A is able to fix public tenders using the President’s (Prime Minister’s) office; while, the President (Prime Minister) enjoys insulation from the immediate zone of illicit activity, minimising the risk of exposure. From the President’s (Prime Minister’s) vantage point, Politician A is a buffer; from the vantage point of the investors, he is a fixer; for both sides; Politician A is an asset (Lasslett, 2017, p. 32).

Networks are composed primarily of two key elements: nodes and edges. In Figure 4.4, a network node consists of a router or parent node (patron), which is connected to individual nodes or vertices (clients) by edges or links (relationships). One network node is an autonomous system connected by current or perceived relationships to the overall administrative/political system. Each of the network nodes has multiple connections to every other autonomous network node within the system based on planned, or proposed schemes in order to capture their interests within the administrative/political system.

The category of each node is determined by the type of relations they have with each other on the network graph or pathway. These relationships could be symmetrical or asymmetrical.

Unstratified social relationships (those that are not defined by the patron-client logic) are symmetrical because the nature of services is common, and the status of actors is equal. However, most social relations or exchanges are stratified or hierarchical, hence are asymmetrical because the nature of services exchanged is disproportionate, and socioeconomic status of the actors is unequal. In stratified social exchanges, nodes are essentially people and the connections they have with each other could be familial, friendly, business-related, employment-related, collegial, and financial (Home Office, United Kingdom, 2016). Lasslett (2017) also suggested that ties that connect the nodes “might include ownership, partnership, kinship, contractor-client, employment or rivalry” (Lasslett, 2017, p. 31). Figure 4.4 is attempting to create a social network analysis within the administrative/political system in PNG.

Papua New Guinea’s administrative/political environment, just like other polities (both democratic and non-democratic), is like a network of networks connected by various categories of actors. This environment is occupied by actors whose roles, responsibilities, needs, and interests could either be mutually inclusive and symmetrical, or mutually exclusive and asymmetrical. The position or status of each actor in the system depends on whether they are high or low order actors, resources they possess, and the political and economic power each of the actors possesses.

There are five autonomous nodes (clientele systems) that coexist within the administrative/political system in a pyramidal arrangement (Figure 4.4), with politicians as top order actors (patrons), bureaucrats and business/corporations as second order actors (brokers), and family, friends, and other individuals forming the clientele base (lower order actors). However, social relations in this pyramidal structure are not always infinite or permanent. The maintenance of social network relations in each of the autonomous groups may cease based on two main factors: 1) when the group’s needs or objectives are achieved; and 2) when the paramount actor within the group can no longer keep the bargain or meet their obligations to the group. Subsequently, new network nodes and networking links or edges will be formed based on perceived or future interests. Within this structure, social network relations, and political, social, and economic activities are in a state of flux. It therefore becomes clear that sometimes, some policy inputs that pass through the feedback loop are usually questionable regardless of how genuine and beneficial the outputs appear to be. This leads to ‘bureaucratic hybridisation’ as alluded to earlier.

Borrowing from the example advanced by Lasslett (2017), a network architecture exists within this pyramidal structure as such: within the administrative system, the Prime Minister, for example, acts as the router or parent node (patron); and within the Prime Minister's network node are several other Members of Parliament (MPs) whose relationships are defined by similar edges or links. These individual edges or links are bridges that connect the individual MPs directly to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is a patron because he possesses several leveraging tools: 1) he is the head of the executive government and, therefore, has prerogative powers; 2) using his prerogative powers, he decides ministerial and bureaucratic appointments; and 3) he uses his discretion to distribute constituency funds.

The outer nodes or vertices (MPs) also serve as an insulation for the Prime Minister in relation to any illicit activity. This politician network node is considered as one autonomous network node or unit within the structure. The other network nodes – i.e., the bureaucratic network node, the business/corporate network node, the family (*wantok*, friend) network node, and the private or individual - are self-regulating autonomous units within the structure, which operates on the same logic. However, power and influence of each network node becomes weaker the further a network node descends from the pyramid's apex.

Although, in theory, each network node is autonomous, in reality there are extended networking links or edges (both current and perceived) that crisscross the entire administrative/political structure. In a typical patron-client system, administrative practices are characterised by neo-patrimonial and clientelist practices that run diametrically parallel, or diametrically opposite each other. For instance, an MP within the politician network node may act as a conduit or bridge between an investor in the business/corporate network node and the Prime Minister or a state minister. As an example, Lasslett (2017, p. 32) noted that, "by acting as a conduit between the investors and a paramount decision maker, the politician is able to fix public tenders using the Prime Minister's office".

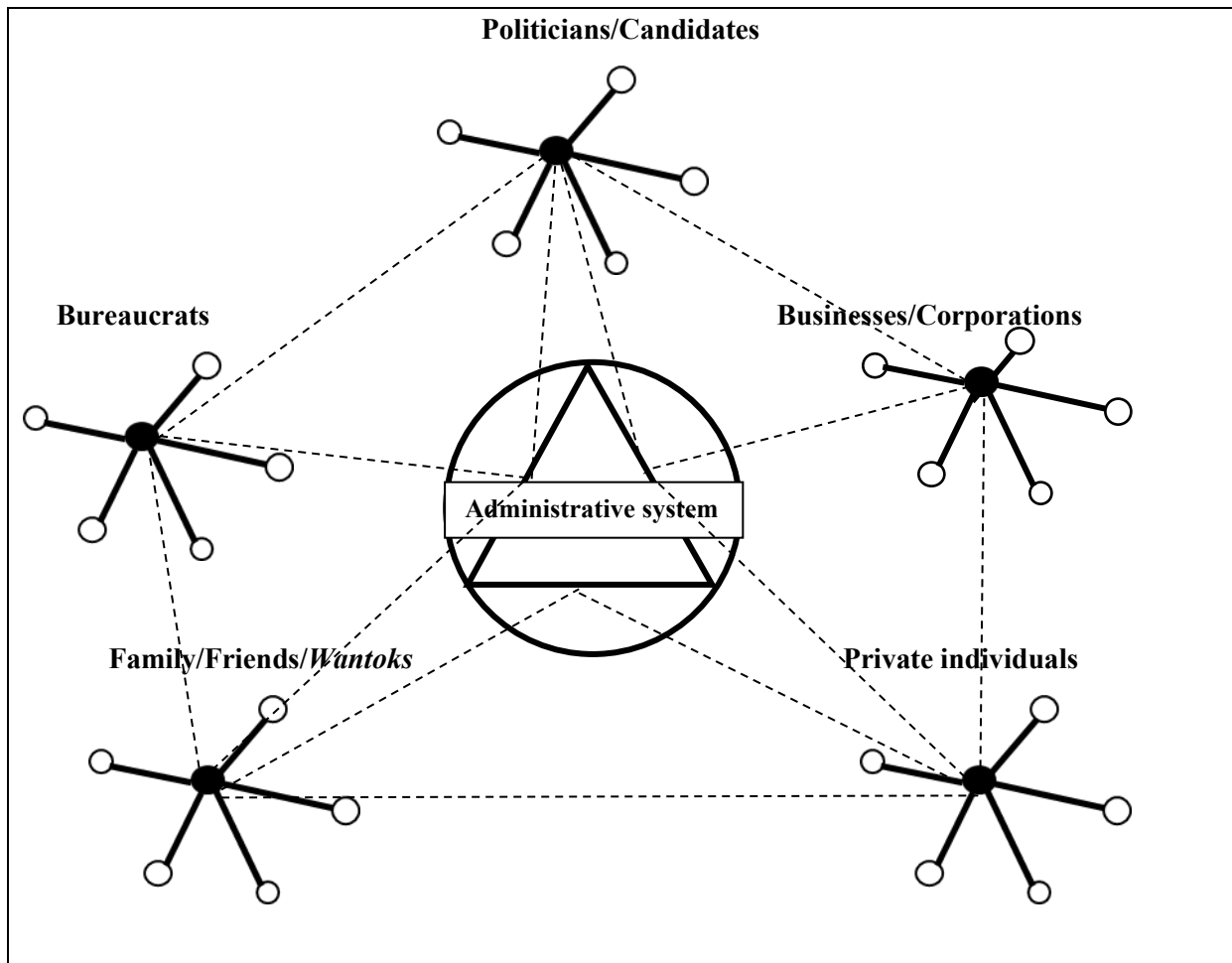


Figure 4.4: The network architecture pyramid.

Source: Author's own

Legends:



A network node  ;  Administrative/political environment;
 ● Router or parent node (patron); ○ Nodes or vertices (clients); — Edges or links (relationships); ----- Networking links or edges (current and perceived relationships) connecting (or manipulating) the administrative/political environment

Figure 4.5: Legends

4.2.2 Case study 2: The network architecture of the Manumanu land scandal

The Manumanu land scandal was selected as a case study to demonstrate network architecture for two reasons: 1) it provides a clear operational example of the network architecture approach and, therefore, can be simplified to context; and 2) the complicity evidenced by the Manumanu network architecture highlights the importance of studying patron-client politics and corruption in cross-cultural settings such as PNG.

On 7 March 2017, Prime Minister (PM) Peter O'Neill, as Chairman of the National Executive Council (NEC), appointed an Administrative Inquiry (hereafter the inquiry) to investigate allegations of complicity relating to the acquisition of land for the relocation of Papua New Guinea Defence Force's (PNGDF) military and naval bases. The relocation exercise was based on the government's decision in 2012 to acquire land for the PNGDF and other government agencies. The PNGDF's military bases earmarked for relocation included the Murray Barracks, the Taurama Barracks, and the Lancron Naval Base in Port Moresby (GoPNG, 2017).

The inquiry was necessitated by a public protest because an excessive amount of public money was involved in an allegedly fraudulent land contract, which was also pursued by the opposition on the floor of parliament. The Opposition Leader, Hon Patrick Pruaitch described the "deal, purchase, payment and involvement of State institutions and various Ministers as fraudulent" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 12). Hon Kerenga Kua, a member of the Opposition suggested that "there were multiple issues, multiple layers of fraud, [and] multiple layers of non-compliance of all the requisite procedures that one followed" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 13). The inquiry noted that excessive amounts of public money were committed in the acquisition process, which was deemed to be highly irregular (GoPNG, 2017). The nature of this scandal involved five land transaction deals, all of which were part of Manumanu in the Kairuku-Hiri District of Central Province. The five parcels of land which became the subjects of the inquiry included portions 154, 422, 423, 406, and 698.

Parcels of land to be identified for the relocation program needed to meet certain minimum requirements set by the Department of Defence (DoD). In a Defence Council Order 28 of 2014, dated 4 June 2014, the Defence Council submitted the following minimum requirements:

1. The land must be within 50km of Port Moresby city,
2. The total land area must be not less than 150 hectares and not more than 300 hectares either in parts or as a whole. The minimum for a parcel of land is 100 hectares and preferably within close proximity to each other,
3. The land must be accessible by road,
4. The land must be near water source for water supply,
5. The land must have terrain and jungle for warfare training and shooting range; [and]
6. The land must not be under disputes and preferably have a defined ownership by way of registration and Title (GoPNG, 2017, p. 12).

In 2015, only three of the five portions of land were acquired by the DoD through the compulsory acquisition process in ‘consultation’ with the State Solicitor and the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP). Based on evidence tendered before the inquiry, the three portions of land that were acquired for defence purposes were “Portion 422 for K7.4 million, Portion 423 for K9.2 million, and Portion 406 for K46.6 million” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 9). The inquiry found that the method used by the Valuer General to conduct valuation was applied to all three portions, where the rate per hectare for each of these portions was overly inflated. By land size, Portion 422 had 138.45 hectares, Portion 423 had 170.5 hectares, and Portion 406 had 847.25 hectares. The inquiry noted that “the amount paid by the State was plainly excessive, [and concluded] that the most plausible explanation was financial inducement [including fear of retribution], causing manipulation of valuation process” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 16).

4.2.3 Portion 406, the network actors, and the conspiracy to defraud

The parcel of land that is of particular interest to the present research was Portion 406. In order to understand the network architecture of Portion 406, key actors need to be identified, the nature of their relationships established, and whether their network node(s) exacerbated or facilitated corrupt transactions (Figure 4.5). Throughout the land mobilisation, relocation and acquisition processes, certain actors within the ministries of Defence, and Public Enterprises and State Investments, and the departments of Defence, State Enterprises and Public Investments, and DLPP played significant roles. But as the media (Kenneth, 2017) and the inquiry report would reveal later, they were not the only ones involved in the alleged conspiracy to defraud the state. There were other state agencies and actors that were embroiled in the scandal including:

The Ministries and Departments of Defence and State Enterprises and State Investments colluded with the proprietors of the said portions of land and paid millions of Kina in both compensation and purchase price, and that the proprietors were either associates, relatives and/or friends of persons holding responsible positions within the Ministries of Defence, State Enterprises, Lands and Physical Planning, Kumul Consolidated Holdings Limited, Motor Vehicle Insurance Limited, State Solicitor and the Valuer General (GoPNG, 2017, p. 5).

Portion 406 occupied 847.25 hectares of the Manumanu land, whose total land area was more than what was required by the Defence Council. On 6 August 2009, Michael Sariman, who

owned M&M Investments Pty Ltd commenced his leasehold over Portion 406 from the State, after paying an application fee of K650. In a valuation report of February 2009, Portion 406 was classified as rural and not feasible for any physical planning or development, but was suitable for agricultural development (GoPNG, 2017). The report further stated that Portion 406 was “generally level [flat] throughout” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 90), was unimproved or undeveloped, and unoccupied. Its market value as of 25 February 2009 was K30,000, or K35 per hectare. In July 2015, another valuation report placed the market value of Portion 406, which was still unimproved, at K84,420, or K99 per hectare. On 30 July 2015, a state lease over Portion 406 was acquired by Kurkuramb Estates Limited (KEL) (a company allegedly owned by Hon William Duma, Minister for Public Enterprises and State Investments, but company records showed one Mr Christopher Polos as the sole director and shareholder), for an application fee of K650 (PNGi Central, 2018). After Portion 406 was acquired by KEL, another valuation report was conducted on 3 November 2015, which placed the final value of Portion 406 at K46.6 million, or K55,000 per hectare.

Between February 2009 and November 2015, the market value of Portion 406, being an unimproved land, went up by about K55,000 per hectare. A K650 investment by the KEL made on 30 July 2015 was inflated 71,692 times to K46.6 million within four months (PNGi Central, 2018). The circumstances surrounding the acquisition of Portion 406 by KEL on 30 July 2015 were controversial and littered with impropriety. The inquiry report noted that between August 2009 when M&M Investments Pty Ltd held the State Lease over Portion 406 and 4 June 2014 when the Defence Council Order 28 of 2014 was made, Portion 406 was never considered as suitable for any relocation exercise. As stated above, Portion 406 was specifically earmarked for agricultural/commercial purposes. Only Portions 422 and 423 were identified by the DoD as suitable for the relocation exercise for defence purposes. According to the inquiry report:

The basis for the selection of Portion 406 is not clear. Its acquisition does not appear to have been endorsed by the Defence Council, and there is no information to suggest that its acquisition was ever supported by a feasibility study. Further, at Manumanu the Defence already had 2,331 hectares available, namely 2,023 hectares on Portion 154, 138 hectares on Portion 422, and 170 hectares on Portion 423. Further, Portion 406 was well away from the sea [not fit for purpose] (GoPNG, 2017, p.35).

The events that culminated in the awarding of State Lease over Portion 406 to KEL originated in early 2014. On 28 February 2014, the DLPP Secretary issued a Notice to Show Cause as to

why the State Lease held by M&M Investments Pty Ltd since August 2009 should not be forfeited. The notice was issued without prior consultation with the owner of M&M Investments Pty Ltd, neither was a comprehensive review conducted of M&M Investments Pty Ltd's business proposal and plans to develop Portion 406 for agricultural purposes. "The issue in that regard is whether the forfeiture action was genuine forfeiture action on the basis that M&M Investments Pty Ltd had not carried out the improvement conditions or whether, on the other hand, officers of the [DLPP] effected the forfeiture for ulterior motive or motives" (GoPNG, 2017, p.31). Whether M&M Investments Pty Ltd complied or not, the inquiry noted that the forfeiture was not genuine based on five possible explanations, including: 1) there was no evidence to suggest that the DLPP had conducted a comprehensive valuation of Portion 406 to determine the progress of improvement; 2) there were many such cases where landowners did not comply, but their lands were not forfeited; 3) officers of the DLPP had already known the prospect that Portion 406 might be of interest to the investors (including DoD) and, therefore, colluded to expedite the forfeiture; 4) files relating to the forfeiture action were removed; and 5) files relating to the advertisement of Portion 406 and the granting of the State Lease to KEL were missing or removed (GoPNG, 2017). "An illicit motive behind the forfeiture is more consistent with the removal of the file relating to the forfeiture action. If the forfeiture had been genuine forfeiture based on non-compliance with covenants, there would appear to be no reason why there would be any interest in causing the removal of the file relating to that transaction" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 31). The inquiry further noted that the forfeiture notice served on M&M Investments Pty Ltd did not comply with the requirements of s.122 of the *Land Act* 1996 (GoPNG, 2017).

On 14 April 2014, the owner of M&M Investments Pty Ltd became aware that State Lease over Portion 406 was about to be forfeited. The forfeiture process was expedited without proper consultation with M&M Investments Pty Ltd to show cause and, on 24 April 2014, the forfeiture notice was published in the National Gazette G151. In a letter from the Defence Minister to the Acting Secretary for the DLPP dated 15 October 2015, the former advised the latter that the "[Defence] Ministry and the PNGDF have identified Portions 406 and 154 as suitable for the construction of a new military barracks and associated facilities" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 34). The Defence Minister further advised the Acting DLPP Secretary that since portions 406 and 154 were currently agricultural leases held by private interests, he wanted the DLPP to acquire these portions for the state (PNGDF) for military purposes under the compulsory acquisition process provided in the *Land Act* 1996 (GoPNG, 2017). Except for Portion 406, which was

under private leasehold, the reference to Portion 154 was incorrect as this portion had been state property since 1907. Dr Fabian Pok was the Defence Minister and a member of the Defence Council and must have known that Portion 406 had not been approved by the Defence Council to be part of the relocation program (PNGi Central, 2018). Therefore, he “gave Ministerial impetus on the compulsory acquisition of Portion 406 in circumstances in which there was no Defence Council approval of that purchase and no feasibility study” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 65). Dr Pok’s knowledge about the status of Portion 406 and its commercial value could have motivated him to collude with other actors. The inquiry also noted that “if he was acting in the interests of others, including Kurkuramb Estates and himself, his actions of course would be corrupt” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 66).

The Defence Minister’s letter of 15 October 2015 was the first time Portion 406 was officially mentioned as a ‘site’. It became an area of ‘great interest’ to be considered for the PNGDF relocation program through compulsory acquisition. Ironically, on 27 February 2015, the Defence Council only approved portions 422 and 423 as the new relocation sites for the PNGDF, and not Portion 406. The inquiry found that:

Those portions (422 and 423) are adjacent to Manumanu. Of course, it may well be that Defence had shown interest in the Manumanu area prior to 27 February 2015 and, as 27 February 2015 was the date of approval of Portions 422 and 423 for that purpose, it would be surprising if that had not been the case. A review of facts given to the Prime Minister in this matter stated that it was in 2014 that the Defence Ministry and Organisation (PNGDF) had identified the two portions of land that became Portion 422 and Portion 423 (GoPNG, 2017, p. 35).

As stated earlier, reference to Portion 406 for compulsory acquisition was not clear because there was no endorsement from the Defence Council. Furthermore, there was no evidence that a feasibility study was conducted to support the compulsory acquisition of Portion 406 (GoPNG, 2017).

On 21 October 2015, Mr Luther Sipison, DLPP’s Acting Secretary issued a Notice to Treat for compulsory acquisition of Portion 406 to KEL following the advice from the Defence Minister dated 15 October 2015. As alluded to earlier, Portion 406 was already leased to KEL on 30 July 2015. The Notice to Treat was for the state (DoD) and KEL to reach an agreement through compulsory acquisition of Portion 406 for the defence relocation program. “On 3 December

2015, a Notice of Compulsory Acquisition in respect of Portion 406 was published in the National Gazette No. G793 by the [DLPP] Secretary as a delegate of the Minister for Lands” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 38). The same notice was also published in the media on 7 December 2015. The gazettal and publication of notice of compulsory acquisition meant that KEL’s interest in Portion 406 would be converted to a right of compensation under the *Land Act* 1996 for assessment and compensation (GoPNG, 2017).

On 11 December 2015, the State and KEL finalized the acquisition agreement under the ‘Sale and Transfer of Land’. By that agreement, KEL agreed to sell and transfer Portion 406 to the State for K46.6 million. The agreement was signed by the Acting Secretary for the DLPP, as the delegate of the Lands Minister for and on behalf of the State, and Mr Christopher Polos (the sole director and shareholder of KEL according to company records) on behalf of KEL (GoPNG, 2017). A parcel of land (Portion 406) containing 847.25 hectares, which on 30 July 2015 (private lease with KEL) was valued at K84,420 (K99 per hectare), would be leased back to the state for an inflated amount of K46.6 million (K55,000 per hectare). As previously mentioned, the third valuation conducted on 3 November 2015, which placed the final value of Portion 406 at K46.6 million, contained elements of complicity and fraud.

On 26 February 2016, the DoD and the PNGDF wrote a letter to the Managing Director of Kumul Consolidated Holdings (KCH), a statutory organisation responsible for managing the state’s interests in the mining and petroleum sectors. The letter notified KCH of the compulsory acquisition of Portion 406 by KEL, and for KCH, on behalf of the state, to compensate KEL an amount of K46.6 million in exchange for the land title to the Lancron Naval Base (Portion 154). Kumul Consolidated Holdings wanted to acquire Portion 154 and convert it into a high-end hotel and tourism site due to its strategic (harbourside) location. However, several things were problematic from the start with the acquisition arrangement. As stated earlier, portion 154 has always been state land since 1907, and Portion 406 had been in private hands since 30 July 2015. The PNGDF’s Lancron Naval Base at Fairfax Harbour was reserved for defence purposes until 5 October 2016, when the DLPP Secretary revoked the reservation by effecting the Revocation of Certificate Authorising Occupancy. Consequently, the land ceased to be reserved for the purpose of public defence. The notice was gazetted on 7 October 2016 (GoPNG, 2017). The action taken by the DLPP Secretary in issuing the Revocation of Certificate Authorising Occupancy was not in the best interest of the state because he was acting outside of due process, hence his actions were *ultra vires*. Whether he was driven by personal motives,

or whether there was coercion from political heads, were issues the inquiry could not fully establish. This is something the corruption investigation framework (CIF) could not determine because the essential elements of the network architecture (i.e., the network node, parent nodes (patrons), nodes (clients), and networking edges or links) were not clearly defined.

Following the revocation and transfer of title over Portion 406, an Independent Committee was appointed by the KCH Board on 20 January 2017 to investigate Mr Garry Hersey, KCH's Managing Director. The Independent Committee noted that:

- (a) The PNGDF did not own the Lancron Naval Base and had no right to sell it. The land was owned by the State and was reserved for the purpose of public defence. The PNGDF only had rights of occupation,
- (b) The restrictions applicable to the Lancron Naval Base would equally have applied to Portion 406, and
- (c) The Secretary for Defence had no power to bind the State unless expressly so authorised. Without such express authorisation, any purported power of sale exercised by the Secretary of Defence as regards the Lancron Naval Base would be *ultra vires* or outside the scope of the Secretary's powers (GoPNG, 2017, p. 40).

"On 14 October 2016 KCH entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with KEL under which it agreed to pay K46.6 million to KEL. But the agreement was never tabled before the KCH Board for approval" (GoPNG, 2017, p.46). The KCH's principal lawyer noted that the MOA was never brought to the KCH's legal team for due diligence and vetting. The KCH's principal lawyer, Mrs Kari Taviri was advised by KCH's Managing Director, Mr Garry Hersey to remove an anti-corruption clause in the MOA, effectively creating a legal loophole (GoPNG, 2017). Despite the fact the Managing Director of KCH knew the relocation plan, he went ahead and compensated KEL. The Independent Committee concluded that the Managing Director embarked on an unauthorised and intentional course of conduct to compensate KEL with K46.6 million (GoPNG, 2017). The Independent Committee determined that the Managing Director of KCH should have sought clearance from the State Solicitor on the entire relocation plan prior, and not after KEL was compensated with K46.6 million. The actions of the Managing Director of KCH lacked due diligence [and therefore were corrupt] (GoPNG, 2017). The inquiry found that KCH's Managing Director's "conduct throughout the Portion 406 transaction demonstrated a complete breakdown of proper legal, internal management, and accounting processes within KCH" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 59). Evidence tendered before the inquiry revealed

that the KCH Managing Director issued a direction to relevant staff members to delete all electronic files relating to Lancron Naval Base and Portion 406, and all physical documents to be handed to him. This was a deliberate attempt by the Managing Director to destroy and conceal evidence (GoPNG, 2017). There were “serious unlawful breaches of his statutory, contractual and/or common law duties as a director, he acted willfully and intentionally, and in concert with certain members of the KCH management, to deliberately mislead the Board, and the payment of K46.6 million to KEL was both grossly irresponsible and improper” (GoPNG, 2017, 61).

It was noted by the inquiry that the Managing Director of KCH “was under pressure from the Minister, and [the Minister] wants the payment done at the earliest” (GoPNG, 2017, p. 48). It appeared that the Minister was Hon William Duma, who was Minister for Public Enterprises and State Investments during the time the deal was entered into between KCH and KEL. He was in a position of influence over the Managing Director of KCH, and the latter was asked to facilitate the compensation of KEL under duress for fear of retribution. This allegation was later denied by Hon Duma.

4.2.4 Kurkuramb Estates Limited (KEL): Status and owner(s)

Kurkuramb Estates Limited was established on 2 May 2014 (Appendix 4.1). Registered company extracts for KEL from the PNG Investment Promotion Authority (IPA) showed that Mr Christopher Polos was the sole director and shareholder of KEL, appointed on 2 May 2014 (Appendix 4.1). Company records from IPA showed that KEL’s registered office address was Section 30, Allotment 6, Port Moresby, National Capital District. Its postal address was PO Box 556, Port Moresby, National Capital District. Further company record searches revealed that KEL’s registered office and postal addresses were the same addresses used by Hon William Duma, the Minister for Public Enterprises and State Investments. Hon Duma also had a private company called Kopana Investments Limited (KIL) established on 8 November 1999. He was the only company director and shareholder of KIL at that time (Appendix 4.2). Kopana Investments Limited appeared to have the same registered office and postal addresses as KEL. During the inquiry, Hon Duma agreed that the registered office address for KEL was previously shown as Section 30, Allotment 6, Port Moresby, National Capital District. However, on 29 September 2017, Hon Duma asserted that: 1) it was a mistake that his home address was used as a company’s address; 2) he had nothing to do with KEL; 3) he had nothing to do with filing of company documents purported to be from KEL with IPA; and 4) he did not provide his

postal address to be used by KEL (GoPNG, 2017).

Mr Polos was the sole director and shareholder of KEL and a close relative of Hon Duma (see Figure 4.6, below). He lived with the Duma family and acted as Hon Duma's personal aide and a handyman at Hon Duma's home. On 5 August 2017, Hon Duma testified before the inquiry that Mr Polos was the biological brother of his wife, or his brother-in-law, as the inquiry was informed. However, he retracted this on 29 September 2017, arguing instead that Mr Polos was not his brother-in-law as there was no biological affiliation between Mr Polos and Hon Duma's wife. He argued that Mr Polos was adopted by his wife's family and not his wife's biological brother. He claimed his wife's younger biological brother was a different person. Although Hon Duma denied having any knowledge of Mr Polos, he did not dispute that Mr Polos was the sole director and shareholder of KEL (GoPNG, 2017). Hon Duma was queried further by the inquiry regarding other allegations and actions that were deemed complicit, and he denied all these allegations of complicity.

The company registration for KEL was intentionally changed before the Manumanu scandal emerged in February 2017. According to company extracts from the IPA, several filings were made on 13 January 2017 purposely to change registered office addresses (Appendix 4.3). The particulars of notice of change of registered office included changing the registered office and postal addresses of KEL to HLB Niugini Accountants, Level 1, ADF Haus, Port Moresby (Appendix 4.4). This address was also registered to Hon Duma's private company, Kopana Investments Limited. Mr Polos' registered office address was changed to Section 392, Lot 7, Hohola, National Capital District. The only plausible explanation for the change of office and residential addresses of KEL was for Hon Duma to remove any trails or traces that would link him to KEL, and to minimise the risk of exposure. However, despite the change, there was sufficient evidence to suggest that Hon Duma owned both Kopana Investments Limited and Kurkuramb Estates Limited. Figure 4.6 provides the network node of the KEL, its relationships with KIL, and how transactions relating to Portion 406 were connected. As alluded to above, before the change of registered office addresses occurred, KEL's addresses were the same as those of KIL. It appeared that KEL was set up as a shell company for a particular purpose. Mr Polos was used as a proxy to facilitate the financial transactions involved in transferring KEL's private lease over Portion 406 to the state (DoD). Therefore, Hon Duma used a proxy (Mr Polos) as KEL's director to avoid conflict of interest and risk of exposure.

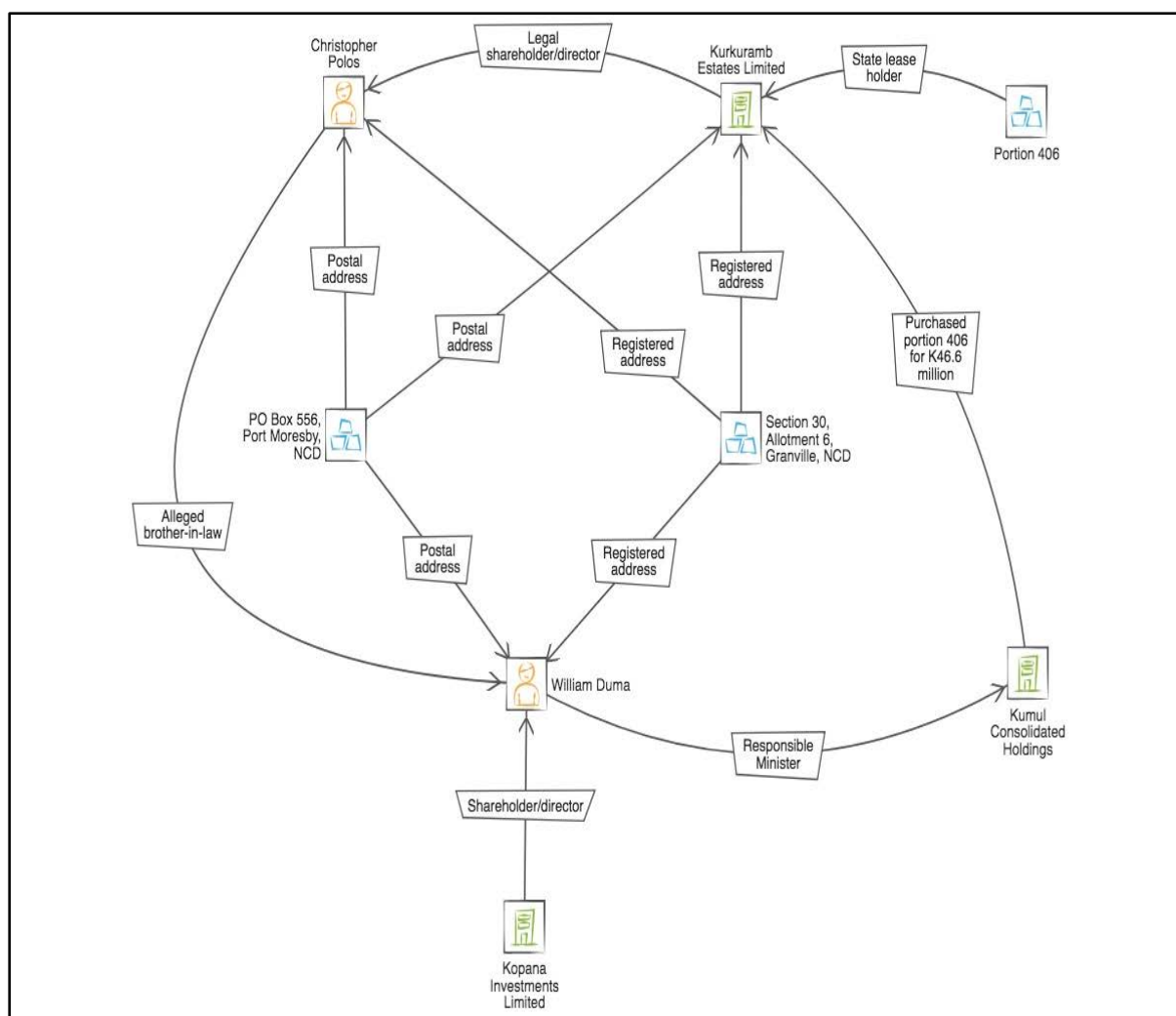


Figure 4.6: The network node of the Kurkuramb Estates Limited and land Portion 406

Source: Retrieved from <https://pngicentral.org/reports/william-duma-and-the-manu-manu-land-scandal-the-full-story>

The corrupt nature of the acquisition of Portion 406 was connected to one man, namely William Duma. Hon Duma was the beneficial owner of KEL (PNGi Central, 2018). Kurkuramb Estates Limited could have been created as a vehicle through which Portion 406 would be used for private interests. Hon Duma used his network architecture within the administrative and political systems to fraudulently claim a compensation of K46.6 million from the state. The acquisition of Portion 406 and the compensation that followed were fraudulent because of three main issues: 1) the valuation of Portion 406 was fraudulent; 2) files and records relating to the valuation and acquisition of Portion 406 were missing or lost; and 3) compensation records for the payment of K46.6 million were destroyed by KCH. Hon Duma attempted to conceal his

interest in the Manumanu land deal, particularly with Portion 406 by using a proxy shareholder, his alleged brother-in-law Christopher Polos (PNGi Central, 2018). Hon Duma's actions amounted to abuse of office, power, trust, and authority as the custodian of public money and office. His actions also prevented the state from recouping the full compensation amount paid to KEL. The state, through this scandalous deal, lost essential national income valued at K46.6 million.

The administrative inquiry concluded that its limited powers prevented it from identifying those who may have benefited from the deal involving Portion 406 because it was unable to subpoena witnesses and files owing to its limited powers (GoPNG, 2017). Moreover, the inquiry was unable to conduct a proper investigation into the affairs of KEL (GoPNG, 2017). Normally, in fraud cases involving millions of 'Kina' (or dollars) of taxpayers' money, a Commission of Inquiry (COI) would be required. That was the case initially, but Prime Minister Peter O'Neill downgraded it to an administrative inquiry instead because the NEC "considered it prudent and cost-effective" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 4). The inquiry cost the PNG government and its people K2 million, and not one of the allegedly corrupt actors was successfully prosecuted. The rationale for downgrade from a COI to an administrative inquiry was unreasonable for two possible reasons: 1) the prime minister wanted to avoid a fracture in his cabinet; and 2) the prime minister might have had vested interests in the Manumanu case. The administrative inquiry did not in the end serve any useful purpose to advance national interests, nor did it promote good governance. The inquiry panel operated on the assumption that:

A large number of personnel across a number of [government] departments, including Heads of some [government] departments, and in two cases Ministers, conspired together (and presumably with several others) to manipulate the compulsory acquisition of Portion 406 at an inflated price and to divert the proceeds of the acquisition of the property into their hands (GoPNG, 2017, p. 78).

The inquiry panel believed that "full investigations of this matter should be completed by the Police and the Ombudsman Commission, as appropriate" (GoPNG, 2017, p. 79). Unfortunately, investigations by the National Fraud and Anti-Corruption Directorate (NFACD) of the police concluded that all those involved, including two state ministers were cleared of all allegations. On 29 August 2018, Mr Gari Baki, the former Police Commissioner (and an appointee of the O'Neill Government) ended police investigations into the Manumanu land scandal, noting that the police fraud squad ruled out any conspiracy between ministers and employees of

the State involved in the process (*The National*, 2020). It seemed that these people broke laws with complete impunity. However, on September 2020 a senior DLPP officer was arrested after a separate investigation by the NFACD, who opened the Ombudsman Commission file relating to the officer's involvement in inflating the value of Portions 406, 422, 423, and 154 of the Manumanu land (*The National*, 2020).

The Manumanu land scandal is an example of a 'land and cash grab' strategy (described in further detail in Chapter Six) that was cleverly concocted in converting a scarce good or commodity (large amounts of national income) into the hands of private interests. Land was used as a conduit for stealing money from the state by manipulating the price, or inflating valuation of land through fraudulent means. McDonnell (2017) identified this act to be popular among elites in Melanesia, explaining that "political elites across Melanesia are instrumentally involved in land transformations" (McDonnell, 2017, p. 284).

CHAPTER 5: A narrative of corruption and patronage in Papua New Guinea

“There’s no such thing as a free lunch, unless you have a coupon for a free lunch...or someone gives you a lunch...never mind” (John Adams, 2nd President, US, 1797 – 1801).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses narratives of corruption and patronage derived from a survey and several focus group discussions with selected PNG people (refer to Chapter 3, Research Methodology). The core argument of this chapter is that stories, views and lived experiences (real-world evidence) from Papua New Guineans are useful in understanding the context (cross-cultural boundary) in which corruption occurs. This argument explores further two distinct, but related concepts commonly associated with corruption within PNG’s administrative and political systems. These are 1) gifting (which can resemble traditional forms of reciprocity), and 2) bribery (which is typically not part of traditional culture). Overarching questions of whether traditional and non-traditional sources of reciprocity such as gifting camouflaged as bribes within the modern public sector produce moral or corrupt outcomes; and whether these social exchanges are the precursor of clientelism, are analysed. These questions are investigated using stories, narratives, and experiences from the PNG research participants. Storytelling and narrative analysis, however, have slightly different meanings. Both share a common aim – “to explore the different ways in which both the production and analysis of qualitative data can be understood as processes whereby different groups of people engage in ‘story telling’ and in doing so produce narrative accounts of their lives [lived experiences]” (Earthy & Cronin, 2008, p. 3). “Story telling is a natural part of social life – we all tell stories in different situations [or settings] and different ways” (Earthy & Cronin, 2008, p. 2). Stories are an essential part of the human experience (ANZOG, 2022). Researchers use narrative analysis to understand how research participants construct story and narrative from their own personal experience (Delve & Limpaecher, 2020). “Narrative analysis in the human sciences refers to a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have in common a storied form” (Riessman, 2005, p. 1).

This chapter comprises seven subsections including this introduction, outlining the chapter’s rationale or central argument, and how it relates to the thesis questions. Subsection two discusses corruption narratives using respondents’ stories, and offers a distinction between bribery and gifting with Melanesian interpretations. Subsections three, four and five explore three common cultures associated with everyday informal reciprocity practices including *buai*, lunch money and *kola* culture, the *nere tere* culture, and the *save pes* or the *wantok* culture.

Subsection six discusses some sections of law that deals with corruption, bribery and leadership in PNG, and subsection seven provides concluding remarks.

5.2 Constructing a narrative of corruption and patronage: Citizens' stories

There is general consensus that corruption exists, but there is no agreement upon what its meanings are. Much has been written about it, yet much is still unknown about the elusive nature of corruption. Its definitions, causes and solutions vary across polities and cultures. Moreover, all meanings of the terms are finite and have inherent issues, whether they be conceptual, practical, or operational. For the purpose of this chapter, Nye (1967, p. 419) offered an operational definition, noting that “corruption is behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence”. As an extension, Banfield (1961, p. 315) said “this includes such behaviour as bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgement of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding uses)”.

Corruption is context specific and could mean different things to different societies and groups of people. Pearson (2013, pp. 33-34) explained that “due to cultural differences, it is often argued that what constitutes corruption may differ between countries”. For instance, in some countries, people consider gift giving as part of their customary obligation, while in others, this practice may be interpreted as unethical, or as an act of bribe (Kim & Kim, 1997; Larmour, 1997; Phongpaichit & Piriyaarangsarn, 1994; Tiki, 2018; Tiki et al., 2021; UNDP, 1999). Corruption is a contentious matter across cultural boundaries as “one person’s bribe is another person’s gift” (Rose-Ackerman, 1999, p. 5). In PNG and the Pacific Islands in general, what looks like a bribe, for example, is, in reality, frequently a gift. What looks like nepotism is culturally-sanctioned concern for one’s kin (Larmour, 2012; Tiki, 2018). The following accounts from the research participants involved with this research resonated well with this cultural relativist argument:

In PNG, we could say that this [gifting] is not corruption as it is part of our custom to appreciate a person, but in the Western context, this is still corruption as you will still supply more gifts in the future. Someone was persuaded [bribed] now for future benefits (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

Some Western ways [culture] are different from ours. Using our culture [in the public sector] is okay, but to the Westerners, this is not okay. Therefore, we need to clearly define corruption within our context (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Papua New Guinea's administrative and political systems are plagued by corruption according to the literature (Ayius & May, 2007; Dix & Pok, 2009; Graycar & Jancsics, 2017; Kanekane, 2007; Larmour, 1997, 2006, 2008; Walton, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015, 2016, 2019; Walton & Hushang, 2017; Walton & Hushang, 2020; Walton & Jackson, 2020; Walton & Jones, 2017; Walton & Peiffer, 2017). Data from the present research (Winn, 2021) and similar findings from the PNG global corruption barometer (Kukutschka, 2021) strengthen this view. The present research found that 99 percent (data from both the survey and individual responses from the FGDs) of people interviewed found corruption to be either problematic or highly problematic in the public sector and the political system. Similarly, data from the PNG Global Corruption Barometer (Kukutschka, 2021) found that 96 percent of people surveyed in PNG think that corruption in government is a big problem. The following views from some participants in the present research underscore this common story or narrative regarding the pervasiveness of corruption across both the government and society at large.

Corruption is becoming normal in our political system as a means [for candidates] to lure electoral support to remain in power; and in the administrative system, as a means to increase personal and family wealth, and also to buy political support to continue to hold or acquire higher positions of authority (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Corruption is happening everywhere in broad daylight. It is becoming normal nowadays. People cannot speak against corruption. It is a way of life (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Corruption in PNG occurs at all levels of society and in all sectors. People have become so accustomed to certain practices that they see them as being culturally acceptable, or generally accepted ways or behaviour (Survey participant, Female, 35-44).

Corruption has become a norm. For instance, if you enter the workforce and become part of the system, you will already know that there is corruption. You could engage in bribery to get what you want by using your position (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Every day, corruption takes place in most of our administrative and political systems. There are some public servants that are trying to uphold the code of ethics or conduct, or not trying to be corrupt, but for the most part, the administrative system in PNG is riddled with corruption (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

5.2.1 Bribery versus gifting and views from Melanesia

Bribery and gifting are universal practices. This subsection explores the differences between these two concepts and attempts to answer the question of when does a gift become a bribe, especially when applied within the context of government ethics. Different categories of gifts and their interpretations within the Melanesian setting (Sahlins, 1972) are also discussed. Bribes and gifts are ambiguous, vague, contestable, and detrimental to the functioning of the public service (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017; Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Graycar and Jancsics (2017, p. 1014) noted that “while the line between a gift and a bribe is contestable, acceptance of and reliance on gifts harms public policy and delivery of services”. For example, while gifting your new neighbour home baked cakes and cookies is clearly a gift and an expression of goodness and kindness (e.g., see Appendix 5.1), a driving school instructor who was offered money to issue a driver’s license without the applicant taking a test is apparently an act of bribery (e.g., see Appendices 5.2 & 5.3). Anything in between for instance, the hosting of a city council official responsible for approving construction permits by a property developer at a lavish lunch date, is more contestable, in terms of whether this is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, and how it affects an outcome (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017).

Globally, Graycar and Jancsics (2017, p. 1019) noted that “our political and administrative history is replete with examples of officials who have taken gifts and denied that there was a quid pro quo. We have blatant examples of bribes where a rent seeking bureaucrat would not perform a required task without a gift”. Regionally, the National Integrity System (NIS) surveys of twelve Pacific Island Countries (PICs), PNG included, found corruption to be more evident in police and customs, land and titles administration, forestry and fisheries, and health and education among others (Larmour and Barcham, 2004). Politicians and public servants are perceived as the major practitioners of embezzlement, fraud, unsanctioned procurement, collusion, and nepotism (Duncan and Hassall, 2011). Hassall (2019, p. 13) noted that “ministers and public servants have been accused of corrupt practices in relation to the allocation of land and housing, awarding of scholarships, and the granting of licenses and work permits. In general, those agencies or individuals exercising “gatekeeper” functions, whether for big business

or for the humble citizen, are those most open to abuse”. At the national level, Sam Koim, the former head of PNG’s Task Force Sweep (an institution created by the government of Peter O’Neill in 2011 to arrest and prosecute corrupt leaders) and currently PNG’s Internal Revenue Commissioner, noted that corruption is visible and rampant in the PNG public service (Koim, 2020). Indeed, the present research showed that everyday corruption is widespread at all levels of society in PNG. For instance, one research participant noted that “corruption is systemic and systematic. It is pervasive and affects all strata of society in PNG: the clergy, the judiciary, the police etc., are all infected by this disease. You read [and heard] about it almost every day.” (Survey participant, Male, 35-44). There are many causes, types, and effects of corruption. Bribery is one type of corruption that involves two willing participants – bribe giver, usually private person, and bribe taker, usually public official (Koim, 2020). Koim’s (2020) view was not remote from data generated by this research as the following respondents’ views suggested:

Gift giving and bribery happens every day. It’s an everyday issue in the public service or state institutions such as state-owned enterprises (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I would say that gifting a government officer [a gift] is corruption because this is the only way to access government services (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

The key question in the following discussion is where does one draw the line between gifting and bribery, or when does a gift become a bribe? Graycar and Jancsics (2017, p. 1013) explained that “if the gift and the reciprocation both come from private resources, it is clearly a gift. [However], if what is reciprocated after a gift is given comes from an organisation or is a government resource rather than from “one’s own pocket” then it is most likely a bribe”. Bar-cham (2007, p. 34) argued that “it is not the practice of gift-giving itself that is inherently corrupt but rather that the structures of the modern state have provided a source of previously unimaginable power and wealth and so provided opportunities for some elites to exploit these opportunities in pursuit of their own interests”. Alatas (1968, pp. 96-97) suggested that “cultural practices are used for the purposes of corruption rather being the cause of corruption”.

The key issues or points of difference between traditional gifting (common in PNG and the Pacific) and modern gifting peddled by politicians, public servants and businesspeople are often those of intent (involving intentional bribe), the scale (size) of reciprocity or exchange, and whether the gift is public or private. In addition, the ‘person’ doing the actual reciprocating is

the taxpayer (via the state), not the bureaucrat who accepts the bribe. Barcham (2007, p. 34) provided a response to this question as below.

The point to note is that in defining how and when traditional cultural practices such as gift-giving become corrupt there are a number of issues at play, including: intent, scale and the public or private nature of the ‘gift’. And so, as an example, if an elected representative visits a village in their constituency and receives cigarettes and alcohol as a gift which they at some later point reciprocate with gifts of pigs this is not corruption. If, however, the representative receives tens of thousands of dollars from the village and reciprocates with the initiation of a public works programme in that village then that clearly is a case of corruption.

The reason the latter case represents corruption is not just the overall larger scale of the transaction, but the lack of proportionality between the two ‘gifts’ – i.e., the government’s gifts of the public works program is clearly worth vastly more than the village’s bribe of tens of thousands of dollars (which may also be privately appropriated by the official and not end up in some consolidated revenue). Apparently, the party that ‘foots the bill’ here for the reciprocation are the taxpayers, via the state/public service, not the politician.

Bribery can either be active (offering of a bribe) or passive (receiving a bribe), or it could also be extortive driven by the bribee (receiver). A bribe can be in the form of both monetary and non-monetary exchanges. In its simpler version, bribery involves anything of value that is given by someone, which is expected to be reciprocated by the receiver, or as Nadler and Schulman (2006) noted, something given in the hope of influence and benefit. Bribes usually come in the form of actual items such as money, gift vouchers, a bottle of expensive wine, watches, expensive phones etc., or as intangible items such as tickets to a sporting event or a concert, holidays and travel, health and beauty treatments, rounds of golf, an expensive restaurant meal, jobs for family or friends, and sexual favours (sextortion) (Nadler & Schulman, 2006; Rodrigues-Neto, 2014). While a bribe involves a clear request for reciprocity, a gift is something given in expectation of a generous future reciprocity (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). As Mauss (1950) noted, in a gift economy, “the aim of the transactor is to acquire as many gift-debtors as he possibly can and not to maximise profit. What a gift transactor desires is the personal relationships that the exchange of gifts creates [where reciprocation is expected]” (as cited in Gregory, 2015, p. 13).

Bribery could be expressed as rent-seeking or extortive behaviours by public officials. For instance, “when civil servants [have monopoly over and] control scarce resources such as the issuing of a licence, which they might not issue without a bribe, this is called rent seeking” (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017, p. 1013). When public servants use speed money (bribe) by extorting payments from service seekers to expedite a process, this is called extortion (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017).

There is general consensus that people globally condemned bribery and viewed it as undesirable, harmful, destructive, illegal, immoral, evil and costly (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017; Pyman & Heywood, 2024; Rose-Ackerman, 1998). “Bribes are given to influence the outcome of a political, bureaucratic, business, or professional decision or relationship” (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017, p. 1014). For example, “bribes that win public contracts for an incompetent bidder reward inefficiency and may discourage efficient forms [of development and growth] from entering a country’s economy” (Johnston, 2005, p. 24). Wei (1999) noted that “speed money paid to bureaucrats does not break down administrative bottlenecks, instead it tells other officials that they too can make money by dragging their feet (as cited in Johnston, 2005, p. 24). Bribes paid by contractors incur great losses for the state, with the citizens paying the price without their knowledge or consent.

Gifting (which can resemble traditional forms of reciprocity) and bribery (which is typically not part of traditional culture) are forms of reciprocity. Sahlins (1972) offered three distinct categories of reciprocity relevant to classical or traditional gift economies such as PNG, which include: 1) generalised reciprocity, 2) balanced reciprocity, and 3) negative reciprocity. Generalised reciprocity is the closest form to pure altruism. Obligation to reciprocate is either vague or non-existent. The relationship endures even if there is no reciprocation. Examples of generalised reciprocity include sharing, hospitality, free gift, general help, volunteering and generosity. Balanced reciprocity involves direct exchange, where a reciprocation of similar value is expected within a set time frame. Failure to reciprocate would damage the relationship. Examples of balanced reciprocity are found in such social exchanges as marriage transactions, friendship or social compacts, and peace agreements. Negative reciprocity is where each party tries to get an advantage over the other. A good example of negative reciprocity is haggling, where no social bonds are created or desired (Sahlins, 1972).

The traditional gift economy system in Melanesia and other non-capitalist societies fits Sahlins’ (1972) category of ‘balanced’ reciprocity. But this is perverted in modern times by *wantokism*,

which frequently involves freeloading (i.e., failure to reciprocate). Traditional reciprocity becomes bribery when the government employee accepts a gift as an individual but shifts the obligation to reciprocate onto the state. This is the aspect that is perhaps unique to PNG. There is a pretence of ‘traditional’ reciprocation, but it is really the state (i.e., the taxpayers) doing the reciprocating without anyone’s knowledge. Moreover the ‘value’ of a) the bribe, and b) the ‘service’ obtained in exchange for it, are typically highly unequal. This research noted that some participants perceived a gift as a form of bribery and an exacerbator of corruption, while others argued that a gift is merely a token (a symbolic gesture of kindness in line with ceremonial norms) one uses to appreciate someone for the services rendered. That is, the Melanesian cultural norm of reciprocity (gifting) is used to mask what is in fact plain old bribery. Respondents who suggested that a gift is perceived as a bribe thought so because sometimes a bribe can be camouflaged as a gift. For instance, bribers might camouflage bribery using alternative languages (Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010), there are bribers who employed indirect speech to bribe (Pinker, Novak, & Lee, 2008), and some bribers use proverbial languages such as in Ghana (or in other cross-cultural boundaries) (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016).

Through his research on perceptions of bribery and gift-giving within PNG’s public service, Tiki (2018) found that bribery is perceived to be a norm because it “is often confused with gifts in the Melanesian cultural context” (2018, ii). This confusion is deliberately exploited by the briber because the recipient (usually a state official) accepts a gift as an individual but shifts the obligation to reciprocate (the bribee, family, or the *wantoks* etc.) onto the state. Gregory (2015) and Mauss (1950) are the more authoritative sources on the cultural meaning (and ‘weight’) of gifts in reciprocating social systems such as Melanesia. Gregory (2015, p. 12) noted that PNG was “the home of the classic gift economy”, while Mauss (1950, p. 33) noted that the gift economy in Melanesia resembles a process of “constant give-and-take”, an epitome of the archetypal form of exchange in traditional gift economies (Mauss, 1950).

Gregory (2015) explained that the gift economy, one that is found in ‘primitive’, or clan-based (non-European) society is a debt economy as opposed to the class-based commodity economy found in European (Western) societies. According to Mauss (1950), in a gift economy, “the aim of the transactor is to acquire as many gift-debtors as he possibly can and not to maximise profit, as it is in a commodity economy. What a gift transactor desires is the personal relationships that the exchange of gifts creates, and not the things themselves” (as cited in Gregory, 2015, p. 13). A European (Westerner) typically has difficulty understanding this gift-exchange

process, i.e., the obligation to give a thing as a gift (Gregory, 2015). Mauss (1950) addressed this problem succinctly, raising two fundamental issues: 1) “gift exchange is peculiar to clan-based societies and not class-based societies, and 2) gift-giving places the debtor in a subordinate position” (as cited in Gregory, 2015, p. 14). Thus, “gift exchange is a means by which the relations of domination and control are established in a clan-based economy” (Gregory, 2015, p. 14). As Mauss (1950) noted, gift exchange “flourishes in those societies where there is an unstable clan hierarchy changeable from time to time” (as cited in Gregory, 2015, p. 14), such as in PNG.

The whole field of gift-exchange was well developed in the Pacific, particularly in Melanesia (Gregory, 2015; Malinowski, 2014; Mauss, 1950). In explaining the socio-economic and cultural connotations of gift-exchanges, Mauss (1950) drew insights (comparative analyses) from the Melanesian context. Mauss (1950) focused more on the economic structures of gift-exchanges. As Gregory (2015, pp. 14-15) noted, central to the Mauss’s theory on gift-exchanges is “the concept “money”, by which he meant any instrument of gift or commodity exchange. But money is not merely a physical thing, (Mauss, 1950), it is essentially a social relation” (Gregory, 2015, p. 15). A summary of Mauss’s (1950) observations pertaining to Melanesian traditional gift-economies were thus: the Trobriand Islanders in PNG used *kula* (an instrument of great inter-tribal trade found all over the Trobriand Islands, and which embraced the whole cultural, social and economic life of the Trobriand Islanders) as a medium of gift-exchange, where donors become recipients in the next occasion, and continues indefinitely. In Fiji, the *kerekere* system was and continues to be used today as an economic and social safety net to assist economically disadvantaged people or clans, or to execute important social compacts such as marriages.

The importance of the traditional gift economy was echoed by one participant who explained that “in PNG custom or culture, gift is a part of life. I gave him/her the gift from my heart [resembles Sahlins’ (1972) ‘generalised reciprocity’] and would not be bothered by others because he/she has served me, and this is my token of appreciation to him/her” (FGD participant, Female, 35-44). While another participant argued that “it’s morally right if you work with your heart to serve, and not to expect gifts from people. If you expect people to give you a gift for the work you’ve done for them, then you are not working with your heart [that is, working with your heart may reference the ideal of a dedication to public service]. This is corruption [immoral]. You must perform according to your job requirements. You must not expect anything

in return before you can serve someone” (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Korean philosopher Chong Yakyong (1762-1836) once said that “even if an object sent as a gift is very small, once one becomes sentimentally indebted then one’s actions will already be swayed by one’s personal feelings” (as cited in Kim & Kim, 1997, p. 549). In a similar vein, one research participant noted:

There is a fine line here, especially from a cultural point of view. A small lunch money as a token of appreciation is not really corruption, unless it is meant to attract future dealings, or if it’s meant to attract priority service or preferential treatment in the future (Survey participant, Female, 55-64).

Other participants argued that what is presented as a ‘gift’ in an ostensibly ‘customary’ sense must be categorised as a bribe because it has no moral and ethical basis, and it promotes corruption, with deleterious consequences on the systems of government, economic development, people’s livelihoods, and the society at large. One research participant blatantly condemned action by government officials as bribe takers (bribees) by arguing that “government officers must not receive any gift for the services that are rendered through them. It is their duty to ensure that the people receive the services provided by them through their [respective government] offices” (Survey participant, Male, 25-34). Another research participant explained that gifting constitutes bribery, and bribery is corruption:

If you give gifts in return for a service, you are committing bribery because that public servant is supposed to do his/her work honestly [without fear or favour] and not receiving gifts from people in order to deliver the service. Because the service seeker wants the public servant to provide a service, he/she gives him/her a gift to make him/her happy. So, you are bribing him/her to do their job (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

The emergence of patron-client and corruption narratives is a result of a weak governance system, a poorly paid and thus disincentivised public service, low income earning opportunities and general commodification of the public service resulting from market-based ‘reforms’, which perhaps increases mercenary and opportunistic behaviour. These features are associated with an emerging class of local leaders (PNG *crypto-capitalists*) trying to straddle two very different moral economies: traditional reciprocity and colonial/post-colonial possessive individualism (Gregory, 1982; Martin, 2007). According to Macpherson (1962, p. 3) a possessive individual is someone (a big man or an elite in PNG or Melanesian context) who is “the

proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them”. Public service roles almost anywhere in the world provide opportunities that put one’s personal interests (individualism) over public interests (citizenship). However, in PNG the ongoing cultural importance of norms of traditional reciprocity appears to make it easier for both bribe givers and bribe takers to pretend that what they are doing is somehow culturally sanctioned, when it is not, because the ‘person’ who is really doing the reciprocating is the taxpayer, without him or her knowing it. Felson (2011) suggested that “modern corruption has to do with positions, and modern organisation creates lots of positions demanding that people suppress their selfish interests. In the era of traditional and patrimonial authority [Weber’s two other forms of authority], corruption was limited, and modern corruption did not exist [or even if it did, perhaps at a bare minimum]” (Felson, 2011, p. 15).

5.2.2 Typologies of corruption associated with bribery

Corruption can be classified into two broad categories or typologies: petty and grand corruption. Defining these two broad typologies of corruption poses conceptual, practical, and operational challenges, which are usually influenced by the purpose of the study or inquiry, and the context in which corruption (whether petty or grand) occurs. As alluded to in Chapter 2, “the phrase ‘the abuse of office for private gain’ [is problematic and] offers little insight into how to distinguish different forms of abuse” (Bussell, 2015, p. 22). To better understand corruption beyond just ‘an abuse of public office for private gain’, one must consider the variations within the concept of corruption (Bussell, 2015), and also understand “the framework [or context] within which one is operating, and to be particularly sensitive to issues of cultural nuance” (Heywood, 1997, p. 426). Table 5.1 offers some typologies of corruption associated with bribery in PNG including 1) harassment bribes, 2) non-harassment bribes, 3) transactive corruption, 4) extortive corruption, 5) investive corruption, and 6) nepotistic corruption. These are the forms of corruption that epitomise the ‘mask of customary reciprocity’, or the ‘pretence of customary gift morality’, which is all too often common within the Melanesian and/or PNG context.

Table 5.1: Some typologies of corruption associated with bribery

Author	Typology	Definition/distinction
Basu (2011)	Harassment bribes	“[Bribes] that people often give to get what they are legally entitled to” (p.3).
	Non-harassment bribes	“[Bribes] that are believed to occur when government gives out big development contracts” (p. 8).
Alatas (1990)	Transactive corruption	“Refers to a mutual arrangement between a donor and a recipient, actively pursued by, and to the mutual advantage of both parties (as cited in Heywood, 1997, p. 425).
	Extortive corruption	“Entails some form of compulsion, usually to avoid some form of harm being inflicted on the donor, or those close to him/her” (as cited in Heywood, 1997, pp. 425-426).
Heywood (1997)	Investive corruption	“Involves the offer of goods or services without any direct link to a particular favour, but with a view to future situations in which a favour maybe required” (as cited in Heywood, 1997, p. 426).
	Nepotistic corruption	“Refers to the unjustified appointment of friends and or relatives to public office, or according them favoured treatment” (as cited in Heywood, 1997, p. 426).

Data from the present research found that both harassment and non-harassment bribes, transactive corruption, extortive corruption, investive corruption, and nepotistic corruption are common across the administrative and political systems in PNG.

A harassment bribe or extortive corruption (extortionary/coercive bribe) can come in two forms: 1) it involves a public good that a person (private citizen) is normally legally entitled to, but due to certain circumstances or situations, cannot afford it, and therefore must resort to bribe (sometimes through force) to expedite the process; and 2) through extortion where a public official deliberately withholds a public good or service and demands a bribe from the service recipient because the public official possesses discretion and claims to have monopoly over the public good or service. This is usually common among users of public services and utilities such as the hospital, the police, and schools. It also includes the accessibility to and the efficiency of getting other common services such as a driver’s license, a birth certificate, or a business permit. For instance, one respondent described a typical harassment bribe scenario as follows:

Sometimes when you go to the public hospital due to an emergency or to get medication, but the queue is long, you can't be served quickly unless you provide some speed/grease money for quick and easy access to medical attention. If you do not provide a bribe or speed money, you could potentially die like those in the emergency ward because they did not get fast and adequate attention. The same applies to the police. If you want them to attend to you quickly, you need to provide some fuel money (K100 or K200) for the police vehicle. If you don't provide some speed money, they won't attend to you in a timely manner, or sometimes not at all. This is corruption (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Non-harassment corruption usually occurs on a grand scale, and involves state – corporate relationships, or government – business relationships. Sometimes, it can take the form of individual – government relationships through dubious contract bidding or project submissions. In non-harassment bribes, a firm usually operates in a clandestine mode (to hide traces of illicit activities/transactions) with corrupt government officials to get what they want. This type of corruption exposes the problem of power distribution and the role of bribes (by influential persons and corporations/businesses) in influencing the allocation of state contracts and other valuable public benefits (Rose-Ackerman & Lagunes, 2015). One research participant noted that contracts are not transparently awarded anymore, highlighting his own experience below:

From my experience, I can say that even the tender's board (i.e., the National Procurement Commission) is corrupt. It seems the 10 % rule (kickbacks/commission) applies across the board from politicians down to senior public servants. For instance, I have my own community foundation, and I've submitted a project document to the Finance Department for K5 million. But officers in the Finance Department advised that I increase the amount to K8 million. They wanted K2 million as kickbacks. I decided to withdraw my project submission because this is not part of what my community foundation stands for. My foundation advocates for good governance and democracy in this country (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Data from the present research found that 93 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that businesses or corporate entities influence politicians and public servants through bribes and commissions to get what they want by manipulating state institutions and due processes. Similarly, data from the PNG Global Corruption Barometer (Kukutschka, 2021) found that 82 percent of people surveyed in PNG think that corruption in the business sector is a big

problem. Regarding public servant – private business or contractor relationship, 72 percent of participants thought that contractors gave gifts to public servants in the hope of receiving government favours (e.g., road sealing contracts), 75 percent believed that business permits are awarded based on relationships or established networks, and 75 percent thought that politicians accepted bribes from contractors or businesses in return for political favours (Table 5.3). This implies that the government’s national procurement system, and other ‘gatekeeper’ institutions together with the laws that guide their official mandates are corrupted or controlled by networks of politicians, public servants and businesses who are colluding secretly to siphon public resources or goods away from the state into the hands of private interests. When asked whether government contracts are awarded to the most qualified bidder following due processes and rules, 71 percent of the participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 57 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed that business permits and licenses are awarded to contractors according to established rules or laws or following due processes. This implies that the public procurement sector in PNG is politically influenced with a high degree of cronyism and political patronage. There is also lack of compliance with the laws that governed the public procurement sector (Figures 2.2a, 2.2b, Table 5.4, and Figure 5.2).

Government corruption and other governance indices for PNG are quite difficult to quantify due to 1) the cultural connotations that blurred mainstream (Western) definitions, and 2) lack of empirical or reliable data. Even the TI’s corruption perception rankings are not useful for analytical purposes unlike its scores, which reflect the effort or lack of it that governments are investing in anti-corruption. Table 5.2 shows corruption types, types of resources, examples of corruption, and actors that either directly or indirectly influence corrupt outcomes. It is useful for the later part of the discussions under this section.

Table 5.2: Corruption and types of government services

Corruption types	Types of government resources	Examples of corruption	Holder(s) of direct control	Holder(s) of indirect control
Legislative	-Government policies and regulations	-Payments for favourable legislation	Presidents/Ministers/Legislators -Top department bureaucrats	-Bureaucrats with control over implementation
Contracting	-Allocation of licenses/contracts (natural resources,	-Kickbacks on licenses/contracts	-Bureaucrats at level of contract/project	-Politicians with power over bureaucrats

	schools, roads, etc.)			-Middlemen
Employment	-Government jobs	-Bribes or favours jobs	-Politicians and bureaucrats with hiring and transferring authority	-Middlemen
Services	-Provision of individual benefits (e.g., IDs, welfare) or sanctions (e.g., traffic violations)	-Bribes for 'speedy' services	-‘Street-level’ bureaucrats	-Politicians with power over bureaucrats -Local politicians -Middlemen

Source: Bussell (2015) Typologies of corruption: A pragmatic approach

Table 5.3: Proportion of public servants and politicians being bribed

Businesses influence politicians and public servants through bribes or commissions		Contractors giving gifts to public servants in return for favours (e.g., contracts)		Business permits awarded based on relationship or established network		Politicians who accept gifts/bribes from contractors or businesses	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	46	All	18	Strongly agree	18	All	23
Agree	47	Most	54	Agree	57	Most	52
Disagree	5	Some	28	Disagree	22	Some	25
Strongly disagree	2	None	0	Strongly disagree	3	None	0
Total	100		100		100		100

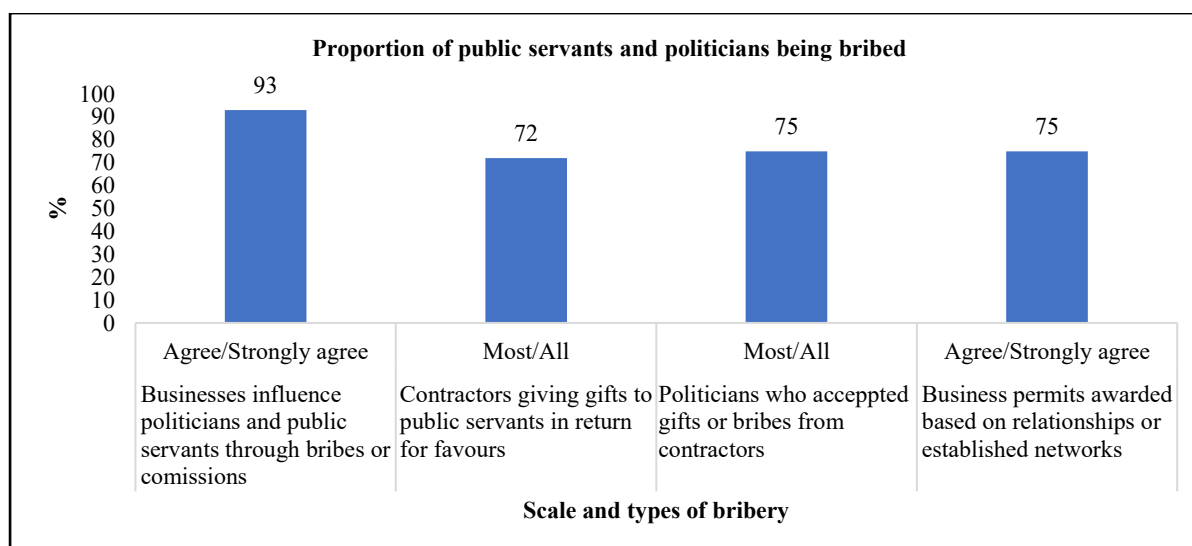


Figure 5.1: Proportion of public servants and politicians being bribed

Table 5.4 PNG's public procurement sector is highly patronised/politicised

Government contracts are awarded to the most qualified or competent bidder following due processes		Business permits and licenses are awarded according to established rules and laws	
Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	6	Strongly agree	8
Agree	23	Agree	35
Disagree	55	Disagree	47
Strongly disagree	16	Strongly disagree	10
Total	100		100

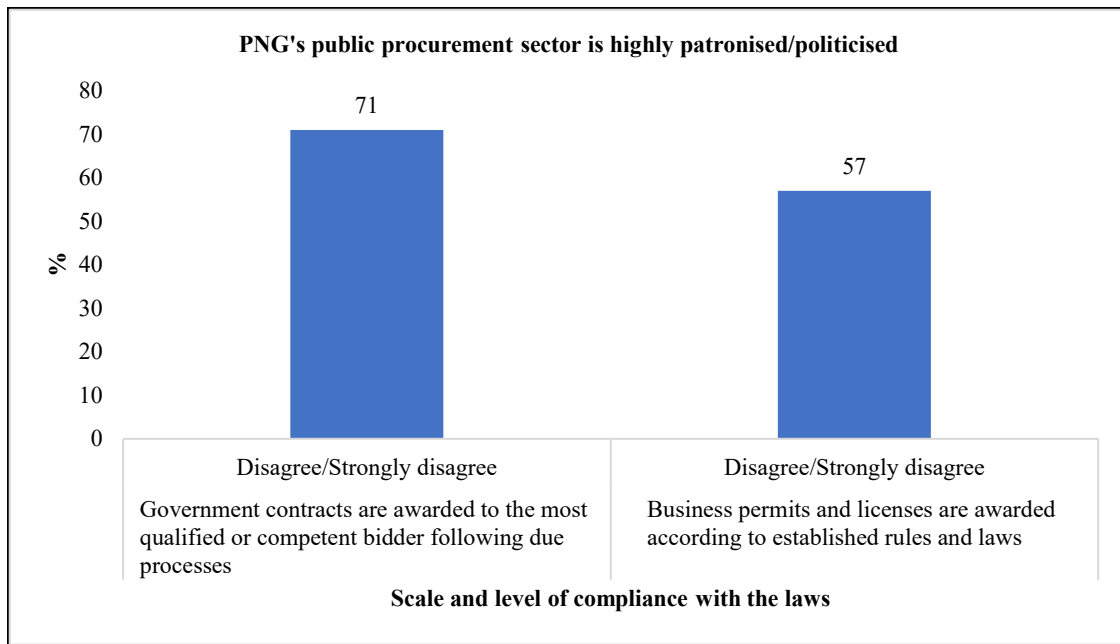


Figure 5.2: PNG's public procurement sector is highly patronised/politicised

Transactive corruption is usually peddled by individuals who have mutual connections and networks in government institutions and businesses. Regarding this research, transactive corruption usually occurs between politicians and public servants and their family, friends, and *wantoks*, and with businesses with whom they share some form of mutual interests. A research participant noted that awarding of a government contract by a public servant (in charge of procurement and tender processes) to a relative or friend is corruption “because you should not use your family to bid for this contract. If you have pre-planned motives that your family will win this contract, you will dip your hands into the family’s pockets to benefit from part of the money from the contract” (FGD participant, Male, 45-54). While another respondent suggested that this action will personally benefit both parties, and therefore constitutes a conflict of interest. “The rule is to declare your conflict of interest if you are on the technical evaluation or procurement committee, and step aside for the panel to make its decision. Awarding of contracts should be based on value for money, ability to carry out tasks to completion, and not based on personal interests” (Survey participant, Male, 35-44). Data from this research found that 81 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that government contracts are awarded to cronies (friends or business associates/partners).

There is evidence of PNG politicians and senior public servants who have been systematically using their existing businesses in awarding themselves and their families lucrative government contracts and sub-contracts. For instance, a catering company whose director is a senior

bureaucrat in the PNG National Department of Health was awarded a contract worth K539,211 (or about AUD200,000) for catering services to a COVID-19 isolation facility in Port Moresby between May and November 2020 (Kuku & Lyons, 2021). There seemed to be well connected patronage networks in the public sector involving public servants – familial/*wantok* connections, who use their state connections to benefit themselves. According to this research, 95 percent of the participants either agree or strongly agree that public servants collaborate with individuals, friends, family and *wantoks* to get what they want using state institutions and resources, while in the case study of land dealings within the DLPP, 59 percent of the respondents thought that public servants promoted corruption in the DLPP by collaborating with their family and *wantoks* to illegally obtain land titles, 69 percent of the respondents thought that public servants are taking bribes or kickbacks from their clients (individuals/family/friends/businesses/politicians) in return for providing government services, while 81 percent of the participants believed that government contracts are usually awarded to a friend’s or an associate’s business (Table 5.5 and Figure 5.3).

Table 5.5: Bribery and influence peddling based on mutual interests and cronyism

Government contract is awarded to a friend’s or an associate’s business (cronies)		Public servants collaborate with family/individuals/ <i>wantoks</i> /friends to get what they want using state institutions (cronies)		Public servants in the DLPP who collaborate with family and <i>wantoks</i> to obtain illegal land titles (nepotism)		Public servants who receive bribes in return for providing government services (bribery)	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	23	Strongly agree	19	All	5	All	7
Agree	58	Agree	76	Most	54	Most	62
Disagree	14	Disagree	5	Some	40	Some	31
Strongly disagree	5	Strongly disagree	0	None	1	None	0
Total	100		100		100		100

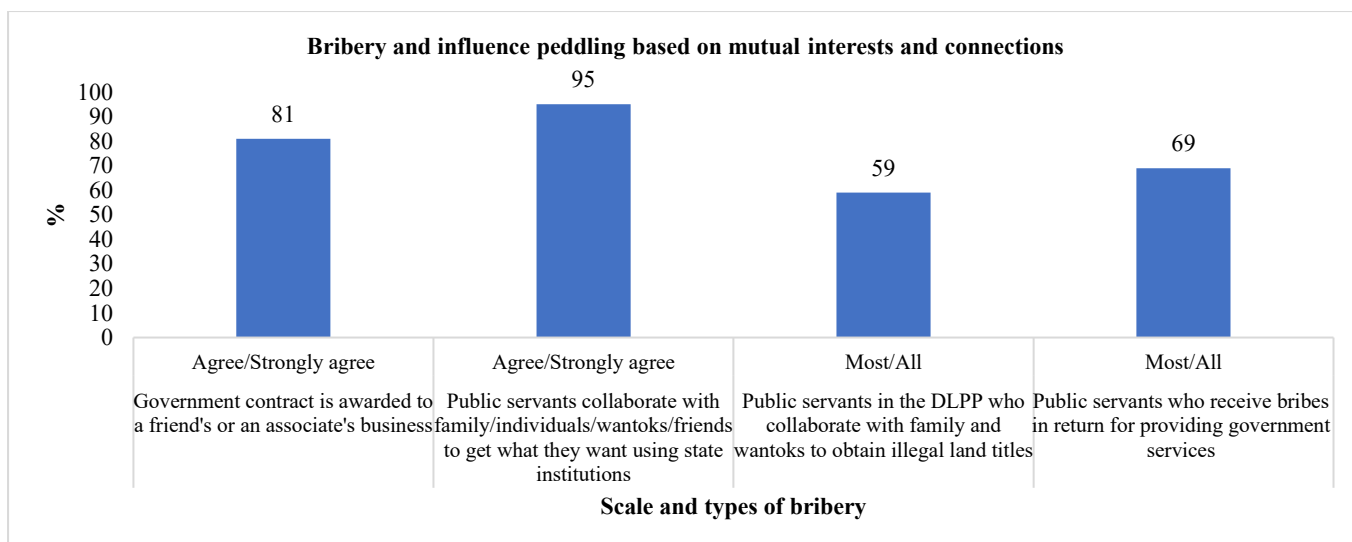


Figure 5.3: Bribery and influence peddling based on mutual interests and connections

Investive corruption is closely related to transactive corruption, but is non-extortionary and reciprocity is vaguely defined, that is, there is no direct link or connection to a particular favour (Heywood, 1997). It involves the bribers giving money, favours or gifts (see examples below) to someone (a bribee) without expecting any immediate return, but with the hope that this transaction will be useful for future dealings (closely resembles Sahlins (1972) “balanced reciprocity”). Investive corruption, as Rose-Ackerman (1999) noted comes with favourable future reciprocal treatment. An example of investive corruption would be thus: “A city official in New Zealand who is responsible for approving construction permits is taken to a lavish lunch by a property developer, and then to a football match where he sits in a corporate box” (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017, p. 1014). In the present research, some participants noted that gifting is an act of persuading someone for future benefits, or gift exchange as an advantage for future benefits, or an allurements where a network of corruption is created for future benefits. One participant thought that bribing “could happen within the context of *wantoks*, but it can also expand to include non-*wantoks*. Although gifting is not immediately seen as corruption, however, it may create [or help facilitate] a network of corruption in the future” (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

The use of nepotism and cronyism under this discussion apply to family/relatives and friends/associates, respectively. Nepotistic corruption, or nepotistic patronage is the most common type of corruption or patronage associated with this research. It involves nepotism, or according to this research, *wantokism*, which is based on the idea that one’s kin or extended family (typically including affines or *tambus* (in-laws)) is usually treated favourably or given

preferential treatment over other non-family or non-*wantoks* in accessing public sector jobs and services, (which is by no means exclusive of the private sector). In terms of public service recruitment, most participants believed that recruitment of family members by politicians or senior public servants based on familial or friendship connections, and without transparent and accountable process, is wrong, or immoral even if the recruits are qualified (though they most often are not). In addition to lacking qualifications, people recruited through nepotism typically also lack creativity and innovation in their job performance, in part because they are controlled by the persons recruiting them.

Talent acquisition managers or human resource (HR) officers (whose family members or friends have applied for public service jobs) should declare their conflict of interests and opt out of the entire selection process. Some respondents argued that the appointment of family or *wantoks* is justified as long as the applicants meet all the selection criteria based on their own merits. One respondent thought that unjustified recruitment or appointment is corruption “because the most qualified and experienced person was overlooked. He or she can bring about positive changes at work because he or she is qualified over the ‘unqualified’ person recruited through nepotism” (FGD participant, Female, 35-44). Another respondent believed that appointment through nepotism is “outright corruption that undermines the principle of meritocracy and therefore, contributes to underperformance and inefficiency in the public service” (Survey participant, Male, 25-34). Data from this research regarding preferential treatment, favouritism, and appointment through nepotism found that 76 percent of the respondents thought some people (or only a few) get preferential treatment from the government because rules and laws are biased or unfair, 98 percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that favouritism exists in the public service, 96 percent thought personal relationship matters in public service employment, and 97 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that appointment and or/promotion to key government positions (senior contracted positions such as provincial administrators and heads of government departments) is influenced by politics (Table 5.6 and Figure 5.4).

Table 5.6: Nepotistic or patronage corruption in PNG's public sector

Proportion of people who get preferential treatment from government institutions		Favouritism exists in the public service		Personal relationship matters in public service employment		Politics influenced appointments or promotions to key government institutions	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	2	Strongly agree	36	Strongly agree	43	Strongly agree	57
Most	21	Agree	62	Agree	53	Agree	40
Some	76	Disagree	1	Disagree	2	Disagree	3
None	1	Strongly disagree	1	Strongly disagree	2	Strongly disagree	0
Total	100		100		100		100

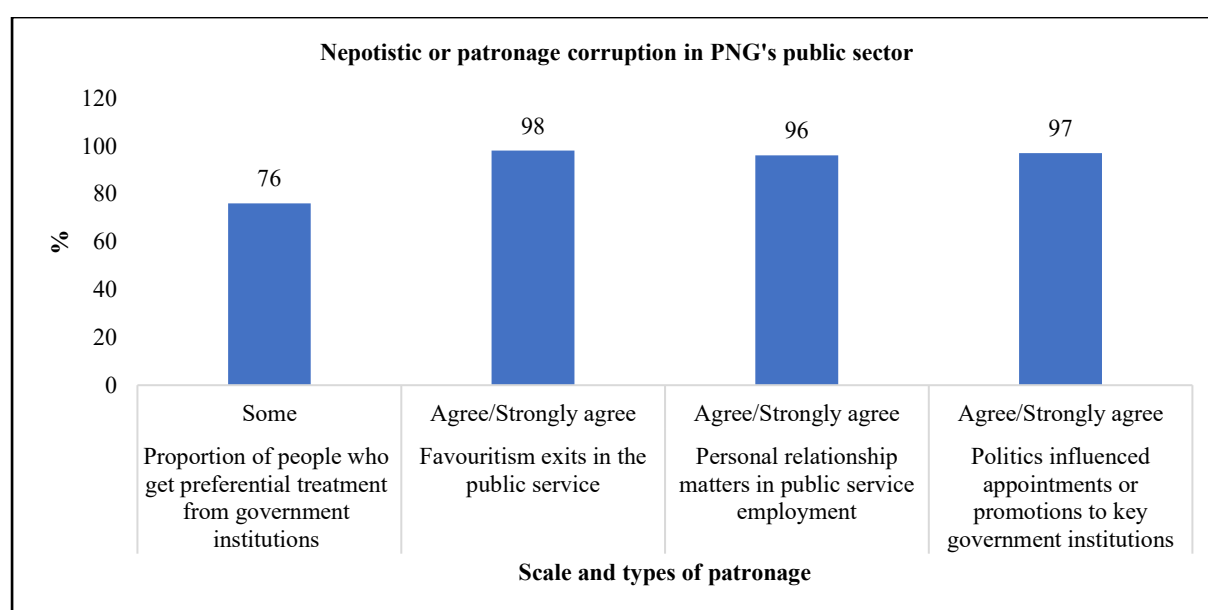


Figure 5.4: Nepotistic or patronage corruption in PNG's public sector

5.3 The *buai*, lunch money and *kola* culture: Alternative bribe languages of PNG society

An experimental analysis into behaviours of bribers (businesspeople) and bribees (public servants) by Lambsdorff and Frank (2010, p. 347) found that “there [was] widespread belief that the standard behaviour [of the bribers or businesspeople] would be to camouflage a bribe as a gift”. In Melanesia, as I have outlined above, this cultural loading makes it even easier to

camouflage bribes as gifts because the ongoing cultural importance of norms of traditional reciprocity appears to make it easier for both bribe givers and bribe takers to pretend that what they are doing is somehow culturally sanctioned, when it is not, because the ‘person’ who is really doing the reciprocating is the taxpayer, without him or her knowing it, that is, pretend reciprocity.

The use of indirect speech or language by bribers to bribe public officials has also been cited by Pinker, Novak and Lee (2008). Yeboah-Assiamah et al. (2016, p. 279) analysed public sector corruption in African countries “by examining the interplay between culturally acceptable norms and professional expectations of public officials” and had found the use of proverbial languages to be the *modus operandi* guiding how public servants, for instance, in Ghana have operated. In African culture, refusing a gift would be considered rude, culturally inappropriate and out of place (uncultured behaviour), and anathema to social relationships (Yeboah-Assiamah, 2016). Achebe (1960, p. 80) made an excellent point about the African culture of gift giving and expectation as thus:

They said a man expects you to accept “*kola*” from him for services rendered, and until you do, his mind is never at rest. A man to whom you do a favour will not understand if you say nothing, or make no noise, just walk away. You may cause more trouble by refusing a bribe than by accepting it.

Camouflaging of bribery using coded language (Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010), the use of indirect speech (Pinker, Novak & Lee, 2008), and the use of proverbial languages, for instance in Ghana and many societies around the world (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016) are also observed in PNG. Papua New Guinea’s administrative and political environments demonstrate similar experiences as the discussions on the *buai* (betelnut), lunch money and *kola* (*Coca-Cola*) culture would attest. In the PNG context, *kola* is the shorthand *tok pisin* expression of the popular carbonated drink, *Coca-Cola* as opposed to *kola*, which comes from the caffeine-rich *kola* nut (*Cola nitida*) found in West Africa and other parts of the world. *Kola* serves much the same purpose in West Africa as *buai* serves in PNG or Melanesia. The *kola* or *Coca-Cola* money has been increasingly used as a language of bribe, particularly within the urban PNG setting.

The *kola* or *Coca-Cola* metaphor is ironic because *Coca-Cola* is perhaps the most quintessential symbol of American capitalism, yet it has clearly penetrated so deeply into one of the world’s most robustly reciprocating (i.e. non-capitalist) economic systems that it has become

part of a vernacular expression. For instance, the briber would say ‘please accept this small *Coca-Cola* or lunch money (which could be in the hundreds or thousands of kinas) as a *token of appreciation* for assisting me with getting this licence.

Bribe givers in PNG including private citizens, businesses, and politicians know too well the expectations of public servants as bribe takers. The bribers also know that PNG’s public sector is prone or susceptible to corruption owing to the cultural and political causes of poor remuneration and low morale in the public service. The pre-existing political fragmentation and low level of state penetration (i.e., a very low level of buy in to the nation state as a project) means people’s primary allegiance is to their clan and language group. This makes it even easier for a briber to induce a public servant with a gift or a bribe in return for an official favour. As Graycar and Jancsics (2017, p. 1013) noted, “in some countries, salaries for civil servants are so low that the proceeds of bribery and extortion supplement the meagre wages”. On the other end, the bribe takers (e.g., public officials) know the intentions of the service recipients (bribers), and often set demands (bargaining rights or bribes) through their monopoly over the public good or service that service receivers should match, failing which the service in question would be dragged or delayed. While Lambsdorff and Frank (2010, p. 348) noted that “both gifts and bribes lead to some whistleblowing, some opportunism, and some reciprocity among public servants”, my research found that within PNG’s public sector whistleblowing is often suppressed (due to economic, social and security risks) and opportunism and reciprocity are associated with bribes that demand expeditious transactions.

The bribe takers’ (bribees) targets are often individuals or businesses with money (cash incentives), and the bribe givers (bribers) targets are often disincentivised, demoralised and/or unscrupulous public servants with expectations of direct rewards for services provided. Therefore, when approaching a public servant for official favours, the bribers usually offer financial inducements using such languages as *buai* (betelnut) money, *kola* (*Coca-Cola*) money, lunch money, flex card (mobile phone rechargeable card) money, and bus fare (Appendix 5.4). These tokens may appear innocently as ‘gifts’ at the first instance, but there is a subtle but unmistakable demand for bribes camouflaged in these languages. These are clearly bribe languages, the meaning of which are only known to the bribe givers and the bribe takers. The use of these slangs or language conventions has become an everyday phenomenon both within and outside of formal settings. It is now considered a common currency of social exchange within the PNG public sector. In their linguistic analysis, Pinker, Novak, and Lee (2008) argued that bribers

prefer indirect speech when trying to bribe a policeman (public official). They further noted that “instead of stating “if you let me go without a ticket, I’ll pay you \$50”, they consider a more indirect wording to be preferable, such as “is there some way to take care of it here?” Once the transaction has taken place, the police officer (bribe taker) would, as an afterthought hinted to the bribe giver that ‘now you are speaking my language’. The advantage from such a wording would be that bribe-takers understand this as an offer, while honest policemen [public servants] may either not understand the insinuation or at least find no clear evidence for attempted bribery” (as cited in Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010, p. 347). Della Porta and Vanucci (2005, pp. 122-123) also observed that “parties to a corrupt transaction develop an alternative language. The purpose of such language is to ascertain that payments are regarded as regular, normal and accepted business transactions”.

The scale (amount), intent and nature of the gifts and bribes vary according to the kind of service in question, and how fast the service is needed. Applying for a birth certificate without urgency, for instance may involve anything between K50 to K200, but applying for a birth certificate because it is a prerequisite for a passport application may involve twice the amount, a passport application may attract an additional service fee or bribe demands of between K300 to K500, and seeking favours in the issuance of official permits and government contracts may involve substantial amounts of money (between K1,000 – K10,000 or even more). This culture is well entrenched in PNG’s public sector. Most participants in the present research explained that the moment you pursue a government transaction in a public office, you are expected to offer some form of gifts or inducements for the services rendered. Koim (2020) also noted that the moment you grease an official with some lunch money to do what he or she is otherwise paid to do, you sow a seed of corruption (Appendix 5. 4). You open their eyes to see that lunch can be afforded outside of their normal pay. Through his extensive experience in PNG’s public service, Koim (2020) observed that:

Bribing someone to get what you want may appear to produce the result intended, but for the moment. You help that officer embark on and lead a lifestyle that their meagre salary could not have afforded. Over time, the price increases as their insatiable appetite for side money grows. The colleagues observe the lifestyle of the bribe taker. They feel that they are missing out on something. They see the same opportunity available to them. They see that the risks of being caught are slim, and the rewards are plenty. They start using the same formula by sitting on their routine jobs and slowing things down, hoping that a

willing participant who wants fast service would grease them too. If your service requires several corrupt officials, the price you pay increases because you have to pay everyone in the chain. And because those who bribe are getting faster service while everybody else is waiting in the queue, it creates an uneven playing field, forcing others to join the bribe givers' club. Soon it becomes a trend. The wheels of public service machinery do not turn until you grease them sufficiently. It started with grease, and unfortunately, it has to be greased continuously after that to keep it [the public service machinery] running.

The following responses revealed negative perceptions people have of bribery and how it influenced public sector and political corruption in PNG. It was also perceived that corruption is unavoidable in all systems of government and at all levels of society as practices of big man, *wantokism*, and other non-Western informality practices continue to creep into the public sector. One participant noted that:

Corruption is unavoidable in all systems (whether political or administrative) in Papua New Guinea due to our cultural mentalities and the unequal distribution of wealth. Corruption is practiced at both the top and bottom levels and is now “systematized” or has become a “norm” in our everyday functions especially in the government organisations. For example, every ordinary public servant nowadays would ask for “lunch money” or “side coins” to perform their otherwise mandated responsibility. To me, this is corruption, an abuse of responsibility in the administrative system at the lowest level. The “*bik-man*” culture which is widely dominant in the highlands region of PNG is also a driving force behind political corruption. Being power hungry motivated by tribal obligations push politicians to the extreme of buying favours either financially (bribery) or by appointment of personnel to specific administrative appointments. This is where politics affects administrative systems from the top (Survey participant, Female, 35-44).

Gift giving is clearly an act of corruption as one participant shared his experience while dealing with a superannuation officer in accessing his superannuation benefits. As the participant explained:

Recently I went to NASFUND (National Superannuation Fund) but had to stand in the queue for some hours as per COVID-19 protocols. While waiting, a male client behind me saw a female NASFUND officer and told me that she has a way of serving us (clients). If we offer her some *Coca-Cola* or bribery (speed) money, she will assist us. After she

received the bribe money, she told us that we expect our queries to be sorted the next day. The next day our queries were indeed sorted out. We met her again and gave some more *Coca-Cola* money. For me, this is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Some participants noted that gifting of *buai*, *kola* and lunch money is being commoditised in the public sector by unscrupulous public servants for their own gain. One participant suggested this practice of “*buai* or lunch money should be discouraged in PNG because it is becoming a norm in the society, and now causing many delays and longer turnaround time of projects or jobs because the government officer often expects something in return. This is corruption and needs to be discouraged in the formal workspaces” (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

Participants were also asked questions relating to the place and time where gift exchanges take place. One question pertained to gift exchange within formal work time in a public office setting, while the other asked the alternative view regarding gift exchanges taking place after formal work hours and outside the public office setting. In a similar study of bribery perceptions within PNG’s public sector, Tiki (2018, p. ii) found that “payments of money or gifts paid *before* the delivery of public goods and services were perceived as bribery, while payments given *after* the delivery of goods and services were considered as gifts”. One research participant’s understanding of the two questions was thus:

If you give the gift in public view, this is not corruption. But if you give the gift behind closed doors (or in an arranged meeting place), this is corruption. For instance, inviting those public servants who have assisted you for a few beers is okay and your motive might be right. But if you are dealing with only one public servant, it may raise some level of suspicions. Since your motive might be to bribe by providing an officer with a gift behind closed doors, this can be seen as corruption. Additionally, gift-giving and bribery happens every day. It’s an everyday issue [everyday corruption] in the public service or state institutions such as state-owned enterprises (SOEs). That’s why some SOEs are about to be sold/privatised because they are not profitable. This is simply because of corruption. For example, signing a government cheque involves a lot of people and middlemen within the system. All of them need to be catered for (bribed) from top down until you get your cheque. It is a disease in the system (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

One participant perceived gift exchange in public office setting and during government time as constituting corruption. Using his own experience while dealing with corrupt officials, he noted that:

Nowadays, it is expected that public servants expect gifts for providing government services. Before cheques are raised, or projects are awarded, public servants usually asked for certain commission before cheques can be released. For instance, last week I was accompanying the Morobe Agro landowners to the Vulupindi Haus (Finance Department) for their claims amounting to K3 million. But we were told by some officers that we have to give them K50, 000 before they will release the cheque in case we might run away with the cheque and not give them the commission (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Another respondent thought that backdoor dealings are the real exacerbator of corruption because it is not transparent. This is apparently separate from any notion of traditional reciprocity, partly because it is clandestine, and partly because it is being demanded rather than offered. As the example below noted:

We may have contract papers that we could submit for a government contract. However, there are some people that go behind closed doors with bribes such as money and beer cartoons to bribe public officers in getting government contracts, while we continue to wait for our contracts, and making many phone calls to no avail. Or we may have some middlemen approaching us to give bribe money to the public officers before our cheques are released. This is not right. This is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Other participants thought gift giving is about appreciating someone for something that was done for you. As this participant noted:

It's about appreciation if you are seeing it from the context where you are paying for that service in the public sector for them [public servants] to serve you quickly [speed money]. But if it's just a token of appreciation, where we have this mentality to say thank you when something is done, then this is not corruption because we all agree to do this. But if you act in a way that you want them to fast track or to serve you quickly, or in this sense you bribe them [with grease money], then that may constitute corruption. But if it's just an appreciation for them serving you well, just to say thank you for the services, I think it's just a token of appreciation. It's not corruption (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Overall, the research participants noted that the emergence of patron-client and corruption narratives in PNG is a result of several factors including weak governance, eroding morals, normalising of a particular set of socio-cultural norms in the public sector, a disincentivised public service, low income earning opportunities, a general marketisation of the public goods and services driven by neoliberal ‘reforms’, and the greed and self-serving behaviours that follow. These features are associated with an emerging class of neoliberal local leaders (PNG *crypto-capitalists*) trying to straddle two very different moral economies: traditional reciprocity and colonial/post-colonial possessive individualism (Gregory, 1982; Martin, 2007). Some respondents’ views highlighted each of the problematic areas associated with this research.

1. Many participants acknowledged that PNG has a weak governance system:

Corruption is rife in all systems (of transparency and accountability) because these systems which are supposed to prevent corruption have themselves become weak owing to decades of corruption (Survey participant, Male, 35-44)

I agree that laws and the government systems are weak. I said this because laws and policies that the parliament passed seemed to target the small people, and not the big people in high places (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

2. Most participants suggested that there is a sense of eroding morals and a general breakdown in the rule of law in the public sector:

Unfair and biased decision making that results in the demoralisation of staff performance. As a result, most tasks are not usually accomplished on time (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

3. Normalising of a particular set of socio-cultural norms in the public sector. Public officials are involved in corruption with apparent impunity:

Big people (politicians/senior bureaucrats) are ‘doing it’ up there. The same thing is happening down the hierarchy where junior government officers are involved in corruption. Therefore, I believed that government has allowed corruption to thrive” (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

4. A disincentivised public service and low-income earning opportunities:

Demand for daily expenditures like high rental costs, school fees, transportation fees, and family's security and welfare had forced many public servants to leave work anytime and participate in other activities to make ends meet to demands of increasing costs of goods and services to subsidise their meagre earnings" (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Times are hard today, and many people (both employed and unemployed) get into unscrupulous schemes and dirty deals every now and again for a little bit of money. The employed use their position to manipulate individuals with the need to get a financial benefit. The unemployed engage in dirty deals to rig systems where they have associates that facilitate their deals to siphon money (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

5. General marketisation of the public goods and services driven by neoliberal structures, promotes an increasing level of greed and erosion of civic responsibility:

It's because of greed. People in position of power are not there to serve others or the people of PNG but they are there to acquire wealth for themselves (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

5.4 The *nere tere* culture

The concept "*nere tere*" is adopted from the Simbu society of Papua New Guinea, which is a social exchange system of 'give and take' (reciprocity). One research participant noted that today we know corruption comes in different forms and shapes.

This [gift-giving] is one form. In PNG, if you give someone a gift, in your mind you expect to be reciprocated. Although you gave him/her the gift, which made him/her happy, your mind and intentions were already corrupt. You gave and expected to be reciprocated. In Chimbu language, we call this '*nere-tere*', which literally translated means 'give and eat, eat and give'. Before [traditional times] gift-giving was good. But today, this is seen as corruption because gift-giving comes with monetary value and expectations (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

The *nere tere* behaviour often features prominently during election cycles in PNG. Unfortunately, this informal system of reciprocity has transposed into PNG's modern bureaucracy and is associated with the rise in everyday corruption. For the briber to receive a public good or service, he or she must first render or offer a certain token (usually monetary gifts) to the bribee (public official). Within an election context, the briber is usually an intending candidate trying to induce votes from the voters with monetary gifts or their equivalent. The voters (bribees/principals) are expected to reciprocate by supplying their votes to the candidates (bribers/agents). In a typical citizen-politician linkage (patronage), Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007, p. 2) noted that "direct material or monetary inducements are used to target individuals and small groups of citizens whom politicians know to be highly responsive to such side-payments and willing to surrender their votes for the right price". Awagl (2016) gave a practical PNG account of the *nere tere* politics using a poetic expression as shown in Figure 5.5.

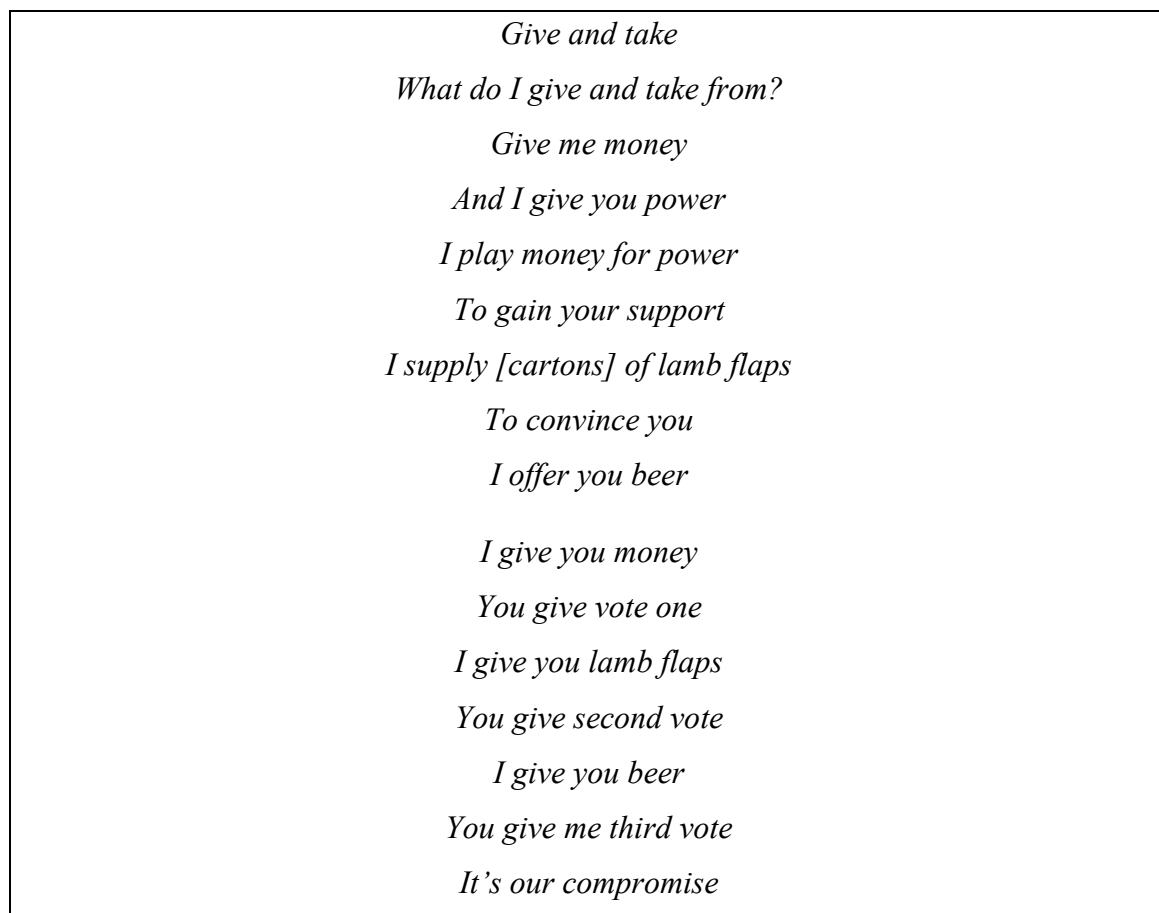


Figure 5.5: Expressing the *nere tere* politics through poetry. Retrieved from <https://www.pngattitude.com/2016/01/nere-tere-give-take.html>.

These types of *nere tere* practices have transcended the realm of electoral politics and are being normalised in PNG's political and public sector institutions. Kin (2016) noted that *nere tere* politics is:

A misapplication of the traditional highlands big man ways of handling power. These days, businessmen wanting to enter politics pay huge amounts of money to be elected and the hundreds of promotional parties they offer, voters see them purchase thousands of kina worth of pigs and frozen goods. The people roam from one campaign house to the next taking advantage of this largesse. And the candidates allow it. They know that under the limited preferential voting system (LPV), second and third choices can be vital to winning. So, such behaviour is accepted.

The data from this research showed that around 91 percent of politicians (during and after election) provided personal favours to their key followers, supporters, and clients. This view is strengthened further with most respondents stating that 99 percent of the time, voters and public servants are overwhelmingly influenced by politicians who have backing from corporate interests during different phases of the election process to get desired results (outcome). The intersection between politicians and corporate sphere needs further investigation, which could be challenging due to the huge financial power of the big resource extractors, and the ease with which they can maintain high levels of secrecy about their activities.

The gift giving culture (*nere tere*) has become a permanent feature of PNG society. Under the guise of the PNG (Melanesian) gifting system, findings from this research showed that around 68 percent of public servants have taken or accepted bribes and kickbacks in return for providing or facilitating accessibility to government services. The results are not surprising as most public servants are now expected to be gifted with tokens or gifts by their clients in return for their service. The clients also know that to expeditiously access the service, they must reciprocate with tokens or gifts. Public servants in PNG are engaged in this parochial activity due to several factors including meagre wages, a repressive salary and wage tax (SWT) regime, inadequate institutional incentives, and lack of morale and motivation. This view is supported by public-choice theorists “who point to the fact that government officials with low wages and thus unmotivated might be propelled to expedite tardy bureaucratic matters” (Ampratwum, 2008, p. 78). Throughout the data generation process, many participants viewed corruption as an existential threat across all levels of government and society in PNG. Gift giving is usually

associated with money, and money when gifted could produce an anti-democratic outcome. As one participant argued:

Leaders (politicians) are hungry for power. For instance, when Peter O'Neill became prime minister, we thought he was the right person to lead the country until he was removed [due to so many corrupt allegations against his government]. Then we have a new prime minister [James Marape], but still we want him changed because he has done some wrong things. Corruption is deeply rooted. Another personal example was when I went for a job interview and was approached by the security guard who told me that the HR personnel responsible for selection wants some *buai* and smoke (cigarettes). However, I went to the interview minus the *buai* and the smoke because I have no money except my bus fare. Even when you are qualified for the job, people who brought tokens/gifts like *buai* and smoke to the HR selection team would most likely be considered or selected for the job. So, as I see it, corruption exists at all levels of government and society, and it is a big problem. It is also associated with the big man system. In our parliament, corruption is deeply rooted. No one leader (politician), who professes to be a God-fearing person that enters parliament will remain godly forever because in parliament/politics leaders are dealing with money, and money is the root of all evil (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

The general observation from the above discussions is that the tendency for public servants to accept tokens and gifts, which distorts their official responsibilities demonstrates that the cynicism towards transparent operating procedures is so widespread it has become part of the culture in the public service.

5.5 The *wantok* or *save pes* syndrome

The *wantok* or '*save pes*' culture is a literal concept for 'someone you know' or an acquaintance. It could be a family, kin, friend, colleague, or an old friend from college. The concept is often associated with people (clients) who are accessing services in both the public and private sectors. Service recipients or seekers usually go through their *save pes* to get the job done because to use the normal process would be time consuming. As alluded to earlier, this would entail some form of harassment or extortive bribes (Table 5.1). Koim (2021) noted that many people who depend on government services are sometimes frustrated at the slow service provided by the government and resort to greasing the wheels, hoping that the wheels of the public service machinery would turn to their favour expeditiously (Koim, 2021). Data from this

research found that 91 percent of respondents believed that either most or all politicians provide personal favours to their key followers and supporters (clients), while within the public sector, 98 percent of the participants either agree or strongly agree that favouritism exists across the PNG public sector. Seventy-six percent of the participants believed that only some service seekers get preferential treatment from government institutions because the system is broken, or rules and laws are not enforced enough, and 72 percent thought that only some people benefited from government services because the service delivery mechanism is biased or unfair (Table 5.7 and Figure 5.6). Data indicated evidence of *conscious dysfunctionism*, deep rooted clientelistic practices, and favouritism and preferential treatment across both the political and administrative environments, which are highly unfavourable to access government goods and services or to do business. These included cases of bending the rules and ‘foot dragging’ or protracted approval processes because state officials believe they have absolute monopoly over the provision of a government good or service and can therefore use their discretion however it benefits them. Under these biased or unfavourable circumstances, service seekers or clients turn to their *save pes* or inside connections with gifts and bribes or, alternatively, harassment or extortive bribery, to expedite their service needs and other business transactions.

Table 5.7: PNG’s political and administrative environments are biased/unfair

Proportion of politicians who provide personal favours to their clients		Favouritism exists in the public service		Proportion of people who get preferential treatment from government institutions		Proportion of people who benefited from government goods and services	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	48	Strongly agree	36	All	2	All	6
Most	43	Agree	62	Most	21	Most	19
Some	9	Disagree	1	Some	76	Some	72
None	0	Strongly disagree	1	None	1	None	3
Total	100		100		100		100

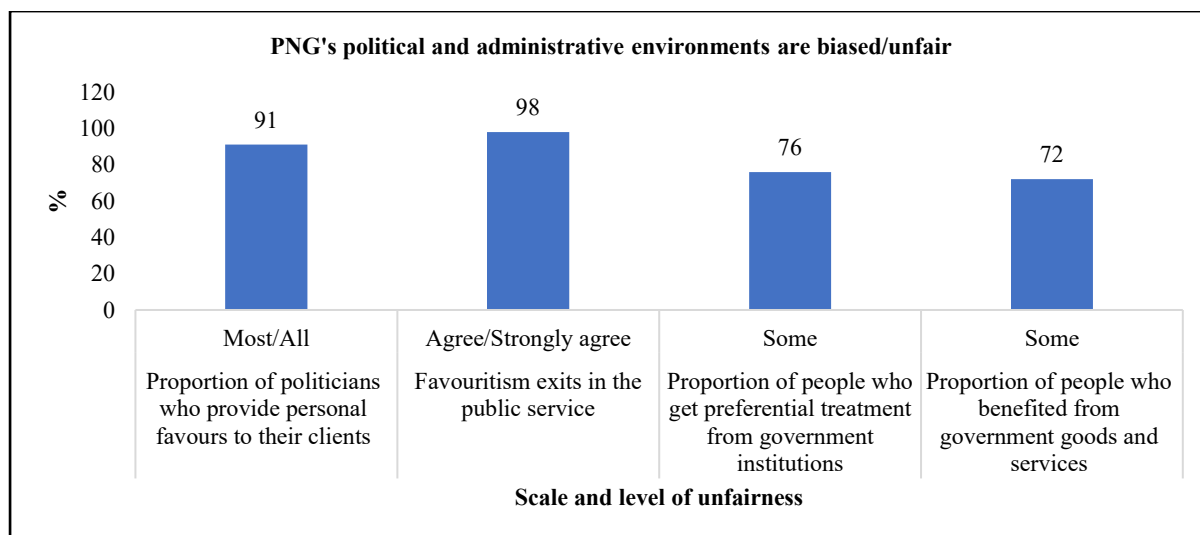


Figure 5.6: PNG's political and administrative environments are biased/unfair

A weak government that does not control its agencies experiences high levels of corruption. This system encourages corrupt officials to use resources and services (such as permits, licenses, passports, etc.) that the state owns for their own benefit. Shleifer and Vishny (1993, p. 599) noted that “licenses, permits, passports and visas are needed to comply with laws and regulations that restrict private economic activity. Insofar as government officials have discretion [and monopoly] over the provision of these goods, they can collect bribes from private agents”. A private agent or individual seeking a government good, or service often resorts to bribery because the government agent, who owns and sells the good or service in question on behalf of the state, denies the private agent. As De Soto (1989) explained, “an important reason why many of these permits and regulations exist is probably to give officials the power to deny them and to collect bribes in return for providing the permits” (as cited in Shleifer & Vishny, 1993, p. 601). Pervasiveness of such clientelistic behaviours has clear implications for economic growth and prospects for economic reform (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). Regarding states in which clientelistic characteristics guide official behaviours, Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) argued that politicians would always try to maintain government institutions that help them stay in power without bringing external institutions such as the World Bank that would threaten their patronage over these government institutions.

Data from the present research found political power and authority to be highly monopolised at least within the executive arm of government (executive dominance), and politicians in government use this vested power to guide legislation formations and policy making. Seventy-seven percent of the participants thought that either most or all politicians monopolised political

power and authority in one way or another to further their own interests during their political tenure. This is observed through for example, use of discretionary powers by the prime minister and state ministers to vote for key legislative reforms that benefit and/or extend their political tenure (life), constant firing of opponents and hiring of cronies, and political interference in policy making at the bureaucratic level. Politicians are self-serving, which is supported by data from this research where 77 percent of the participants believed that either most or all politicians bend rules and laws that benefit their personal interests, and 82 percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that personal rather than public interest guides decisions and/or legislative making in parliament. Eighty-five percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that policy making and implementation processes are often controlled by political leaders to benefit their own interests (Table 5.8 and Figure 5.7). For instance, political leaders have shifted from their legislative making functions into now performing the project manager and implementor roles that were once under the ambit of bureaucratic heads and public servants.

Table 5.8: Monopolising and discretionary use of political power for private interests

Proportion of politicians who monopolise political power and authority to further their own interests		Proportion of politicians who bend rules and laws that benefit their personal interests		Personal interests guide decisions and/or legislative making in parliament		Policy making and implementation processes are often controlled by political leaders to benefit their own interests	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	13	All	25	Strongly agree	18	Strongly agree	24
Most	64	Most	52	Agree	64	Agree	61
Some	23	Some	22	Disagree	14	Disagree	12
None	0	None	1	Strongly disagree	4	Strongly disagree	3
Total	100		100		100		100

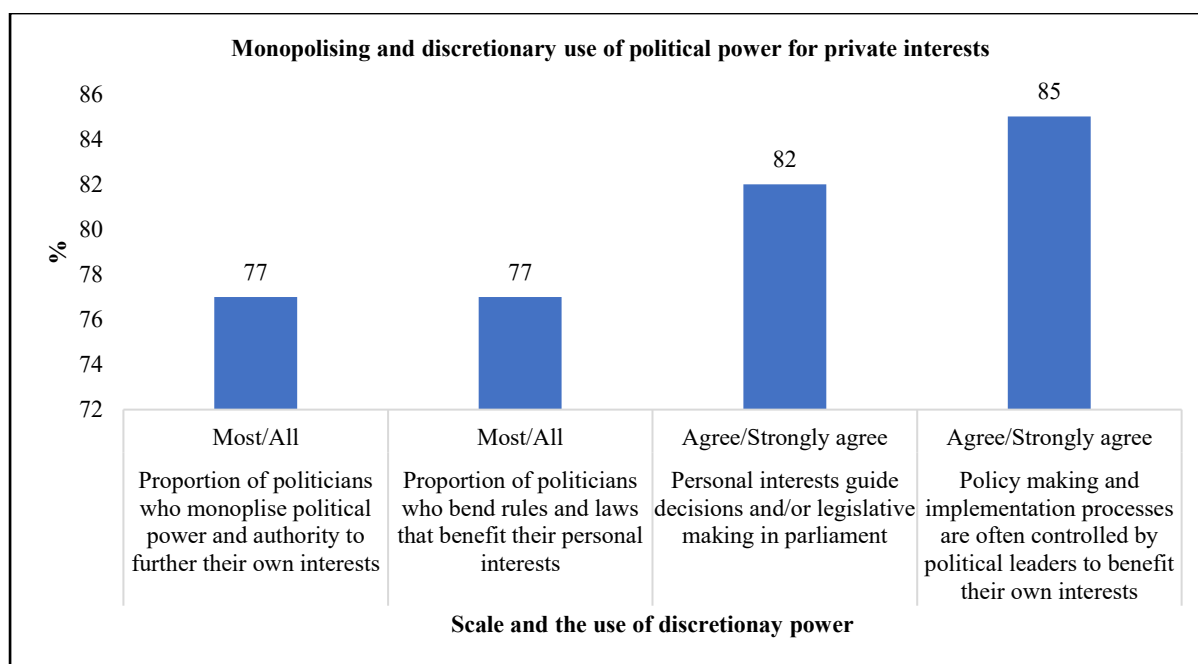


Figure 5.7: Monopolising and discretionary use of political power for private interests

5.6 Corruption, bribery, and leadership under PNG law

There are sections of laws—for instance in the *Criminal Code Act* 1974, the Organic Law on the Duties and Responsibilities of Leadership (OLDRL), the Organic Law on the Ombudsman Commission (OLOC), and sections within the Organic Law on the Independent Commission Against Corruption (OLICAC) that criminalise corruption. Emphases on specific sections under each legal code that deals with corruption and bribery are provided in Appendix 5.5. The following, however, provides a summary of each legal code related to corruption.

Section 87 of the *Criminal Code Act* 1974 in particular is specific about the definition of corruption and provided the following interpretation:

(1) A person who—

(a) being—

(i) employed in the Public Service, or the holder of any public office; and

(ii) charged with the performance of any duty by virtue of that employment or office, (not being a duty touching the administration of justice), corruptly asks, receives or obtains, or agrees or attempts to receive or obtain, any property or benefit for himself or

any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done, or to be done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of the duties of his office; or

(b) corruptly gives, confers or procures, or promises or offers to give or confer, or to procure or attempt to procure, to, on or for any person, any property or benefit on account of any such act or omission on the part of a person in the Public Service or holding a public office, is guilty of a crime.

Penalty: Imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years, and a fine at the discretion of the court.

The *Criminal Code Act* 1974 is very explicit on acts or omissions arising from corruption and provides detail interpretation of how law is applied when bribery or any act or omission related to corruption occur. The main objective of OLDRL is to implement Division III.2 (*Leadership Code*) of the national *Constitution* (s. 26-31) where all public officials holding constitutional offices must act in the national interest. The main aim of the OLOC is to implement Division VIII.2 (*Ombudsman Commission*) of the national *Constitution* (s. 217-220), in particular to guide the conduct and behaviour of constitutional office holders, whose performance must reflect the national interests of the sovereign state and the people of PNG.

The Organic Law on the Independent Commission Against Corruption 2020 (OLICAC) is an organic law enacted on November 12, 2020, that established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), which is a constitutional office mandated by Section 217 of the national *Constitution*. The OLICAC ushered a new era in the fight against corruption. The OLICAC can investigate corrupt conduct by applying Section 34, which establishes the power of the Commission to investigate alleged or suspected corrupt conduct and prosecute indictable offences. The Commission can also apply for instance, Sections 61, 62, 97B and 97C of the *Criminal Code Act* 1974 in prosecuting those attempting to corrupt state institutions and processes. Section 99 of the OLICAC provides the Commission the power to make arrests in conjunction with the powers of the police force.

Since November 12, 2020, the Commission has been run by a transition staff service team (*Service of the Commission*, Section 115 of the Organic law on ICAC) until recently (2023) when the ICAC appointments committee (Section 133 of the Organic Law on ICAC) appointed the ICAC Commissioner and his two deputies. All three commissioners of the ICAC are expatriates, which is interpreted under Section 133 of the Organic Law on ICAC. Prime Minister

James Marape, in announcing these appointments reasoned that the appointment of these three expatriate commissioners was to avoid political influence and other such encroachments (e.g., *wantokism* and big man influence) that have been plaguing other anti-corruption bodies, including the Ombudsman Commission over the years. However, these expatriate appointments were considered by Walton (2023) as a stop-gap measure that, after the terms of these expatriate commissioners expires, may result in the collapse of the integrity of the ICAC, returning it back to the former days of political influence and compromise. A potential long-term approach, as Walton (2023) explained is to identify credible Papua New Guineans to work and train under these expatriate commissioners as potential replacements.

Overall, general observations from the present research indicated lack of transparency, compliance and enforcement of laws. Most participants noted that government transparency is lacking. That is, public servants and politicians acted with impunity with less regard for transparency and accountability. Integrity, honesty, respect for public service norms, and commitment and professionalism toward the state are eroding. While some participants explained that there are already well-intentioned regulations, procedures and public service rules and enabling legislations such as the General Orders (GO), *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1995 and the *Public Services (Management) Act* 1995 in place to deter corrupt acts. However, “implementation is not always transparent once you have people with self-interest employed by the government to implement them” (Survey participant, Female, 35-44). Another participant noted that “there is transparency, but people within the bureaucracy are not enforcing transparency enough” (FGD participant, Male, 18-24). Laws are weakly enforced by government officials, and this has become a culture. For instance, “a person without a valid driver’s license gave some money to the traffic officer without asking for the receipt, that signals a breakdown in law and has become a norm (Survey participant, Male, 25-34). Similar views are presented below:

I agree that laws are weak. For instance, the Ombudsman Commission has conducted numerous leadership tribunals and commission of inquiries but to date, we haven’t seen anyone [leader] being convicted. Are they really looking for information? Have they investigated well? Are they covering each other up? Citizens are lost and not knowing what is going on (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

For me personally, I know there are rules and regulations [in place], or we do have transparency in place. But those people in authority who are responsible for carrying out these rules and regulations are weak [compromised]. The system is weak because of these

people who are involved [in corruption] both at the administrative and political levels.

It's the people who are making the system weak (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Participants were asked about how ICAC should deal with corruption in PNG. Most participants explained that ICAC should operate independently without any form of outside influence (political etc.,). As one participant noted, "the Commission has to be totally independent from any political interference, and those implementing these important functions must be given special protection under the law to ensure their personal safety is guaranteed because of repercussions against them by the corrupt individuals that are being investigated" (Survey participant, Male, 35-44). Section 104 of the ICAC relates to protection of witnesses. To be effective in its operations, one participant suggested that:

The ICAC must be given full powers to investigate corrupt activities and be allowed to prosecute individuals and lay criminal charges. The ICAC must have its own litigation path with a separate judicial bench in the national court to hear trials and expedite sentencing so that the entire process demonstrates commitment to fighting corruption. This is what will make it effective and distinct from the Ombudsman Commission and the fraud investigation unit (NFACD) within the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Overall, the participants are pessimistic about new laws and anti-corruption measures to address corruption in PNG. Papua New Guineans are ambivalent about the nation-state. Peoples' loyalties are still very strongly biased towards kin and language groups. While people very much need and appreciate the services that the state provides (especially health and education, but also law and order, transport, communications, and infrastructure) they are not strongly committed to supporting those services for everyone in the country. This also applies to the trust and confidence people have for anti-corruption institutions as Winn (2021) noted below:

In PNG there are many laws against corruption. There are also a host of integrity agencies, a new Independent Commission against Corruption, as well as NGOs and donors that support anti-corruption reform. Despite these well-intentioned efforts, findings from my research suggest many citizens are simply giving up. That is, they now think corruption is a norm that cannot be changed. These findings indicate that much more needs to be done to convince the country's citizens that the fight against corruption is still worthwhile.

5.7 Conclusion

Distinguishing bribery from gifts and favours in the Melanesian cultural context is vital for understanding bribery in Melanesian countries, including PNG, where culture still plays a very powerful role in state-society relations. Sahlins' (1972) *Stone Age Economics* is a landmark account of economic exchange in pre-capitalist societies. The traditional gift economy system in Melanesia and other non-capitalist societies fits Sahlins' (1972) category of 'balanced' reciprocity. Balanced reciprocity involves direct exchange, where a reciprocation of similar value is expected within a set time frame. But this is perverted in modern times by *wantokism*, which typically involves freeloading (i.e., failure to reciprocate). Traditional reciprocity becomes bribery when the government employee accepts a gift as an individual but shifts the obligation to reciprocate onto the state. This is the aspect that is perhaps most distinctive in PNG. Therefore, the portrayal of culture through *wantokism* and big man system, as the present research noted, is a powerful force that has been shaping the modern state system in PNG.

Most research participants considered gifts as constituting corruption (bribery), especially when exchanged within the context of government ethics and the modern Weberian system. As Walton (2019, p. 3) explained, "In the absence of a welfare state, the *wantok* system (a system of reciprocity between friendship and kinship groups) provides important social protection for many citizens. However, it also means public servants are pressured to provide unofficial favours to their *wantoks*, which can lead to illegal activity". For example, while investigating perceptions of bribery and gift giving from key informants (senior bureaucrats) within central coordinating government departments in PNG, Tiki (2018) found that bribery is perceived to be a norm because it "is often confused with gifts in the Melanesian cultural context" (2018, ii). This confusion is deliberately exploited by the briber because the recipient (usually a state official) accepts a gift as an individual but shifts the obligation to reciprocate onto the state.

Despite the well-intentioned efforts of anti-corruption institutions and laws, there still exist legal loopholes that people (mostly leaders) are using to escape incrimination or prosecution. As the present research demonstrated, enforcement of these laws is lax, and there is no clear demarcation of when a "gift" becomes a bribe and hence is corrupt. Most research respondents explained that national anti-corruption institutions are weak in enforcing crimes related to bribery and other forms of corruption because of lack of political will, under-resourcing of anti-corruption institutions, and key people running anti-corruption offices are compromised.

Money is closely related to the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts. If the prime minister and other corrupt power brokers in parliament are able to block funding to the institutions and people that are tasked with uncovering and prosecuting corrupt acts, then they are effectively stymieing the process. Hence, existing laws such as the *Criminal Code Act* 1974 that criminalise bribery and other forms of corruption exist only on paper, and not in practice.

CHAPTER 6: Land administration, misadministration and institutional corruption: A PNG case study

This chapter provides an overview of the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP), and aspects of land administration and misadministration in PNG. It highlights some practices relating to governance and complicity, supported by two cases that portrayed impropriety in the process of land acquisition and ownership. The selection of the DLPP as a case study stems from three issues central to the present research: 1) the current view that DLPP has a weak land governance and management system (Filer, 2011a; National Research Institute, 2007) that perhaps exposes it to potential complicity; 2) increasing urbanisation and internal migration that creates unplanned activities and settlements, thus putting pressure on alienated and customary land (Filer et al., 2017; Rooney, 2017); and 3) a steady increase in private property developers (Wangi & Ezebilo, 2017), and private sector investments who added increasing pressure on both customary and state-owned land for development purposes. High consumption rates or increasing demand for food, fuel, and commodities are also increasing pressure on both customary and alienated land (De Schutter, 2016). The pressure generated by these issues is particularly serious in main urban centres, such as Port Moresby and Lae where alienated and customary land is being developed, leaving some leaseholders and customary landowners to question whether land is acquired legally or illegally. It is the latter question that is of interest to this case study.

Land in PNG is divided into two broad categories: customary or unalienated land, and alienated land, or land held under formal tenure (Apelis & Moore, 2013; Cooter, 1991; Luluaki, 2014; NRI, 2007; Yala, 2010; Yala & Lyons, 2012). State ownership of land in PNG includes land under formal tenure with freehold and lease-lease-back (LLB) titles (Yala & Lyons, 2012). There is a common assertion that 97 percent of land in PNG belongs to customary landowners, while three percent is alienated land. For instance, Yala and Lyons (2012) noted that after 1975 (following independence):

Most of the land in PNG, [about] 95%, is still held under customary tenure. Of the 5% under formal administration, 2.5% is owned by the Government. Only a small proportion, about 0.5% is owned by private persons as freehold under statutory tenure. The remaining 2% is estimated to be land owned by customary landowning social units leased to private enterprises as business and agricultural leases using the lease-lease-back process defined by the *Land Act* (1996). In terms of ownership, 97% is owned by customary landowning

social units defined by the customary law of the area. While the 2.5% is owned by the State, the remainder, 0.5% is owned by private persons as private freehold (Yala & Lyons, 2012, p. 11).

However, the 97-3 percent assertion (Armitage, 2001; Filer, 2011b, 2014; James, 1985; Kimas, 2010; Levantis & Wangi, 2018; Trebilcock, 1983; Yala & Hamago, 2019; Yala & Lyons, 2012) and the 95-5 percent assertion (Yala and Lyons, 2012) are contested or questioned as more customary land has been alienated in the 21st century by large corporate entities for agricultural purposes, by private property developers for real estate development, and by private businesses and individuals for business or residential purposes (Filer, 2011b, 2014; Gabriel et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2014). It is now believed that of PNG's total land area (462,840 km²), somewhere between 80 and 90 percent falls generally under customary ownership, while the remainder is alienated land. The three percent figure does not include the land that has been alienated for agricultural purposes under the 2003 special agricultural and business leases (SABLs) framework, and other acquisitions that fell into the hands of private businesses and individuals. Since the SABL loophole was created between 2003 and 2011, it was estimated that between ten to eleven percent of customary land was alienated by foreign corporate entities for large-scale agricultural businesses such as oil palm plantations (Filer, 2011b, 2014; Gabriel et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2014). Filer (2011b, p. 1) noted that "between the beginning of July 2003 and the end of April 2011, around 5 million hectares of customary land (11 percent of PNG's total land area) passed into the hands of national and foreign corporate entities through a legal mechanism known as the lease-leaseback scheme". By 2011, between 14-16% (i.e., the existing 3%-5% alienated land plus the 11% alienated land under the SABL loophole) of the land was alienated through the SABLs. However, the amount of alienated land could in fact be a lot more than this, as more land fell into the hands of private property developers, private businesses, and individuals around the country.

6.1 An overview of land administration in Papua New Guinea

Land administration is an important aspect of how land is governed and utilised in PNG (Cromcombe & Hide, 1971; Fingleton, 1982; Kimas, 2010; Larmour, 1986; NRI, 2007; Power & Tolopa, 2009). The main institution that looks after all land with formal tenure, or land that is owned by the state, in PNG is the DLPP (Cooter, 1991; Kimas, 2010; NRI, 2007; Walter et al., 2016; Yala, 2010). Generally, land administration refers to the system of recording, storing, and archiving information on land allocation and land use (NRI, 2007). Land administration is

a very technical process and, therefore, requires technical input in the processes of land acquisition, allocation, governance, use, and development. The DLPP has thirteen divisions including: 1) Policy and Legal Services; 2) Corporate Services; 3) Land Information Services; 4) Physical Planning Division; 5) Customary Land Acquisition; 6) Customary Land Leases; 7) Customary Land Projects; 8) Incorporated Land Group; 9) State Land; 10) Registrar of Titles; 11) Office of Surveyor General; 12) Office of the Valuer General; and 13) National Mapping Bureau (DLPP, 2022). Except for the policy and legal services and corporate services divisions, the rest of the divisions require technical services in land dealings. By structure, the Minister of Lands is the political head of the institution, who relies on professional advice from the DLPP's bureaucratic head (Department Secretary), and his or her divisional staff. The DLPP is responsible for the administration of all land that has formal titles, or all land held under formal tenure. These include both alienated state land and private freehold land (Cooter, 1991; Kimas, 2010; Luluaki, 2014; NRI, 2007; Yala & Lyons, 2012). The DLPP is only responsible for the planning, release, development, and administration of leases on land owned by the State. Moreover, it is also responsible for issuing the titles and providing safe keeping for both the freehold and LLB titles (Yala & Lyons, 2012). However, "all dealings on these land titles are outside of the formal administration system" (Yala & Lyons, 2012, p. 13).

6.2 Customary or unalienated land

Most land in PNG, which is held and defined by custom, belongs to the people. The perception that 97 percent of land was held under customary law (pre- and post-independence view) has now been questioned because it seems more customary land (about 14%-16%) has been alienated in the 21st century through corporate and private business interests. It is now perceived that somewhere between 80 and 90 percent falls generally under customary ownership. Customary lands are those for which "boundaries have not been surveyed, titles have not been registered, the applicable body of law is the customs of the region, and many of the powers associated with ownership are expressed by customary groups" (Cooter, 1991, p. 766). The occupancy, use and inheritance of customary land is guided by an intricate body of customary practices and laws which vary significantly among the many different cultural groups claiming customary land rights in PNG (Cooter, 1991).

If the state needs to lease or acquire customary land, it must do so by meeting the provisions of the *Land Act* 1996. According to Levantis and Wangi (2018), access to customary land, including the right to use and own it is governed by oral or unwritten customs and laws. "In

many ways, the administration of customary land is similar to alienated land except that the latter is governed by written laws. Property rights for alienated land are provided through land titles, which are owned either by the state or by private interests and are tradable in the property market” (Levantis & Wangi, 2018, p. 5).

About 85 percent of Papua New Guineans are rural subsistence farmers, who depend on customary land for their livelihoods. Unlike the alienated land tenure system, unwritten customs and laws define and dictate how customary land is accessed, owned, and used as a property (Cooter, 1991; James, 1985; Levantis & Wangi, 2018; Yala & Lyons, 2012). Therefore, the customary land tenure “operates outside the formal law and administration system. [However], the PNG Constitution, the *Land Act* 1996, and the *Underlying Law Act* 2000 [legally] recognise customary land tenure” (Yala & Lyons, 2012, p. 12). Kimas (2010, p. 34) further noted that “customary land is outside the formal land administration and is administered by customary land law. The State helps settle disputes between customary land groups under the *Land Disputes Settlement Act* 1974”. Currently, disputes involving customary land are also settled through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism, which was designed to deal with the backlog of court cases including land disputes. It was designed around 2000, with the first ADR cases heard in 2007.

Prior to independence in 1975, the Australian colonial administration and external observers saw land in the territory of Papua and New Guinea as *terra nullius* or “waste, vacant, and ownerless” (Cooter, 1991, p. 766). However, this view was dispelled and no longer applies because the general principle now is that all land is deemed to be held under customary tenure (Yala & Lyons, 2012). The rationale for land alienation was “selectively permitted only in areas where [there is a genuine need] for the delivery of public services or to facilitate enterprise development with fair and just payments [compensation] made to customary landowners” (Yala & Lyons, 2012, p. 12). The state has acquired customary land since independence through the *Lands Acquisition (Development Purposes) Act* 1974, and afterwards using Sections 10 and 12 of the *Land Act* 1996. These sections provided mechanisms by which land is acquired for public purposes through voluntary agreement and/or compulsory acquisition (Yala & Lyons, 2012).

In the ensuing years after independence, a minimal proportion of customary land has been alienated further through land reforms (Apelis et al., 2011; Kimas, 2010; Yala & Hamagao, 2019). However, this view changed gradually over the years due to increasing land use

activities because “an increasing amount of land held under customary tenure obtained formal titles under Part III of the *Land Act* 1996 for special business and agriculture leases” (Kimas, 2010, p. 34).

6.3 Alienated land

Alienated land is governed by the *Land Act* 1996 and is administered by the DLPP. There are two categories of alienated land including state leasehold (land owned by the state) and freehold (land owned by private citizens) (Luluaki, 2014; NRI, 2007). The amount of alienated land under both the state (state leasehold) and private citizens (freehold) could be more than three percent following the conversion of about eleven percent of customary land into SABLs between 2003 and 2011. This also includes land converted into the freehold scheme by private businesses and individuals. This research estimated the portion of current alienated land to be somewhere between fourteen to sixteen percent of the total land mass. The *Land Act* 1996, Section 7 provided two modes of land acquisition, which are treated separately under Sections 10 and 12 whereby the Lands Minister may, on behalf of the state, acquire or alienate land by agreement, or by compulsory process, respectively. “Both processes produce a permanent outcome, meaning that upon the conclusion of the acquisition process, the land ceases to be customary land and becomes alienated state land” (Luluaki, 2014, p. 3). Manning and Hughes (2008, p. 245) noted that “in Papua New Guinea the government’s power to acquire land is contained in the *Land Act* 1996 and the *Lands Acquisition (Development Purposes) Act* 1974. The state can acquire land by agreement with landowners, or under some circumstances the Minister for Lands can decide to make a compulsory purchase (*Land Act* 1996, s. 7)”. The acquisition and use of state leases must promote national interest. State leases are usually awarded for a specified period. This is stipulated in Section 102(4) of the *Land Act* 1996, where the Lands Minister can award state leases, particularly for agricultural purposes, for a maximum period of 99 years. Since 2003 when the SABL loophole was created until 2011 when it became the subject of a Commission of Inquiry (COI), about eleven percent (5 million hectares) of customary land was converted into alienated land through the lease-leaseback scheme. This portion together with the current three to five percent leasehold land means that a total of between fourteen to sixteen percent of customary land could by now be in the hands of large corporate entities, private businesses, and individuals (Filer, 2011b, 2014; Gabriel et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2014).

The state is the underlying authority for alienated land and a process of voluntary or compulsory acquisition from customary owners – mainly in colonial times – is how alienated land came to exist (Apelis & Moore, 2013). State ownership of alienated land “is expressed by Section 4 of the *Land Act* by providing that all land in the country other than customary land is the property of the State” (Luluaki, 2014, p. 2). This means that apart from unalienated land, any estates, properties, interests, and rights of ownership over alienated land are deemed to be held under the state through a lease agreement (Luluaki, 2014). “Alienated land, which has been brought out from customary law by a process of title conversion, is either owned by governments or held in freehold by private persons” (Cooter, 1991, p. 766).

6.3.1 Alienation or acquisition by agreement

“Customary land can be acquired by the state by agreement with the customary landowners. Section 10 of the *Land Act* 1996 provides the legal basis for this mode of application” (Luluaki, 2014, p. 3). Two types of alienation are described under Section 10 of the *Land Act* 1996. First, Section 10(1), in accordance with Section 11, allows for land to be acquired or leased following all necessary procedures as approved by the Lands Minister. Second, and in accordance with Section 10(2), customary land will only be acquired by the Lands Minister, on behalf of the State, on such terms and conditions as are agreed on between him and the customary landowners. The land acquired or to be acquired must not be under any conflict (*Land Act* 1996 s. 10).

There are two categories of state leases. “First, the state may, by agreement, lease customary land as provided by Section 10(4) of the *Land Act* 1996. It can use the lease for any stated purpose consistent with the national interest for a specified period. The important point is that the state itself requires the customary land for the benefit of citizens generally. Secondly, there are special agricultural and business leases [SABLs]” (Luluaki, 2014, p. 3). The Lands Minister may lease customary land for the purpose of granting a SABL of the land and, once approved, customary ownership is suspended for the period of the lease to the State (*Land Act* 1996 s.11). The SABLs are granted to an individual, a land group, or a business or incorporated body to whom the customary landowners have agreed through an instrument of lease (*Land Act* 1996 s.102). The distinction between the two leases is that in the alienation or acquisition by agreement, the state requires the lease, while it does not require the lease in the alienation or acquisition by compulsory process (Luluaki, 2014). Agricultural leases (SABLs) involve the lease-lease-back arrangement whereby the state acquires the lease from customary landowners, and

ownership only reverts to the landowners once the lease period lapses. Stead (2017, p. 359) emphasised that “in the lease-leaseback scheme, land is leased from customary owners by the state, which then leases it on to another entity, usually a corporate developer”. Examples of this LLB scheme were presented by Filer (2017) and Gabriel et al. (2017) in their studies of land grab and SABLs through acquisition of customary land by business or corporate bodies for agricultural and business purposes.

6.3.2 Alienation or acquisition by compulsory process

The *Land Act* 1996, Section 8 stipulated that land (usually customary land), acquired by compulsory process, may be an easement, right, power, privilege, or other interest that did not previously exist over or in connection with the land. The primary purpose of compulsory acquisition is to cause the land to be developed or, to be partly developed in a productive manner based on its intended purposes (*Land Act* 1996 s.8). Section 12 of the *Land Act* 1996 is explicit on compulsory acquisition. Luluaki (2014, p. 3) noted that:

If the state requires customary land for a public purpose and agreement to acquire that land fails, it may invoke its power to compulsorily acquire the customary land subject to appropriate compensation being paid. The state’s power to acquire customary land or any other alienated (private freehold) land by a compulsory process is protected by both the *Constitution* (s.53) and the *Land Act* (parts III and IV).

The main caveat associated with land acquired through the compulsory process (*Land Act* 1996 s.7 & 12) is that it affords too many discretionary powers to the Lands Minister, who, in collaboration with other actors, could use his or her position to abuse the process as demonstrated in case studies provided in the present research. The integrity of land administration in PNG is weak. The centralised functions of land planning, development, and registration of land titles in the DLPP make it prone to abuse and corruption. Levantis (2016, p. 8) noted that “the litany of failures with regards to land titling in PNG – such as unauthorized changes in land titles and duplicate titles for a single parcel of land – can mostly be traced to the issue of corrupt practices in a department where powers are concentrated”.

6.4 The organisational culture of complicity

Corruption and land fraud has been an ongoing issue plaguing the DLPP. Recurring corrupt practices within the DLPP have affected many aspects of land administration in PNG. In 2007,

a national land development taskforce report produced by NRI found that, overall, there were lots of deficiencies and weaknesses in land administration in PNG. Eighteen key findings from this report, which outlined major deficiencies and weaknesses in the DLPP are summarised in Appendix 6.1.

The former Secretary for the Department of Justice and Attorney General, late Dr Lawrence Kalinoe was reported as saying that “the Lands Department is totally corrupt from the bottom up. Officers and certain rogue landowners are colluding and conniving with each other to sell off customary land for their own benefit and interest while the majority of the landowners are left out” (Gridneff & AAP PNG Correspondent, 2010). The former PNG Lands Department Secretary, Pepi Kimas, echoed the same sentiment and suggested that there were corrupt officers everywhere, including in the DLPP (Gridneff & AAP PNG Correspondent, 2010). Findings from the present research revealed that almost all respondents (99 percent – this includes respondents from focus groups who were also individually asked questions) believed that corruption is either problematic or highly problematic in the public sector (Winn, 2021). As discussed in the methods chapter, two data generation techniques were used including an online survey ($N=41$) and focus group discussions ($N=42$). Eighty-three people ($N=83$) took part in this research.

Table 6.1: The extent to which corruption is a problem in the public sector in PNG

Scale	Survey	FGD	Total	%
Highly problematic	32	30	62	75
Problematic	9	11	20	24
Less problematic	0	1	1	1
Not problematic	0	0	0	0
Total	41	42	83	100

Respondents were then specifically asked about the degree to which the DLPP is considered a corrupt institution. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the DLPP is a corrupt institution (Table 6.2). The overall perception of public sector corruption (99 percent) and the DLPP corruption perception (98 percent) (Figure 6.1) supported the assertion that corruption is widespread across the public service, with the DLPP as one of the most corrupt public sector institutions in PNG. One research participant noted that:

Corruption is a big issue in the Lands Department. Both the customary and state land are embroiled in many corrupt dealings. Lands officers usually take bribery or side monies. People or landowners with genuine land titles are usually cheated off their titles by corrupt Lands officers, and their titles given to someone else (briber) illegally. The Lands officers are corrupt, and the Lands Minister is doing nothing about it (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Table 6.2: The degree to which DLPP is considered a corrupt institution

Scale	Survey	FGD	Total	%
Strongly agree	20	24	44	53
Somewhat agree	19	18	37	45
Somewhat don't agree	1	0	1	1
Don't agree	1	0	1	1
Total	41	42	83	100

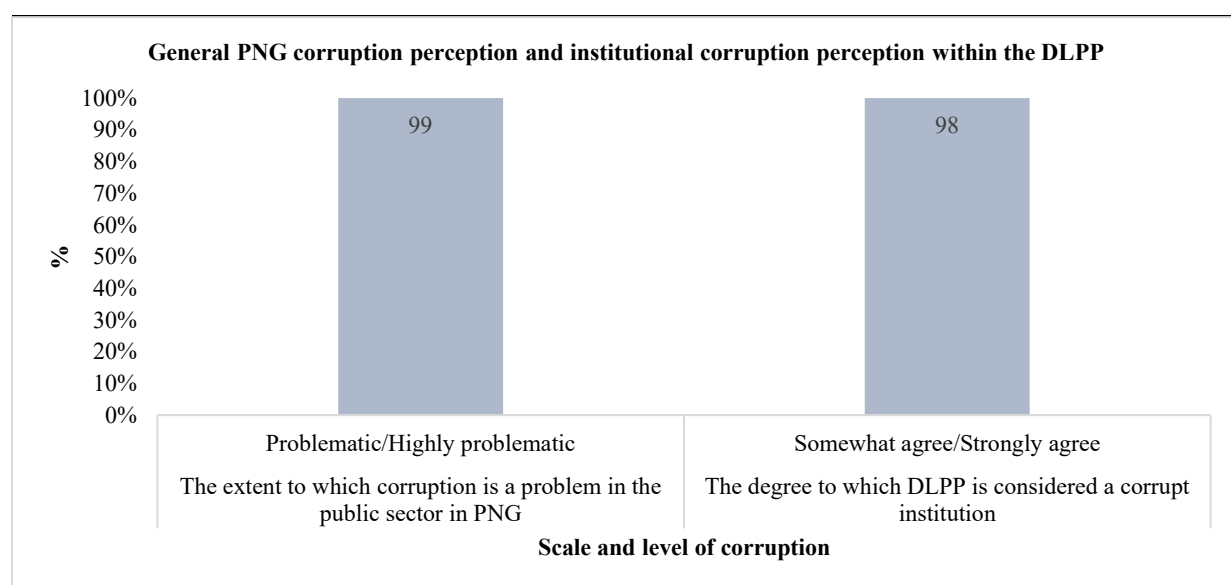


Figure 6.1: General PNG corruption perception and institutional corruption perception within the DLPP

Levantis (2016) explained that most processes and powers relating to land titling and ownership are corrupted because these powers are centralised or concentrated in one agency (i.e., the DLPP), which gives absolute discretion to unscrupulous lands officers in land dealings. Data from this research found that 95 percent of the respondents thought that there is lack of proper management of land titles, records, and databases in the DLPP, while 90 percent believed that

land titles administered by the DLPP do not have secure security features against fraudulent activities, including duplicity of land titling among others. The case of multiple issuance of one state lease on a single piece of land is exemplified in a lawsuit filed by Port Moresby Gun Club Inc against Our Real Estate Limited in 2016. As Wangi and Ezebilo (2017, p. 1) found, “the issuance of more than one state lease for the same piece of land is common in Papua New Guinea. This often results in legal disputes and conflict of interest between all parties that are involved in the lease”. In 2017, the fraud and complaints unit of the DLPP received more than 200 complaints from the public regarding land issues and allegations of corruption levelled against officers of the Lands Department (Vari, 2017). On 18 August 2020, while launching the GoLands and eLands online payment system for related land transactions, Prime Minister James Marape was reported as saying that “in the last 40 years, the government revenue collection through cash payments has been riddled with corruption, nepotism, and mishandling of revenue” (*Post-Courier*, 2020). In September 2020, a senior officer of the DLPP was arrested over inflation of land value relating to the Manumanu land scandal (*The National*, 2020). Police investigations found that the Lands Officer had engaged in official corruption by abusing the office, forging signatures and documents, and stealing by false pretence (*The National*, 2020).

Literature dealing with land administration across Melanesia, including PNG, suggested that corruption is widespread in state agencies responsible for land (both alienated and unalienated) and properties. For instance, McDonnell (2017, p. 291) found that “land administration agencies across Melanesia demonstrate a widespread culture of complicity whereby many government officers either support political elites who engage in illicit acts, or themselves facilitate property transactions on the basis of illicit payments”. In the present research, 74 percent of the respondents said that either all or most politicians, private property developers (businesses), and individuals collaborate with public servants in the DLPP to illegally obtain land or property titles. These results are consistent with the previous survey response, which perceived the DLPP to be the most corrupt institution (Table 6.2). Table 6.3 shows public perceptions regarding the type of network that exists between politicians, businesses, and individuals who collaborate with public servants to illegally obtain land or property titles in the DLPP. Note that only 81 out of 83 respondents provided their views.

Table 6.3: Proportion of politicians, businesses, and individuals who collaborate with public servants in the DLPP to illegally obtain land titles

Scale	Survey	FGD	Total	%
All	6	8	14	17
Most	19	27	46	57
Some	15	5	20	25
None	1	0	1	1
Total	41	40	81	100

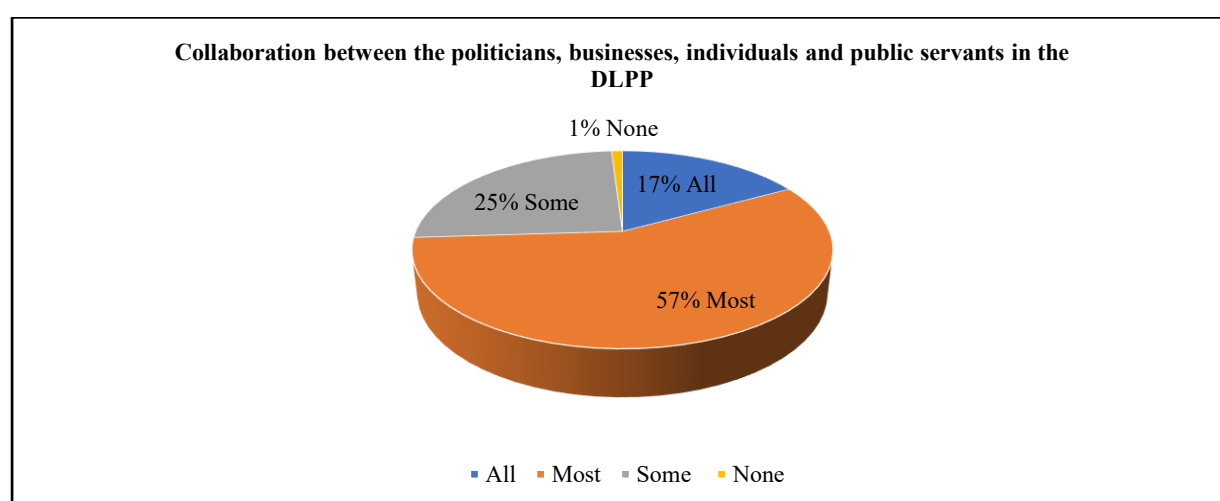


Figure 6.2: Proportion of politicians, businesses and individuals who collaborate with public servants in the DLPP to illegally obtain land titles

These findings (Table 6.3 and Figure 6.2) suggest that there are networks of individuals, government officers, politicians, and businesses deeply embedded within state institutions including the DLPP, which made compliance and monitoring mechanisms ineffective and weak. Supporting this view, McDonnell (2017) found that:

[Several] systemic problems with land administration have been identified across the Melanesian region, namely that land administration officials may collude with outside investors to: tamper with or destroy land records; lower valuations of state land so that they do not reflect the market value and to reduce taxes payable; lower land prices or give preferential access to state to certain investors or politicians; and regularly circumvent planning and environmental processes. However, this does not mean that all officers involved in land administration are inveigled by an organizational culture of complicity... This culture may operate in part because government officers fear for their jobs or

face persecution [retribution] if they do not comply with directions from their political masters. But it is also clear that some government officers promote illegal acts by key state actors for their own personal gain (McDonnell, 2017, pp. 291-292).

6.5 The issue of land grab in Papua New Guinea

In the last decade, demand for land has increased across the agricultural, extractive and property development sectors, leading to land grabs. “The actors colluding to grab land tend to be corporations, foreign investment funds, national and local state officials, and the governments of wealthy, yet resource-poor nations looking to cheaply acquire land” (De Schutter, 2016, p. iv). Land is an essential facet of Melanesian, and/or Papua New Guinean life and, therefore, seen as inseparable (or inalienable) from the person. Land is at the heart of economic life, cultural, and spiritual beliefs, and an individual and group’s sense of social identity and belonging (Koczberski et al., 2017; Sillitoe, 1999). “Land remains the main source of livelihoods, survival, and wealth for Papua New Guineans. In Papua New Guinea, a person without land is without culture, traditional values and birthright” (Kimas, 2010, p. 33). This attachment is now contested because as PNG societies engage with global markets, need for land also increases, giving rise to more complex problems.

Within the broader Melanesian context, Filer et al. (2017) suggested that “it is not possible to separate the land question from the problem of urbanisation, because struggles over access to land are generally more acute in urban and peri-urban areas than they are in rural areas” (Filer et al., 2017, p. 11). Problems such as unplanned urbanisation, and pressure exerted by property developers and investors on customary land have presented opportunities for ‘illegal’ use of land in the country. A relevant example of complicity pertains to the recent surge of what has now been referred to as ‘land grabs’ in PNG (Filer, 2011ab, 2012 & 2017; Gabriel et al., 2017; McDonnell, 2017). Colin Filer’s work on ‘land grabs’ in PNG is well documented (Filer, 2011ab, 2012 & 2017). As McDonnell explained, “Filer meticulously details the more than 5 million hectares of customary land (11 percent of PNG’s total land area) ‘grabbed’ by private companies between 2003 and 2011, while at the same time challenging much of the central ‘land grab’ narrative in the process” (McDonnell, 2017, p. 285). Similarly, Allen and Monson (2014) claimed that “PNG is currently experiencing a so-called “land grab” which is likely to lead to an increase in land disputation in rural areas. [Since 1995], this land grab has seen the long-term leasing of around 12 percent of the nation’s land area in the form of Special Agriculture and Business Leases” (Allen & Monson, 2014, p. 4).

“Melanesian states are embedded in political economies largely dominated by the exploitation of natural resources associated with mining, forestry, and land itself. These political economies mean that Melanesian states are situated in webs of patronage – global and local – such that political alliances with investors representing transnational institutions inform the exercise of state power” (McDonnell, 2017, p. 287). “These shifting political networks form the shadow state that operates behind the facade of the formal state, beyond the ambit of written laws and institutional processes” (Reno, 2000, p. 434). “It is these networks of the shadow state that often guide the operation of state power over customary and state land in Melanesia” (McDonnell, 2017, p. 287). “Shadow state networks also dominate ministerial leasing of urban state land, and across Melanesia, development, planning and environmental regulation is regularly subverted through the alliances of investors with politicians” (McDonnell, 2017, p. 287-288). Political leaders exchanged private goods that accrue to individual citizens and corporate interests such as “jobs and promotions or preferential, discretionary access to scarce or highly subsidised goods such as land, housing, education or utilities” (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 10).

“Political elites do not always perform land transactions in accordance with the rules written in the national constitutions, laws and regulations” (McDonnell, 2017, p. 288). “The dominance of the shadow state means that, across Melanesia, state actors offer concessional access to land to their investor partners or close business or political associates. Politicians also routinely allocate valuable urban state land to members of their immediate family or wider kinship networks” (McDonnell, 2017, p. 288).

McDonnell (2017, p. 284) described ‘land grab’ as “the agency of state actors who lease urban state land without regard to the public [or national] interests. The act is one of political elites seizing land and leasing it in their own self-interest in defiance of the rule of law or administrative requirements”. Hall et al. (2011, p. 27) described these processes as “licensed exclusion, whereby governments awarded legal titles to some people rather than others”. Many politicians allocated the so called “*club goods*” “that provide benefits for subsets of citizens and impose costs on other subsets. Citizens external to certain group boundaries can be excluded from the enjoyment of such benefits” (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 11). Paul Barker, Director of PNG’s Institute of National Affairs (INA) was one of the first researchers involved in land dealings in PNG to apply the phrase ‘land grab’ to the systemic abuse of the lease-lease-back scheme (Barker, 2009). Although land laws governing land across Melanesia may be unique

to each country (PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji), the way land transactions occur among this group showed a noticeable pattern of complicity. McDonnell (2017, p. 286) suggested that “there are commonalities across the region in how political elites and government officials work to facilitate land transactions, as well as logging deals and mining arrangements, for their own benefit or for the benefit of corporate or individual investor interests”.

The special agriculture and business leases (SABLS) in PNG, which began in the early 1980s, provided a good example. The acquisition of SABLS between 2003 and 2011 has seen around 5.2 million hectares of customary land (about 11 percent of PNG’s land area) alienated for special agricultural activities over virgin forests (Filer, 2011ab, 2017; Luluaki, 2014; NRI, 2007; Numapo, 2013). Sections 10, 11, and 102 of the *Land Act* 1996 are key instruments of law in which customary land in PNG is acquired or leased for agricultural and business purposes. Customary land acquisition goes through a two-step process. Section 10 requires that for customary land to be leased to the state, there must be an agreement between the Lands Minister and the customary landowners by way of consent provided the land in question is vacant. Sections 11 and 102 involve re-leasing of customary land to third-party persons or entities for agriculture or business purposes, which is enforceable, consistent with Section 10, where the Minister is satisfied after consenting with the landowners that the land is vacant and approved for re-leasing. “The instrument of lease” in Section 11 of the *Land Act* is often referred to as ‘Lease Agreement’. Land acquired under Section 11 of the *Land Act* is simultaneously re-leased by title deed to an “agreed” person or entity under Section 102 of the *Land Act* as SABL” (Numapo, 2013, p. 4). However, these legal instruments guiding customary land acquisition have not been working effectively according to law since the 1980s.

By 2011, when a Commission of Inquiry (COI) was established to investigate the leases, about 75 SABLS were already granted to logging companies. The lease-lease-back scheme had been turned into a scam that was jeopardising landowners’ customary rights over vast areas of the country, without apparent informed consent (Barker, 2010). According to Barker (2010), “the discretionary powers granted to the Lands Minister under Sections 11 [Acquisition of Customary Land for Lease-lease-back purposes - Acquisition of Customary Land for the Grant of Special Agricultural and Business Lease] and 102 [Special Agricultural and Business Leases – Grant of Special Agricultural and Business Leases] of the *Land Act* 1996 had been systematically abused” (as cited in Filer, 2017, p. 186).

If the process of SABL acquisition continues, Allen and Monson (2014, p.4) posited that “it seems likely that a significant number of these SABLs would enable foreign logging companies to circumvent the rigorous procedures of PNG’s forestry legislation by dealing directly with landowner companies and exploiting loopholes in the *Forestry Act 1991*” (Allen & Monson, 2014, p. 4). Scandals and corruption of carbon credit deals involving large tracts of virgin rainforests have recently surfaced in PNG. An Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Four Corners (2023) documentary report uncovered cases of corruption, environmental devastation, human exploitation, and greenwashing frauds in some forest reserves in PNG through voluntary carbon credit schemes. Voluntary carbon credit schemes involved carbon traders negotiating directly with resource owners without any government intervention (Mongabay Series, 2022). Despite the PNG government imposing a moratorium on new voluntary carbon credit schemes for new rules and regulatory frameworks to be written, new voluntary schemes kept emerging (Mongabay Series, 2022). These carbon credit scams within the PNG forestry sector demonstrated yet another example of international corruption fueled by corporate greed. Unscrupulous carbon traders are using locally connected economic hitmen (EHM), who usually are government officials or ex-government officials masquerading as brokers in manipulating resource owners, dishonestly siphoning millions of dollars away from the resource owners and the state.

6.5.1 Case 1: Illegal land grabbing and acquisition of state leasehold land by an individual

Illegal acquisition of state leasehold land is a common occurrence in most towns and cities throughout PNG. It creates serious law and order problems and can lead to the breakdown in the rule of law. The practice is widespread and chronic throughout the country. This is evident in the growth of illegal squatter settlements in towns and cities at an alarming rate. There is strong evidence to also suggest that squatter settlements are breeding grounds for criminals (*Konga v Allan*, 2018).

In a lawsuit filed by Jackson Konga against Benny Allan, the Minister for Lands and Physical Planning and Clement Koim Mapa, the National Court of Justice found that the plaintiff, Jackson Konga had contravened Section 69 (2) (d) of the *Land Act 1996* relating to legal acquisition of state land. Mapa was a businessman, who had business interests in Port Moresby, and was bidding with Konga and other bidders for the state land Portion 2796. Section 69 (2) (d) of the *Land Act 1996* states: The Minister may exempt land from advertisement for application or

tender – (d) where the State has agreed to provide land for establishment or extension of business, project, or other undertaking [consistent with the national interest]. The National Court, after its deliberation, ruled in favour of the sixth defendant, Clement Koim Mapa for fulfilling necessary requirements under Section 69 (2) (d).

Konga purposely filed the lawsuit seeking review against the decision to recommend Mapa as the new lessee of land Portion 2796, 8 Mile, National Capital District on 12 March 2014 by the PNG Land Board. The case originated in 2009 when Konga, without confirming the status of the land with the DLPP, went ahead and bought it for K15,000 from a person claiming to be the customary owner of the ‘disputed’ land from Hanuabada, a native urban village in Port Moresby. Since acquiring the land, Konga had built a semi-permanent house. Sometimes later, he was advised by the Lands Department that he was squatting illegally on state land. Konga then applied for the land to be exempted from being advertised, but this was also denied. Since the land Portion 2796 was formally established as state land and advertised, both Konga and Mapa applied, seeking formal residential lease. The Land Board after meeting had successfully awarded the lease to Mapa. Although Konga had appealed the decision claiming that he had applied for an exemption earlier, the Minister and other defendants, including Mapa, argued that the purported exemption was null and void because under the terms of s. 69 (2) (d) of the *Land Act* 1996, for such exemption to be valid, the State must agree for the land to be exempted (*Konga v Allan*, 2018).

The National Court established the fact consistent with s. 69 (2) (d) of the *Land Act* 1996 that Konga had failed to satisfy the requirements. The court, therefore, concluded that the plaintiff (Konga) did not have any intention to do business, nor did he have the capacity to do so to improve the land. He moved into the land without obtaining title and illegally erected a small semi-permanent house. He was determined by the National Court to be a trespasser squatting illegally on the State land (*Konga v Allan*, 2018). The National Court quashed Konga’s appeal and awarded the case to Mapa in compliance with s.69 of the *Land Act* 1996.

The case of *Konga v Allan*, 2018 demonstrates that, due to weak governance and enforcement mechanisms within the DLPP, it was easy for unscrupulous individuals to circumvent rules to benefit themselves rather than the national interest. In this case, Konga may have either colluded with officers in the DLPP, or intentionally ignored establishing facts by seeking advice from the Physical Planning Board and obtaining physical planning approvals over state land. This case, therefore, highlights the need for this practice to be addressed by relevant authorities

because it creates serious law and order problems, and can lead to breakdown in the rule of law. Illegal land grabbing also resulted in the loss of scarce State land to such unscrupulous individuals, groups of individuals, and even corporate entities. This illegal practice is increasingly becoming uncontrollable by authorities. Thus, there is a pressing need for effective protection and control of the State land so that its use and ownership especially in towns and cities is proper and legal. This is vital for the effective maintenance of the rule of law (*Konga v Allan*, 2018).

6.5.2 Case 2: Fraudulent leasing of customary land for a special agricultural business lease (SABL) by a business entity

The issue of SABLs has been very controversial in recent years. On 21 July, 2011, a Commission of Inquiry (COI) was established by Sam Abal, who was then Acting Prime Minister to investigate and inquire into SABLs and their operations (Numapo, 2013). This inquiry was a result of growing concerns among customary landowners who believed the ways in which their land was acquired and used for agriculture and business purposes were dubious and inconsistent with existing land laws. “It was estimated that over 5.2 million hectares of customary land around the country had been alienated, mostly for ‘special agriculture activities’ over virgin forest tracks containing tropical hardwoods” (Numapo, 2013, p. 2). Between the 1980s and 2011, when this COI was established, more than 400 SABLs were issued ‘by the state’ to various persons and entities (Numapo, 2013). The COI concluded that there was “widespread abuse, fraud, lack of coordination between agencies of government, failures and incompetence of government officials to ensure compliance, accountability and transparency within the SABL process from application stage to registration, processing, approval and granting of the SABL” (Numapo, 2013, p. 235).

Akami Oil Palm Limited was one of the 75 SABLs investigated by the COI between 2011 and 2013. According to the COI, Akami Oil Palm Limited, SABL number 31 was granted a 99-year special agricultural and business lease (s.102(4) of the *Lands Act* 1996) on a parcel of land covering 345.75 hectares. The SABL was located on portion 2628C, Milinch Megigi, Fourmil Talasea, Central Nakanai area of West New Britain Province. However, the lawsuit pursued by the principal plaintiff, David Mota, on behalf of nine other plaintiffs, involved both portion 2628C and portion 104C. Portion 104C, Milinch Megigi, Fourmil Talasea, in the Central Nakanai area of West New Britain Province covers an area of 231.2 hectares. Both portions of land totaling 576.95 hectares were privately leased to Akami Oil Palm Limited under dubious

circumstances.

In the lawsuit filed by David Mota and others against Albert Camillus and Akami Oil Palm Limited, the National Court of Justice found that the manner in which Akami Oil Palm Limited (second defendant) obtained these two leases did not comply with the specific requirements of Sections 10, 11, and 102 of the *Land Act* 1996 relating to compulsory acquisition. When the court proceedings began, Albert Camillus (first defendant) held primary shareholding and directorship of Akami Oil Palm Limited (second defendant). The plaintiffs submitted before the court the following affidavit:

In March 2000 there was a meeting involving the Rigula Landowners Association (which was then an umbrella group for customary landowners of the land known then as Bialiki, Roka No 2) and the first defendant, Mr Camillus. It was agreed that Mr Camillus, who comes from East Sepik Province, should develop it for the benefit of his children. This was agreed as Mr Camillus was married to a local woman, who was herself a primary landowner by virtue of the matrilineal system of customary landownership extant in West New Britain. The plaintiffs argue that it was only 40 hectares that was sold to Mr Camillus, and they were shocked upon discovering eight years later [2008] that Mr Camillus had somehow got 576.95 hectares of their land registered in the name of his company, Akami Oil Palm Ltd. They argue that the only inference to be drawn is that Mr Camillus fraudulently used some of their signatures which appeared on the March 2000 purchase agreement, to facilitate a land grab (*Mota v Camillus*, 2017).

The transfer of the two leases from the former customary landowners to Camillus and Akami Oil Palm Limited between March and April 2000 occurred through purchase agreement where money (bribe) was paid. The Minister for Lands was not consulted (as per Sections 10, 11 and 102 of the *Land Act* 1996) in this ‘illegal’ process of acquisition. Therefore, the plaintiffs argued that there was serious case of omission and fraud where statutory requirements stipulated under Sections 10, 11, and 102 of the *Land Act* 1996 were bypassed. To lawfully grant a SABL over customary land, the Minister for Lands and all interested parties must comply with all the requirements of Sections 10, 11, and 102. Section 10 requires that for customary land to be leased to the state, there must be an agreement between the Lands Minister and the customary landowners by way of consent provided the land in question is vacant. Sections 11 and 102 involve re-leasing of customary land to third-party persons or entities for agriculture or business purposes, which is enforceable, consistent with Section 10, where the Minister is satisfied

after consenting with the landowners that the land is vacant and approved for re-leasing.

In the case of *Mota v Camillus* (2017), Mota and others were seeking relief against the manner in which leases over Portions 2628C and 104C have been awarded to Akami Oil Palm Limited between March and April 2000. Mota and others claimed that circumstances surrounding the granting of the leases to Akami Oil Palm Limited involved fraud. After the trial, the court found extensive violation of statutory procedures for transfer of interests in customary land. It was proven that the circumstances in which the second defendant, Akami Oil Palm Limited, had accessed the title were so unsatisfactory, irregular, and unlawful as to amount to constructive fraud. Therefore, the principal relief sought by the plaintiffs was granted: each lease was declared null and void and quashed, and the Registrar of Titles was ordered to amend the Registrar of State Leases and all other records of the State under his control to give effect to the declarations (*Mota v Camillus*, 2017).

6.6 Conclusion

Land management in PNG is often riddled with corruption. The survey and the FGD data including the case studies illustrate the extreme level of corruption in the DLPP. For instance, 98 percent of the people interviewed either agree or strongly agree that the DLPP is a corrupt institution. This corruption is facilitated and even protected by corrupt players elsewhere in the PNG government, including the executive government and the politicians. The level of collaboration between these corrupt actors to use land as a conduit to siphon off cash is often supported by intricate webs of informality networks – between politicians, public servants, businesses, and individuals. The extraordinary scale of land grabbing enabled by the SABL legal loopholes has been significantly aided and abetted by the corrupt culture in the DLPP.

CHAPTER 7: Data analysis and discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide analysis and discussion of data that were collected with 83 participants ($N=83$) in Papua New Guinea (see Research Methodology, Chapter 3). These data will be used to examine the impact of patron-clientelism and how it manifested itself in governance and political structures in PNG. Some of the data have been discussed previously in the thesis, and together with discussions in this chapter, the thesis attempts to answer these overarching questions: 1) how do traditional and non-traditional reciprocity practices, such as *wantok* and big man systems, along with bribery/gifting, respectively, exacerbate and catalyse corruption within PNG's public service?; 2) what are the processes by which traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity are imbricated and coopted into formal institutions, serving as an alternative governance structure in PNG?; and 3) how pervasive is clientelism in PNG's administrative and political systems?

Six themes that this research investigated include general corruption perception, common administrative and political practices, types of patronage, cultural perceptions of corruption, institutional case study, and in-group corruption. Overall, findings from this research noted that, locally, citizens' perceptions suggested that corruption is still a big problem in PNG and will remain so.

7.2 General corruption perception

This section discusses some common occurrences of corrupt activities and actions that people perceive about corruption in the administrative and political environments in PNG. For instance, participants were asked to give their views about how common or widespread corruption is within the administrative and political environments in PNG. The issue of government transparency was discussed, and participants were asked to provide their views about the transparency of government rules, regulations, and procedures in the way institutions of state are managed in PNG. Other issues discussed included rule bending or breaking, unmeritorious appointment or nepotism within the recruitment and appointment system, government contracts vis-à-vis bribery or nepotism, discretionary use of public funds, non-compliance of government rules and procedures, "gift giving", bribery and informal reciprocity, and the extent to which corruption is a problem in PNG.

Overall, respondents perceived corruption to be a perennial problem that pervades all levels of society and government. This is evident in the respondents' description of corruption with words such as widespread, deeply rooted, deep seated, systemic and systematic, rife, deeply embedded in formal structures, endemic, prevalent, a norm, pervasive, invasive, manipulative, and abusive. Other respondents thought that corruption has been a constant source of much of the citizenry's complaints for lack of service delivery and development. This implied that elected leaders (members of parliament) are unresponsive to the needs of their constituents. At the broader level, national institutions are weak, democracy is deficient and governance not yet fully accountable to all citizens (UNDP, 1997). The deficiency in PNG's democracy is linked to challenges such as weak state institutions, political instability, electoral irregularities, political fragmentation, ethnic and regional fragmentation, poor governance (lack of transparency and accountability), limited access to information, and lack of inclusive participation in the democratic processes (elections).

Findings from the present research revealed that almost all respondents (99 percent – this includes respondents from focus groups who were also individually asked questions) believed that corruption is either problematic or highly problematic in the public sector (Table 6.1 & Figure 7.1).

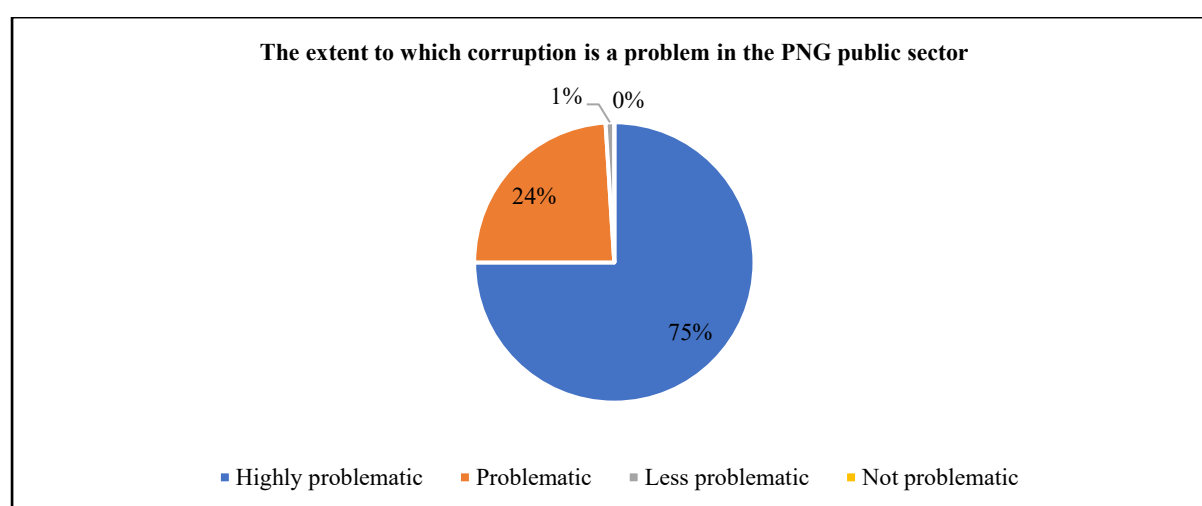


Figure 7.1: The extent to which corruption is a problem in the PNG public sector

That is, 75 percent of the people interviewed indicated that corruption is highly problematic, 24 percent perceived corruption to be problematic, and only 1 percent think that corruption is less problematic. The results therefore revealed that corruption is a very serious problem in PNG's public service. As one respondent suggested, "corruption is systematic and is already

in place. It's already inbuilt in our system. Every one that goes into the system tends to follow that practice" (FGD participant, Female, 18-24). This view is further supported by another respondent who said that:

Corruption is endemic and systemic. My views on corruption in PNG is on misuse of public funds, abuse of office, bribery and *wantok* system. These are areas that are widespread in the country. MPs and department heads down to the headmasters of schools and any other persons who are in control of public funds are not using public funds properly. They misuse funds to do private business. They award contracts to their *wantoks* or family members and receive kickbacks. To award contracts to other eligible contractors, they have to pay some money in order to strike under-the-table deals (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

An unemployed male participant from the FGD shared the following view:

In my opinion, corruption is not only unique at the top level of government. It starts from the grassroots level and goes up the structure. This means corruption also exists in the village. Because those at the top practice it, those below find it convenient to engage in corruption. For instance, in my village, if I want to enrol my son in school but there are no more spaces, I have to give some '*Coca-Cola* money' [bribe] to the headmaster to have my child enrolled. From the village to the town, it is the same. If I had already purchased a plane ticket, but there are no spaces, I have to give some '*Coca-Cola* money' [bribe] to the ticketing officer to create a space for me to travel. When I arrive in the city, it is just the same. Everywhere, there is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Some corruption perception studies in PNG including data from the PNG Global Corruption Barometer indicated that corruption is widespread across both the society and within the public sector (Cook & Winn, 2012; Kukutschka, 2021; Lasslett, 2017; Walton, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2019; Walton & Peiffer, 2017). The view that corruption is widespread in post-colonial (non-Western) states with similar political and cultural contexts was also observed by other scholars (Olken, 2009; Peiffer, 2017). International indicators also demonstrated the extent to which corruption is a problem in PNG. Transparency International's corruption perception index (CPI) for PNG in the last five years (2018-2022) showed signs of decay in good governance, accountability, and lack of institutional strengthening. Table 7.1 shows Papua New Guinea's CPI scores and ranking between 2018 and 2022 (TI, 2023). However, although CPI ranking provides a country's relative position in the index compared to other countries it may not be

useful for analytical purposes. The more important trend to analyse would be the CPI score (Espiritu, 2023; TI, 2023). The CPI scores for PNG between 2018 and 2022 were 28/100, 28/100, 27/100, 31/100, and 30/100 respectively. Between 2017 and 2022, PNG was under two different governments. These scores reflected the effort or lack of it that each government put into anti-corruption work, or the promises they made to address certain aspects of public sector corruption.

Table 7.1: CPI scores and ranking for PNG (2018-2022)

Country: Papua New Guinea		
Region: Asia – Pacific		
Year	CPI score (/100)	Rank (/180 countries)
2018	28	138
2019	28	137
2020	27	142
2021	31	124
2022	30	130

Source: Transparency International (2023). *Corruption Perception 2022*.

The trend between 2018 and 2020 showed that PNG’s CPI scores (which is measured out of 100, 100 being very clean and 0 being highly corrupt) continue to disappoint. Between 2021 and 2022, PNG’s CPI scores increased by at least three places. But this slight change does not improve PNG’s overall confidence at both the national and international levels. In a similar vein, Papua New Guinea’s CPI rankings (out of 180 countries, 1 being the least corrupt, and 180 being the most corrupt) between this period have not improved in any significant way, making it one of the most corrupt countries. Findings from this research suggest that citizens are simply giving up. That is, they now think corruption is a norm that cannot be changed. As alluded to earlier, 99 percent of people interviewed perceived corruption to be either problematic or highly problematic across all levels of government and society. As explained earlier, Transparency International’s CPI rankings are derived from experts and businesspeople in the public sector, and therefore will not give context specific definitions and objective analyses of corruption for each country. However, the CPI score as Espiritu (2023) explained, is useful for analytical purposes as it gives a roughly comparative assessment of corruption trends relative to other countries year on year. The new government of James Marape, crusading on the back of anti-corruption campaigns was elected in a successful vote-of-no-confidence on 29 May 2019, replacing the former government of Peter O’Neill who had occupied office since August 2011. The government of Peter O’Neill was accused of gross neglect and abuse of state

institutions and finances. However, TI's CPI scores between 2019 and 2022 only improved by two places, suggesting that the Marape administration has not delivered much in the areas of good governance, accountability, and anti-corruption reforms that it promised, and until recently (post-2022 election), its first 100 days in office were futile. Walton and Hushang (2020) suggested that corruption in PNG, like elsewhere goes through a 'boom and bust' cycle. "New governments often promise to address corruption and then wind back reforms and defund anti-corruption institutions" (Walton & Hushang, 2020, p. 2).

The Marape administration has been plagued with recurring issues of internal and external security such as sporadic urban ethnic tensions, kidnapping for ransom in parts of the Highlands region, escalating law and order problems, and drug trafficking have become acute during Marape's administration. Other perennial issues include politicising of the public service, widespread allegations of corruption, questionable public procurements, allegations of money laundering, political expediency, political instability, unmeritorious appointments, deterioration in major public utilities and the inability of the government to adequately provide services to its citizens. There are also institutional scandals, some of which are legacies inherited from the O'Neill administration such as the infamous UBS loan saga and the so called Parakagate scandal. These failures indicated that people's perceptions about corruption in PNG are a result of both their experiences (directly or through familial or friendship connections) and general knowledge about events that occurred within and outside of the bureaucratic and political systems. Therefore, responses from the participants reflected the prevailing nature or behaviour of the administrative and political environments in PNG.

7.3 Perceptions of the role of traditional culture in corrupt practices

Papua New Guineans' understanding of what corruption is, and what causes it differs slightly. The present research noted that generally people who occupied formal roles in both the public and private sectors (i.e., public servants and private sector employees) associated their understanding and causes of corruption with the moral-legalistic view: i.e., deficit in governance (corruption) is caused by lack of accountability, honesty, and transparency. While those occupying the informal economy (i.e., unemployed, self-employed etc.,) and university students viewed corruption as a general failure of government to deliver goods and services, which is informed by their traditional moral economy lens (as discussed in subsection 2.3.1). However, both groups agree that pressures exerted by the traditional moral economy such as the *wantok* and big man systems onto the formal system of government produce what appears to be a

widespread tacit acceptance of immoral or corrupt outcomes. For instance, a female private sector employee with over ten years in a senior management role explained that:

Corruption is systematically widespread both in the political and administrative systems. Corruption in any form or shape is everywhere in every system of government or society the world over. However, the problem in PNG is that we fail to enforce the rule of law over the issue of corruption. Lack of enforcement is the main factor causing disillusion and ‘no care attitude’ among our people, especially within the public sector (Survey participant, Female, 45-54).

Meanwhile, a FGD participant shared her experience in this manner:

I mean politicians are supposed to serve people as service providers. We haven’t really seen them doing something that is corrupt, but certain services that are not available like shortage in medicine/drug supplies led us to question where all the [taxpayers’] monies have gone to. Therefore, we are saying they [politicians] are corrupt because they are diverting funds elsewhere (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

This contrast underscores one important point raised by Walton (2013a) that there is paucity of analysis relating to different perspectives of corruption held by Papua New Guineans. While scholars and policy makers are viewing corruption through the Western-oriented lens, which is not cognizant of prevailing socio-cultural, political, and economic norms, local people perceived corruption through prevailing socio-cultural and political-economic systems and processes. As Walton (2009) noted, “majority of Papua New Guineans understand the difference between a gift-giving and reciprocity [it is the moral obligation of family, kin or *wantok* to provide], and the malfeasant nature of corruption can be related back to lessons passed on through traditional culture” (Walton, 2009, p. 1). This makes modern state government or the Weberian system incompatible with traditional governance structures. Consequently, the paucity of such analysis may potentially lead to poor targeting of anti-corruption programs in PNG (Walton, 2013a).

Bribery and gifting (which were discussed at length in Chapter 5) are two common practices research participants were associating most with corruption. Research participants situated their understanding of bribery and non-traditional gift-giving, or corruption within the ambit of *wantok* and big man systems (culture). Most respondents see *wantok* and big man systems as embedded within PNG’s political and administrative systems but also as taking on a fundamentally perverted form within them. Views expressed by participants placed *wantok* and big

man systems at the core of corruption within state institutions in PNG. For instance, one FGD participant noted that:

My perception of corruption is using public office for personal gain. For example, our leaders in parliament hold office and then they use it for personal gain such as employing their own relatives. That is corruption, but then it also serves our cultural beliefs on *wantokism*. It is like a conflict between corruption and our cultures (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

One survey participant responded in a similar way:

Yes, corruption is widespread throughout our political and administrative systems. Apart from mismanagement of funds, nepotism [*wantokism*] is one of the main forms of corruption. Everyone knows someone in key positions that make things happen or just being influential. For example, a political appointment or even hiring of *wantoks* who lacked merits (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Literature that supported these views include Dix and Pok (2009) who explained that “today, the *wantok* and big men traditions manifest themselves in PNG’s political arena as a system by which elected leaders and bureaucrats use public office as an opportunity to accumulate wealth and therefore status, and by which these officials’ *wantoks* expect the spoils of office to confer direct benefits” (Dix & Pok, 2009, p. 247). Schram (2015) also noted that *wantok* has become a term of use and abuse by elites and big men (politicians) in the Pacific, who rely on it to forge new tribal and linguistic identities within formal institutions, consequently exacerbating corruption and clientelistic practices. This means that *wantok* has extended beyond its tribal space. It is a political symbol of contemporary big man, referring more to political elites and their associates within the urban, possessive individual space than the more traditional community system that used to have a great man and his humble following (Dix & Pok, 2009). In developing post-colonial states where such sources of informal reciprocity formed the basis of an informal welfare system, it is easy to manipulate state institutions and divert public resources for personal use. As Walton (2019) explained; “In the absence of the welfare state, the *wantok* system provides important social protection for many citizens. It also means that public servants are pressured to provide unofficial favours to their *wantoks*” (Walton, 2019, p. 3). Lomnitz (1988, p. 54) explained that “as the state apparatus expands and its economic functions become more encompassing, the informal networks of reciprocity exchange and patronage invade the formal system and mimic its power structure”. While investigating perceptions of bribery and

gift giving from selected senior bureaucrats within key government departments in PNG, Tiki (2018) found that bribery is perceived to be a norm because it “is often confused with gifts in the Melanesian cultural context” (Tiki, 2018, p. ii).

Western capitalist culture, through colonialism, has created a divisive and elitist class structure in what was once strong communal societies (Alatas, 1968; Farmer, 2014; Galtung, 1969 & 1971; Hirschfeld, 2017). After colonialism ended, informal systems in the peripheries such as the *wantok* system tend to evolve and mimic capitalist values, creating an unintended opportunity for these informal practices to be used as an excuse for corruption.

A question about government transparency was asked, that is, respondents were probed whether government regulations and procedures have integrity or are transparent. Overall, respondents thought that there is lack of, or no transparency, accountability, integrity, honesty, respect, commitment and professionalism invested by the public servants into the day-to-day conduct of the public service. That is, the integrity and transparency of most government institutions, particularly with regards to how rules, laws, regulations and government procedures are enforced in PNG remains a challenge. This is also reflected in the poor governance indices (World Bank) and the disappointing CPI scores (TI) PNG continues to record year on year. Some respondents, however, explained that there are already well-intentioned regulations, procedures, public service rules, and enabling legislations such as the General Orders (GO), *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1995 and the *Public Services (Management) Act* 1995 in place. However, “effective implementation of these “codes of conduct” is compromised once you have people with self-interest employed into the system” (Survey participant, Female, 35-44). “There is transparency, but people within the bureaucracy are not enforcing transparency[enough]” (FGD participant, Male, 18-24). Laws are weakly enforced by government officials, and this has become a culture. “For instance, a person without a valid driver’s license gave some money to the traffic officer without asking for the receipt, that signals a breakdown in law and has become a norm” (Survey participant, Male, 25-34). The following views from the respondents add further to the discussion:

I agree that laws are weak. For instance, the Ombudsman Commission have conducted numerous leadership tribunals and numerous commissions of inquiries (COIs) were established, but to date, we haven’t seen anyone [leader] being convicted. Are they really looking for information? Have they investigated well? Are they covering each other up? Citizens are lost and not knowing what is going on (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

For me personally, I know there are rules and regulations [in place], or we do have transparency in place. But those people in authority who are responsible for carrying out these rules and regulations are weak [compromised]. The system is weak because of these people who are involved [in corruption] both at the administrative and political levels. It's the people who are making the system weak (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I think there is nothing wrong with [government] regulations and procedures. They are already in place, but the enforcement agencies or those responsible for implementing them are not doing their part. If their [public servants'] own operational conduct is already in conflict with these regulations and procedures, they would not want to enforce them (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

I personally believe that most of the government regulations and procedures are not transparent. Regulations and procedures are developed for personal gain and interest and not for the public interest (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

Laws and systems [transparency] in PNG are weak because like we've said, there is too much *wantok* system in our country. People in charge of institutions like the police and army, or other government departments usually recruited their own *wantoks* into the system. *Wantok* system is big. So, during recruitment, some applicants have papers (qualifications), while others don't have papers (qualifications). And these kinds of practices lead to another problem that we are facing in the country, that is, many of our law enforcers are not disciplined. They (the policemen) usually beat people up for no good reason (particularly when they are drunk). Another thing is that our leaders are misusing government monies [public funds]. That's why our laws and systems of government are weak (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Data regarding some common non-traditional clientelistic practices including neo-patrimonial tendencies, rule bending, non-meritorious appointments, questionable government contracts, pork barrelling of public funds and resources, and soliciting of gifts or money for favours or preferential treatments were asked. The following sub-sections discussed the commonly held views people (respondents) have toward these clientelistic practices.

7.4 Neo-patrimonial practices within PNG's state institutions

Islam (2013, p. 148) noted that "the concept of neopatrimonialism has great utility in explaining behaviour in a dysfunctional democracy [or bureaucracy], where personalised exchanges,

exploitation of bureaucratic and state mechanisms and political scandals are common”. Neo-patrimonialism is a type of regime that facilitates corruption or abuse of power for private gain (Araral et al., 2019), or it is a type of regime in which ruling elites use the state for personal enrichment and profit (Beekers & van Gool, 2012). In a neo-patrimonial environment, politicians and public servants are perceived as the major practitioners of embezzlement, fraud, unsanctioned procurement, collusion, and nepotism (Duncan and Hassall, 2011). State power is personalised or monopolised by the political elites by creating networks and alliances, relying on exchanges to meet their objectives. In this regard, state elites use elements of the state and political system to mediate these exchanges (Islam, 2013). As discussed elsewhere (see Chapter 5), the ongoing cultural importance of norms of traditional reciprocity in PNG appears to make it easier for both bribe givers and bribe takers to pretend that what they are doing is somehow culturally sanctioned, when it is not, because the ‘person’ doing the actual reciprocating is the taxpayer (through the state without his/her knowledge), and not the unscrupulous bureaucrat or the politician who accepts the bribe.

Personalisation of political power is a key feature of neo-patrimonialism and a key element of clientelism, particularly in postcolonial developing states, where, after independence, “new leaders [indigenous elites], as well as their *wantoks*, quickly exploited the [modern administrative] system to facilitate corruption, especially through nepotism [*wantok* system] and political patronage” (Dix & Pok, 2009, pp. 248-249). In a clientelist political system, “it is assumed that patrons, or the politicians in power, maximise their personal gains subject to maintaining political support. These gains consist of government revenues minus what is transmitted to clients and non-clients in exchange for political support. The revenue of the patrons is derived from general taxation or from corrupt activities, such as the illegal sales of licences, foreign exchange, and contracts” (Kurer, 1993, p. 260). As I have argued above, the taxpayer (or the state) is the one doing the reciprocation without it knowing, and not the unscrupulous politician or bureaucrat. The political cultures of most post-colonial states are often underscored by neo-patrimonial practices such as personalisation of political power by political and bureaucratic leaders as a means to personally accumulate wealth and to also distribute wealth to their clients (voters, donors, supporters etc.,).

Data from the present research showed that political and administrative behaviours are characterised by common elements of neo-patrimonialism such as personalisation of state power, personalising decision making or legislation making powers, and rule bending by politicians for private gain. As portrayed in Table 7.2, 77 percent of the respondents thought that either

most or all politicians personalised or monopolised political power and authority for their own gain, reward their clients, and punish their rivals. In most cases, politicians use state power to optimise their economic gains to the disadvantage of the state, taxpayers and the common people. In terms of legislation making in parliament, 82 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that personal interests usually guide decisions and/or legislation making in parliament. This is epitomised by the current practice in the PNG parliament whereby the executive arm of government has become more dominant (executive dominance) over the legislative arm, rendering the separation of power principle meaningless. Members of parliament (MPs) who voted for the prime minister and are in government have the numbers necessary to pass legislations, some of which are questionable, such as the *National Pandemic Act 2020*. The prime minister, as head of government also uses this opportunity in controlling and applying constituency development funds at his discretion to consolidate his government to avoid votes of no confidence, while at the same time the constituency development funds are used as a stick and carrot strategy. The prime minister normally weaponises the constituency development funds such as the District Services Improvement Program (DSIP) funds and the Provincial Services Improvement Program (PSIP) funds by rewarding loyal government MPs through timely and full allocation of their DSIPs or PSIPs, while withholding or partially releasing DSIPs/PSIPs for MPs in the parliamentary opposition. For instance, Ketan (2013) highlighted some issues regarding the use of DSIP funds when discussing governance and service delivery in Western Highlands province, Papua New Guinea. Similarly, 86 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that policy making, and implementation processes are often controlled by political leaders to benefit their own interests, while when asked if policy making and implementation processes are determined by public interests, 71 percent of the participants either disagree or strongly disagree. For instance, politicians are increasingly prioritising funding pet projects over budgeted projects for personal aggrandisement, prestige and as a means of wealth redistribution. This is captured in Table 7.6, sub-section 7.5.4 where 56 percent of respondents thought that most or all politicians disburse or allocate public funds at their own discretion to support unbudgeted projects and programs.

Data from this research strengthened the view that in PNG, elites (politicians, bureaucrats, lawyers, accountants, businesspeople, etc.,) are above the law, or there are two sets of laws – one for the commoners, and another for the elites. People with excessive power tend to bend rules. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents thought that either most or all politicians bend rules and laws that benefit their personal interests, including their families and friends. These

findings supported an argument forwarded by Stewart and Strathern (1998, p. 132), who argued that:

[PNG's] Westminster-style democracy has provided avenues for emergent leaders [indigenous *crypto-capitalists*] to enter into politics, and the emphasis on wealth and its distribution as a means of attaining and legitimising political power has given a particular cast to the activities of politicians generally, who need wealth both to gain votes and to reward supporters. Such local imperatives have driven the national political machine to provide sectoral funds for direct distribution by politicians in their electorates, bypassing the public service channels. Democracy has thus been diverted into patronage, and strong policy based political parties have not emerged.

Table 7.2: Neo-patrimonialism and personalisation or monopolisation of state power in PNG

Proportion of politicians who personalised or monopolised political power and authority		Personal interests guide decisions/legislation making in parliament		Policy making and implementation processes are often controlled by political leaders to benefit their own interests		Proportion of politicians who bend rules and laws that benefit their personal interests		Policy making and implementation processes are often determined by public interests that benefit everyone	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	13	Strongly agree	18	Strongly agree	24	All	25	Strongly agree	6
Most	64	Agree	64	Agree	62	Most	52	Agree	23
Some	23	Disagree	14	Disagree	12	Some	22	Disagree	54
None	0	Strongly disagree	4	Strongly disagree	2	None	1	Strongly disagree	17
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

7.5 Common clientelistic practices within PNG's administrative and political environments

The assumption that corruption within the administrative and political systems is exacerbated by clientelist behaviour or practices is analysed in this section. The present research hypothesised that both phenomena (corruption and clientelism) are inextricably bound together, and one cannot survive without the other. Practices such as preferential treatment and unfairness in

service delivery, favouritism, bribery, kickbacks, rule-bending, and non-meritorious appointments were found to be common occurrences in the public sector. Within the political environment, the neo-patrimonial behaviour of political leaders (as discussed under sub-section 7.4) was found to be epitomised in such practices as personalisation or monopolisation of state power for private gain, value conflict between personal and public interests, circumvention of the rule of law, pork barreling, unfair use of public office and resources, and the politicisation of the public procurement processes.

7.5.1 Rule bending

One of the key behaviours of clientelist bureaucrats and politicians is rule bending, which is defined as “a willingness to depart from rules and procedures” (DeHart-Davis, 2007, p. 893), or a willingness to violate the obligations, rules, procedures, and formal requirements of the code of conduct in the organisation (Taştan, 2019). It “involves a decision to go around the formally stated obligations by not fully following a rule, requirement, procedure, or specification” (Sekerka & Zolin, 2007, p. 228). Rule bending may occur “because it is perceived as necessary for job performance, or as a pressure to have high performance at work” (Sekerka & Zolin, 2007, p. 226), or value conflicts between personal and public interests might trigger rule bending (Taştan, 2019). For this research, value conflict was seen as a common tendency exercised by both public servants and politicians in PNG. Participants were asked two questions in relation to rule bending including: 1) whether rule bending by a public servant in a government department to get a job done for their family or a friend is corruption, and 2) the extent to which politicians bent or circumvented rules and laws that benefit their private interests. Most respondents explained that both actions are tantamount to an unethical conduct because any behaviour that does not follow established rules and procedures, or that occurs outside the rule of law, and which does not promote national interest is considered as corruption. It is unethical when rule benders (public servants and politicians) try to maximise their self-interests more than the interests of others who may be affected by their decisions. The following are some responses that portray this perception:

If anything is done outside of the rule of law, this is corruption (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

As soon as you bend the rules, it's illegal and wrong. This is corruption and is not right. You practiced corruption there and it's not benefiting others. You are thinking about yourself. So yes, it [rule bending] is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

This is nepotism. It's part of corruption. Although we could say that in PNG culture, it's *wantok* system or someone helping his/her family out, but it's still corruption. The public office doesn't belong to you and your family members (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

It is corruption because he/she broke his/her code of ethics [i.e., General Orders of the *Public Services (Management) Act 1995*]. Each profession has its own code of ethics. It's a law that they must follow to fulfill their job requirements/responsibilities in serving the people of this country (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Of course, this is corruption because procedures and rules are not complied with. Obviously, that friend or relative [rule bender] must have been paid some "side money" (bribed) to bend the rules – as is the case nowadays (Survey participant, Female, 35-44).

Overall, research participants thought that rule bending in the public service and political institutions has become a norm (Table 7.3a & 7.3b). Rule bending is manifested in various forms including public servants and politicians bending certain rules and laws that benefit themselves and their family and friends, or preferential treatment awarded to a select group of people because rules and laws are biased or unfair, or where only a certain proportion of people benefited from government's handouts (goods and services) because the service delivery mechanism is biased or unfair, or favouritism shown by public servants and politicians to certain individuals or groups of people, or where public procurement rules and laws were circumvented that benefit only a few individuals and businesses. Data presented in Table 7.3a and Table 7.3b showed that 77 percent of the respondents thought that either most or all public servants bent rules and laws that benefit their friends, *wantoks* and family, while on the same vein, 77 percent of the respondents stated that either most or all politicians bent rules and laws that benefit their personal interests. According to the respondents, practices such as using an institution's photocopiers to print or photocopy a relative's documents, driving an official vehicle on unofficial errands, political influence in awarding multiple land titles to certain individuals or businesses, or bypassing certain procedures in approving a friend's project funding request constituted rule bending.

Preferential treatment in the public service is a common behaviour. Seventy-six percent of the respondents believed that only some people (usually those having strong social, business and political connections) get preferential treatment from public servants who intentionally bend certain rules to serve their networks. Such practices as jumping the queue for fast turnaround

or spending more time on a few people while overlooking others are considered as unfair treatment for clients who are trying to get the same service. This is closely related to favouritism, where 98 percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that favouritism is a prevailing norm in the public sector. Public servants usually gave special preferences (knowingly neglecting their public service code of conduct) to people they know, or have established social, business or political connections with, while dragging the needs of other clients.

Seventy-one percent of the people interviewed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that government contracts always follow proper procurement rules and procedures. Some public servants who managed and implemented public contracts (e.g., at the National Procurement Commission level or within provincial procurement boards) usually bent or circumvented rules by awarding contracts to certain bidders, who sometimes may not be qualified or competent to implement national public works and programs. Some respondents suggested that this is evident in for instance, low quality infrastructures (road works, bridges and buildings) that started deteriorating soon after work was “completed”. Similarly, it was found that business permits particularly within the property development, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), and land development sectors were issued through questionable means. For instance, respondents were particularly concerned with the way multiple business permits were awarded to Asians (Chinese, Bangladeshis etc.) around the country, who operated SMEs such as small shops and food bars, which by law, are reserved for locals.

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that business permits are usually awarded according to established rules and laws. Apparently, public servants involved in this scheme know that rule bending is unethical and goes against the public service code of conduct, general orders, and rule of law, yet they intentionally act to maximise their self-interests more than the national interest. Rule bending is a conscious decision and rule benders knowingly violate procedure, and thus rule bending is conceptualised as intentional behaviour (DeHart-Davis, 2007; Taştan, 2019). This is purposeful or intentional corruption because existing administrative and legal loopholes are taken advantage of by corrupt officials, or new legal loopholes are created by dishonest public servants for similar reasons. Rules and laws are poorly applied or implemented in such environments.

Table 7.3a: Common rule bending practices within PNG’s administrative and political environments

Proportion of public servants who bend rules and laws that benefit themselves, their friends (<i>wantoks</i>) and family		Proportion of people who get preferential treatment from government institutions if rules and laws are biased or unfair		Favouritism exists in the public service		Government contract is awarded to the most qualified and competent bidder through established rules and processes	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	11	All	2	Strongly agree	36	Strongly agree	6
Most	66	Most	21	Agree	62	Agree	23
Some	23	Some	76	Disagree	1	Disagree	55
None	0	None	1	Strongly disagree	1	Strongly disagree	16
Total	100		100	Total	100	Total	100

Table 7.3b: Common rule bending practices within PNG’s administrative and political environments

Business permits are awarded according to established rules and procedures		Proportion of politicians who bend rules and laws that benefit their personal interests	
Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	8	All	25
Agree	35	Most	52
Disagree	47	Some	22
Strongly disagree	10	None	1
Total	100	Total	100

7.5.2 Nepotism/Non-meritorious appointment

Nepotism in the public service, particularly in relation to appointment of family, friends or *wantoks* for public service jobs was cited by most respondents as non-meritorious and unethical. The terms ‘nepotism’ and ‘cronyism’ apply to family/relatives and ‘friends’/associates, respectively. As discussed in Chapter Five (sub-section 5.2), nepotistic corruption or nepotistic patronage is the most common type of corruption or patronage associated with this research. It involves nepotism, or according to this research, *wantokism*, which is based on the idea that

one's kin or family is usually treated favourably or given preferential treatment over other non-family or non-*wantoks* in accessing public sector jobs and services. One respondent noted that "PNG has a patron-client system so everyone must serve family's and community's interests first" (FGD participant, Female, 18-24). While another said that "our leaders in parliament hold public office and then use it for personal gain such as employing their own relatives" (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Most participants stated that public service recruitment that is influenced by senior public servants and politicians based on familial or *wantok* connections is wrong, or immoral even if the applicants are qualified. In some cases, people recruited through nepotism lack creativity and innovation in their job performance, perhaps because they are only responsive to the narrow interests of those responsible for their employment. To avoid nepotism, respondents suggested that recruitment managers (whose family members or friends have applied for public service jobs) must declare their conflict of interests and opt out of the entire selection process, or an independent recruitment agency must be engaged to process and select suitable candidates. Some respondents argued that appointment of family or *wantoks* is justified and merited if the applicants meet all the selection criteria. One respondent thought that unjustified recruitment or appointment is corruption "because the most qualified and experienced person was overlooked, who if recruited, could bring about positive changes at work because he or she is qualified over the 'unqualified' person recruited through nepotism" (FGD participant, Female, 35-44). Another respondent believed that appointment through nepotism is "outright corruption that undermines the principle of meritocracy and therefore, contributes to underperformance and inefficiency in the public service" (Survey participant, Male, 25-34). Nepotistic appointment or recruitment into the public sector is influenced by such informal connections as familial or kin ties, *wantok* networks, business interests, political influence, and often bribery.

Data from this research (Table 7.4) found that 96 percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that personal relationship matters in public service employment, 72 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that personal relationship matters in job promotion in the public sector, while 97 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that appointment and or/promotion to key government positions (senior contracted positions such as provincial administrators and heads of government departments) is influenced by politics. Forty-eight percent of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that merit-based non-contract public service recruitment and promotion matter in public service employment. The other 52 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that non-contract public service recruitment and promotion has no merit and

does not matter in the public service. In terms of contract positions such as heads of government departments, state-owned-entities, and statutory organisations, diplomatic appointments, and senior executive managers etc., 75 percent of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that recruitment or appointment and promotion of these category of public servants is determined by a merit-based system.

It appears that the PNG public sector has become a ‘spoils system’ whereby politicians and bureaucrats who are connected through party politics use public office as an opportunity to reward their clients (party supporters, sponsors, etc.), to consolidate their control and status, and to accumulate wealth or other economic benefits (Dix & Pok, 2009). Some research participants noted that the appointment or selection of heads of government departments (HODs), statutory organisations and state-owned-entities (SOEs) are manipulated by the politicians. Politicians normally use them as conduits to siphon off or swindle public monies for their own benefit. Therefore, this constitutes corruption. As one respondent explained, “I have observed that nowadays corruption occurs through this medium, that is, politicians often appointed their own men to key government positions, then they go through the back door using these appointees as conduits to drain off public monies or resources. Apparently, corruption occurs between these two parties – the bureaucrats and the politicians” (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

It is evident from these data that the PNG public sector lacks a system whereby public service recruitment, appointment and promotion are done on merit. It can also be inferred from this finding that PNG’s public sector (or bureaucracy) appeared to have no independent decision-making power. Indeed, in a system that rewards political patronage, “promotions and pay rises [including appointments] proceed almost exclusively on the basis of political favouritism” (Chubb, 1981a, p.114). For instance, “government officials are appointed by a particular politician, to whom they are indebted to begin with, and on whom they rely for promotion and other favours, such as the employment of relatives in the government sector” (Chubb, 1981b, p. 70), or even the continuation of employment (Waterbury, 1989). Aatai John (2017), Fraenkel (2005), Namosuaia (2016), and the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (2015) had observed in the Solomon Islands that “civil servants are frequently appointed on the basis of political connections” (as cited in Wood, 2018, p. 485-486). “Given this situation, it is indeed likely that the position of the bureaucracy [in a predominantly clientelist system] is weak” (Kurer, 1993, p. 260).

Table 7.4: Nepotism within PNG’s public sector and political institutions

Personal relationship matters in public service employment		Merits based on qualifications and experience matter in public service employment		Personal relationship matters in job promotions in government institutions		Appointment and/or promotion to key government positions is influenced by politics		Appointment and/or promotion to key government positions is determined by a merits-based system	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	43	Strongly agree	23	Strongly agree	25	Strongly agree	57	Strongly agree	2
Agree	53	Agree	29	Agree	47	Agree	40	Agree	23
Disagree	2	Disagree	42	Disagree	19	Disagree	3	Disagree	60
Strongly disagree	2	Strongly disagree	6	Strongly disagree	9	Strongly disagree	0	Strongly disagree	15
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

7.5.3 Gaming the public procurement and contract system

Papua New Guinea’s public procurement and contract system is highly politicised or patronised (see related discussions in Chapters Two and Five). Respondents were asked a question in relation to awarding of a government contract by a public servant to a friend’s or *wantok*’s firm and whether this constitutes corruption. Most respondents believed that this is corruption because such deals usually involve kickbacks and/or sharing of illicit gains. In most cases, contracts (roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, etc.,) obtained through nepotism and bribery were usually substandard, and in some instances, incomplete. Consequently, many end users are forced to rely on substandard services because the process lacks merit and fair competition. However, some respondents suggested that if the contractor or sub-contractor (relative, *wantok* or friend) met all the requirements, or was the best option who could deliver the project on time and within budget, and is compliant with procurement guidelines, then this is not corruption. As one respondent explained, “government contracts must be put on tender for every firm or company to competitively bid for. So, if a company or the contractor is capable of doing the job and wins the tender, then that’s not corruption because it went through a competitive bidding process” (FGD participant, Female, 18-24). Similarly, another participant said that “if a contract is awarded through merit (including to a friend or relative who meets all procurement requirements), then this is not corruption” (FGD participant, Male, 18-24). Conflict of interests must be declared if you are in the position to make the final decision, whether it involves public

service recruitment, or awarding of public contracts. One respondent explained that “the general rule is to declare your conflict of interest if you are on the technical evaluation or procurement committee, and step aside for other panel members to make their decision. Awarding of contracts should be based on value for money, and the ability to carry out tasks to completion, and not based on personal affiliations” (Survey participant, Male, 35-44). The following are some representative views given by the survey participants in response to the above question:

In my opinion, I think this is corruption because he knew you and gave you the contract [job], but he doesn’t know your credibility, and whether you have appropriate papers to do that contract [job] right. Many times, because you are his/her *wantok*, he/she will award you the contract. Many times, contracts were not done well or completed because of this practice [*wantok* system] (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

This is absolute corruption. Family members occupying senior government positions as CEOs or directors of state institutions, or as state ministers usually wine and dine in some expensive hotels and strike deals (kickbacks and commissions) to award government contracts to their family members who own contracting companies. Financial benefits from these transactions are usually shared among themselves (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I think this is corruption because many times government officers, contractors, and sub-contractors usually entered into some arrangement to inflate the contract costs, and on how to split the commissions. Therefore, in most cases, sub-contractors have not always delivered the projects, or even if they delivered, these projects were usually poorly done (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

A research participant noted that awarding of a government contract by a public servant (in charge of public procurement and tender) to a relative or friend is corruption “because you should not use your family to bid for this contract. If you have pre-planned motives that your family will win this contract, you will dip your hands into the family’s pockets to benefit from part of the money from the contract” (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Another research participant complained that contracts are not transparently awarded anymore, highlighting his own experience below:

From my experience, I can say that even the tenders’ boards (i.e., the National Procurement Commission and provincial procurement boards) are corrupt. It seems the 10% rule

(kickbacks/commission) applies across the board from politicians down to senior public servants. For instance, I have my own community foundation, and I've submitted a project document to the Finance Department for K5 million. But officers in the Finance Department advised that I increase the amount to K8 million. They wanted K2 million as kickbacks. I decided to withdraw my project submission because this is not part of what my community foundation stands for. My foundation advocates for good governance and democracy in this country (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

As discussed in Chapters Two and Five, outcomes of administrative and political decisions are often conceived through questionable means, particularly when dealing with public funds and contracts. Some major financial commitments and public contracts or tenders do not always follow cabinet and parliamentary processes, national and provincial procurement guidelines, and public finance management laws before approval. Approval processes were sometimes circumvented by self-interested individuals. The PNG government's national procurement system, for instance, has always been rife with nepotism or *wantokism*. There is evidence that PNG's public procurement system lacks competitive bidding by private firms and individuals for licenses and government contracts. Indeed, PNG politicians and senior public servants have been systematically using their existing businesses to award themselves and their families lucrative government contracts and sub-contracts. For instance, a catering company whose director is a senior bureaucrat in the PNG National Department of Health was awarded a contract worth K539,211 (or about AUD200,000) for catering services to a COVID-19 isolation facility in Port Moresby between May and November 2020 (Kuku & Lyons, 2021). There seemed to be well connected patronage networks in the public sector involving public servants – familial/*wantok* connections, who use their state connections to benefit themselves. According to Paul Barker, Director of the PNG Institute of National Affairs, “corruption in public procurement is still a big concern for companies. Some companies would not even bother to apply for tender because they would have to deal with corrupt ‘back door’ government officials [and politicians]. That has been their modus operandi over the years (as cited in Esila, 2019). This also implies that, because scrupulous companies avoid doing any business with the PNG government, the nation only gets services from dodgy providers, at inflated prices, which is a serious impediment to economic and human development. Comparing PNG with Solomon Islands, Osifelo & Dawea (2015) and Wood (2018) observed that Solomon Islands MPs often give out government contracts on the basis of ties rather than competitive tender.

Data from this research (Table 7.5) noted that 81 percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that government contracts are awarded to a friend's business based on friendship and business connections, 72 percent of participants thought that either most or all contractors give gifts to public servants in the hope of receiving bureaucratic favours (e.g., road sealing contracts etc.), 75 percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that business permits are awarded based on relationships or established networks, and 75 percent of the respondents thought that either most or all politicians accept gifts or bribes from contractors or businesses in return for political favours. When asked whether government contracts are awarded to the most qualified bidder following due processes and rules, 71 percent of the participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As portrayed in Table 7.3b, 57 percent of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that business permits and licenses are awarded to contractors according to established procurement guidelines and laws. In other words, rule bending within the procurement sector has become a norm.

The inference from these data is that PNG's public procurement system is defined by patronage and embedded personal connections within both the public sector and political institutions. Personal, business, and corporate interests have permeated the public procurement system, rendering it weak and ineffective. Overall, the government's national procurement system, and other 'gatekeeper' institutions together with the laws that guide their official mandates are compromised and controlled by networks of politicians, public servants, individuals, and businesses who are colluding secretly to siphon public resources or goods away from the state into private interests.

Table 7.5: The state of PNG's public procurement and contract system

A government contract is awarded to a friend's business because he/she is a friend or an associate		Business permits are awarded based on relationships or established networks		Government contract is awarded to the most qualified and competent bidder through established rules and processes		Proportion of contractors who give gifts to public servants in the hope of receiving government contracts or bureaucratic favours		Proportion of politicians who accept gifts or bribes from contractors or businesses in return for political favours	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	23	Strongly agree	18	Strongly agree	6	All	18	All	23
Agree	58	Agree	57	Agree	23	Most	54	Most	52

Disagree	14	Disagree	22	Disagree	55	Some	28	Some	25
Strongly disagree	5	Strongly disagree	3	Strongly disagree	16	None	0	None	0
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

7.5.4 Pork barrelling and political patronage

Pork barrelling and political patronage are clientelistic practices common among politicians and senior bureaucrats particularly in post-colonial developing states. Data from the present research showed evidence of pork barrelling and political patronage among members of parliament and senior public servants within PNG's public sector. Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002) defined pork barrelling as discretionary use of public funds to targeted or localised projects that do not serve the wider interests, and often bypassing normal funding procedures. Kurer (1993), considered pork barrel benefits as collective benefits such as local schools, roads, wells and health facilities and patronage benefits as individual benefits such as the allocation of a job, credit, a contract, exemption from taxes or access to a particular service. For the purpose of this research, pork barrelling and political patronage are used interchangeably as both in most cases involved appropriation of public funds and state resources to a particular geopolitical area and population to achieve the same result – that is, leaders (politicians) subjecting their followers (whether collectively or individually) to a perpetual state of dependency, while they continue to amass wealth, prestige and power.

Respondents were asked two related questions regarding the redistribution of funds and state resources by politicians and bureaucrats to their respective constituencies, and whether everyone benefits fairly from this redistribution. The questions are thus:

- 1) If your friend or relative in a government institution disburses public funds at his/her own discretion to support your community. Is this corruption? and
- 2) A government service was expedited without proper vetting, but still reached its targeted population. Is this corruption?

Most respondents thought that corruption hinges on discretionary use of public money without any form of accountability. Others said that if public funds are not earmarked in the budget for use in a particular community, then this is corruption. Public money or funds are supposed to be spent equitably and fairly, and not for wealth accumulation, personal aggrandisement, and

prestige by a few people. However, if a person uses his/her discretion to divert public money to a targeted community that does not serve the interests of the wider population, this is misappropriation and therefore is tantamount to corruption. Others explained that even if the result is justified, but the process through which the result is achieved is compromised, this is still corruption. That is, if the process is not consistent with the requirements of the *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1995, this is abuse of office and therefore is tantamount to official corruption. The following are some representative views from the respondents regarding pork barreling and political patronage:

In some cases where the situation is urgent, and you have no time to discuss plans and make decisions or negotiate and if the rules say you can use your power [discretionary] to make decisions without consultation, then this is not corruption. But if the law doesn't state clearly that you can use your power [or discretion] to disburse any public funds and property then this is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I think in cases where there is a dire need for something in a particular community (e.g., in an emergency) and if the *wantok* uses his discretion to allocate public funds to help alleviate or relieve that situation, then I think this is not corruption because he's trying to help. But for other situations, or reasons that are not urgent, but he uses his discretion to disburse funds, that is corruption because he abuses the power that he was bestowed with (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I think this is corruption because he/she has siphoned or diverted public money that was budgeted for existing projects to specific or targeted areas or projects in the community. So, he/she is misappropriating public funds by diverting the money elsewhere to unbudgeted projects and benefiting only a small number of people (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

It is a corrupt act if it is not done in line with the *Public Finances (Management) Act* 1995 pertaining to the use of discretionary funds, which is only applicable to members of parliament and heads of government agencies. However, if the funds are drawn and expedited to support my community following proper procedures then this is not corruption because it is applied for the common good of the people in my community (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

It can only be seen as corruption if the expenditure to support a community project is not approved and no funding appropriated for it, or if it was approved and funding was made

available for this community project, but the expenditure or disbursement process did not comply with the requirements of the PFMA (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Regarding the question of political and bureaucratic expediency relating to the provision of a public good or service, most participants noted that it is still wrong for a public policy decision to be rushed or expedited without adequate consultation, vetting and debate. As one participant noted, in terms of government and public service ethics, the process is important, not the outcome. In a normal bureaucratic setting, a policy must go through a cycle before it becomes useful for public consumption. For example, a policy involves a problem definition or agenda setting, construction or formulation of an alternative policy option, selecting a preferred policy option, policy design, policy implementation, and finally, evaluation. If a policy decision misses one of these crucial steps, then the process itself becomes questionable. One respondent explained that “if there is no transparency in the vetting process, then the process itself is questionable, thus corrupt deals are likely to occur” (Survey participant, Female, 25-34). However, there are exceptional cases, where for instance, some bureaucratic procedures and red tapes would have to be avoided to expedite a policy in an emergency or disaster situation. If this is justified by an emergency law, then this is not corruption. The following are some representative views expressed by the respondents regarding the question of bureaucratic and political expediency:

The improper execution of procedure would render the vetting process corrupt for not complying with procedures correctly, even if in the end the objective was achieved. The process is important not the outcome in this case. Not doing the right thing is still corruption (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

It depends on the nature of the service. In a state of emergency, war or disaster, there would be exceptions against the rule. But this must be documented [or supported by law] as to why certain processes were overlooked. However, in a normal situation, this is not acceptable because this would be violation of the processes and procedures (Survey participant, Female, 45-54).

There are certain instances (e.g., in an emergency) wherein a certificate of inexpediency may be used by the CSTB (now National Procurement Commission) to waive stringent vetting requirements to get the services delivered quickly. There are some governance processes that are too rigid and not practical (red tapes) in which vetting processes may not be followed. As long as the service reached the customers at the agreed upon price

and is value for money, I don't see any problem with that (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Someone in government that we do not know provides the service to us. This is good for us as end users, and regardless of how [process/procedure] the service was provided, we have benefited. This may sound like corruption, but we could not care less as we have benefited from the service. Whether this is corruption or not is a problem the public servants will have to deal with (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

My response to this question is both yes and no. I think this is corruption because proper processes and procedures were not followed, but on second thought, I think this is also good because people are always in constant need of government services regardless of how services are delivered. If they benefit, there is no reason for it being corrupt (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

The most important thing is that services [and goods] reached the people. If someone in government circumvented some procedures and diverted money to areas where we want the services to go, but services are not delivered then based on law, this will be seen as corruption. But if services are delivered in spite of the circumvention of procedures, then I think this is not corruption because we experienced delivery of services to the community (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I think this is corruption. For instance, during elections, public servants can collaborate with MPs and engage in dubious dealings to siphon off public money to fund pork barrel projects. Even though services/goods may reach the people, they don't know how funds were procured to deliver these services/goods/projects. So, this is white collar corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

In PNG, it takes a long time for services [and goods] to be delivered, especially to rural areas. So, if some rules were bypassed to deliver services, I don't think that's corruption (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

I don't think that's corruption. I think the service was delivered, however the government department or the employees [public servants] failed to adhere to the regulations that were set in place for them to follow. It's just that the way the service was provided lacked due diligence. But regardless, the service was delivered to the people (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Our modern bureaucracy requires us to follow procedures and protocols. Even if the end result was satisfying, or has met the needs of the people, the processes in which the service was delivered was unethical and involved corrupt practices. So, I think it's corruption because the service delivery did not go through proper procurement guidelines (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

It is evident from the views expressed above that pork barrel and political patronage have implications for corruption, and how corruption is manifested within PNG's public sector. The process by which pork barrelling and political patronage encourages corruption is through such informal practices as discretionary use of public funds and politicisation or personalisation of service delivery systems. For instance, Okuk's style of pork barrelling and political patronage in Simbu in the 1980s was epitomised in the way he created jobs for both his allies and former opponents, and then diverted funds from preplanned projects to his pet projects (Standish, 1983). Overall, some respondents argued that it is considered corruption for communities to benefit from decisions that bypassed essential procurement guidelines and processes. They further explained that in accordance with transparency and accountability, the process (decision-making) is more important than the outcome (service/good). However, others argued that in special circumstances such as state of emergencies or disaster situations, political expediency is necessary to avoid red tapes and bureaucracy, but these decisions must still commit to legal requirements such as the granting of the certificate of inexpediency by the National Procurement Commission.

The following findings were derived from the research data (Table 7.6): 72 percent of the respondents thought that only some people benefited from government services because the service delivery mechanism or system is biased or unfair, 81 percent of people interviewed explained that only some constituencies or population received fair allocation of public funds that is intended for everyone, 56 percent of the respondents said that either all or most politicians disbursed or allocated public funds at their own discretion to support projects and programs not budgeted for (pet projects), 91 percent of the respondents noted that either all or most politicians provided personal favours to their key followers, supporters and clients, and 85 percent of the respondents thought that either all or most politicians used public resources and office to benefit themselves, their friends (*wantoks*), and family. Supporting these views, Duncan and Hassall (2011, p. 266) explained that "countries in which there is an intense focus to delivering transfers to targeted constituents to serve narrow interests are identified as clientelist states".

Table 7.6: Pork barrel practices and political patronage within PNG’s public sector

Proportion of people who benefited from government services if the service delivery mechanism is biased or unfair		Proportion of communities or constituencies who receive fair allocation of public funds that benefit everyone		Proportion of politicians who disburse or allocate public funds at their own discretion to support projects and programs not budgeted for		Proportion of politicians who provide personal favours to their key followers, supporters and clients		Proportion of politicians who use public resources and office to benefit themselves, their friends (<i>wantoks</i>) and family	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	6	All	5	All	12	All	48	All	30
Most	19	Most	9	Most	44	Most	43	Most	55
Some	72	Some	81	Some	37	Some	9	Some	15
None	3	None	5	None	7	None	0	None	0
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

The *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)* Project produced annually by the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden often asked a question based on the political culture and practices of countries around the world. That is, to what extent are politics based on clientelistic relationships? According to Coppedge et al. (2020), the authors of the 2020 V-Dem report, clientelistic relationships include the targeted, contingent distribution of resources (goods, services, jobs, money, etc) in exchange for political and administrative support.

Kabuni et al. (2022) used data by the V-Dem Institute, which were derived from a large international study of countries’ political practices to plot countries on the bar chart based on how strongly clientelist their politics are (Figure 7.2). As Kabuni et al. (2022) explained, “each bar is a country. Higher bars are countries with more clientelism. All the world’s countries with data are included (179 countries in total). The score is an average across the years 2015–19. PNG is shown in red. PNG has one of the highest bars on the chart, reflecting the fact that it is one of the world’s most clientelist countries. However, the figure also shows that PNG is not unique – clientelism is prevalent in many other countries too” (Kabuni et al., 2022, p. 40).

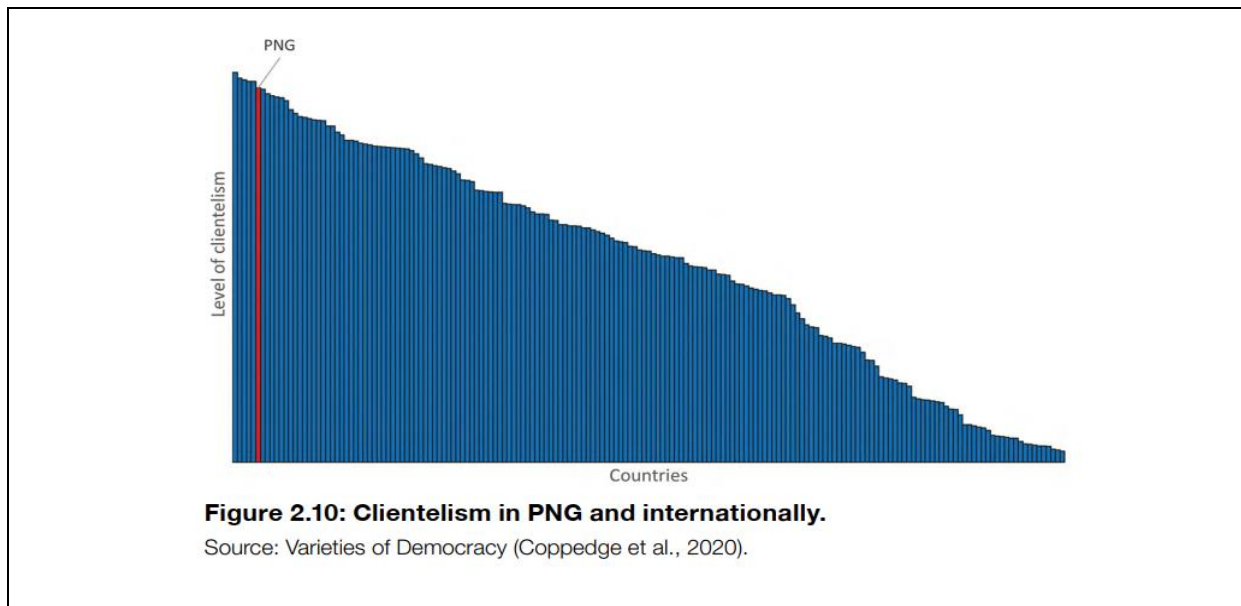


Figure 7.2: Clientelism in PNG and internationally

Source: Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al., 2020) as cited in Kabuni et al. (2022).

7.5.5 Contextualising gifting as bribery and gifting as traditional reciprocity

Corruption is a protean concept and understanding how it manifests itself across cross-cultural boundaries is important in analysing local perceptions that define the overall political and administrative environment. Definitions of and distinctions between bribery and gifting were addressed at length in Chapter Five. Discussions under this sub-section relate to the context and space in which gifting occurs, and how context and space determine the outcome as perceived by the respondents. An important point discussed in Chapter Five, and an important contribution to the issue of bribery within the Melanesian context was the masking of gifting or the idea of gift economy as pretend reciprocity – a sort of Trojan horse. This research defines pretend reciprocity as actions by public officials who illicitly derive money and other resources from the state to feed their greed and that of their clients, while accepting (or normalising) this as a form of ceremonial obligation. That is, politicians and public servants are illicitly utilising the state (taxpayers) to continue to fund and perpetuate corruption using the pretext of supporting family and *wantoks*. This cultural loading makes it even easier to camouflage bribes as gifts because the ongoing cultural importance of norms of traditional reciprocity appears to make it easier for both bribe givers and bribe takers to pretend that what they are doing is somehow culturally sanctioned, when it is not, because the ‘person’ who is really doing the reciprocating is the taxpayer, without him or her knowing it. Apparently, the state is exploiting the “good-will” of the people by allowing the corrupt to make illicit gains from it, which in modern

bureaucracy, is morally and legally unacceptable. As one respondent noted, “this is against the Public Service Code of Ethics [because] the government officer is being paid by the state to provide the service” (Survey participant, Female, 35-44). This is the current dilemma facing PNG’s public sector.

The respondents were asked to distinguish between an act of corruption (soliciting of gifts or money for favours) by a public servant during official business hours and within the confine of the public office (space), and an act that occurs outside of public office, or after official business hours. Most respondents explained that gifting both within and outside of the confines of a public office is still corruption because the actors and the gifts are the same, while others suggested that this is a grey area and needs careful analysis according to the intention of the giver, the value of the gifts, and institutional laws regarding gifting and bribery. For instance, some respondents explained that if the gift was given as a token of appreciation or as a show of PNG (Melanesian) way of appreciation, this is acceptable and does not constitute corruption. However, if existing institutional policies outlaw the acceptance of gifts in exchange for administrative or bureaucratic favours, this is bribery and therefore constitutes corruption. One respondent noted that “there is a fine line here, especially from a cultural point of view. A small lunch money as a token of appreciation as per our Melanesian way is not really corruption, unless it’s meant to attract future dealings” (Survey participant, Female, 55-64). Other respondents viewed gifting within the context of the *wantok* system and the traditional norm of reciprocity versus the modern bureaucratic establishment, which they believed is facilitating corruption. Representative views from the respondents are presented below to highlight the importance of context and space, and the overall perceptions of Papua New Guineans about gifting and bribery in public institutions. Respondents’ views are divided into five thematic sub-headings including 1) public versus hidden, 2) before versus after, 3) outside versus inside, 4) cash versus lunch/dinner, and 5) true tradition versus corruption.

7.5.5.1 Public versus hidden culture of gifting

Views expressed under this sub-section are about whether public acceptance of gifts or gifts accepted secretly are tantamount to corruption, and reasons why this was the case.

I think any gift exchanged during official working hours is not corruption because the transaction was witnessed by other colleagues. However, if both the public official and the gift provider exchanged gifts secretly somewhere, then this is corruption (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Under-the-counter gift is considered as corruption if one's intention was to motivate or incentivise the public servant to attend to his/her query first, while ignoring other clients who are trying to access the same service (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

If you give the gift in public view, this is not corruption. But if you give the gift behind closed doors, this is corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

To give a gift to an officer in the office while his/her coworkers are watching is none of their problem. In PNG *kastom* (custom) or culture, gift giving is part of our existence. I gave him/her the gift from my heart and would not be bothered by how others perceive me. This is my token of appreciation (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

If the gift was given in secrecy or exchanged in a concealed environment and is of significant value, I would classify this as corruption (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Although the exchange takes place in front of other officers, there's a motive behind this exchange. In my view, this is a form of corruption (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I'd say this is corruption because this [gift-giving] under-the-counter is the only way to access government services (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I consider this [under-the-counter exchange] as a form of corruption because the transaction occurred in the office and during official [working] time. This means that the officer receiving the gift is abusing his position and misusing official government time to attend to this personal transaction (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

It can be seen as bribery if the government officer accepts the gift under the counter. Though the service has already been carried out, accepting the gift can put the officer in a situation where in the future he will feel obliged to help me out again due to the gift exchange (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

I think an under-the-counter deal is corruption because the person who will do my job will serve me quickly if I provide him/her with a gift (speed money) and will drag his/her foot if I do not provide a gift (speed money) (FGD, Female, 35-44).

7.5.5.2 Accepting gifts before versus accepting gifts after

Respondents' views presented below are about public servants (bribe takers) accepting gifts now with the promise of reciprocating with an administrative favour later, or public servants rendering personal favours now with the promise of gifts later by bribe givers, and whether these are considered corrupt practices.

Depends on the context. Gifts given before the service is rendered to sway favour would be seen as corrupt practice, while gifts given after the service was delivered may be seen as tips, although the gift-exchange might be questioned (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

To give a gift before a service is provided is deemed as bribery, which is a form of corruption. But to give a gift after the service was rendered can be interpreted as a token of appreciation (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

It constitutes corruption only if a promise of a gift is made prior to the service is rendered. But it's not corruption if it is given out of goodwill after the service is rendered and no promise is made as a verbal contract (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

If a service comes before the gift, then it should be considered as a token of appreciation [and not corruption]. However, work codes or ethics should not allow officers to receive gifts from people they serve, lest the action encourages them to be expectant, needy, and dissatisfied every time they serve others who are unable to appreciate them. This may lead to dishonesty or corruption (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

7.5.5.3 Accepting gifts inside versus accepting gifts outside

Views about space or location and how corruption is manifested (whether within an office environment or external to it) also influenced some respondents' thoughts about corruption. The following are some representative views pertaining to this line of thought.

I think it's corruption because the exchange took place outside, and not under the scrutiny of those in the office or workspace. They are doing it outside, or the transaction is taking place outside. There is no scrutiny in this transaction (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

This is outside of official work hours (after hours). Many instances of corruption occur outside of official work hours (or public office). This is a clear case of corruption because

the exchange involves the two of you. There are no witnesses (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

It's not corruption if I exchanged the gift with good intention to compensate the [government officer] who had used his/her personal time away from the confines of the public office to attend to my query (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

A small gift given outside of the public office is a show of appreciation, but could constitute corruption, if it's meant to attract priority service or preferential treatment in the future (Survey participant, Female, 55-64).

I would say that it's not corruption if the exchange occurs outside of official working hours and space. However, if the exchange involves the use of public or official resources, it is corruption (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Depends on the motive. If the gift was genuinely or generously exchanged because you were not able to do so in the office, then this is not corruption. But if you are seeking future favours or preferential treatment, then it's corruption (Survey participant, Male, 55-64).

If I give a government officer a gift as a token of appreciation outside of official space and working hours after receiving a service, then I don't think that is corruption. It would be my own conviction for returning the favour. However, if I give a government officer a gift as a token of appreciation outside of official space and working hours after receiving a service, and that this gift was pre-arranged, then I believe that is corruption (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

It's still corruption regardless of whether you received the gift inside or outside the office. If you give an officer a gift in the office, he/she will attend to you quickly than without a gift. If the exchange occurred outside the office, you are only encouraging the officer to be involved more in obtaining gifts and money from outsiders [service seekers]. A culture will develop whereby in order to receive or provide a service, you have to first give or accept a gift such as money (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

7.5.5.4 Accepting cash versus buying lunch/dinner

Some research participants suggested that bribery does not only come in the form of cash or material gifts, but also in the form of intangible gifts such as lunch or dinner dates. Some of their views are presented below.

It's a grey area with being thankful and being corrupt. If the service was provided without a bribe, I would still appreciate the officer by inviting him/her for lunch. However, if the officer wants a commission for work he/she is supposed to do, then that would be corruption (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Your treatment to everyone must be the same (or fair). If you engage in gifting, then you are not doing your job well because you just want to receive gifts from people with money, which is unfair. You sadly overlooked others who were there for the same service. You made them wait. Public servants are obliged to provide standard (or fair) treatment to everyone, not just a few people (with money) (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I've observed public institutions like the National Capital District Commission inundated with bogus claims for government contracts/sub-contracts. Throughout the [procurement] processes, I've seen corruption taking place, especially within the accounts section. We must pay them [NCDC officers] some money before we can collect our cheques. Too much corruption exists in the public service because public servants are not only doing government business, but they are also involved in 'side jobs' to line their own pockets (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

If jobs are successfully completed or services successfully delivered, and if people are happy, they would give gifts to government officers. This is not corruption. But if you give gifts using your own discretion and with an immoral intention, you are committing bribery. People deserved to be given what [goods and service] is rightfully theirs by the government. Why should public servants delay and demand bribes from the people before providing the service? They are being paid by the government and it is not right to demand or expect monetary rewards or gifts from the people who are supposed to be served without bias or expectations (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

7.5.5.5 True traditional reciprocity (Melanesian ways) versus corruption (actual bribery)

Comparing Melanesian reciprocity against actual bribery is often a challenge in deeply cultured societies such as Melanesia. An elaborate narration of this contextual and definitional issue is discussed in Chapter 5, sub-section 5.2.1. Some representative views from my PNG participants are presented below to further enhance the contextual and definitional understanding of issue.

Even though the gift was given outside of working hours it might still be seen as bribery, and the officer might feel obliged in the future to help me out again. I think there is an issue as well between what is culturally acceptable and what is bribery. In PNG people like to give gifts and by not accepting the gift it may be seen as being disrespectful to the person offering it (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

In my view, if the public servant wasn't expecting a present from you, but you still give him/her a present, this is not corruption [because he/she has no expectations or intentions of receiving or accepting any bribes]. But if he/she has expectations of receiving a gift, then this is corruption [because this will become a norm and will lead to more future expectations of getting bribes] (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

If the gift was given without any influence from the officer and as an acknowledgement initiated by me, then I would not consider this as corruption and I expect no reciprocation for what is given as a gift. This, however, might not be acceptable in the Western context as opposed to the traditional (unofficial) system of PNG. The issue of contention is the context or space in which exchanges took place. Since this is a public office, the practice shouldn't be accommodated or accepted at the initial stage (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

In PNG context we would say this is not corruption as this is part of PNG customs where we appreciate but within the Western context, this is a form of corruption as you may still supply more gifts in the future. You are persuading someone now for future benefits (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

It can work both ways. The act is corrupt if the gift is meant to bribe the officer. However, culturally, we exchanged gifts among ourselves to appreciate what we've done for each other. So, this comes to the intention of the giver and the receiver. If it is done as part of our cultural practices, then that should be okay, but I think it would be better not to accept any gift when one is in the position of influence because such little things can lead to

huge corrupt practices. The officer needs to act with wisdom and sensitivity around that space because it is challenging when culture is involved. It requires great effort to say no to gifts of appreciation. If the gift is given [around] an organised gathering and the public [co-workers] is watching when you present something to appreciate him or her about the services being provided, I think that is the best offer because it does not constitute corruption (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

In relation the above view, Appendix 5.1 is an example of ‘genuine gifting’ among coworkers in an organised group activity. Overall, respondents’ views suggest that there is a prevailing culture of exchange within the public service – gifts (e.g., *buai* (betelnut) money, *kola* (*Coca-Cola*) money, lunch money, flex card (mobile phone rechargeable card) money, and bus fare) are expected as rewards by public servants for providing a government service (see Chapter 5). Service recipients who occupied positions of influence and are expected to exchange gifts often find themselves enjoying government’s perks and privileges through corrupt means. Unfortunately, service recipients who do not possess gifts or ‘largesse’ or who do not have the means to buy their way are dragged along by the system. This practice has evolved overtime, has become a norm, has been commoditised, and therefore operated outside of the traditional notion of *wantok* system.

7.6 Typology of patronage within PNG’s administrative and political systems

This section looks at the types of informality networks (Lomnitz, 1988) or informal sources of reciprocity (Walton & Jackson, 2020) that exist within the administrative and political systems in PNG. The theoretical basis of these informality networks are derived from Scott’s (1972) patron-client cluster (Figure 4.1) and patron-client pyramid (Figure 4.2), and Lasslett’s (2017) network architecture (as portrayed by the author in Figure 4.4). These models typify simple versions of the complex real world social interactions and exchanges that take place between different groups or clusters of actors. In this sub-section, six distinct informality networks are analysed including politicians – politicians collaboration, politician – public servants collaboration, businesses – politicians – public servants collaboration, public servants – public servants collaboration, public servants – family, *wantoks*, friends and individuals collaboration, and candidates/businesses – voters and government officials collaboration. What is common in these six informality networks is that each actor is connected through complex power networks, referred to by Carvajal (1999) as social network phenomenon based on a relationship of complicity. McDonnell (2017) explained that Melanesian states (including PNG) are situated in

webs of patronage (both local and global), where local politicians and corporate actors who represent transnational institutions inform the exercise of state power. Corruption is a social network phenomenon because the structure of its social network is determined by exchange relationships between individuals or units. Exchanges are governed by three factors including: 1) the direction of the exchange; 2) the type of resources exchanged; and 3) the mode of exchange (Lomnitz, 1982).

In Table 7.7 below, participants were asked their views about what they felt and thought about different layers of both formal and informal social networks and connections that exist across the administrative and political landscapes in PNG. The aim of this inquiry is to gauge the participants' views about the embeddedness and consequences of these networks on formal sources of government and politics, and to establish the type of patronage that have the most influence on how the public sector functions in PNG. Participants were probed into these six scenarios: 1) politicians collaborate with each other to get what they want using their position of privilege to manipulate state institutions, 2) politicians collaborate with public servants to get what they want using state institutions and resources, 3) businesses influence politicians and public servants through bribes and commissions to get what they want by manipulating state institutions and due processes, 4) public servants collaborate with each other to get what they want using state institutions and resources, 5) public servants collaborate with individuals/*wantoks*/friends/family to get what they want using state institutions and resources, 6) Candidates and businesses influence voters and government officials to get desired election outcomes by manipulating state institutions and due processes.

Table 7.7: Typology of patronage and informality networks within PNG's administrative and political environments

Typology of patronage	Scale				N-Total	%
	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)		
Politicians-Politicians	N=30 (36)	N=52 (63)	N=0 (0)	N=1 (1)	N=83	100
Politicians-Public Servants	N=34 (41)	N=45 (54)	N=4 (5)	N=0 (0)	N=83	100
Businesses-Politicians & Public Servants	N=38 (46)	N=39 (47)	N=4 (5)	N=2 (2)	N=83	100
Public Servants-Public Servants	N=28 (34)	N=54 (65)	N=1 (1)	N=0 (0)	N=83	100
Public Servants-Family, <i>Wantoks</i> , Friends & Individuals	N=16 (19)	N=63 (76)	N=4 (5)	N=0 (0)	N=83	100
Candidates & Businesses-Voters & Public Servants	N=53 (64)	N=29 (35)	N=1 (1)	N=0 (0)	N=83	100

Note: SA=Strongly agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly disagree

Table 7.8: Different nodes of actors, instrument of control, and targeted resources

No.	Nodes of actors	Instrument of control	Targeted resources
1	Politicians-politicians collaboration	Bribery, inducements, perks and privileges, influence, political power, authority, violence, and intimidation	State institutions and resources (money/power)
2	Politicians-public servants collaboration	Bribery, inducements, perks and privileges, influence, political power, authority, violence, and intimidation	State institutions and resources
3	Businesses-politicians-public servants collaboration	Bribery/kickbacks, economic incentives, rents, inducements, and corporate power	State institutions and laws Public contracts, licenses, and permits
4	Public servants-public servants collaboration	Favours/bribery	State institutions and resources
5	Public servants-family/friends/ <i>wantoks</i> collaboration	Favours/bribery	State institutions and resources
6	Candidates/businesses-voters/government officials collaboration	Favours, inducements, bribery, intimidation, political power, corporate power, and violence	State institutions and laws

This research identified six main types or styles of patronage existing within PNG's public service and political system (Tables 7.7 and 7.8). In other polities and bureaucracies, there are variations in the type of patronage according to context. In PNG, these six patronage styles or typologies appear to be the most common, with cultural and political connotations. They range from complex patron-client clusters and network nodes involving top order actors (e.g. between politicians and corporations) to everyday corrupt practices between individuals and public officials.

The first typology involves politicians collaborating with each other at the top level of the administrative and political structure (Figure 4.4). The main instruments of control are bribery, inducements, and perks and privileges. In some instances, politicians use intimidation, and violence or threat of it through criminal acts or coercion to get what they want. They seek to enhance the ideological and political legitimacy of their clique, particularly those in

government. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents thought that this patronage network is entrenched deeply within state institutions and functions as an insurance scheme that feeds the politicians' appetites, greed and egos.

The second type of patronage involves politicians and public servants colluding with each other to get what they want using state institutions and resources. There are webs of bureaucratic patronage that align directly to political interests. Public officials usually adhere to a hierarchical chain of command to execute dubious or shady deals and transactions. Most often, politicians tend to use their influence, power and authority to manipulate administrative and bureaucratic actors within state institutions to get what they want for themselves and their families, kin and associates. In the process, official documents, policies, and legislations are tampered with to get an outcome. Ninety-five percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that such networks are also anchored deeply within state institutions.

Thirdly, 93 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that there is a network where businesses or large corporations have been manipulating politicians and public servants (as agents of the state) through bribery, kickbacks, inducements and economic incentives to get what they want, particularly public contracts, business licenses and official permits (fisheries, logging, mining, etc.).

The fourth form of patronage that is deep-rooted in the system is the connection that public servants have between and among themselves. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that within their small informality networks or patron-client clusters, public servants often use their official position to procure illegally or plunder from the state. Respondents believed that this is the most corrosive form of administrative corruption that is plaguing the public service. Moonlighting during official hours and double-dipping from official salaries to unusually high cash advances and travel allowances were highlighted as examples.

The fifth type of patronage is based around familial and *wantok* engagements that individuals have with their family or *wantoks* in the public service daily. Ninety-five percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that there are well-established informality networks between the public servants and their family, friends and *wantoks*, who often utilise the privileges accorded by the state to pursue their everyday interests. Examples of this type of everyday corruption include using official vehicles for personal errands, using official equipment to run personal documents, and pushing papers illegally for claims against the state.

Finally, 99 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that representative democracy in PNG with its institutions such as political parties and the electoral office are highly compromised. Indeed, they thought that influential or powerful candidates and businesses often determine the outcome of an election by influencing and manipulating voters and electoral officials with bribes, intimidation, and violence or threat of it. Papua New Guinea's electoral climate is replete with this type of patronage.

Overall, it can be deduced from these views that the informality network that is having a negative impact on public sector institutions is the top order network of corporations-politicians-public servants' because both elements of the state (i.e. public service/executive arm and politics/legislative arm) are involved in facilitating unscrupulous activities with powerful corporations who have money and other resources at their disposal to influence a desired outcome. Furthermore, much of the national wealth and income are lost through this network or scheme. Equally consequential are other social clusters and network nodes that have also participated in unscrupulous corrupt acts involving state institutions at the expense of the taxpayers, because it is the taxpayers who are paying or reciprocating for the costs of corruption without them knowing. This includes corrupt taxpayers who are also paying for their own ignorance.

7.7 Traditional reciprocity norms and cultural perceptions of corruption in Papua New Guinea

This section assesses participants' perceptions about the role of culture, particularly the traditional reciprocity norms of big man culture and *wantok* system within the modern management or bureaucratic system in PNG. Participants were asked to provide their views on the entrenchment of the big man culture and *wantok* system within formal state institutions, and whether these informal systems of reciprocity, i.e., are the big man culture and the *wantok* system beneficial or detrimental to the efficiency and effectiveness of formal institutions of state? The data show that the influence of culture through the traditional reciprocity norms of the big man culture and *wantokism* continues to be a powerful force in shaping the post-colonial modern state apparatus in PNG. The most common view from this research was that the big man culture and *wantok* system are suited to pre-contact societies or traditional polities governed by big men and chiefs who tailored informal governance structures towards society's circumstances and needs. The big man and *wantok* practices emanating out of this space are beneficial, for instance, through balanced reciprocity practices such as compensation settlements or marriage ceremonies where communities reciprocated in a given time frame (Sahlins, 1972). The big

man and *wantok* cultures are a form of social security that assists community members who are economically vulnerable or disadvantaged. However, the big man culture and the *wantok* system continue to grate against many post-colonial institutions due to the incompatibility of the reciprocating mode of traditional economic personhood with the possessive individualism demanded by capitalism (Gregory, 1982, 2015; Martin, 2007, 2010, 2018). The data suggest that relying on the contemporary version of big man culture and *wantok* practices (e.g. service seekers or bribe givers as bearers of incentives, gifts and inducements) has led to a dysfunctional bureaucracy and an emerging culture of expectation and entitlement in the public service. The data indicate that most public servants had adopted a rent-seeking attitude in which bribes and extra inducements from clients were expected in return for performing services that ordinarily should be a routine part of their salaried terms of reference.

The following views were shared by some participants regarding the role of big man and *wantok* cultural norms in shaping the modern administrative and political institutions in PNG.

It's okay (big man and *wantok* cultures) in PNG's village/traditional settings but this practice is counterproductive to modern PNG context. It is a disruptive culture from a modern perspective (Survey participant, Male, 45-54).

The traditional big man culture is a hindrance to progress within modern state institutions. PNG is a country made up of many tribes and cultures. Each leader comes with their perceived "big man" mentality as cultured by their respective tribal backgrounds and, in the process leads to intense competition over state's resources. This is prevalent in the political arena and the public institutions. These leaders compete to score points thereby causing a fierce power-play among themselves, and in the process, neglect or ignore their official responsibilities. This big man mentality belongs to traditional societies and therefore is not compatible in modern institutions. It only causes division among leaders and their followers and must be discouraged (Survey participant, Female, 45-54).

There is no clear demarcation between a big man and a politician or a bureaucrat. A political or administrative leader automatically assumes the big man role (Survey participant, Female, 35-44).

We must first address this issue before we can address anything else. The big man culture is a barrier to our country's development because it only serves the interest of individuals and certain groups (Survey participant, Female, 35-44).

It (big man culture) is prevalent especially in the Highlands of PNG. It cannot co-exist with the current modern political and administrative institutions since they are anathema to each other. The big man culture encourages patronage whilst the modern system promotes transparency and giving each person a fair chance on merit-based systems of appointment and equal redistribution of wealth, etc. (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

This traditional big man culture creates an unequal playing field for the women folks from meaningful recognition and engagement in our modern political and administrative institutions (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

The modern system is a rules-based system underscored by procedures and laws. The gaps that promote corruption are accommodated by our traditional society. Every day people are socialising with others and discussing cultural obligations and petty politics. They don't talk about law and order, the development of the nation, or foreign affairs. The latter issues have become least of their concerns. We inject more influence from our traditional society into the modern system. We become agents of corruption. We have become a threat to the modern system by taking refuge in it while incubating our cultural dispositions as cultural agents. What I'm trying to say is that we are more corrupt than the office (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Wantok system is considered a social safety net for PNG societies. We only need to accommodate it [*wantok* system] in a more judicious way. For instance, having separate jurisdictions, or pieces of legislations to accommodate it in the bureaucratic structure. *Wantok* system has always been here. It is essentially a part of our culture. We are all born into this [system]. We have to find a space in our bureaucratic system to make both functional and co-existing. It has nothing bad to offer. It is all good. It's just that we don't tailor it in a way that creates benefits and supports the government or bureaucratic system. I think this is the only problem – both are incompatible (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Wantok system was meant to strengthen relationships and promote fair trade while maintaining an amicable environment that benefits everyone in the community. However, the misapplication (and possibly misinterpretation) of *wantok* system in PNG's modern administrative institutions failed to realise these values and therefore had cultivated a conducive environment for corruption to flourish (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

I think the *wantok* system is a great support network, but it should not influence how institutions are being administered (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

It can be deduced from these views that the big man and *wantok* systems are not compatible with contemporary administrative structures. Both have their own place and application. Traditional societies hinge on the big man and *wantok* systems. Some saw *wantok* system as good (culturally), while others argued that *wantok* system is the precursor to corruption. Overall, the data suggest that big man and *wantok* systems (traditional sources of reciprocity) become bribery (corruption) when ‘entitled’ public officials accept gifts as individuals but shift the obligation to reciprocate onto the state. That is, the taxpayers are doing the reciprocity on behalf of the state, and not the corrupt individuals.

7.8 Land administration and governance in Papua New Guinea

This sub-section analyses data on different groupings or nodes of actors colluding with each other to fraudulently acquire land titles, commit fraudulent acts that gave rise to illegal land grabbing, and engage in bribery and complicity within the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP). Related narratives on land administration and governance were discussed in Chapter Six. Preexisting literature claimed that the political economies of Melanesia, PNG included are largely dominated by neo-liberal interests where exploitation of land among other resources is predominant (McDonnell, 2017). The nodes of actors, instrument of control, and targeted state resources identified in Table 7.8 also apply to land management and development in Melanesia. The following quote from McDonnell (2017, pp. 284-288) highlights this neo-liberal tendency regarding land exploitation in Melanesia. Illegal land grab, development and exploitation are associated with:

The agency of state actors who lease urban state land without regard to the public [or national] interests. The act is one of political elites seizing land and leasing it in their own self-interest in defiance of the rule of law or administrative requirements (p. 284). There are commonalities across the region in how political elites and government officials work to facilitate land transactions for their own benefit or for the benefit of corporate or individual investor interests (p. 286). It is these networks of the shadow state that often guide the operation of state power over customary and state land in Melanesia. Shadow state networks also dominate ministerial leasing of urban state land, and across Melanesia, development, planning and environmental regulation is regularly subverted through the

alliances of investors with politicians (pp. 287-288). Political elites do not always perform land transactions in accordance with the rules written in the national constitutions, laws and regulations. The dominance of the shadow state means that, across Melanesia, state actors offer concessional access to land to their investor partners or close business or political associates. Politicians also routinely allocate valuable urban state land to members of their immediate family or wider kinship networks (p. 288).

In this research, participants were asked to provide their views on land administration and how land titles and records have been managed within the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP) in Papua New Guinea. Part of the investigation involves exploring the proportion of politicians, businesses, and individuals who might have collaborated with public servants in committing complicity in illegal ‘land grabbing’, and manipulation of land records and land titles through fraudulent means (Tables 7.9a & 7.9b). As outlined in Chapter Six, governance, management, and accountability systems within the DLPP are weak. This leads to unplanned rural to urban migration and the increasing demand for settlements, and an increasing demand for private property development resulting in illegal land grabbing. These loopholes created favourable conditions for illegal and unscrupulous activities occurring on both unalienated (customary) and alienated (state leasehold and freehold) land, particularly in urban areas in PNG.

The webs of patronage, deception and secrecies within the DLPP are well entrenched as the data from this research suggest (Tables 7.9a & 7.9b). Seventy-four percent of the respondents thought that either all or most politicians, businesses, corporations, and individuals colluded fraudulently with Lands officers to obtain land titles mostly for real estate property development, retail shops, warehouses, or for industrial purposes. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents thought that either all or most Lands officers have collaborated with their family, friends, and *wantoks* to illegally obtain land titles for personal property development. Sixty-two percent of the respondents thought that either all or most Lands officers have facilitated these unscrupulous transactions, which suggests a rise in illegal land grabbing. Numerous exposures by groups like *PNGi Central* or *PNGi Investigates* further substantiate the reality of this rise in illegal land grabbing by public servants, politicians, and corporations. The frequency in which bribes and kickbacks occurred to obtain fraudulent land titles is very high, with 82 percent of the respondents stating that bribery and kickbacks occurred either regularly or often within the DLPP. Ninety-five percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that

management of land titles, records, and databases is very poor, or lacking. In terms of security of land titles, 90 percent of the respondents thought that land titles administered by the DLPP do not have security features against fraudulent activities. These views collectively formed the overall perception that the DLPP is to a high degree a corrupt institution, with 98 percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the DLPP is considered one of the most corrupted government institutions.

Overall, land, including land titles, land records and databases are being mismanaged by unscrupulous state officials and their associates. These findings are consistent with the key findings of the National Land Development Taskforce (NRI, 2007) presented in Appendix 6.1. The webs of patronage between politicians, businesses, cronies, family, kin, bureaucrats, public servants and individuals are well established within the DLPP. Fraudulent activities involving land acquisition and lack of accountability and transparency make the DLPP one of the most corrupt institutions in PNG.

Table 7.9a: The governance and administration of land and land titles in PNG

Proportion of politicians, businesses/corporations and individuals who collaborate with public servants in the DLPP to illegally obtain land titles		Proportion of public servants in the DLPP who collaborate with their family and <i>wan-toks</i> to illegally obtain land titles		Proportion of public servants in the DLPP who have assisted with the rise of illegal land grabbing		Frequency in which bribes and kickbacks are exchanged with public servants in the DLPP to obtain fraudulent land titles outside of due process	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
All	17	All	5	All	6	Regularly	40
Most	57	Most	54	Most	56	Often	42
Some	25	Some	40	Some	37	Sometimes	18
None	1	None	1	None	1	Never	0
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

Table 7.9b: The governance and administration of land and land titles in PNG

There is lack of proper management of land titles, records, and databases in the DLPP		Land titles administered by the DLPP do not have security features against fraudulent activities		The degree to which DLPP is considered a corrupt institution	
Scale	%	Scale	%	Scale	%
Strongly agree	55	Strongly agree	36	Strongly agree	53
Agree	40	Agree	54	Somewhat agree	45
Disagree	5	Disagree	9	Somewhat don't agree	1
Strongly disagree	0	Strongly disagree	1	Don't agree	1
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

7.9 Citizens' views on reporting and tolerating in-group corruption

Section 46 of the Organic Law on the Independent Commission Against Corruption 2020 (OLICAC) empowered citizens to report alleged or suspected cases of corrupt conduct either in writing or orally. However, persons making false or misleading complaints can be prosecuted under Section 49 of the same law (OLICAC). In this section, participants were asked about their experiences on reporting and tolerance of in-group corruption, and whether their reporting or tolerance of corruption will have a positive or negative impact on key institutional structures and development indicators such as the governance system, the service delivery system, overall economic growth, and the state or quality of democracy. According to Hicken (2011, p. 302), “the consensus in the literature is that clientelism has profound negative implications for the way in which democracy functions, citizen attitudes about the quality of their democracy, and the capacity of governments to produce needed public policies”.

Based on data presented in Tables 7.10 and 7.11, it was noted that citizens were willing to report corruption, which they argued will produce positive outcomes in governance, service delivery, economic growth, and quality of democracy, but they explained that reporting may attract economic risks (e.g. losing the only income source), social risks (e.g. exclusion from the family or community), and security risks (e.g. threats or retribution). Conversely, they also thought that by not reporting, or by tolerating corruption, it will encourage deficiency in each of these four development indicators. Four sets of actors were used to generate data relating to reporting or tolerating of alleged or suspected corrupt conduct including 1) family, 2) friend or business partner, 3) public servant, and 4) politician and/or businessperson. Most respondents

explained that, in general, they would report alleged or suspected corrupt conduct. However, the professed willingness to tolerate corrupt conduct of family members, friends and business associates is significantly higher than in the case of (unrelated) public servants or politicians. According to data generated by the present research (Table 7.10 and Figure 7.3), 61 percent of the respondents noted that they would report a corrupt family member; in terms of a friend or business associate, 64 percent of the respondents said that they would report his or her alleged corrupt conduct; 85 percent said that they would report the corrupt conduct of public servants because they are supposed to be stewarding prudently and upholding the laws and protecting state institutions; and 80 percent of the respondents explained that no one is above the law including politicians and businesspersons, and they would report corrupt actions of their MPs or businesses that are contravening the laws of the country. Those who would report corruption cited morality and ethics as the main factors influencing their decisions, while those who would not report corruption cited economic, social and security risks as key factors influencing their decisions. The data also clearly indicate the strong (though by no means universal) social pressures to tolerate corruption among kin, friends and business associates.

Table 7.10: Reporting or tolerating of in-group corruption – Summary

Reporting or tolerating of in-group corruption – Overall summary (Survey & FGDs); N=83								
Qs No.	Responses				Percentage (%)			
	Will report	Will tolerate	Missing data*	N=83	Will report	Will tolerate	Miss- ing data*	Total (%)
G1	51	32	0	83	61	39	0	100
G2	53	30	0	83	64	36	0	100
G3	71	8	4	83	85	10	5	100
G4	66	17	0	83	80	20	0	100

Note: For data coding, refer to Appendix 3.2: Interview Guide

G1=Reporting of or tolerance of a corrupt family member or kin

G2=Reporting of or tolerance of a corrupt friend or business associate

G3=Reporting of or tolerance of a corrupt public servant

G4=Reporting of or tolerance of a corrupt politician or businessperson

**Missing data were from participants who either skipped an interview question to relieve themselves, or where the FGD facilitator skipped some interview questions unintentionally (an oversight). This research was undertaken during the COVID-19 peak period (2020-2022). I conducted FGDs remotely through the aid of research assistants in Port Moresby, PNG using WhatsApp video calls. Therefore, I had less control over those interview sessions with missing data. Refer to Chapter Three for details of research methodology.*

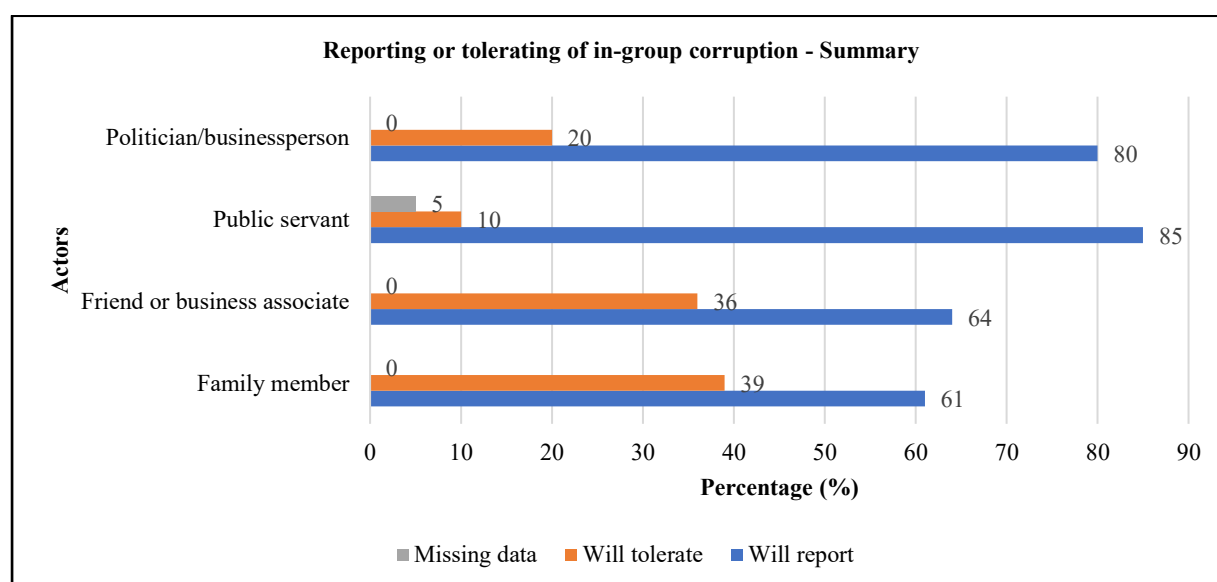


Figure 7.3: Reporting or tolerating of alleged or suspected corrupt conduct

The following subsections highlighted some of the commonly held views by respondents of each of the category of actors in relation to whether they will report or not report alleged or suspected corrupt conduct.

7.9.1 G1. Reporting or tolerating corrupt conduct by a family member

As a family, we will be mindful of his/her “bread and butter” role so we will not report him/her. However, we will only talk to him/her that this is wrong. He/she must not do it again (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I will not report him/her because he/she is my family, i.e., my brother or sister. He/she works for the bread and butter that I feed on as well. But if he/she doesn’t share the spoils of corruption with me, I’ll report him/her. But then it won’t make a difference if I report him/her because there are corrupt people in the justice and legal system, e.g., in the police and correctional services (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I think I would tolerate his/her behaviour because strong kinship and loyalty to family is one of the most basic foundations in Melanesian culture, and I stand on that (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

I will report him/her because he/she has caused trouble and will bring bad reputation to the family. I will not defend or tolerate his/her wrongdoing. He/she is corrupt (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

If a family member was removed [terminated] from his/her job because of my complaint, my family will be angry with me. So, I will not report it (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

If I'm benefitting from his or her [corrupt] action, then I won't report it to police [authorities]. But if I'm not benefitting, then I'll report it (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Corruption is part of our system. Whether I report him/her doesn't matter because the outcome will be the same – nothing will be done about it [citizens have lost trust and confidence in PNG's justice and legal system]. Therefore, I will not report it (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I will report him/her because I want him/her to learn from this mistake and change his/her behaviour. I want him/her to feel the consequences, which will also serve as a deterrent to his/her friends and colleagues. Reporting him/her doesn't mean I hate him/her. I reported him/her to teach him/her a lesson, and for him/her to learn from this mistake. (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

If you consider this from an ethical point of view, reporting them is the right thing to do, and I think that big things started from small things. So, if you report something as small as that (say abusing an official vehicle), obviously in a way you are helping them to not engage in actions like that again (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

I think it would not be safe for me to report the case immediately. However, I'll discourage him to not do it again. If he engages in that illegal activity, he must withdraw from it. But if he continues to do what he's doing, then I'll consider taking the second option by reporting him (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I will tolerate a corrupt behaviour if I see that there is a risk to my safety and that of my immediate family. I think a lot of the institutions intended to protect the ordinary citizens

from harm in PNG are weak like the police and the legal systems, and I feel there's a high probability that my friend or family member would find out I was the one that reported them. Even though we may be close, if I was the cause of their downfall or investigation, they would potentially hurt me in some way or form. Therefore, the safety of my loved ones and myself would be the first factor I would consider by not reporting (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

My conscience suggests that it is not the right thing to do. However, the implication would be that the perpetrators are most likely to react negatively. Sometimes, this could end up in fights, which may cost us our lives. Therefore, in fear of this, most corrupt practices are not reported. This is so because the law to protect whistleblowers at local level is not so strong (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

The main reason I would tolerate my family's or friend's corrupt behaviour is that I will have the influence to change their behaviour for the better and avoid future corrupt behaviour (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

If it's my family member then I might protect them since I might get hurt if they are prosecuted. If it's my friend then I am protecting our relationship (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

7.9.2 G2. Reporting or tolerating corrupt conduct by a friend or business partner

I will report him/her because he/she is wrong or is breaking the law. He/she must face the consequences of his/her wrongdoing. We have so much trouble, and we must report to help alleviate the country off these many problems associated with corruption. Too many problems have arisen because we just observed but did nothing to many of these illegal things happening at our workplaces or departments, etc. (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I will talk to him/her about the negative impact this would have brought upon himself/herself, his/her friends and even family. This is not good, and I would advise him/her not to do it again. You must be honest with your work (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I think I'll report it because it's the right thing to do, and he/she is not part of my family (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

I think I'll report his/her behaviour because in this case, it's a business and I'm part of that business. If I'm a shareholder, I wouldn't want that business to be affected (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

I would report my business partner because I don't want to lose my business too (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

If their actions are going to benefit the company [in a good way], then I don't think I'm going to report. But if it's going to destroy the business, then I will report (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I will not report it if this corrupt act is perpetrated by my business partners because I'm a shareholder and would not want to risk the benefits generated by the business. Regardless of whether the deals are good or bad, I'll make sure to get the good out from the business. I will never risk whatever benefits I think are good for me. I will never report that (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

7.9.3 G3. Reporting or tolerating corrupt conduct by a public servant/bureaucrat

For public servants, I will report them because under the public service general orders, they are supposed to protect public funds and the integrity of the office (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I will not tolerate his/her behaviour but will report it because this is a public organisation where everyone should be benefiting fairly (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I will not report it because if I do and nothing is done about it, I'm only wasting my time (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I'm also mindful of the repercussions of reporting. The persons that are being reported might retaliate and harm me, or my family. This is the main reason that is discouraging us from reporting (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I will report, but first I must have sufficient evidence. If I don't have sufficient evidence, they might press charges against me. For instance, photographic evidence to back my claim (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I would report the behaviour because he's misusing public resources and funds (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Two things that would dictate whether I will report or not report: 1) The proceeds of corruption and whether I would benefit, and 2) Whether that public servant is a relative or a friend, etc. If the act is outside of these two categories, I will definitely report because it is an obstacle or barrier to fair distribution of public benefits (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I will report him to authorities because the corrupt act does not promote the public good, but individual interests. I would discourage that (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

7.9.4 G4. Reporting or tolerating corrupt conduct by a politician (MP) or business-person

He is wrong, and I will report him for the law to deal with him. However, this depends on our justice and legal systems. If the laws are strong, they will deal with him fairly and swiftly. But if the system is weak, then the problem will persist (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I will report him, especially an MP because his/her primary responsibility is to make laws for the country (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I will report the MP because I voted him/her to protect the interests of the people, and not for his/her own interests. So, if he/she does something wrong, I will report him/her (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I will report the MP if he is found to be involved in indecent activities such as gambling or adulterous relationships (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

I will tolerate my MP's corrupt behaviour because I've benefited from it (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I won't report him because I don't trust that the law is strong enough to prosecute him successfully, while at the same time protect me from reprisal (FGD participant, Male, 45-54)

It will be hard for me to report him because if I do, I don't trust that the law will protect me. The politician [or his supporters] will easily attacked me or will use police on me (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

Fear of reprisal, retribution or retaliation is keeping us back from reporting. The recently enacted *Whistleblower Act* 2020 is not fully enforced [is not effective in protecting

whistleblowers]. There is no guaranty that whistleblowers will be safe. What will I gain from being a good [honest] citizen if my safety won't be guaranteed? Therefore, I won't report (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

It is easier to report, but the fear of reprisal is the only thing keeping us back. If we are attacked and injured by these powerful politicians/businessmen and their supporters, who will take care of our families? Because we are not reporting due to fear of retaliation, corruption continues unabated (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

It will be difficult to report them because they are politically and economically powerful and will use the system to their advantage (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I will not tolerate the MP's behaviour because he is holding public office, the integrity of which must be protected. Anything I see or hear about him [that is not right], I will definitely report him to the authorities (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Overall, most respondents explained that they would report alleged or suspected corrupt conduct of their family and friends, public servants, and leaders including businesspeople because this is the right or moral thing to do. Reporting a family or a friend will help in changing their corrupt behaviour or will serve as a deterrent. Public servants are supposed to know their public service code of ethics and the oath of loyalty they swore to uphold. By reporting them, it would help restore the integrity of the office they occupy. Respondents argued that politicians are their elected representatives and legislators who make laws for them to follow. Therefore, by reporting them, it would bring positive benefits to the people's wellbeing, promote economic and social development, and uphold the integrity of the public office they hold. In terms of business relationships, some respondents noted that they would report alleged or suspected corrupt acts of their business partners because they do not want to risk their businesses.

However, those who would not report argued that family is an important part of the Melanesian kinship system. Therefore, they would tolerate his or her unethical actions although the family member was wrong. Some respondents explained that because everyone and every system (justice/legal) is corrupt, they would not bother report alleged or suspected corrupt conduct because reporting would not make a difference. In terms of their friends and/or business associates, some respondents explained that they would not report friends and business partners because they would not want to lose their personal bonds and businesses, which were built overtime. Respondents who would tolerate suspected corrupt conduct of MPs argued that politicians are politically and economically powerful and they would not risk their family's and their own

safety. Respondents also argued that politicians are well connected to the system (justice/legal) and would easily evade prosecution. Therefore, it would be a waste of time reporting them. Other participants also explained that because they would benefit either directly or indirectly from the MP or the businessperson, they would not report their alleged or suspected corrupt conduct. Overall, respondents explained that they are willing to report corrupt politicians, but the fear of reprisal and lack of strong whistleblower protection laws were the main reasons why they would not report. Moreover, they do not trust that the system will deal effectively with big men such as MPs, senior bureaucrats, and businesspersons. Most respondents argued that PNG's justice system is generally weak. Therefore, it cannot process complaints and enforce the rule of law swiftly and effectively.

7.10 Outcome of reporting or tolerating in-group corruption

Over half of the respondents believed that reporting alleged or suspected corrupt conduct would produce positive outcomes for good governance, service delivery, the economy, and democratic performance. Based on interview results (Table 7.11 and Figure 7.4), 61 percent of the respondents said that by reporting cases of corrupt conduct, it would affect governance system positively; 53 percent of the respondents explained that reporting suspected corrupt conduct would bring positive changes to PNG's service delivery system between the national and sub-national levels; 61 percent of the respondents believed that reporting corruption would positively affect economic performance and other enabling economic indicators that support economic growth; and 59 percent of the respondents suggested that reporting suspected corrupt individuals would positively affect PNG's democratic performance and other democratic indicators that support democratic consolidation efforts in PNG.

Respondents who would not report alleged or suspected corrupt conduct acknowledged that it would negatively impact good governance, service delivery, the economy, and democracy. For instance, 36 percent said that by not reporting corrupt cases, it would affect governance negatively, 34 percent noted that by tolerating corrupt conduct, it would affect service delivery negatively; 35 percent said that if they do not report corrupt actions, it would hinder economic progress; and 39 percent said that by not reporting corrupt cases, it would encourage democratic or institutional decay.

Table 7.11: Outcome of reporting or tolerating of in-group corruption – Summary

Outcome of reporting or tolerating of in-group corruption – Overall summary (Survey & FGDs); N=83								
Qs No.	Responses				Percentage (%)			
	Will affect positively	Will affect negatively	Missing data*	N=83	Will affect positively	Will affect negatively	Missing data*	Total (%)
G5	51	30	2	83	61	36	3	100
G6	44	28	11	83	53	34	13	100
G7	51	29	3	83	61	35	4	100
G8	49	32	2	83	59	39	2	100

Note: For data coding, refer to Appendix 3.2: Interview Guide

Given your responses to G1, G2, G3, and G4 above, how would it affect the:

G5. Overall performance of governance system in PNG?

G6. Overall performance of service delivery system in PNG?

G7. Overall performance of PNG's economy?

G8. Overall performance of PNG's democracy?

** Missing data were from participants who either skipped an interview question to relieve themselves, or where the FGD facilitator skipped some interview questions unintentionally (an oversight). This research was undertaken during the COVID-19 peak period (2020-2022). I conducted FGDs remotely through the aid of research assistants in Port Moresby, PNG using WhatsApp video calls. Therefore, I had less control over those interview sessions with missing data. Refer to Chapter Three for details of research methodology.*

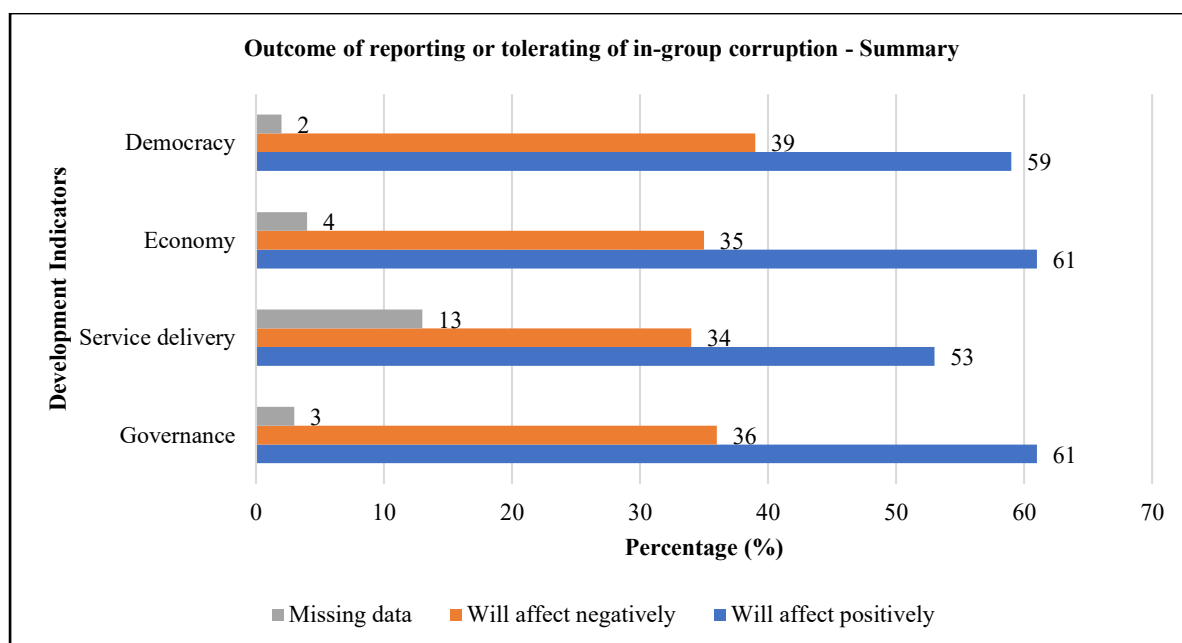


Figure 7.4: Outcome of reporting or tolerating of alleged or suspected corrupt conduct

7.10.1 Outcome of reporting alleged or suspected corrupt conduct: Citizens' views

The following were some responses or explanations from the respondents on why or how reporting alleged cases of corruption would produce positive outcomes for the four development indicators including governance, service delivery, the economy, and democratic performance in PNG.

When we start reporting corruption, it will make leaders to be cautious and exercise transparency in governance and/or within the government system, and our government will run/function well. Consequently, we will see positive results from our MPs being transparent about promoting good governance (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

When we report corruption, it establishes transparency, and people will be fearful and start doing the right thing. So, when they do the right thing, government services will be delivered efficiently and effectively. Services will be improved if we report corruption (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

If we continue to report corruption, I see that our parliamentary system and democracy will function well. All our MPs will work together with the main aim of developing our country. They will put aside their party differences for the common good. They will have a clear vision to run the country and delivering services to the people (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

It will affect governance system in a good [positive] way because at least public servants will be more responsible and accountable and will not be involved in misusing public funds (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

If I report, it will save the country a lot of money, which we can do many things with, including economic growth (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Since I will report, it will expose corrupt leaders and officials. I think it will bring positive results to the political [and governance] system (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

If corrupt political leaders are reported, our political system will be stable, and it will bring positive changes to the economy, and the political and democratic systems (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Reporting it (corruption) will produce a positive outcome, which will enable all the citizens to access services fairly. The service delivery system will be transparent (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Reporting corruption will produce a positive outcome and create a safe place where people (investors) can come and invest and contribute to the economy (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

Wantok system promotes corruption and unfairness so by reporting corruption, everyone would be treated fairly, and job appointments done on merit. This would have a positive impact on democratic performance in PNG (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

By reporting corruption, it will minimise the impact and implications it has on the delivery of basic goods and services to the rural areas. Afterall, corruption is an issue that affects development in our country. Reporting will minimise costs of corruption, which would affect the government's performance positively (FGD participant, 18-24).

One of the fundamental aspects of democracy is to allow people to express themselves. So, when we have reporting systems in place to report corrupt conduct and behaviour of government officers, it reflects the type of government we have – democracy. So, if we continue to report corrupt conduct, it will uphold democracy in our country (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Overall, the participants argued that reporting alleged or suspected cases of corruption would produce six desired outcomes including 1) promotion of transparency and good governance, 2)

improvement in service delivery, 3) political stability, 4) economic growth, 5) improvement in public service performance, and 6) strengthening of democratic institutions. Reporting corruption would instil fear in corrupt, or potential corrupt actors, which (as the research participants argued) would potentially result in a shift in their mindsets. People who are more likely to be reported are those closest to the whistleblowers (e.g. family and friends) because they pose less security risks than those who do not share personal or familial connections and are considered powerful and intimidating, like politicians and businesspeople. Therefore, fear of reprisal and lack of strong whistleblower protection are compelling reasons against reporting alleged cases of corruption involving those who are politically powerful and wealthy.

7.10.2 Outcome of tolerating alleged or suspected corrupt conduct: Citizens' views

Participants were also asked about the consequences of tolerating alleged or suspected corrupt conduct of their family, friends, public servants, politicians, and businesspersons. The general consensus was that tolerating or concealing suspected corrupt individuals would affect the overall performance of key development indicators and state structures in a negative way. It would be costly to the state in terms of erosion of the principles of good governance, a broken service delivery system, weak economic performance, and democratic and institutional decay within parliament and institutions of government. The following were some of their responses or explanations.

Tolerating corruption will have a negative impact on our governance system. If corrupt practices continue unabated, it will create a malfunction bureaucracy, or bureaucratic dysfunction, and unfair distribution of wealth and services (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

I said that I would tolerate corrupt behaviour, which will apparently lead to bad governance or promote bad governance. My inaction will also affect service delivery. When the government is corrupt, service delivery system will become inefficient (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

By tolerating corrupt practices, it will affect our service delivery system negatively through an unequal distribution of services and wealth across the country. If you observe PNG right now, I think only some districts are benefiting or developing, while others are still lagging in terms of economic growth and development (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

By tolerating corruption, it would affect service delivery in a negative way. When there is lack of basic services, it disrupts enabling factors such roads and markets that contribute to the economy of our country. For instance, inaccessible roads will lead to inefficient transportation of goods and services, therefore decrease opportunities for market accessibility. So, when there is inefficient transportation of goods and service, that will contribute negatively to economic growth (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

It will affect or weaken the rule of law. Corrupt practices also create instability in our political system. For instance, in our parliament, there are lots of instances where political parties are bribing other party members to shift allegiance to their parties. By tolerating corruption during elections where there are lots of bribes taking place, you would potentially elect someone who is not qualified or does not have the [necessary] skills [and knowledge] to represent you. One of the key pillars of democracy is equal participation. If I tolerate corruption, then obviously it will affect [active] civic participation, which is one of the key elements of liberal democracy. If there is [active] civil participation, then we will have a strong governance system, which will reflect our national interests (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

7.11 Individual and community action against corruption in PNG

Over half of the respondents explained that reporting corruption would result in positive changes to society including political stability and good governance, effective service delivery system, improvement in economic performance, and strengthening of democratic institutions. The respondents were asked about their experiences with corruption, and possible actions they would take either as individuals or as a group (civic action) against corruption. Overall, they agreed that the community must mobilise as a group in reporting alleged or suspected corrupt conduct to authorities for the good of the economy, society and government. Conversely, most respondents explained that there is a lack of community action against corruption because many citizens had lost trust and confidence in the justice and legal system. Furthermore, there is a lack of community awareness about the roles and functions of anti-corruption institutions. This also includes lack of awareness on how to file and who to file a report to as a whistleblower, and lack of assurance that whistleblowers will be adequately protected by the law. These impediments had prevented active individual and civic action against corruption. That is, some respondents explained that the court system and law enforcement agencies (police) are incapable of providing sufficient security for their

safety if they report corrupt conduct. Other respondents noted that anti-corruption bodies such as the Ombudsman Commission are weak, underfunded, and centralised and therefore inaccessible to many people in the semi-urban and rural areas of the country. The following are some representative views that allude to these perceptions.

PNG does not have enough people who have the guts to report corruption. Many are fearful of their lives, their jobs, and their families' safety. That is why not many people are reporting corrupt conduct (Survey participant, Male, 25-34).

Our people must be made aware of the ills of corruption and how it will affect them economically or by impeding service delivery within their own communities and provinces. The long-term negative effects must be stressed to enhance their understanding (Survey participant, Female, 45-54).

If people or the community saw positive outcomes, they would slowly regain the trust [of the government] and be able to report corrupt conduct to responsible bodies, etc. Right now, people don't have much faith in reporting due to lack of positive or tangible outcome (Survey participant, Female, 25-34).

It will be much better if the community as a whole is committed in reporting corruption because they elected MPs to parliament to represent them. They will benefit from the services through their MPs so people must not keep quiet about corruption, but report corruption to make things right (FGD participant, Female, 35-44).

Most PNG people are in the rural areas and are illiterate. Therefore, they need proper awareness about corruption. Anti-corruption institutions and groups should be going down to the rural areas and provide awareness to them so that they can know what corruption is, and from there they can build a strong community coalition/voice against corruption (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

NGOs such as Transparency International and others that advocate against corruption should conduct more awareness so that the public would be aware on the process involved in reporting corruption. These NGOs should engage more with the public (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

I think it's all about cooperation and support, and if a person is lobbying against corruption, then he/she needs support. Everyone including the government, the private sector, and NGOs should all work together by integrating their anti-corruption programs into the

communities for better understanding of this social disease (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

In my view, if everyone takes responsibility in reporting corruption, this might reduce the prevalence of corruption in our government and society. But the dilemma here is that while some people are trying their best to voice concerns against corruption, others are practicing it on the side. This has become a big challenge (FGD participant, Male, 45-54).

I think collective action is important because if everyone else is reporting corruption, it encourages other members of society to also do the same, consequently contributing positively to the country's development (FGD participant, Female, 18-24).

If the community continuously report corruption, then it will create a civil society that is aware of its role in the political life of the country. For example, in my area, everyone is politically aware of what corruption is. So, if they observe that a leader is corrupt, they will vote him out in the next election. Therefore, reporting corruption will produce a politically conscious civil society (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

The problem I see here is that NGOs and citizens can lodge their complaints through the Ombudsman Commission, but the OC is not very effective in addressing those corruption allegations (FGD participant, Male, 18-24).

Community action against corruption at the grassroots level is the best place to begin. When people are empowered to act against corruption in their communities/wards and localities, they will see the benefits of having a transparent leader/s or local government where their needs and concerns could be met. Most Papua New Guineans are undereducated and so they continue to accept and assume that what the few corrupt and educated do, is the right thing to do. We need more educated leaders who actively engage and educate the public about administrative functions and how things work and what they should be expecting from their leaders (Survey participant, Female, 35-44).

It is incumbent on everyone to report corruption. Currently, there is lack of reporting because people fear reprisals, there is no witness protection system here, our watchdogs are muzzled, etc. The police and court system are not helping also due to collaborating with the offenders to misplace files, etc (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

The research participants generally believed that more needs to be done in terms of reporting, especially through concerted community effort. More civic awareness regarding the rights and responsibilities of whistleblowers is needed. Presently, people are willing to report, but anti-corruption institutions like the Ombudsman Commission is ineffective. Whistleblowers are also pessimistic about the roles of the courts and the police in protecting them and their families from reprisals.

7.12 Citizens' views on anti-corruption laws

In addition to reporting or tolerating of in-group corruption, participants were asked about the effectiveness of two key anti-corruption laws: the Organic Law on the Independent Commission Against Corruption (OLICAC), and the *Whistleblower Act* 2020. Participants were asked about how the ICAC should deal with corruption in PNG. Most participants explained that the ICAC should operate independently without any form of external influence (political etc.). As one participant noted, “the Commission has to be totally independent from any political interference, and those implementing these important functions must be given special protection under the law to ensure their personal safety is guaranteed because of repercussions against them by the corrupt individuals that are being investigated” (Survey participant, Male, 35-44). Section 104 of the ICAC relates to protection of witnesses. One respondent explained that “the law (*Whistleblower Act* 2020) is simple and clear. I would recommend that the law not only protects the employee from occupational detriment but also guarantees protection for his/her family from harassment and threats (Survey participant, Female, 25-34). To be effective in its operations, one participant suggested that the ICAC:

Must be given full powers to investigate corrupt activities and be allowed to prosecute individuals and lay criminal charges. [The ICAC] must have its own litigation path with a separate judicial bench in the national court to hear trials and expedite sentencing so that the entire process demonstrates commitment to fighting corruption. This is what will make it effective and distinct from the PNG Ombudsman Commission and the fraud investigation unit (NFACD) within the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary” (Survey participant, Male, 35-44).

Overall, the participants are pessimistic about new laws and anti-corruption measures to address corruption in PNG. One respondent noted that if the “new law (*Whistleblower Act* 2020) is implemented effectively then individuals and organisations can work effectively to report

and combat corruption. Otherwise, it will be just as another ordinary law without any teeth to bite” (Survey participant, Male, 35-44). On the same vein, Winn (2021) explained that:

In PNG there are many laws against corruption. There are also a host of integrity agencies, a new Independent Commission against Corruption, as well as NGOs and donors that support anti-corruption reform. Despite these well-intentioned efforts, findings from my research suggest many citizens are simply giving up. That is, they now think corruption is a norm that cannot be changed. These findings indicate that much more needs to be done to convince the country’s citizens that the fight against corruption is still worthwhile.

7.13 Conclusion

Corruption remains one of PNG’s key development challenges both at the government and societal levels. Data from this research (99 percent of the people interviewed or surveyed) clearly indicated that corruption remains a major hurdle within PNG’s public sector. Some regional and international indicators also positioned PNG in the same light. For example, data from PNG global corruption barometer found that 96 percent of people surveyed in PNG think that corruption in government is a big problem (Kukutschka, 2021). Moreover, Transparency International’s CPI scores for PNG between 2018 and 2022 showed signs of decay in good governance, accountability, and lack of institutional strengthening. Recurring issues of political instability, slow economic growth, increasing lawlessness, and sporadic civil unrests and ethnic tensions are among myriad of issues adding extra stress on governmental authority, with far reaching consequences for the country’s development and its citizens.

Generally, Papua New Guineans’ perceptions of the role of traditional culture and in corrupt practices are epitomised in practices of *wantok* and big man systems. That is, pressures exerted by the traditional moral economy such as the *wantok* and big man system of government produce what appears to be a widespread acceptance of immoral or corrupt outcomes. The processes by which traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity are co-opted into formal institutions, serving as an alternative governance structure in PNG include neo-patrimonial leadership traits, and common clientelistic practices such as rule bending, nepotism, meddling in the public procurement system, and pork barrelling and political patronage. Data generated by this research indicated that PNG is one of the world’s most clientelistic countries, which answered the key question of “how pervasive is clientelism in PNG’s administrative and political environments”? Finally, research participants indicated that they are willing to report

corruption, which they believed matter most to: 1) PNG's governance systems, 2) how the PNG government delivers public goods and services, 3) PNG's economy, and 4) PNG's democratic performance. But they are pessimistic with the laws in place, which they doubt will adequately protect them from reprisals. Chapter Eight (8), which is the final chapter of this thesis will highlight the main findings of the preceding chapters and offer some recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

8.1 Thesis summary

Corruption is a complex phenomenon. It is a universal problem without a universal definition, and its causes and the strategies to address it vary across cultures and political systems. The present research aimed to explore this complexity by addressing corruption through an ethnocultural and moral economy lens. In a nutshell, this research investigated the role of culture and tradition in exacerbating corruption within PNG's administrative and political environments. That is, whether the presence of patron-clientelistic practices within PNG's public sector institutions have exacerbated corruption through both traditional and non-traditional reciprocity practices such as the *wantok system* and bribery/gifting.

The central questions for this research were as follows:

1. How do traditional and non-traditional reciprocity practices, such as *wantok* and big man systems, and bribery/gifting, exacerbate and catalyse corruption within PNG's public service?
2. What are the processes by which traditional and non-traditional norms of reciprocity are co-opted into formal institutions, serving as an alternative governance structure in PNG?
3. How pervasive is clientelism in PNG's administrative and political environments?

This research used the qualitative meta-ethnography approach (Noblit & Hare, 1988) through the interpretivist paradigm and content analysis of text file data. Document analysis, an online survey, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to generate data. The snowballing method was used to recruit participants. Research subjects ($N=83$) were sampled from selected Port Moresby residents: government and private sector employees, retired senior public servants, university students, and informal sector vendors. There were 41 survey participants, and eight focus groups consisting of 42 participants (with an average of four to eight participants per focus group). Participants were asked questions relating to government transparency, rule of law and rule bending, recruitment and appointment systems, public contracts, bribery, nepotism (particularly through the *wantok system*), favouritism, gift giving, and use of discretionary powers (Winn, 2021).

Generally, this study aimed at investigating government and political corruption in Papua New Guinea (PNG) using the conceptual framework of patron-clientelism as a means for better understanding of corruption across cultural boundaries. The key findings were informed by

several data sets, including focus group and survey data, which identified individual opinions by PNG nationals connected to the field of study. The study identifies a gap in the literature that has often been blurred or ignored where previously corruption places emphasis on the institutional (political science and management) approach, and less on the cultural and traditional moral economy debate (anthropological approach). This thesis argues that an anthropological approach can generate critical insights that shed light on why corruption is still a main concern in PNG despite decades of anti-corruption reforms. The present research found that traditional and non-traditional practices of reciprocity are both imbricated and deeply embedded in PNG's public sector. For instance, the *wantok* and big man practices tend to embed themselves within the formal Weberian system, resulting in an ideological (relational) confrontation between the traditional norms and the Weberian rational-legal authority. This creates a hybrid administrative structure, which I approach as a moral economy of bureaucracy which is typical of clientelist systems, and provides a conducive environment for corruption to thrive.

One aspect of this research that is perhaps unique to PNG is the distinction between true reciprocity (Melanesian reciprocity) and actual corruption or bribery. That is, traditional or Melanesian reciprocity becomes bribery when the government employee accepts a gift as an individual but shifts the obligation to reciprocate onto the state.

Corruption is indeed a serious problem in PNG. Overall findings from the people interviewed found corruption to be widespread at all levels of society, but more so in the public sector. Almost all respondents (99 percent – this includes respondents from focus groups who were also individually asked questions) believed that corruption is either problematic or highly problematic in the public sector. In addition, 62 percent of respondents believed that most public servants have received bribes or kickbacks in one form or another through informal exchanges (mostly petty corruption), while 52 percent thought most politicians have been bribed by businesses or firms for political favours (grand corruption) (Winn, 2021).

Corruption, exacerbated by *wantokism* and big man system has infiltrated the entire system of government. Most participants said *wantok* system has many negative effects and is a barrier to transparency and accountability. Likewise, the big man system was viewed negatively by the participants and seen as a barrier to PNG's development. The big man system is premised on a patronage culture where individual or group interests are prioritised over public interests.

The study finds that 1) corruption in PNG is exacerbated by the cultural components of clientelism such as gifting, and traditional institutions of reciprocity which are central to the big

man and *wantok* systems; and 2) elements of clientelism have pervaded all levels of government and society and are shaping modern political governance and administrative institutions in PNG. These findings suggested that PNG displayed typical characteristics of a clientelist state. Clientelist relationships include the targeted, contingent distribution of resources (goods, services, jobs, money, etc) in exchange for political and administrative support (Coppedge et al., 2020). The present research found that clientelism has systematically infiltrated the entire political and administrative systems. For instance, contractors bribing public servants and politicians for administrative and political favours scored very high on people's responses (72 percent and 75 percent respectively). Informal collaborative networks that involved individuals, public servants, politicians and businesses are well entrenched in the system. For instance, 99 percent of participants believed that politicians collaborated with each other by using their power and influence to defraud the state, 99 percent said public servants collaborated with each other in a similar way, 92 percent said businesses influenced politicians and public servants with financial inducements or other favours in getting what they want (particularly government contracts) from the state, and 95 percent believed public servants collaborate with their family and kin using public institutions and resources for their own benefit.

These informal exchanges and collaboration occur within a contested space that this research approached as a moral economy of bureaucracy. In this space, outcomes of administrative and political decisions are conceived through questionable processes/means, particularly when dealing with public funds and contracts. Major financial commitments and public contracts or tenders did not always follow cabinet and parliamentary processes, national and provincial procurement guidelines, and public finance management laws. Approval processes were sometimes circumvented, with most participants suggesting that many government departments and employees lacked transparency and accountability.

Most respondents believed that reporting corruption would produce positive net benefit for good governance, service delivery, the economy, and democracy. Theoretically, they were willing to report corruption, but practically they could not, due to economic, social and security risks associated with reporting. Many said anti-corruption laws such as the *Whistleblower Act* 2020 and the *Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Act* 2020 were simply weak and unenforceable. Their perceptions about widespread corruption were also informed by pre-existing legal loopholes and lack of law enforcement, particularly with prosecution (legalistic view). There are a host of integrity agencies as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donors that support anti-corruption reform. Despite these well-intentioned efforts, findings

from my research suggest many citizens are simply giving up. That is, they now think corruption is a norm that cannot be changed.

This study is the first in recent years to develop original work, but more importantly, it is a study researched and written by a PNG scholar with PNG subjects, and therefore will make an important contribution to the scholarly literature on government policies, contribute to a more culturally-informed understanding of corruption within the PNG government, and will be useful for designing culturally-and socially-appropriate anti-corruption agenda in PNG. Understanding traditional reciprocity norms such as *wantok* and big man is an important step in investigating clientelistic networks embedded in PNG's state institutions, between big men and their *wantoks* or associates, which was perceived as a potential trigger for corruption.

8.2 Policy implications

The present research found that corruption affects all levels and systems of government and society including worsening governance indicators, a broad failure in the public service delivery systems, declining socio-economic indicators, and general erosion in the values of democracy that PNG has. In terms of anti-corruption laws and the integrity of oversight institutions, most citizens believed that laws are weak, and anti-corruption institutions have become rubberstamps. Most oversight institutions are politically influenced, underfunded and stymied, and cannot successfully pursue corrupt actors. They only exist to serve the interests of the wealthy and the powerful, and not the common interests. Therefore, most respondents were pessimistic about the ability of the state to effectively protect them if they report alleged or suspected corrupt cases.

Data from this research indicated that individual whistleblowing is risky and may not be an effective way to report corrupt cases due to three main risks: 1) security risk (fear of physical harm due to retribution from exposed parties), 2) social risk (fear of social exclusion), and 3) economic risk (fear of losing economic life support/incentives). Moreover, citizens outside of major urban centres and towns lacked adequate knowledge of corruption. But for citizens who know what corruption is, the next challenge is on how to report, who to report to, and when to report suspected corrupt cases. These structural challenges make it difficult for citizens to effectively report corruption. Most respondents argued that reporting as a group would be more effective rather than as individuals.

One way forward is to invest adequately in community programs that encourage community or civic action against corruption. Anti-corruption programs pursued by non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) such as Act NOW PNG, Centre for Environmental Law and Community Rights (CELCOR), and Transparency International must receive support from the national government by way of partnership and funding. The government should encourage partnerships between the NGOs and public anti-corruption bodies such as the ICAC, Ombudsman Commission, and NFACD. The government must also invest adequately in anti-corruption programs pursued jointly by the state and NGOs. More awareness is needed to filter down to the grassroots level so that citizens become knowledgeable on what corruption looks like, and the processes and procedures involved in reporting corrupt cases. Community and ingroup action, as the research indicated would be more effective against potential intimidators or corrupt actors.

8.3 Study limitations

Two key limitations in terms of representativity are worth highlighting. First, the scope of this research is limited to one geographical area, which is urban in context (refer to Chapter Three, Research Methodology). Constraints relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, time, and costs have limited the ability to broaden the scope of this research to the semi-urban and rural areas. Second, and on a broader level, the present research focused only on one sub-unit within the broader cultural region of Melanesia. The findings or results of this research would have been enriched from a cross-cultural comparative analysis conducted within the region with similar characteristics as PNG.

8.4 Future research

Given the need for a comparative analysis, replicating the study in two or more sub-units within the Melanesian context would enrich or reinforce some of the key findings of this research.

Researchers embarking on similar research in the future should consider the role of technology and digital platforms in addressing corruption in a cultural setting. This study recommends that more insights are needed around the issue of open-government, digitalisation of government transactions, and a decentralised and integrated digital reporting platform for each province. This provincial integrated digital reporting system must be easily accessible to citizens who wish to report suspected or alleged corrupt cases under the condition of anonymity or commercial in confidence.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 2.1: *The State v Joel Luma* CR (FC) No. 36 of 2019

CRIMINAL LAW - S.92(1) of the Criminal Code - Abuse of Office - Nature and purpose of offence · Elements of Offence
- The offence recognises that those who are entrusted to exercise the power and authority of public office must be accountable to the public - Meaning of “Arbitrary”, “Abuse”, and “Authority” · The circumstances in which the offence may be committed are broad and the conduct which may give rise to it is diverse - The offence requires a wilful abuse of authority of the office held - To establish the offence the abuse of office must be so serious that is worthy of condemnation and criminal punishment having regard to the responsibilities of the office and the officeholder, the importance of the public objects which they serve and the nature and extent of the departure from those objects. The conduct must fall so far below acceptable standards as to amount to an abuse of the public’s trust in the office holder.

The accused was the Secretary of the Department of Works. As Secretary he was authorised to approve the expenditure of Department monies up to K300,000.

On 8 September 2009 the accused approved, in his capacity as Secretary of the Department, eight unwritten contracts on behalf of the Department of Works with Road Stoa Limited for the supply and delivery of a pothole patching material called QPR to eight provinces, all at values of less than K200,000, to a total value of K1,561,945. A further three contracts were approved by the accused in 2010 in respect of three provinces, at similar values, to a total value of K574,000.

In January 2011 the accused executed sixteen written “Profomo (sic) Minor Works Contracts” on behalf of the Department of Works in his capacity as Secretary with Road Stoa Limited for the supply and delivery of QPR to fourteen provinces, at a total value of K4,309,000. Contracts ranged in value from K251,000 to K297,000. Two contracts were executed in respect of Central Province in two different amounts. A further two contracts were executed in respect of East Sepik Province in different amounts. Each of the sixteen contracts executed in 2011 was supported by a certificate of inexpediency from tender approved by the accused himself in his capacity as Secretary of the Department of Works.

In total the accused approved 27 contracts with Road Stoa on behalf of the Department to a total value of K6,445,145. <Procurement> did not take place in the normal manner, through the Operations Division of the Department of Works, following request from Provincial Works Managers, upon need, and from the cheapest supplier at the time. The First Assistant Secretary [FAS], Operations was not made aware of the contracts. There was no tender process in accordance with the *Public Finances (Management) Act*. No application was made to the Central Supply and Tenders Board (CSTB) for a certificate of inexpediency from the tender process. The accused had no authority to issue a certificate of inexpediency which could only be issued by the CSTB or the Minister pursuant to the Act. In every case the contracts fell under the accused’s financial limit as Secretary of K300,000. On a per bag basis the cost of QPR was between K300 and K330 during the relevant period. Local products were available for between K40 and K80 per bag.

On 5 May 2011 the FAS Operations wrote to the accused, copied to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Works, objecting to the contracts on several grounds. On 16 August 2011 the Principal Auditor at the Department of Works wrote to the accused objecting to the contracts on several grounds. On 20 December 2011 the accused wrote to Assistant Secretary, Finance and Budgets, Department of Works, directing her to immediately process payments for QPR on the basis that Provincial Works Managers were begging for the materials on site, the CSTB had been unable to meet for three weeks to consider the Department’s submission, and no legal clearance was required as the contracts fell within his K300,000 jurisdiction.

The State alleged that the accused approved 44 contracts to a value of K9,594,860.79 in abuse of the authority of his office contrary to s92(1) of the *Criminal Code*.

Source: *The State v Joel Luma* (2021). Extracted from <http://www.paclii.org/cgi-bin/sino-disp/pg/cases/PGNC/2021/31.html?stem=&synonyms=&query=procurement>

Appendix 3.1: Participant characteristics for both online survey and FGDs (demographic information)

	Online survey <i>N</i> = 41			FGDs <i>N</i> = 42			Com- bined total <i>N</i> = 83	Com- bined %
	Category	<i>N</i>	%	Category	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Age category	18-24	0	0	18-24	16	38	16	19
	25-34	17	41.5	25-34	13	32	30	36
	35-44	17	41.5	35-44	3	7	20	24
	45-54	4	10	45-54	9	21	13	16
	55-64	3	7	55-64	1	2	4	5
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Total <i>N</i> + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Gender identity								
Male	18-24	0	0	18-24	6	14	6	7
	25-34	10	24	25-34	6	14	16	19
	35-44	12	29	35-44	2	5	14	17
	45-54	2	5	45-54	7	17	9	11
	55-64	2	5	55-64	1	2	3	4
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Female	18-24	0	0	18-24	10	24	10	12
	25-34	7	17	25-34	7	17	14	17
	35-44	5	12	35-44	1	2	6	7
	45-54	2	5	45-54	2	5	4	5
	55-64	1	3	55-64	0	0	1	1

	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Marital status								
Single	18-24	0	0	18-24	16	38	16	19
	25-34	8	21	25-34	10	24	18	21
	35-44	3	7	35-44	2	5	5	6
	45-54	1	2	45-54	2	5	3	4
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Married	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	6	15	25-34	3	7	9	11
	35-44	13	32	35-44	1	2	14	17
	45-54	3	7	45-54	4	10	7	8
	55-64	2	5	55-64	1	2	3	4
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Other	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	3	7	25-34	0	0	3	4
	35-44	1	2	35-44	0	0	1	1
	45-54	0	0	45-54	3	7	3	4
	55-64	1	2	55-64	0	0	1	1
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Marital status by gender								
Single Male	18-24	0	0	18-24	6	14	6	8

	25-34	5	13	25-34	5	12	10	12
	35-44	2	6	35-44	2	5	4	5
	45-54	0	0	45-54	2	5	2	2
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Single Female	18-24	0	0	18-24	10	24	10	12
	25-34	3	7	25-34	5	12	8	11
	35-44	1	2	35-44	0	0	1	1
	45-54	1	2	45-54	0	0	1	1
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Married Male	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	3	7	25-34	1	2	4	5
	35-44	10	25	35-44	0	0	10	12
	45-54	2	6	45-54	4	10	6	8
	55-64	1	2	55-64	1	2	2	2
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Married Female	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	3	7	25-34	2	5	5	6
	35-44	3	7	35-44	1	2	4	5
	45-54	1	2	45-54	0	0	1	1
	55-64	1	2	55-64	0	0	1	1
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Other Male	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0

	25-34	2	6	25-34	0	0	2	2
	35-44	0	0	35-44	0	0	0	0
	45-54	0	0	45-54	1	2	1	1
	55-64	1	2	55-64	0	0	1	1
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Other Female	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	1	2	25-34	0	0	1	1
	35-44	1	2	35-44	0	0	1	1
	45-54	0	0	45-54	2	5	2	2
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Employment type								
Employed (Government)	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	6	15	25-34	0	0	6	7
	35-44	8	20	35-44	0	0	8	10
	45-54	2	5	45-54	1	2	3	4
	55-64	1	2	55-64	0	0	1	1
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Employed (Private)	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	10	25	25-34	2	5	12	15
	35-44	4	10	35-44	0	0	4	5
	45-54	1	2	45-54	2	5	3	4

	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Self/Unemployed	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	1	2	25-34	6	14	7	8
	35-44	5	12	35-44	2	5	7	8
	45-54	1	2	45-54	6	14	7	8
	55-64	2	5	55-64	1	2	3	4
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Students	18-24	0	0	18-24	16	39	16	19
	25-34	0	0	25-34	5	12	5	6
	35-44	0	0	35-44	1	2	1	1
	45-54	0	0	45-54	0	0	0	0
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Employment position								
Junior position	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	6	15	25-34	2	5	8	10
	35-44	1	2	35-44	0	0	1	1
	45-54	0	0	45-54	2	5	2	2
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Middle mgmt.	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	8	20	25-34	0	0	8	10

	35-44	8	20	35-44	0	0	8	10
	45-54	1	2	45-54	1	2	2	2
	55-64	0	0	55-64	0	0	0	0
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Senior mgmt.	18-24	0	0	18-24	0	0	0	0
	25-34	2	5	25-34	0	0	2	2
	35-44	3	8	35-44	0	0	3	4
	45-54	2	5	45-54	0	0	2	2
	55-64	1	2	55-64	0	0	1	1
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Self/Unemployed	18-24	0	0	18-24	16	38	16	19
	25-34	1	2	25-34	11	26	12	15
	35-44	5	12	35-44	3	7	8	10
	45-54	1	2	45-54	6	15	7	8
	55-64	2	5	55-64	1	2	3	4
	65+	0	0	65+	0	0	0	0
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Years of employment								
Government	0-1	0	0	0-1	0	0	0	0
	1-5	2	5	1-5	1	2	3	4
	5-10	6	15	5-10	0	0	6	7
	10+	9	22	10+	0	0	9	11
Private	0-1	0	0	0-1	1	2	1	1
	1-5	5	12	1-5	2	5	7	8

	5-10	6	15	5-10	1	2	7	8
	10+	4	9	10+	0	0	4	5
Students	0-1	0	0	0-1	22	53	22	27
	1-5	0	0	1-5	0	0	0	0
	5-10	0	0	5-10	0	0	0	0
	10+	0	0	10+	0	0	0	0
Self/Unemployed	0-1	9	22	0-1	15	36	24	29
	1-5	0	0	1-5	0	0	0	0
	5-10	0	0	5-10	0	0	0	0
	10+	0	0	10+	0	0	0	0
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100
Employment/preoccupation by gender								
Government	Male	11	27	Male	1	2	12	14.5
	Female	6	14	Female	0	0	6	7
Private	Male	7	17	Male	2	5	9	11
	Female	8	20	Female	2	5	10	12
Students	Male	0	0	Male	12	28	12	14.5
	Female	0	0	Female	10	24	10	12
Self/Unemployed	Male	8	20	Male	7	17	15	18
	Female	1	2	Female	8	19	9	11
Total N + %		41	100		42	100	83	100

Appendix 3.2: Interview Guide/Instrument (Human Ethics Approval H8078)

Hi participant/s, thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. My name is Midelit, and he is Samuel. We are assisting Teddy Winn, the principal investigator and a research student at James Cook University, Australia. This interview is part of a project in which Teddy will be investigating corruption using the informal systems of reciprocity, culture, and tradition (such as the wantok and the big man systems) to try to explain corruption in the PNG context. Teddy thinks that your perceptions have an important role to play in guiding the understanding of corruption in PNG. He wants to make sure your views are accounted for in the research space. He will not provide any judgement on what you have done or are planning to do. He just wants to know more about your perceptions.

Results from this questionnaire will contribute towards his PhD thesis, and relevant sections will be written up into reports to be presented at conferences and seminars. Your identity will be protected in these publications.

Before we begin, I would like to record your consent to participate in this interview, the details of which have been explained to you in a written information sheet. The consent form will be for us to keep. This interview is voluntary.

Section A: Respondent's Information

I would like to get some information about you. The information you give will not be used to identify you in this research.

A1. Indicate your gender category.

- i. Male (M)
- ii. Female (F)
- iii. Other (Intermediate/Intersex/Unspecified)

A2. Indicate your age range.

- i. 18-24
- ii. 25-34
- iii. 35-44
- iv. 45-54
- v. 55-64
- vi. 65+

A3. Indicate your marital status.

- i. Single
- ii. Married

- iii. Other

A4. Indicate your occupation type.

- i. Government employee
- ii. Private sector employee
- iii. UPNG student (undergraduate)
- iv. Self-employed/unemployed
- v. Other

A5. If you are formally employed (both in the government and the private sector), indicate your years of service. **PROMPT:** This is an optional question for those who are formally employed. If you are not formally employed, proceed to Section B.

- i. 0-1 year
- ii. 1-5 years
- iii. 5-10 years
- iv. 10+ years

A6. If you are formally employed (both in the government and the private sector), indicate your level of position held. **PROMPT:** This is an optional question for those who are formally employed. If you are not formally employed, proceed to Section B.

- i. Junior position
- ii. Middle management
- iii. Senior management
- iv. Other

Section B: General corruption perception

In this section, you are required to offer your general perception about corruption in Papua New Guinea.

B1. What are your views on the idea that corruption is widespread in our political and administrative systems?

PROMPT: For instance, in an online survey with 38 people, almost all think that corruption is widespread in our political and administrative systems.

B2. What are your views on the transparency of most government regulations and procedures?

PROMPT: Do you think the system is transparent? The 38 people surveyed further indicated that transparency is lacking because of weak regulations.

B3. Hypothetically, your friend or relative in a government institution bends the rule for you to get a job done. Is this corruption?

PROMPT: For example, fraudulent documents and records were created by a friend in the Department of Lands and Physical Planning to issue you with a fraudulent land title.

B4. Hypothetically, your friend or relative in a government institution appoints one of your family members even though other applicants were better qualified. Is this corruption?

B5. Hypothetically, your friend or relative in a government institution awards a government contract to your firm because you are his friend/relative. Is this corruption?

B6. Hypothetically, your friend or relative in a government institution disburses public funds at his/her own discretion to support your community. Is this corruption?

B7. A government service was expedited without proper vetting, but still reached its intended customers. Is this corruption?

PROMPT: Although some rules and procedures were bypassed, the service was successfully delivered to the customers.

B8. If you give a government officer a gift in return for a service over the counter as a token of appreciation, does this constitute corruption?

PROMPT: The transaction occurs within official working hours and space. One or more officers have observed the transaction.

B9. If you give a government officer a gift outside of official space and working hours after receiving the service as a token of appreciation, does this constitute corruption?

PROMPT: The transaction occurs outside of official working hours and space. Only you and the government officer are involved.

B10. Overall, to what extent do you think corruption is a problem in the public sector in PNG? Select the option below that applies.

Highly problematic	Problematic	Less problematic	Not problematic
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Section C: Common Practices in the Administrative and Political Environments

In this section, I request you to assess the administrative and political environments in our country based on your knowledge and experience of our government system and politics.

Statement/Question <i>{From the given statement or question, select an option from among the four preferences and discuss your thoughts}.</i>		Preference			
i. Evaluating or testing common practices in the Administrative System					
Part A		All	Most	Some	None
C1	What proportion of people overall get preferential treatment from government institutions if rules and laws are biased or unfair?	All	Most	Some	None
C2	What proportion of people overall benefit from government services if the service delivery mechanism is biased or unfair?	All	Most	Some	None
C3	What proportion of contractors overall give gift (cash or kind) to public servants in the hope of receiving government contracts or favours?	All	Most	Some	None
C4	What proportion of public servants overall bend rules and laws that benefit themselves, and their friends (<i>wantoks</i>) and family?	All	Most	Some	None
C5	What proportion of public servants overall take bribes and kickbacks in return for providing government services?	All	Most	Some	None
Part B (Strongly disagree (-2), Disagree (-1), Agree (1), Strongly agree (2))		SD	D	A	SA
C6	Favouritism exists in the public service.	-2	-1	1	2
C7	Personal relationship matters in public service employment.	-2	-1	1	2

C8	Merits based on qualification and experience matter in public service employment.	-2	-1	1	2
C9	Personal relationship matters in appointment and /or promotion in government institutions.	-2	-1	1	2
C10	Appointment and or/promotion in government institutions is based on merits .	-2	-1	1	2
C11	Government contract is awarded to a friend's business because he/she is a friend/an associate .	-2	-1	1	2
C12	Government contract is awarded to the most qualified and competent bidder through established rules and processes .	-2	-1	1	2
C13	Business permits are awarded based on relationships or established networks .	-2	-1	1	2
C14	Business permits are awarded according to rules and laws .	-2	-1	1	2
ii. Evaluating or testing common practices within the Political System					
Part A		All	Most	Some	None
C15	What proportion of politicians overall monopolize political power and authority?	All	Most	Some	None
C16	What proportion of politicians overall bend rules and laws that benefit their personal interests?	All	Most	Some	None
C17	What proportion of communities or constituencies overall receive fair allocation of public funds that benefit everyone?	All	Most	Some	None
C18	What proportion of politicians overall disburse or allocate public funds at their own discretion to support projects and programs not budgeted for?	All	Most	Some	None
C19	What proportion of politicians overall provide personal favours to their key followers or clients?	All	Most	Some	None

C20	What proportion of politicians overall use public resources and office to benefit themselves, and their friends (<i>wantoks</i>) and family?	All	Most	Some	None
C21	What proportion of politicians overall accept gifts or bribes from contractors or businesses in return for political favours?	All	Most	Some	None
Part B (Strongly disagree (-2), Disagree (-1), Agree (1), Strongly agree (2))		SD	D	A	SA
C22	Personal interests guide decisions/legislative making decisions in parliament.	-2	-1	1	2
C23	Public interests guide decisions/legislative making decisions in parliament.	-2	-1	1	2
C24	Policy making and implementation processes are often controlled by political leaders to benefit their own interests.	-2	-1	1	2
C25	Policy making and implementation processes are often determined by public interests that benefit everyone.	-2	-1	1	2
C26	Appointments and/or promotions to key government positions are influenced by politics.	-2	-1	1	2
C27	Appointments and/or promotions to key government positions are determined by a merit-based system.	-2	-1	1	2

Section D: Typology of Patronage [Types of social relationships/networks]

This section looks at the ideal type of patronage culture (types of social relationships, networks and connections) prevailing in an administrative and political systems. You are required to suggest whether you Strongly disagree (-2), Disagree (-1), Agree (1) or Strongly agree (2) based on your knowledge and experience of PNG's government system and politics.

(-2= Strongly disagree; -1= Disagree; 1 = Agree; 2= Strongly agree)

Statement <i>{From the given statement or question, select an option from among the four preferences and discuss your thoughts}.</i>		Preference			
		SD	D	A	SA
		-2	-1	1	2
Typology of patronage					
D1	Politicians collaborate with each other to get what they want using their position of privilege to manipulate state institutions.	-2	-1	1	2
D2	Politicians collaborate with public servants to get what they want using state institutions and resources.	-2	-1	1	2
D3	Businesses influence politicians and public servants through bribes and commissions to get what they want by manipulating state institutions and due processes.	-2	-1	1	2
D4	Public servants collaborate with each other to get what they want using state institutions and resources.	-2	-1	1	2
D5	Public servants collaborate with individuals/wantoks/friends/family to get what they want using state institutions and resources.	-2	-1	1	2
D6	Candidates and businesses influence voters and government officials to get desired election outcomes by manipulating state institutions and due processes.	-2	-1	1	2

Section E: Patron-client culture and cultural perception (perception about leader-follower relationships & informal social networks)

This section will assess your perception about patronage culture and cultural traits found in informal social networks prevailing in our society. Write out your responses to each question below.

E1. What do you think about the co-existence of the traditional big-man culture in our modern political and administrative institutions?

PROMPT: In an online survey with 38 participants, some participants thought that it is good culturally, but in modern systems, it makes people lazy, it breeds corruption, and it weakens rule of law. What do you think?

E2. What do you think about the practice of *wantok* system in our modern administrative institutions?

PROMPT: In an online survey with 38 participants, most participants thought that wantok system has been a good support system, but when abused in the modern system, it becomes the main cause of corruption in our government and political systems. What do you think?

E3. Overall, would you suggest some positive benefits of the *wantok* system?

E4. Would you also suggest some negative impacts of the *wantok* system?

Section F: Administration of land and land titles in PNG

In this section, I request you to assess how land administration in general, and land titles in particular are administered by the Department of Lands & Physical Planning (DLPP) based on your knowledge and experience of how land is administered in PNG.

Statement/Question <i>{From the given statement or question, select an option from among the four preferences and discuss your thoughts}.</i>		Preference			
F1	What proportion of politicians, businesses/corporations and individuals overall collaborate with public servants in the DLPP to illegally obtain land titles?	All	Most	Some	None
F2	What proportion of public servants in the DLPP overall collaborate with their <i>wantoks</i> and family to illegally obtain land titles?	All	Most	Some	None
F3	What proportion of public servants in the DLPP have assisted with the rise of illegal land grab?	All	Most	Some	None
F4	Overall, how often are bribes and kickbacks exchanged with public servants in the DLPP to obtain fraudulent land titles outside of due process?	Regularly	Often	Some times	Never

Strongly disagree (-2), Disagree (-1), Agree (1), Strongly agree (2)		SD	D	A	SA
F5	There is lack of proper management of land titles, records and databases in the DLPP.	-2	-1	1	2
F6	There is proper management of land titles, records and databases in the DLPP.	-2	-1	1	2
F7	Land titles administered by the DLPP have secure security features against fraudulent activities.	-2	-1	1	2
F8	Land titles administered by the DLPP do not have secure security features against fraudulent activities.	-2	-1	1	2
F9	Do you believe/agree that the DLPP is a corrupt institution?	Highly agree	Some-what agree	Some-what don't agree	Don't agree

Section G: Tolerance and reporting of in-group corruption

This section asks questions relating to tolerance and reporting of in-group corruption, and how it may affect governance, service delivery, economic and democratic functioning in Papua New Guinea. Participants are to **select only one option** from G1-G4 and discuss why.

G1. If your family member or kin is involved in a corruption allegation, you would:

- i. Tolerate his/her behaviour. Why?
- ii. Report his/her behaviour. Why?

G2. If your friend (business associate/partner) is involved in a corruption allegation, you would:

- i. Tolerate his/her behaviour. Why?
- ii. Report his/her behaviour. Why?

G3. If you know or hear of a public servant in a **government organisation** involved in a corruption allegation, you would:

- i. Tolerate his/her behaviour. Why?

- ii. Report his/her behaviour. Why?

G4. If a politician or a businessman is involved in a corruption allegation, you would:

- i. Tolerate his/her behaviour. Why?
- ii. Report his/her behaviour. Why?

G5. Given your responses to questions G1, G2, G3 and G4 above, how would it affect the overall performance of the **governance system** in PNG?

- i. Positively
- ii. Negatively

PROMPT: Your response to this question will depend on whether you would tolerate or report a corrupt behavior.

G6. Given your responses to questions G1, G2, G3 and G4 above, how would it affect the overall performance of the **service delivery system** in PNG?

- i. Positively
- ii. Negatively

PROMPT: Your response to this question will depend on whether you would tolerate or report a corrupt behaviour.

G7. Given your responses to questions G1, G2, G3 and G4 above, how would it affect the overall performance of **PNG's economy**?

- i. Positively
- ii. Negatively

PROMPT: Your response to this question will depend on whether you would tolerate or report a corrupt behaviour.

G8. Given your responses to questions G1, G2, G3 and G4 above, how would it affect the overall performance of **PNG's democracy**?

- i. Positively
- ii. Negatively

PROMPT: Your response to this question will depend on whether you would tolerate or report a corrupt behaviour.

G9. If reporting corruption produces positive outcomes, what would be your views about individual and community action against corruption in our country?

G10. The Whistleblower Act 2020 was passed on 18 February 2020 and certified on 7 May 2020. What are your views on this new anti-corruption law?

G11. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Bill is yet to be passed to give it legal standing. If the ICAC is legally established, what would be your suggestion on how it should deal with corruption in our country?

G12. If you have further suggestions, you think should be included in this survey, please comment below. If not, you can end the interview.

This is the end of our interview.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 4.1: Company extract of Kurkuramb Estates Limited

This administrative form
has been removed

Source: Retrieved from https://www.pngblogs.com/2017/01/exclusive-proof-minister-duma-illegally.html#disqus_thread

Appendix 4.2: Company extract of Kopana Investments Limited

This administrative form
has been removed

Source: Retrieved from https://www.pngblogs.com/2017/01/exclusive-proof-minister-duma-illegally.html#disqus_thread

Appendix 4.3: Change of addresses, Kurkuramb Estates Limited

This administrative form
has been removed

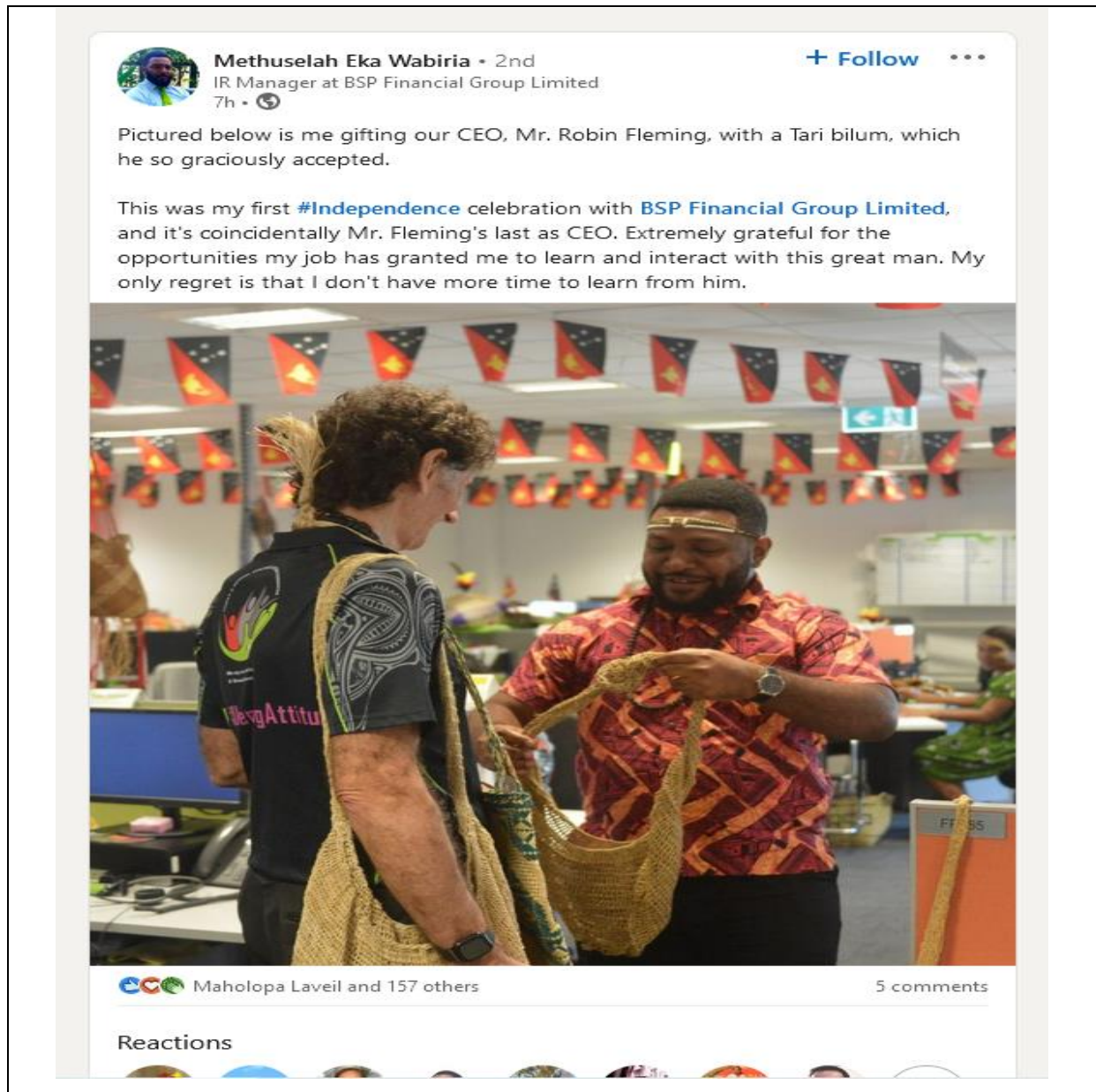
Source: https://www.pngblogs.com/2017/01/exclusive-proof-minister-duma-illegally.html#disqus_thread

Appendix 4.4: Particulars of notice of change of registered office

This administrative form
has been removed

Source: Retrieved from https://www.pngblogs.com/2017/01/exclusive-proof-minister-duma-illegally.html#disqus_thread

Appendix 5.1: A grateful PNG employee presented his boss with a gift of a specially woven PNG *bilum* (side bag) as a show of appreciation



Source: Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6980025186238554112/>.

Appendix 5.2: Corrupt PNG policemen receiving bribes to release a detainee under state custody

facebook

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NBC News PNG

18 July · 🌐

A POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED TO 5 YEARS IMPRISONMENT

A police officer, Sergeant Stanley Japele has been sentenced to five years imprisonment in hard labour by the National Court in Waigani.

The 45-year-old from Sowom Village, Wewak in East Sepik Province was convicted on a charge of official corruption for receiving K50, 000.00 to facilitate the release of a detainee, between May 20th and 30th, 2018.

The money was received from one, Onne Bani, for himself and other police officers First Constable Paul Bari, to facilitate the release of one, Aaron Cui, who was detained at the Boroko Police cell on or about May 21st, 2018.

Chief Justice Sir Gibbs Salika ruled that police officers, commissioned and non-commissioned are not above the law and are accountable to the same laws they enforce.

The money was paid to Japele and Bari. However, Cui was never released on bail. Bari was also charged and is awaiting trial.

Sir Gibbs ruled that the practice of police officers asking for favours is becoming entranced as a way of doing police work, saying this is unlawful and must be punished.

The Chief Justice stated that there were two of them and each should share the restitution amount equally.

Japele has already paid K20, 000.00 to the complainant, Onne Bani, and has promised to repay the balance.

He was ordered by the Court to pay K5 000.00 as his outstanding balance, and that Bari is to pay the other K25 000.00

Amongst the orders of the Court, Japele is to serve his prison term at a prison facility of his choice.

NBC News- Eric Tamaan



657

106 comments 58 shares

Source: Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/213810848972510/posts/1715619548791625/>.

Appendix 5.3: An example of bribery within PNG's Department of Education



Notice to Teachers, Finance Companies and the Public

📅 August 9, 2021 👤 Editor 📁 Press Release

There are huge number of complaints from teachers about salary officers in both the National and Provincial Offices requesting inducements, charges and service fees to deal with teachers' salary matters.

Public servants in Waigani, Teaching Service Commission and Provincial Divisions of Education are being paid on a fortnightly basis to serve teachers and clients as part of their normal employment.

Service fees, and charges amount to bribery, are corrupt in nature and must be stopped immediately.

Third party or agents who act on behalf of teachers will not be entertained as the National and Provincial Offices. Teachers must enquire on any salary matters in person.

At the same time any Finance Company involved in paying inducements in cash or kind to any salary officer will be terminated and referred to the Fraud Squad.

A registration of all applicants for deductions and other related matters will be kept and attended to on a first come first serve basis and upon our capacity to serve you.

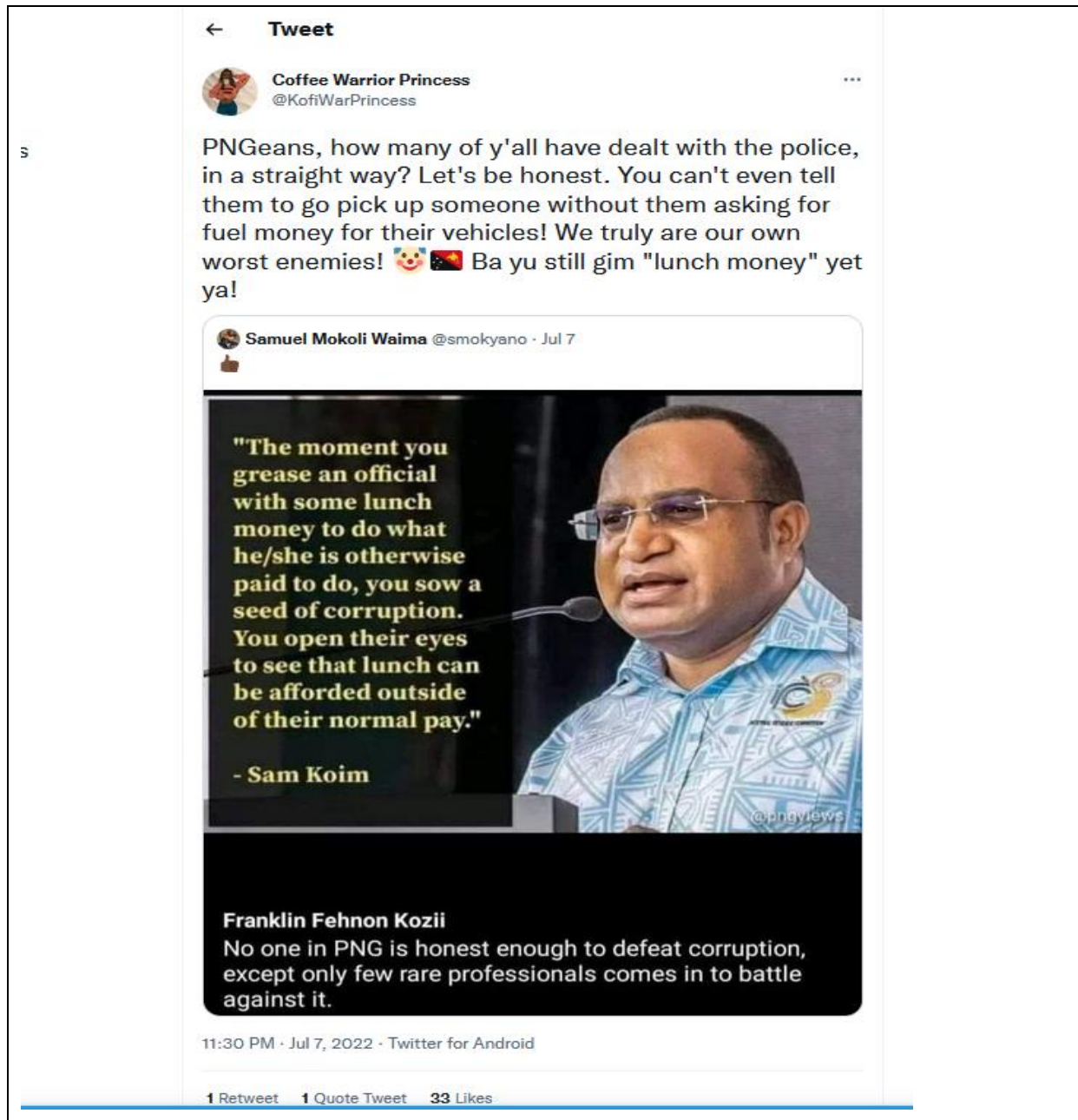
Any teacher who is asked by any public servant to pay an inducements, charges and service fees must report this to the First Assistant Secretary – Finance Services on mobile phone number: 7911 6261 or email: camilus_kanau@education.gov.pg

AUTHORIZED BY:
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

BRIBES | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | DOE | INDUCEMENTS | NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | NDOE

Source: Retrieved from <https://edunewspng.com/2021/08/notice-to-teachers-finance-companies-and-the-public/>.

Appendix 5.4: A common language of bribery dubbed “lunch money” (grease-the - wheel) within PNG’s public sector



Source: https://twitter.com/KofiWarPrincess/status/1545037415915540486?t=8MuWT7gt4cWULh6fN_C-ug&s=03

Appendix 5.5: Pieces of legislations related to bribery and corruption in Papua New Guinea

i. *Criminal Code Act 1974*

The *Criminal Code Act 1974* interpreted ‘gratification’ as (a) money; or (b) an office or employment; or (c) a payment of or release from a loan or liability; or (d) valuable consideration of any kind; or (e) forbearance to demand money or money’s worth; or (f) aid, a vote, consent or influence; or (g) a service, favour or advantage of any description whatsoever; or (h) an offer or promise of any kind of gratification as described in Paragraphs (a) to (g) inclusive. For the purpose of this chapter, gifting or receiving of gratifications are often associated with public authorities or officials. Therefore, the *Criminal Code Act 1974* defined a public official as a “person employed in the Public Service”, which include the following:

- (a) a member of any of the State Services established under or by authority of Section 188 (Establishment of the State Services) of the Constitution; and
- (b) a constitutional officeholder as defined in Section 221 (Definitions) of the Constitution; and
- (c) a member of or person employed by a constitutional institution, being any office or institution established or provided for by the Constitution including the Head of State, a Minister or the National Executive Council; and
- (d) a member of the National Parliament or of a provincial assembly; and
- (e) a person employed under the *Official Personal Staff Act 1980* or the *Parliamentary Member’s Personal Staff Act 1988*; and
- (f) a person employed by a provincial government; and
- (g) a member, officer or employee of a body or corporation established by statute.

Gratifications come in the form of either bribes or gifts. Bribes and gifts are criminalised by relevant sections of the *Criminal Code Act 1974* depending on the degree of harm done to, or consequences of such acts to public offices. For example, Section 61 of the *Criminal Code* concerns a member of parliament (MP) who solicits, asks, receives, or obtains properties or benefits for himself/herself, which is an offence under the law (*Criminal Code*) and carries a penalty of up to seven years imprisonment for the offender (MP). Specifically, Section 61(1) stipulated that:

A member of the Parliament who asks, receives or obtains, or agrees or attempts to receive or obtain, any property or benefit for himself or any other person on any understanding that his vote, opinion, judgement, or action in the Parliament, or any Committee of the Parliament will—

(a) be influenced by it; or

(b) be given in any particular manner or in favour of any particular side of any question or matter, is guilty of a crime.

Penalty: Imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years.

Section 62 of the *Criminal Code* deals with a person attempting to bribe an MP, which is a crime and is punishable by law (*Criminal Code*). Section 62 (1) specifically stated that:

A person who—

(a) in order—

(i) to influence a member of the Parliament in his vote, opinion, judgement or action on any question or matter arising in the Parliament or in any Committee of the Parliament; or

(ii) to induce a member to absent himself from the Parliament or from a Committee of the Parliament, gives, confers or procures, or promises or offers to give or confer, or to procure or attempt to procure, any property or benefit to, on, or for the member, or to, on, or for, any other person; or

(b) attempts, directly or indirectly, by fraud, threats or intimidation of any kind, to influence a member of the Parliament in his vote, opinion, judgement or action on any such question or matter, or to induce him to so absent himself, is guilty of a crime.

Penalty: Imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years.

On matters relating to bribery of public officials, Section 97B (1) of the *Criminal Code* stipulated that:

A person who offers to a person employed in the Public Service, or being a person employed in the Public Service, solicits or accepts a gratification as an inducement or reward for—

- (a) the person employed in the Public Service voting or abstaining from voting at any meeting in favour of or against any measure; or
- (b) the person employed in the Public Service performing or abstaining from performing or aiding in procuring or hindering the performance of an official act; or
- (c) the person employed in the Public Service aiding in procuring or preventing the passing of any vote or granting of any contract in favour of any person; or
- (d) the person employed in the Public Service showing or refraining from showing any favour or disfavour in his capacity as a person employed in the Public Service, is guilty of an offence.

Penalty: A fine at the discretion of the Court or imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years, or both.

In instances where public officials are bribed, or are induced to perform corrupt acts, or omit lawful duties in return for corrupt transactions, it is their (public servants) duty under the law (*Criminal Code*) to report any illicit activity at the earliest convenient time to an officer of the law (police). Section 97C (1 & 2) is explicit on this with the following interpretation:

- (1) A person who is corruptly offered or given a gratification shall report the offer or gift at the earliest opportunity to a commissioned police officer.
- (2) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the provisions of Subsection (1) is guilty of an offence.

Penalty: A fine not exceeding K1,000.00 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.

There are other sections of the *Criminal Code Act* 1974 that defined and/or interpreted some common themes in the present research, for instance extortion by public officers (Section 88), public officers interested in contracts (Section 89), false claims by officials (Section 91), abuse of office (Section 92), corruption of valuator (Section 93), false certificates by public officers (Section 94), and corruptly procuring withdrawal of tenders (Section 97A).

ii. The Organic Law on the Duties and Responsibilities of Leadership

Section 1 of the OLDRL defines “benefit” as any gift, loan or service (whether or not it has a monetary value) and all other personal advantages and favours given beyond the normal standards of hospitality. Persons to which this law is applied are identified under Section 26

(*Division 2 – Leadership Code*) of the national *Constitution*. These persons include constitutional office holders such as the prime minister and the ministers, the Opposition leader or his deputy, the heads of police and defence forces, provincial and local-level government politicians, and heads of government departments and statutory organisations (including their associates (families, friends)) etc. Part II of the OLDRL interpreted leadership responsibilities in the following manner: timely and honest compilation of statement of income, including all gifts received by the leaders or their associates (other than gifts received in the normal course of events from close relatives) during the period to which the statement relates and the value of those gifts (Section 4(f)), use of public office to promote national interest rather than personal interest (Section 5), declare personal interests that do not interfere with due processes (Section 6), declare interest in contracts and public procurements (Section 10), acceptance of bribes, gifts or any benefits obtained through fraudulent means (Section 11), and acceptance of loans, or any monetary benefits. A constitutional office holder who fails to uphold these responsibilities is guilty of a misconduct in office and will be referred to a leadership tribunal. Additionally, Section 27 of the national *Constitution* interpreted “responsibilities of office in the following manner:

- (1) A person to whom this Division applies has a duty to conduct himself in such a way, both in his public or official life and his private life, and in his associations with other persons, as not—
 - (a) to place himself in a position in which he has or could have a conflict of interests or might be compromised when discharging his public or official duties; or
 - (b) to demean his office or position; or
 - (c) to allow his public or official integrity, or his personal integrity, to be called into question; or
 - (d) to endanger or diminish respect for and confidence in the integrity of government in Papua New Guinea.
- (2) In particular, a person to whom this Division applies shall not use his office for personal gain or enter into any transaction or engage in any enterprise or activity that might be expected to give rise to doubt in the public mind as to whether he is carrying out or has carried out the duty imposed by Subsection (1).
- (3) It is the further duty of a person to whom this Division applies—

- (a) to ensure, as far as is within his lawful power, that his spouse and children and any other persons for whom he is responsible (whether morally, legally or by usage), including nominees, trustees and agents, do not conduct themselves in a way that might be expected to give rise to doubt in the public mind as to his complying with his duties under this section; and
 - (b) if necessary, to publicly disassociate himself from any activity or enterprise of any of his associates, or of a person referred to in paragraph (a), that might be expected to give rise to such a doubt.
- (4) The Ombudsman Commission or other authority prescribed for the purpose under Section 28 (further provisions) may, subject to this Division and to any Organic Law made for the purposes of this Division, give directions, either generally or in a particular case, to ensure the attainment of the objects of this section.
- (5) A person to whom this Division applies who—
- (a) is convicted of an offence in respect of his office or position or in relation to the performance of his functions or duties; or
 - (b) fails to comply with a direction under Subsection (4) or otherwise fails to carry out the obligations imposed by Subsections (1), (2) and (3), is guilty of misconduct in office.

iii. The Organic Law on the Ombudsman Commission

The Organic Law on the Ombudsman Commission (OLOC) is a law created to implement Division VIII.2 (*Ombudsman Commission*) of the national *Constitution*. As per Section 218 of the national *Constitution*, the purposes of the Ombudsman Commission include the following:

- (a) to ensure that all governmental bodies are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the People; and
- (b) to help in the improvement of the work of governmental bodies and the elimination of unfairness and discrimination by them; and
- (c) to help in the elimination of unfair or otherwise defective legislation and practices affecting or administered by governmental bodies; and
- (d) to supervise the enforcement of Division III.2 (leadership code).

Specific functions of the Ombudsman Commission are interpreted both by the national *Constitution* (Section 219) and the OLOC (Section 13). These functions are:

(a) to investigate, on its own initiative or on complaint by a person affected, any conduct on the part of–

(i) any State Service or provincial service, or a member of any such service; or

(ii) any other governmental body, or an officer or employee of a governmental body; or

(iii) any local government body or an officer or employee of any such body; or

(iv) any other body set up by statute–

(A) that is wholly or mainly supported out of public moneys of Papua New Guinea; or

(B) all of, or the majority of, the members of the controlling authority of which are appointed by the National Executive, or an officer or employee of any such body; and

(v) any member of the personal staff of the Governor-General, a Minister or the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition; or

(vi) any other body or person prescribed for the purpose by an Act of the Parliament, specified by or under an Organic Law in the exercise of a power or function vested in it or him by law in cases where the conduct is or may be wrong, taking into account, amongst other things, the National Goals and Directive Principles, the Basic Rights and the Basic Social Obligations, and

(b) to investigate any defects in any law or administrative practice appearing from any such investigation; and

(c) to investigate, either on its own initiative or on complaint by a person affected, any case of an alleged or suspected discriminatory practice within the meaning of a law prohibiting such practices; and

(d) any functions conferred on it under Division III.2 (leadership code); and

(e) any other functions conferred upon it by or under an Organic Law.

iv. The Organic Law on the Independent Commission Against Corruption

The main functions, powers, and procedures of the ICAC are covered under Sections 32 to 44 of the Organic Law on ICAC. Of particular interest to the present research are Sections 33 (prevention and reduction of corrupt activities) and 34 (investigating and prosecuting corrupt conduct). Section 33 is interpreted in the following manner:

Without limiting how the Commission may prevent and reduce corrupt conduct, the Commission may do the following:

- (a) undertake or commission research; or
- (b) review and make recommendations regarding the systems, strategies, policies, practices, and procedures of any public body or public official;
- (c) undertake or commission education, training or awareness, to the public generally or to a particular section of the public or private sector, including educational institutions; or
- (d) enlist and foster public support for preventing and reducing corrupt conduct; or
- (e) analyse information regarding complaints, investigations and prosecutions; or
- (f) make recommendations for legal, operational or policy reforms; or
- (g) publish recommendations, research, reports, policies or guidelines and provide such material to other agencies and bodies; or
- (h) make public statements necessary for its purpose under this Law or regarding the powers or functions of the Commission; or
- (i) work in cooperation with other agencies and bodies, including other public sector agencies and bodies, the media, civil society, educational institutions and the private sector.

Section 34 provided details of investigating and prosecuting corrupt conduct and behaviour as follows:

- (1) Without limiting how the Commission may prevent and reduce corrupt conduct, the Commission may—
 - (a) investigate alleged or suspected corrupt conduct, including offences mentioned in Subsection (2), and perform functions or exercise powers under Parts IV, V and VI; and
 - (b) prosecute indictable offences relating to corrupt conduct in accordance with Part VII.
- (2) The Commission may investigate—
 - (a) offences under this *Organic Law*; and
 - (b) other offences under the *Criminal Code Act 1974* that fall within the definition of corrupt conduct; and
 - (c) offences under any other laws that fall within the definition of corrupt conduct.

Appendix 6.1: Key Findings of the National Land Development Taskforce

No	Issue	Finding
1	Customer relations	Customer services were very poor. Lack of electronic storage leading to inefficient retrieval of land files, titles, and information.
2	Accountability	Lack of advanced tracking systems leading to weak accountability among the DLPP officers.
3	Information unit	Lack of an integrated information system between the national and sub-national lands departments. Lack of an integrated lands database.
4	Rent collection	Revenues were lost through lack of property appraisal. Weak enforcement of rent default notices. Rent and property transfer files were outdated.
5	Valuations	Land valuation lacked quality management and control. Valuation policies were inefficient.
6	Physical planning	The physical planning division lacked qualified or properly trained physical planners.
7	Surveys and mapping	Outdated equipment and facilities.
8	Land administration	The land management division lacked procedural manuals and therefore, dysfunctional. Lands offices lacked proper system of recording, storing, and tracking of applications.
9	Title registry	Land titles were manually archived, and therefore unsecured. There was poor handling and separation of title documents from title files. Land titles were not kept in a secure place and format, and therefore were easily duplicated. There was lack of vigilance in handling land titles. Lack of a centralised database of all land titles.
10	National Land Board (NLB)	The NLB has an inefficient system of land allocation.

	<p>The NLB promoted corruption.</p> <p>The NLB was too rigid and politically compromised.</p>
11 Special projects unit	This unit lacked skill and capacity and found to be weak and incompetent.
12 Staff training	<p>Knowledge and special skill set on land administration and management lacking.</p> <p>Inadequate level of staff training on highly skilled and technical areas of land administration.</p>
13 Audit of alienated land	<p>There was an absence of a reliable database on all alienated land, therefore allowing room for complicity.</p> <p>Annual reporting of land acquisitions was done inefficiently.</p> <p>There was a lack of an inventory system to monitor all unimproved alienated land.</p>
14 Land laws	Most land laws were outdated (colonially contrived), and weak, with many loopholes.
15 Provincial lands offices	<p>Coordination and monitoring of provincial lands offices was dysfunctional.</p> <p>There was a breakdown in delegation of functions between the national and provincial lands offices.</p>
16 Various types of leases	Multiple lease types caused confusion, resulting in land dealings being easily manipulated by vested interests.
17 Dispute settlement	<p>Methods of settling land disputes including mediation were inefficient.</p> <p>Inappropriate land dispute settlement laws under the Department of Justice and Attorney General, therefore causing duplication and created room for complicity.</p>
18 Customary land	Land laws relating to customary land were outdated and weak, with many loopholes.

Source: National Research Institute (2007)