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Porgera—whence and whither?

Aletta Biersack

Ipili speakers span two valleys—the Porgera Valley, home of the eastern Ipili, and the Paiela Valley, home of the western Ipili (Biersack 1995a). Porgerans and Paielans share a language, a culture, and a common, but also divergent, history. In the past, and still today, marriage, travel, and trade linked Porgera with Paiela to the west, the Tari basin to the south, and Enga-speaking areas to the east of Porgera. Their position today, however, is not merely a regional one. Colonial and post-colonial history, and in particular the gold mining for which Porgerans are justly famous, have exposed them to global markets, multinational corporations, and the state of Papua New Guinea, with its own laws, provincial government system, and international partnerships. The categories that are ubiquitous in this volume—the Special Mining Lease (SML), the SML clans and sub-clans (here called lines), and the SML landowners—signify novel entities and statuses. The SML is itself a fiat of the state of Papua New Guinea. The SML's boundaries were established to facilitate the investments of the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV), an amalgamation of several multinational corporations in partnership with the state of Papua New Guinea. Understanding the tensions and dynamics of gold mining depends upon understanding how the SML lines, and those designated as the SML 'landowners' (*yu anduane*), interact with neighbours at the valley,

regional, and provincial levels (cf. Jorgensen 1996; Sagir 1997). Since the SML has arisen from the needs of the PJV and the powers of the State of Papua New Guinea, global capital and the state are fully implicated in any analysis of that interaction.

Today, there is a general 'breakdown of law and order', the refrain of Bonnell's insightful and rich report (Bonnell 1994). Tribal fighting is recurrent and disruptive. Is this escalation in conflict an inevitable trauma of development, a by-product of capitalist penetration and processes of 'modernisation'? Or is it better understood as the complex outcome of the interaction of local and national (or global) orders of determination? Here I shall argue that the task of accounting for this escalation, as well as explaining why the situation is not more explosive than it actually is, requires that we conceptualise Porgera as the subject of plural, cross-cutting, sometimes mutually reinforcing, but also sometimes contradictory orders of determination. The conflict of today should be understood in terms of the way that new, mining-related concepts of entitlement and endowment interact with traditional mores and, more specifically, the way that the SML zone, an artefact of global capital and state jurisdiction, interacts with antecedent social networks, themselves rooted in traditional social organisation. My argument, in a nutshell, is that the interaction is complex. On the one hand, the privileges of a few are bolstered through the codifications of mining, but on the other hand, the openness and inclusiveness of Ipili society is informally preserved. The greater the exclusiveness, the greater the conflict; yet the sharing of wealth and other resources levels economic disparities, promotes harmonious relations, and upholds traditional values and morality.

My discussion begins with the 'whence?' of the title, with a summary of the salient features of the traditional system. It proceeds to the title's 'whither?', exploring the fractures and tensions of the mining era as a by-product of multiple orders of determination operating in conjunction. Using my own research in the Porgera-Paiela region,¹ as well as the abundant information supplied by the reports of the Porgera Social Monitoring Programme, I shall then suggest how the recent codifications which stem from mining interact with anterior arrangements, and how, in effect, the seemingly innocuous institutions of kinship and marriage are politicised and deployed in 'altered contexts' (Gewertz and Errington 1991) to enable SML people to informally negotiate their own agreements with constituencies lying beyond the SML border.

An open society

From line to social field

Anthropologists have often tended to assume that 'societies' are made up of bounded, static groups. We have known, ever since John Barnes's pathbreaking article on 'African models in the New Guinea Highlands' (Barnes 1962) that such an assumption does not square with the facts of life in Papua New Guinea. Even in those PNG societies which have patrilineal or matrilineal 'rules' of descent, actual groups are formed by other criteria and tend to be flexible in their boundaries and composition. Barnes (1967) went on to challenge the application of 'African models' to the Enga, with their supposedly rigid rules of patrilineal descent and group formation. Roy Wagner's equally provocative article of 1974 shockingly asked: 'Are there social groups in the New Guinea Highlands?'

In this context, Ipili society—anomalous yet also brilliant at every turn, and with an unsurpassed fluidity, openness, and ability to respond organisationally to every contingency without loss of integrity—assumes enormous theoretical importance. Worldwide, cognatic descent is a rarity, the Ipili version is conspicuous in both the New Guinea context and the anthropological literature. Recruitment to the line is through female as well as male members, and all line members can be classified as *tene* ('base people') or *wana* ('girls').² This contrast does not distinguish the children of a line of male descendants from all the rest, as would happen in a patrilineal regime. Rather, it separates the children of line men from the children of line women. Thus (as I have been told repeatedly by Ipili themselves), the children of male *wana* are *tene*, and the children of female *tene* are *wana*. What is important is the sex of the linking parent, not the sex of a line of descendants. The distinction, in short, is a matter of gender, not of descent.

Since the children of both men and women are line members, any one person is affiliated with multiple lines: with the lines of the mother and with the lines of the father. Porgerans typically list multiple line memberships, some through their mother and some through their father. The model appears to recognise eight line memberships, four matrilineal and four patrilineal, although actual listings of line affiliations vary in length. Now, if everyone has plural line memberships, the members of any one line are also members of other lines, and lines intersect or overlap in their memberships.

Consequently, and in stark contrast to unilineal systems, there are no discrete, mutually exclusive groups in Ipili society, nor is the line a functional unit in most (if any) social settings. This is where Wagner's shocking question becomes relevant. The groups that form and function precipitate out of a field of actors that cuts across particular line boundaries, and it is upon such fields that analysis must focus.

How, then, do these fields form? The cognatic rule guarantees that all lines will intersect. These points of intersection are thickened through the express preference for concentrating marriages between lines. Typically, A and B lines intermarry not just once but many times, producing members of line A who are also members of line B, and vice versa—in short, a group of people who are As and Bs. If As and Bs intermarry, then many As and Bs will have joint membership in the two lines. Under the circumstances, As and Bs participate in a field of relations in which some As are also Bs (or vice versa), while some As are not also Bs, and some Bs are not also As. Ipili constantly allude to such fields in their own sociological statements. In Ipili idioms: those who are As and Bs are 'in between' (*tombene nga*) A and B; those who are As but not Bs are 'true' As; and those who are Bs but not As are 'true' Bs. A group which precipitates out of such a field would mostly be comprised of A-Bs, with some 'true' As and some 'true' Bs. Ipili action groups have closely related people (A-Bs, for example) at their core, with 'true' members of other lines represented on the margins of the field. Fields such as this function with respect to marriage sponsorship, local group formation, and mobilisation for a variety of collective efforts.

The formation of such fields is the express purpose of marriage. In explaining line exogamy, Ipili state that, if a man from one line marries a woman from another line, then the cognatic rule means that their children will be 'in between' the two groups. The purpose is to extend and consolidate networks, increasing societal cohesion and peace. A person belongs to all of the lines of both his or her parents, and is thus positioned 'in between' parental lines, equally or impartially committed to one and all. Should war break out between any two lines, those who are members of both lines are expected to maintain their neutrality. Smalley (1983:9) pointed out that cognatic descent 'minimises conflict' because '[a] man cannot fight cognates who reside in other lines within the Ipili'. This pacification effect of cognation is also well documented for Ipili speakers living in the Paiela Valley (Biersack 1980, 1990, 1991, 1996).

Lines tend to have more than one line with which they intermarry. Line A would not concentrate its marriages with line B alone, but would 'exchange women' with several lines—with lines C and D, for example. I use the term 'affinal cluster' to designate a line and all the other lines from which it typically draws its spouses—its 'woman suppliers' (*wanda atata pene*) (Biersack 1995b, 1996). The word 'affinal' indicates that it is specifically marriage that is the source of the cluster's cohesion. Line A may have a cluster that includes lines B, C, and D, but line B may have a cluster that includes lines A, D, and E. In this way, affinal clusters interlock. Each line is positioned within an affinal cluster, and these affinal clusters intersect. This network structure is the real integument of Ipili society.

The cluster and the field in which it is embedded are fluid, open, malleable. They can be expanded through the accretion of further woman-supplying lines, and they can be consolidated through a further concentration of marriages between particular lines. The texture and scope of the network depends upon actual marriages. Clusters come into and go out of existence, expand or contract, depending upon specific events and the aggregated decisions that particular actors take in the face of them. Ipili marriage is best understood as an instrument of self-organisation (Biersack 1991) in the face of ecological and political contingencies. Wars, famines, droughts and pestilence have been among those factors that have governed the choice of spouse; and today mining is also important. To understand Ipili society is to understand the suppleness and historicity of its networks, their flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances. Marriage is the specific instrument that allows for event-sensitive adaptation without loss of organisational integrity. However people marry, structured fields will form so long as marriages are concentrated to some degree between lines.

Networks, land ownership and travel

Lines own specific blocks of land (*yu*), and these blocks are subdivided among the lines. The members of any one line are 'owners' (*andwane*) of the block of ground belonging to the line, and may exploit the line's estate by gardening and/or residing on it. Any one person, as the member of multiple lines, may garden and/or reside on any and all of the estates belonging to his or her lines. Ideally, a person visits or resides on all of his or her estates, the estates of the father and the estates of the mother, thus activating the various segments of his or

her network. Co-residence for longer or shorter periods is required to preserve ties which tend to lapse with any prolonged absence, as do rights in land (Ipara 1994; Pacific Agribusiness 1987:16).³ Line members who live 'outside', and who do not come to visit and lend their support to line members living 'inside', on the line estate, can become *persona non grata* in the homeland. But access to estates will also depend on contingencies such as the availability of land and whether the local group is recruiting for military purposes, or fattening pigs for a major prestation, and thus wanting to build up its numbers.

Once a person marries, he or she is expected to visit or reside with members of his or her spouse's lines, no less than with members of the lines to which he or she belongs. Spouses should live together, and they should do so on a range of estates, the estates of the wife's lines as well as of the husband's lines. In a pattern that has also been reported for the Huli to the south (Glasse 1968; Allen 1995), Ipili rotate among kinspeople and affines, visiting for longer or shorter periods, or even establishing dual or multiple residences (Biersack 1995b, 1996). This 'coming and going' (*pua ipu pua*) of spouses anticipates the movements of the couple's children once they achieve adulthood. The children will be 'in between' the parents' lines, and owners of all of their parents' estates, and they will be expected to live on these estates, among their matrikin and patrikin. A husband and a wife rotate among each other's estates in order to introduce their children to all their relatives, mapping through their own itineraries the anticipated travels of their own children. Of course, the children will eventually marry and move among their own affines, and not just among their consanguines, widening still further their social and geographical orbit.

Within this general pattern of movement among relatives by birth and marriage, there is some variation by gender. A married woman is expected to live initially among her husband's kin. This does not always happen, nor is it a strict rule. However, the very expectation that a woman would move to her husband's place upon marriage, and not vice versa, makes sons seem more crucial than daughters to residential continuity and gardening succession, at least in the short term. Over the course of the marriage, the couple is expected to live in the wife's as well as the husband's places, and this means that, in the long if not the short run, residential continuity is achieved as much through daughters as through sons. In general, mobility, flexibility,

openness, and network breadth are the ideals, and, all other things being equal, daughters and sons-in-law are as crucial to network building and network maintenance as are sons and daughters-in-law. The expectation that a bride will join her husband, and not the other way around, reflects a certain male (rather than agnatic) bias in the culture, which also assures that men and not women are leaders, and that men rather than women dominate the most important arenas of prestige competition (Biersack 1995b). Today, mining is perhaps the most important such arena.

The special status of the spouse

Spouses have a special line status, not as line members but as line affiliates. A member 'takes' the name of the group's ancestor and is reckoned as a descendant or *mandi yene* (literally 'he or she who has been borne') of the ancestor. Since lines are exogamous, the spouses of members are never *mandi yene*. The spouse of an Angalaini line member is 'woman's husband' (*wana akalini*) or 'man's wife' (*akali wetene*) of Angalaini (and all his or her other lines). As such, he or she is considered as an 'owner' of the estate of his or her spouse's line, and is expected to assume certain responsibilities towards his or her affines. Husbands and wives own gardens and pigs together, and they also give and receive pigs as domestic partners. Together they produce wealth, and together they deploy this wealth to support each other's kin.

Together they also reproduce, and it is as parents that their affiliation with each other's lines is ultimately to be explained. By the rule of exogamy, a Porgeran ideally marries a person who belongs to lines other than his or her own lines. And yet, by the cognatic rule, a married person always bears members of his or her spouse's lines. If an A man marries a B woman, his children will belong to lines A and B, the A man becoming the progenitor of members of his wife's B line and the B woman becoming the progenitrix of members of her husband's A line. In recognition of the A man's role in spawning members of B line, he is *wana akalini* of B line and 'owner' of the estate of the particular grouping within the line to which his wife belongs. In recognition of her role as bearer of the next generation of A people, the B woman is *akali wetene* or 'wife of a man' of A line, and 'owner' of the estate of her husband's particular grouping within the line. Smalley, who 'lived and worked' with Porgerans from the early 1960s onward, reported this feature of the Porgera system in his 1983 genealogical study.

It is a fact, that once the full bride price has been paid, a child produced, the incoming member is accepted as having full title and rights to his wife's land and is entitled to compensation. Conversely, a female, who marries in has title to the husband's land and assets through her offspring (Smalley 1983:6).

Hosts and guests (*epo atene*)

The scope for movement is enhanced through the host-guest relationship. In brief, a person can reside and garden anywhere that a 'landowner' grants him or her permission to reside and garden, and regardless of whether that person is a landowner in the area. Landowners—members of the corporate line as well as their spouses—typically grant use privileges to kith and kin. Let us assume, for example, that there are three men: M1, M2, and M3. M1 belongs to lines A and B, is married to a woman who is a member of lines C and D, and lives on the estate of a particular grouping within A line. M2 is a member of line B but not of line A, and he wishes to join M1 on the estate of the grouping within A line. If M1 grants M2 permission to move in, M2 becomes M1's guest or *epo atene*, 'someone who comes to stay'. Now imagine M3. He belongs to line C, or to lines C and D, but not to line A or line B. He, too, wishes to live with M1. If M1 authorises him to do so, M3 will join him on the estate of the grouping within A line to which M1 belongs as M1's affinal guest. Since spouses 'own' the estates the groupings within each other's line, spouses can also serve as hosts. For example, M3 would be as much the guest of M1's wife as of M1; and the same is true of M2, who is the affine of M1's wife.

Epo atene reside where they do at the sufferance of a host, someone who grants them rights of usufruct and sojourn. The hallmark of the class is not, as Banks (1994a:25) suggests, that guests come from outside the Porgera Valley, but that, regardless of where they originate, they are not owners of the estate on which they reside. Morally, a person is bound to host relatives, and this means that a line functions as a magnet, attracting guests from all sectors of the affinal cluster in which the line participates. The rule of exogamy requires that lines draw to themselves spouses ('men's wives' and 'women's husbands') from the outside; and the ability of landowners to extend hospitality to those of their relatives who are not themselves owners of the particular estate, and who are in search of resources and domicile, means that line members host a number of guests—allies, supporters,

neighbours, and friends. The mixed composition of any Porgera hamlet—the juxtaposition of line members, their spouses (also ‘owners’), and the guests of both of these—is symptomatic of a sort of open-door policy, a policy that rejects line parochialism in favour of inclusivity.

There is one further aspect of hospitality that is important. By definition, a guest does not belong to the descent unit which owns the estate on which he or she resides. Consequently, the guest may marry in, drawing spouses from the landowning line. A guest who marries an ‘owner’ of the hosting line becomes himself or herself a landowner, and his or her children will be owners as well—hence natives of the land. Line exogamy facilitates the transformation of a guest and non-landowner into a spouse and landowner, and the cognatic rule ensures that the offspring of such unions will be incorporated in perpetuity as members of the corporate and hosting line. Thus are outsiders converted into insiders.

Marriage and regional networks

Marriage, it is said, creates ‘roads’ or ‘bridges’ between lines—idioms that reflect the physical movement between the estates of intermarrying lines which are created by marriage. Lines represent districts, and the full inventory of parental and spousal lines maps the geographical reach of a person’s network. The scope of a person’s network is always established through a marital history: the marriages of his or her great grandparents, grandparents, and parents, as well as his or her own marriage. The ‘roads’ that such a marital history creates may be quite long, from one end of the Porgera Valley to the other, from the Porgera to the Paiela valleys, and from as far as Lake Kapiago in the west to various groups of Enga speakers in the east. In principle, these networks may extend to Mount Hagen or Port Moresby, or even to Australia and America.

We know, from consultants and researchers writing in the 1980s, that marriage relations were already far-flung. Writing in the early 1980s, Kundapen Talyaga reported that, in a sample of 15 marriages entered into by the future SML landowners, 36 per cent of the spouses were from Porgera, but 25 per cent were from Paiela, 11 per cent were from Wage (an Enga-speaking area), and 6 per cent from Tari (Talyaga 1984:35). In a larger sample of 32 marriages, Talyaga discovered that 28 per cent of the spouses were drawn from Tari and another 33 per cent from Laiagam and Wabag (*ibid*:47). Smalley’s sample was much

larger. In a survey of nine lines, he noted that there was a heavy concentration of marriages with Engans, but Huli people from the Tari basin were also chosen as spouses (Smalley 1983:2–3). From my own five-week stay in Tipinini, at the eastern edge of the Porgera Valley, in 1993, I came to know the extent of intermarriage between Porgerans living there and the Enga and Huli people to the east, northeast, south and southwest. Similarly, members of the Kewai line living just north of the Kaiya River are said to have ‘links with groups to the east (Enga), south (Huli) and the west (Paiela)’ (Banks 1994b:8).⁴

While Smalley’s and Talyaga’s statistics stem from the 1980s, intermarriage with neighbouring ethnic groups was commonplace in earlier periods. An earlier patrol report (Laiagam PR No. 1 of 1960–61) mentions intermarriage with Enga, Huli, and Duna (see also Biersack 1995a:11–12), and even a cursory reading of the Tiyini (a.k.a. Tieni) line genealogy drafted by Father Phil Gibbs in 1981 (and reflecting previous as well as contemporaneous marriages) reveals the extent of intermarriage between Porgera and the southern end of the Paiela Valley. Of the 708 marriages which he recorded, 284 (or about 40 per cent) of the spouses come from the Paiela Valley, whose heartland, as well as its southern end, are well represented in the sample. In addition, a smattering of spouses came from Tari, Lake Kopiago, and the Hewa country, from Tumbiam, Laiagam, Wabag, and Wage (all Enga-speaking areas), and even from Mount Hagen, the Simbu area, and Australia.

Given the plurality of line memberships and affiliations, and the geographical scope of a person’s network, the task of distinguishing Porgerans from non-Porgerans becomes difficult, if not specious. If 40 per cent of the spouses of Tiyini line members are Paielans, then a significant number of the landowners of the Tiyini estate are Paielans, and the children of these will be both east and west Ipili—‘in between’. During my two-month stay at Porgera Station in 1995–96, I rarely came across anyone who, though residing in the Porgera Valley, did not have at least one, and often many more line affiliations outside it. These cross-cutting ties enlarge the spatial scale of any one person’s activities; they render travel across districts, valleys, and regions safer than it would otherwise be; and they are proactively cultivated for these very reasons. By the same token, they render the Porgera Valley utterly porous.

Marriage and the circulation of wealth

Income is ideally shared among all blood kin. Thus, if a person who is a member of lines A, B, and C receives wealth, then he or she should

distribute this wealth to the members of all three lines, not just to the members of one or two of them, even if the wealth has been received through his or her membership of only one of them. In other words, to the extent that cognatic descent positions actors interstitially, it institutionalises a circulation of wealth across line boundaries.

Part and parcel of the diplomatic function of marriage is the flow of wealth which it inaugurates between the bride's and the groom's sides along the 'road' which marriage opens up. Married couples co-own gardens and pigs because they are expected to produce the wealth which funds the prestations of their relatives by birth and marriage. Bridewealth instigates a flow of wealth between the two sides, and this is perpetuated in the next generation through the couple's children and their distributions. The express purpose of the union is to produce 'in between' children—children who, by virtue of their network position, will share their wealth with the father's and the mother's side alike, thus uniting them.

Ipili mores endorse sharing among kith and kin. A major award should never be pocketed; it should be distributed. Individuals have multiple line affiliations, some by birth and some by marriage, and it is the full range of affiliations that is honoured in any distribution. Consequently, wealth flows within affinal clusters and across line boundaries; it does not, and should not, stay within line boundaries. To the extent that marriages are geographically far-flung, wealth circulates at the regional and not just the local level, across valley ridges and ethnic divisions. This aspect of Porgeran society—its tendency to set wealth in motion within a wide network of kith and kin—is fundamental to understanding its traditional dynamics, and it is the key to fathoming the tensions and expectations engendered by today's gold mining era. In brief, any situation which privileges some lines over others, and even Porgerans over non-Porgerans, will create valley-wide and regional conflict.

Porgera today: an open-and-shut case

Porgera social organisation creates tremendous flexibility. A person has many options. He or she may live on the estate of a matriline or a patriline, on the estate of a spouse, or as a guest on the land of a foreign line, provided that some relative who is a landowner extends residential privileges. If a conflict develops among neighbours, it is always possible to find a safe haven elsewhere, among other kith and kin. There are many potential hosts to accommodate altered

circumstances. During a war, a person can recruit allies or flee from enemies; during famine, more fertile ground can be sought; if an aid post or school has opened up, a person can move nearby it to make use of it. Marriage itself is a tool for adapting to changing circumstances. Through marriage, new 'roads' can be opened up, new niches exploited, and existing networks strategically expanded. In short, Ipili speakers deploy their system as a contingency-sensitive resource. How, then, have Porgerans and others used it in an era of large-scale mining? Is it equally useful to everyone, or is it problematic for some? Reading between the lines of the other chapters in this volume, one can glimpse a pair of conflicting tendencies: towards a continuing openness, through marriage and hospitality, but also towards the imposition of restrictions and exclusions.

The host-guest relationship today: preliminary observations

Today, Porgerans themselves appear to be shifting closer to the mine (Banks 1993:19), and immigrants flood the area. Fritz Robinson, a former PJV community affairs officer, has estimated that about 3,000 outsiders arrived in Porgera between 1989 and 1994 (Robinson 1994b); and Banks has more recently estimated that *epo atene* comprise 'up to 40 per cent of the population of the [Porgera] valley' (Banks 1996:233). Robinson (1994b) fears that this high level of immigration will place Porgera at risk: newcomers are interested in immediate rewards, rather than in the 'gradual growth of the local economy', and if the trend continues, he predicts that there will be a 'gradual demise of the Eastern Ipili as a discrete group'. Bonnell, too, has warned against the potential for 'chain migration', which 'could cause the Ipili culture to be extinguished through marriage' (1994:65).

Robinson's doomsday prediction reflects the kind of negativity towards the newcomers which Porgerans themselves, overwhelmed by the onslaught of immigrants, sometimes express. Nevertheless, Porgerans appear to be complicit in this immigration. As Banks observes, far from passively suffering the incursions of outsiders

individual Porgerans must to a large degree accept responsibility for the influx of migrants within the valley...Not only have individuals allowed *epo atene* to reside in their areas, but many must have actively recruited people to the SML (1994a:28).

Bonnell also implies that an understanding of the newcomers as 'squatters' is problematic, because the newcomers live in Porgera at the behest of their Porgeran hosts.

A squatter is a person who settles on land without authorisation. As most non-Porgerans residing in Porgera have landowner permission to reside, it is more accurate to say Porgera has an outsider [rather than a squatter] problem (Bonnell 1994:83).

For all the disadvantages of a heavy influx, Porgerans stand to gain much by tolerating rather than stemming the flow of immigrants. Among the newcomers, Engans are the most heavily represented: 34 per cent are from Mulitaka and Laiagam, 33 per cent from elsewhere in Enga Province, and 28 per cent from the Southern Highlands Province (Banks 1994a:27). The same is true of shorter-term 'visitors': 20 per cent are from Mulitaka and Laiagam, 33 per cent are from other parts of Enga, and 40 per cent are from Tari (*ibid.*). Engans are the ethnic majority in Enga Province, and before the expansion of gold mining operations in Porgera in the 1980s, their political and cultural dominance in the province was unchallenged. Yet today, as Bonnell notes, '[m]any angry Engan people complain they have received no benefits from the PJV' (1994:91), and she alludes to the blackmail to which some Engans have resorted in their quest for a piece of the Porgera pie, as when making the road from Mount Hagen to Porgera impassable, especially for PJV vehicles. 'In order for the PJV to secure road access through Enga province, Engans needed to perceive that they were receiving benefits from the PJV' (*ibid.*). Banks himself links the immigration problem to Engan highway blackmail, reporting that '[t]he most frequently raised response to why they can't get rid of the *epo atene* is the fear of security problems further down the Enga Highway if they did eject people' (1994a:28). As any Engan is quick to point out, especially today, when Ipili gold attracts all the attention, Enga Province belongs to Engans, not to Ipili. Allowing, even encouraging, Engans to live in Porgera might placate a group which substantially outnumbers Ipili speakers and is politically dominant.

Immigration also appears to accord the western Ipili (or Paielans) some access to mining-generated revenues. My own guess is that Paielans account for a significant number of the immigrants whom he labels as coming from 'other parts of Enga'. In his report on the Kewai line living just north of the Kaiya River, for example, Banks notes that 'it was evident that a relatively large number of Paielan-born people had moved into the area in the last 5 years' (Banks 1994b:8; see also Bonnell 1994:83). My own observations the Porgera Valley have certainly left me with the impression that there has been a significant influx of Paielans.

Migration gives people greater access to the benefits of mining. For this reason, Porgerans themselves are moving around, relocating closer to the mine. Banks remarks of the Kewai line members that 'individuals and family groups have utilised their links with Tuanda, Tieni and other [SML] lines to gain better access to the material benefits of the mine development' (1994b:10–11). By shifting their place of residence, people who would otherwise be sidelined have greater proximity to the action and access to the benefits of mining. The Kewai line is not an SML line, while SML line members living in the Paiela Valley—indeed, all people living in the Paiela Valley—are not eligible to receive royalties or compensation. However, as a guest living in Porgera, a Paielan or an Engan has a greater chance of being employed by or through the mine, partaking in the distribution of royalties, living in a relocation house, tapping into mining-generated wealth through entrepreneurial activities, and enjoying the infrastructural, educational, and other improvements which are among the spinoff benefits of mining (see Enga Provincial Government 1989) than they would have if they had stayed at home. Hosts cannot easily say no, and it is good diplomacy to say yes, because a guest is a friend and an ally, not an enemy.

Interethnic marriage

Without a doubt, Bonnell's most interesting finding is that, despite decades of missionisation and exposure to a monogamous European culture, and despite extensive monetisation, polygyny is presently on the rise (see Table 4.9). In families which the PJV has relocated, monogamous men had greatly outnumbered polygynous men before the relocation occurred, but after the relocation, polygynous husbands marginally outnumbered monogamous husbands (see Table 4.8). Males converted compensation money into new wives (Bonnell 1994:70).

Interethnic marriage did not begin with gold mining, as suggested by Smalley (1983:2–3), but it has certainly been intensified with mining (Table 4.9). According to Bonnell (1994:7), '64.5% of the wives acquired after relocation (that is after receiving large compensation payments) were non-Porgerans'. By intensifying marriage with their neighbours, Porgerans arguably deploy a traditional device for creating and sustaining amicable relationships between potentially hostile groups. Marriage inaugurates a flow of wealth between the bride's and the groom's side, initially through the bridewealth which

the groom pays to the bride's side, and subsequently through the presentations and sharing that characterise affinal relationships. Despite the fact that the royalties from mining belong to the members of SML lines, and despite all the efforts to favour Porgerans over other groups, interethnic marriage allows the dispersion of mining-generated revenues beyond the boundaries of the SML lines, even beyond the Porgera Valley, along the 'roads' which marriage opens up at the regional level. Also, since a person is considered an 'owner' of spousal estates on the grounds that he or she will bear future line members, marriage effectively widens the group of landowners in the gold-mining context. Like immigration, interethnic marriage creates goodwill and 'security' in an environment that would be destabilised if any group or groups had a monopoly of mining proceeds.

There is an obvious connection between immigration and interethnic marriage. All landowners, including spouses, can host guests. Inter-marriage facilitates chain migration, as Bonnell notes. The relationship between marriage and immigration can also work in reverse, with immigration facilitating marriage instead of the other way around. Traditionally, as I have already pointed out, guests sometimes married into the host group, becoming 'women's husbands' or 'men's wives', and thus line affiliates, 'owners' of the line estate, and parents of line members. While the previous chapters do not establish this point too clearly, Bonnell does show that the Engans and Southern Highlanders who are heavily represented amongst the immigrants are also heavily represented amongst the new wives of relocated men. Whereas, before relocation, 10.4 per cent of wives were from Laiagam and 5.9 per cent of wives were from Tari, after relocation, the percentage of Laiagam wives jumped to 17.3 per cent and the percentage of Tari wives increased to 29.4 per cent (Table 4.9; see also Smalley 1983:2–4). After relocation, there were also more than four times as many wives from Kandep as before relocation, although the overall percentage was still under 10 per cent (Table 4.9).

The host-guest relationship and marriage have always had strategic uses. In the past, guests facilitated interline marriage, warfare, and production for exchange. Today, it could be argued, the host-guest relationship and interethnic marriage are key devices for positioning Porgera within a developing regional politics which places pressure on Porgerans, and specifically on members of SML lines, to share their mining-based income with those groups located outside the SML area, even among non-Porgerans (see Jorgensen 1997b).

Rule of custom, rule of law

While it is easy to make the case that the porosity of units has been preserved in the mining context—through the use of marriage and hospitality to incorporate outsiders, for example—it is also true that the various codifications of mining have had restrictive effects, and that there is considerable ambivalence among SML landowners about allowing outsiders to access resources.

Consider, for example, the criteria for determining eligibility for a relocation house. To qualify for a relocation house, a guest living in the SML area had to have lived there for at least ten years, and a member of one of the SML lines had to have lived there for more than three (originally five) years (Bonnell 1994:14–15; Robinson 1991).⁵ In the case of both the SML and the Kaiya River LMP just north of it, absentee members of landowning lines were passed over entirely. It was entirely predictable that those who were eliminated from consideration—short-term guests and SML line members who did not meet the residency requirements—would challenge these guidelines.

These apparently simple criteria were not simple in practice. There were a number of different perception [sic] operating. Someone who had been living with relatives in Paiela or Tari, but who had visited the SML (and perhaps stayed a month or two) considered themselves [sic] fully eligible (Robinson 1991).

Contributing to the level of disputation in the Porgera Valley is the fact that codifications as such, because they narrowly specify criteria and are rigid and insensitive to circumstances and mitigating factors, will always be problematic. Operating principles tended traditionally to be plural, ambiguous, conflicting (cf. Ernst in press; Jorgensen 1997a). There were no principles that could not on principle be challenged; and resolutions and settlements were necessarily negotiated through adversarial processes—hence the Ipili penchant for muscle-flexing and disputation. Any effort to codify, particularly for the purpose of exclusion, necessarily founders on that fact: codification as such will always be contested. Hence, the agreements associated with the two relocation programs could only be hammered out over a protracted period, and the conditions for awarding a relocation house were relaxed again and again. The fact that the number of relocation houses has swelled over the years suggests that narrow codifications and interpretations have been challenged by groups who, although disenfranchised by emerging regulations, have

successfully pressured both the PJV and the SML landowners to bend the rules in the name of other values and principles (see Bonnell 1994; Robinson 1991).

Codifications have sometimes subtly reinterpreted received categories in ways which have undermined the openness of the system. Among the Ipili, there is parity between *tene* and *wana*, the children of male line members and the children of female line members. Together with the rule of line exogamy, the parity of *tene* and *wana* guarantees the openness of each particular line, for together they mean that every marriage of every member of a line results in the incorporation of people who are also members of other lines. Yet the procedures of the mining era subtly undermine this parity. Those named as 'agents' to distribute royalties are mostly *tene*, rather than *wana*.

In accordance with custom, some...Wana landowners and persons with affiliated land rights have also been appointed as Agents to participate in the distribution of compensation payments. This is normally done to ensure that the decisions to distribute compensation in relation to who receives compensation and how much, are made collectively. In the event of a disagreement amongst the distribution committee, a decision of the Yuu tenes will usually prevail (Ipara 1994:14–15).

Typically, then, compensation would flow from the PJV to *tene* and thence to *wana*. In 1995, the Department of Mining and Petroleum's Acting Liaison Officer in Porgera, Morep Tero, assured me that, whereas the 'agents' tended to be *tene*, the *wana* and *tene* received equal shares. However, one son of a Tiyini (a.k.a. Tieni) woman complained to me that he was receiving a smaller share of royalties than were the *tene* of his line. He even suggested that the *tene* had removed the names of *wana* from the lists.

There is also a marked ambivalence towards guests among SML residents, for, however diplomatically useful it is to extend hospitality, guests are competitors for resources and allocations. Robinson (1994b) recounts that landowners have expressed a preference for either keeping the mining-related jobs for themselves or else reserving them for Porgerans rather than for outsiders. Also, some Porgeran landowners appear to regret having to share with mere sojourners the compensation paid for houses, gardens and trees which have been destroyed in the course of mining.

Compensation is for the damage to improvements...which are owned by the occupier, not for the land itself...but the landowners often argue that they are entitled to a share of whatever is given to their guests (Banks 1996:231).

Although some Porgerans may feel that they cannot live without the 'squatters' and immigrants, others may well feel that they cannot live with them.

For its part, the PJV may place subtle pressure on landowners to restrict the number of people who realise mining benefits, on the theory that its own interests are better served by narrowing the circle of beneficiaries. It is obvious from the evidence presented by Banks (Chapter 5), and also from my own conversations with PJV personnel, that some Porgerans have looked to the PJV for support in curbing the encroachments of outsiders. The PJV has shied away from playing an open and official role in monitoring immigration into the valley, but 'indirectly, PJV has offered to provide advice on procedure to landowners who want to evict unwanted *epo atene*' (Banks 1994a:28). In effect, SML landowners and the PJV are thus colluding in their eagerness to place a limit on the distribution of endowments (see Jorgensen 1997b).

Conclusions

The present mining situation creates vast differences in income between SML-landowning lines and other lines, between places within and without the SML, and even among the SML lines. Compare, for example, the income of Apalaka, which lies within the SML, with the income of Mungalep, Anawe and Kewai, all of which lie just beyond the SML, and again with the income of Tipinini at the eastern perimeter of the Porgera Valley (Table 6.1). Compare also the landholdings of Tiyni (a.k.a. Tieni) line with those of Angalaini, Mamai, Waiwa, or Anga (Table 5.4) for an indication of the range of mining-related income among the SML lines themselves. Likewise, the various groupings within these SML lines have differential landholdings, with a corresponding differentiation in their mining-related incomes. But is conflict best understood in terms of class formation and class antagonism pure and simple, as an antagonism between the haves and the have-nots, or is the source of friction more complicated?

The SML is an artefact of multinational investment and national legislation and, as such, represents the exogenous forces of global capitalism and the nation-state. Yet it has been superimposed upon anterior grids, upon the networks of kith and kin which marriage has generated, and these grids also have causal force. The differences in mining-related wealth and income frequently arise among people who are related by blood and marriage, and among whom sharing is mandated by traditional morality (see Filer 1990). In these cases,

economic disparities distinguish rich from poor relatives, people who have and who should therefore give from people who do not have and who should therefore receive. The outcome, at least for the many people living in the Porgera Valley and the wider region who are related to SML residents, would be something closer to 'tribal' war than to class war. This 'tribal' war is provoked in an altered context (Gewertz and Errington 1991), the context of mining and state-legislated jurisdictions and rights, and must be attributed to a conjuncture of the local and the national or global.

One could productively ask why the law and order problem is not worse, why the situation is not more explosive than it is. Today, as before, marriage and hospitality are used to build and exercise networks, but the effort is specifically to undercut any polarisation of rich and poor which mining might create. The point is again the same: this peace, like the war it undercuts or forestalls, is explicable in terms of the duality of forces in play; for the peace, like the war, is made among relatives.

In actual fact, the principal beneficiaries of mining evince conflicting responses to the economic opportunities and social and political challenges which mining creates. On the one hand, the porosity which all boundaries traditionally possessed, given certain mechanisms for inclusion, continues because of the strategic deployment of these same mechanisms. On the other hand, there is a novel tendency towards boundary maintenance and exclusion, and a new and insidious parochialism. The previous chapters portray Porgeran society as poised amid competing precedents, temptations and strategies. There is a mixture of orders of determination which are now in play—a matter of culture and political economy, of contradictory principles, codifications and impulses. This conjuncture is unique, volatile, possibly unstable. Consequently, there is no trajectory, no teleology, no master narrative that can orient us adequately in the process, no development theory that might offer guidelines to the various 'stages' of Porgera's unfolding history. What is needed instead is an ethnography of change which captures the disparate discourses, ideologies, and values in play in an ambivalent and uncertain time.

Notes

- 1 Fieldwork in the Porgera Valley was conducted initially under an award from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research in 1993, and subsequently, from December 1995 to February 1996, under a Fulbright Research Fellowship. I have also conducted archival research on Porgera in the National Archives of Papua New Guinea; the PNG National Research Institute, and the Department of Political and Social Change in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University. My research among the western Ipili of the Paiela Valley was undertaken initially from 1974 to 1978, and was funded by a National Science Foundation Dissertation Grant and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan, with write-up support from the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the Center for the Continuing Education of Women at the University of Michigan. Further research in the Paiela Valley was conducted in 1993 and 1995, with Wenner-Gren and Fulbright funding.
- 2 The term *wanaini* (literally 'girl's son') can be used of the sons of female members.
- 3 See Allen (1995) and Glasse (1968) for Huli parallels.
- 4 All page references are to the original consultancy reports, rather than the edited versions included as chapters of the present volume, because the wording of some quotations has changed during the editorial process (Ed.).
- 5 According to Banks (1996:229), the settlement for housing to those who were relocated was as follows. The landowners received a relocation house, built at a site of their own choosing, K1,000 for the inconvenience of relocating, a K1,400 allowance for the making of new gardens, and the covering of subsistence needs for up to nine months while the new gardens matured. Those *epo atene* who did not merit a relocation house were compensated for their loss of gardens, trees, etc., given K500 for the inconvenience, and shipped back home (see also Chapter 4, this volume).