



Examining the Gifting Culture of Corruption in Papua New Guinea

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ABSTRACT

Gifting has become a prevalent and widespread form of corruption in PNG's working environment. PNG is currently facing a significant challenge in the form of gift-giving corruption, which has significantly impacted the nation's administrative and political structures. It alleviates the sense of responsibility from representatives, who often prioritise their own and their colleagues' convenience above fulfilling their fundamental responsibilities. This is primarily because it lessens their sense of accountability. Several variables contribute to the widespread occurrence of this kind of unethical conduct in PNG. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the current pattern of bribery and gift-giving in PNG

INTRODUCTION

The practice of exchanging gifts in PNG is gradually undermining the economic and social well-being of a considerable portion of the country's population. Given its ubiquity and many manifestations, it poses a formidable development challenge. A variety of legal, political-socioeconomic, and cultural difficulties often lead to inadequate governance, many of which have their roots in the gifting culture. Different philanthropic cultures have a significant impact on the creation and execution of effective nation-building strategies and the formulation of sound policies. Within the circles of professional managers and their supporters, a culture of exchanging gifts exists. These people use their positions of authority and influence to further their personal and collective political and economic objectives. This pervasive corruption bolsters the legitimacy of PNG's impoverished administration, diverting valuable resources and energy away from developmental efforts. The PNG development issue is complex and may appear in various ways. One of the more prevalent forms of gift-giving bribery in PNG is a practice called "cola moni," which directly translates to "coca-cola money." This article aims to examine the prevailing practices of bribery and gift-giving culture in PNG.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Essence of Culture and Corruption

PNG is home to a diverse array of cultural groups. Some deeply ingrained traditions within these civilisations actively contribute to the proliferation of corruption. The normalisation, legality, and commendation of these unwholesome qualities by cultural systems are worrisome as they promote the pursuit of success via all available methods. Individuals' influence has led to widespread corruption, a phenomenon evident in all other human organisations or institutions. Various cultural orientations significantly influence persons who engage in immoral behaviour. The assimilation of other civilisations through association leads to distinct characteristics in contemporary humans. Culture ultimately shapes human activities, serving as their primary source and influential foundation. Gadamar (1967) argues that individuals do not speak or act in a vacuum, but rather their cultural background influences their language and behaviour. Our cultural orientations are evident in the gestures we make, and people see and understand the world based on their distinct cultural perspectives, which shape their lives.

Culture integrates the concepts of norms, standards of conduct, beliefs, and practices. Bamikole (2008) asserts that culture serves as the fundamental basis for the development of human connections and social movements. Ogbu (1983) defined culture as a coherent vision of the cosmos, explained by a set of conceptions that organise the natural and social cycles, as well as the roles of individuals within them. These are the rationales that underlie the definition of culture. As a result, culture manifests itself in people's lives in a tangible way, indicating that human behaviours are reflections of cultural experiences. Indeed, culture is an educational phenomenon that undoubtedly shapes human identity and influences individuals' development, mindset, behaviour, values,

and orientation from infancy to death across different regions and historical periods.

Kanu (2010) states that the ancestors intentionally conceived, created, and instilled it in the innate capacities of their relatives, leading to it becoming a part of the inner nature of the human being. Kanu's theory is based on the progenitors' purposeful creation. According to Udebunu (2011), cultural structure has a significant influence on individuals, moulding their identity, values, preferences, and dislikes as they traverse the vastness of the cosmos.

Conversely, corruption signifies a decline in integrity, morality, and moral principles. The condition of being debased, aberrant, depraved, and improbable in decision-making is what we mean when we talk about this. Transparency International (2006) defines corruption as the misuse of entrusted authority for private gain. "The misuse of authority for sub-unit, personal, or organisational gain," according to Anand (2003, page 3), is another definition of this phenomenon. Considering these factors, the term "corruption" encompasses a broad spectrum of unethical business and private practices, such as nepotism, embezzlement, bribery, fraud, theft, favouritism, extortion, and similar activities, all of which compromise the public interest. One might say that there is a clear connection between culture and corruption, since corruption is a phenomenon that does not exist in isolation. The values and ways of living that are considered acceptable in a culture not only have a significant role in determining, guiding, and justifying human social actions, but they also play a substantial role in humans' decision-making process in both their private and public lives. Therefore, Pillay and Dorasanry (2010) argue that culture is typically a significant macro-variable that determines the perception and practices of corruption. This corruption undermines the public good and maintains private interests, which in turn distorts the evolution of society.

Papua New Guinea Cultures' Corruption Evolution

Any society has its share of evildoers. This is because every story, whether good or bad, encompasses both sides of the human experience. Unfortunately, corrupt behaviours and rituals became more common in Papua New Guinean culture as a result of colonialism and imperialism. Prior to colonial invasions, Papua New Guinean culture was somewhat low-key when it came to social vices. The colonisers' insatiable desire to govern and conquer severely affected the customs of the indigenous peoples. That is where the evil deeds that plague modern-day Papua New Guinean culture got their start. It should come as no surprise that Lord Macaulay's (1835) proposal to the British parliament perfectly aligned with the implementation of the British cultural invasion of PNG. It is based on the notion of eradicating the spiritual and cultural heritage of the colonised and substituting it with that of the British in order to ensure that the colonised continue to embrace English culture and civilisation above their own legacy. This guarantees that the conquered will respect and preserve English civilisation and culture.

The colonisers forced the people of PNG out of their historical, technological, and sociocultural current environment. They did this with the intention of enslaving and exploiting the people themselves. They intended this action to both facilitate their subjugation and advance their own interests. They were first and mainly exposed to the English language in order to instill in them the culture and civilisation of the English people, which was characterised by irresponsible capitalism and other social ills. The aim was to inculcate the English language in the indigenous people. The purpose of this action was to more deeply acquaint the native people with the English language. Following this, a wave of zealous missionaries emerged, successfully transforming the indigenous nature of the socio-religious cultures of PNG. These missionaries proved to be an effective force in this endeavor. According to Kouassi (2016), these civilisations were unique and had stringent moral standards to adhere to. A surge of fervent missionaries followed, striving to spread the gospel all over the world.

Achebe (1993) asserts that the British indirect control system elevated "upstarts and ruffians" to the position of mushroom kings and chiefs. These individuals' promotion led to their elevation. This incident took place after the British had established their settlement. We call this a cultural bankruptcy because these colonial rulers prioritised exploitative colonial and personal interests over the welfare of the public. As a result, public welfare suffers. This led to the eradication of moral remnants from PNG's cultures, laying the groundwork for the current authenticity crisis, identity crisis, and corrupt behaviours among the country's citizens. In light of this, this was the consequence of this. The current system of high corruption relies on the unequal distribution of wealth and the use of power to safeguard a large number of dependents. This new framework emerged, combining the remnants of PNG's indigenous cultural legacy with the dynamic cultural framework of colonial governance. This framework is where the current high corruption practices originate. The new framework facilitated the implementation of these practices. Corruption, which is now pervasive in contemporary PNG's society in general, became more prevalent as a result of the conflict that occurred between the cultures of the indigenous people and those of the colonial administrators. This corruption has established a solid grip on the nation's political leaders, officials, and even the regular population, all of whom have been considerably impacted by it. It has developed a strong hold on them.

Cultural Basis of Corruption in Papua New Guinea

Critical analysis can uncover the cultural origin of corruption. From this pivot point, corruption spread across all of the social institutions that were already in place in PNG. Therefore, we can reasonably infer that the colonial system exacerbated features in most Papua New Guinean cultures, thereby fostering the growth and dissemination of corruption. On the other hand, the situation got even worse as a result of the proliferation of globalisation, humanism, secularism and modernism, and all of which made engagement with other cultures feasible and facilitated its speed. Consider, for example, the traditional practice of exchanging gifts that is common in the majority of PNG's

communities. This activity has two consequences: taking bribes and showing favoritism. On the other hand, people interpret the practice as an expression of gratitude for the blessings they have received. An anticipatory admiration of one's personality or portfolio is also possible. Contrary to the giver's intentions, receiving such gifts has a negative effect on the recipient's moral character and influences their behaviour to favour the giver.

On this premise, it is safe to say that the vast majority of Papua New Guinean cultural customs include showing appreciation before or during big transactions. People at all levels of society, including communities, families, and individuals, reach out to those in positions of power and influence via various forms of mass communication to offer their congratulations, best wishes, and other similar sentiments. There is a hint of anticipation in these messages. The institutionalisation of the principle of "give and take" in most Papua New Guinean cultural traditions led to the emergence of corruption. As evidence for this idea, Ani (2009) argues that this behaviour has special moral weight when seen through the prism of the community's and the family's established hierarchy of duties and obligations. In this place, individuals have access to resources because of the long-standing customs of reciprocity and accountability that run through families and communities. The question of whether a "culture of corruption" exists becomes more critical in light of the fact that it seems to lay the cultural groundwork for contemporary corruption.

The historical roots of corruption in PNG are impossible to overstate. The pressure a public office holder faces from their family and community can lead to obvious consequences such as nepotism, tribalism, and the misuse of public funds. For a person to be regarded as a true son or daughter, it is necessary for them to demonstrate that they have met certain standards. The society expects individuals to demonstrate both monetary and kind dedication, and these expectations manifest in the form of financial and kind consideration. In PNG communities, fulfilling public duties necessitates a substantial display of cultural obligations towards family, lineage, community, and ethnic group members. This is a fantastic load. In fact, the many expressions of these desires are what the people of PNG sometimes refer to as the possibilities for social connection.

The inhabitants of PNG, driven by their cultural values, are determined to get whatever possible benefits or advantages from the civic society in order to preserve their core traditions. This reality supports the perception that the government and public service are irrelevant or distant institutions whose commitment should be secondary to cultural allegiance. Therefore, the law strictly prohibits any form of corruption within the government, including fraud, embezzlement, and theft. So far, these acts have mostly targeted the government's financial resources and assets rather than the cultural well-being of the people involved. Ani (2009) asserts that individuals perceive public service as a foreign establishment, with their primary objective being to extract as many benefits as possible without facing any consequences. One then intends to successfully share the acquired resources with their tribe, family, village, or clan, the focal points of loyalty and attachment in Melanesian culture.

As a result, the only negative aspect of this behaviour is the risk of getting into trouble.

Nevertheless, a thorough analysis of corruption reveals that the insufficient ethical disposition of the individuals in PNG is the main underlying cause of the issue. Human cultural traditions, which encompass beliefs, moral laws, values, ideals, and other similar principles, form the fundamental elements of an individual's moral character. These cultural variables have the ability to strengthen or weaken an individual's determination and personality based on their innate qualities. Therefore, culture is the fundamental source of corruption. Furthermore, the prevailing cultural traditions of PNG not only tolerate but also legitimise corruption by endorsing the accumulation of wealth. These cultures unequivocally acknowledge, embrace, esteem, and compensate wealthy individuals, regardless of the dubious origins and unfavourable circumstances that underpin their wealth. In these civilisations, society's authority has shifted from the previous generation of disciplined and morally upright young people, who served as cultural exemplars, to those who possess significant wealth. In a similar manner, they have abolished even the most esteemed traditional titles and places of power.

Consequently, the majority of the ethnic groups in PNG have actively participated in, questioned, and modified their traditional customs by giving importance to the utilisation of abundant resources. Conventional and religious labels often categorise persons who are both crooked and wealthy, irrespective of their particular identities. The country's society experiences the repercussions of this situation, often acknowledging individuals with significant riches, regardless of their questionable origins, as important participants and granting them national titles, honours, and positions. They frequently disregard the law because of their substantial financial power, which surprises the general public. As a result, PNG's society has undergone a transformation in which possessing financial knowledge is the prevailing standard, but moral standards are lacking. The situation in PNG clearly demonstrates that the Socratic equation, which links knowledge and action, is not functioning as it should. Socrates argues that individuals engage in immoral behaviours due to their lack of awareness of the consequences of their actions. Individuals may possess a thorough comprehension of moral concepts, but they may not exhibit complete dedication to upholding these values owing to a deficiency in self-control when confronted with social influence and enticing temptations. The situation in PNG illustrates that people might have a deep comprehension of moral principles. In order to effectively combat corruption in PNG, it is crucial to have a mindset that is dedicated to changing attitudes and developing the determination to adhere to moral principles. This is because corruption necessitates a greater adherence to moral values.

METHODOLOGY

Gift-giving Bribery in Papua New Guinea

PNG, an emerging economy, has been grappling with significant instances of corruption related to gift-giving, namely Colamonism. This has resulted in serious harm to the nation's economy and the financial well-being of its citizens. Both the country and cultural background have a significant effect in shaping the practice of gift-giving. According to Maus (1950), there are three primary obligations related to gifts: giving, receiving, and reciprocating. Steidlmeier (1999) and Walton (2016) have documented that the cultural practices in PNG include a gift-exchange system and reciprocal transactions. Cultural norms and behaviors may influence the perpetuation of bribery. There are instances when an action that is seen as a bribe in one culture may be considered a traditional gift or a gesture of goodwill in a different community. When addressing the issue of colamonism, the presence of cultural relativism might provide challenges, especially in a diverse culture such as PNG. Payani's 2015 paper defines reciprocity as a crucial component of Melanesian culture, grounded in the principles of reciprocity and the exchange system. The inhabitants of PNG have a profound affinity for their culture, which extends to their job as well. There is a asserts that each individual possesses a distinct geographical location, a personal narrative, and a bond with others (Tiki, Luke & Mack, 2021). In PNG, individuals within nuclear and extended families, as well as clans, tribes, and larger ethnic communities, view the act of gift-giving as a way to express care and support.

Corruption may be defined as the act of presenting gifts in order to exercise influence over someone or to use public resources for personal gain. One may take this action with the intention of gaining a better position or benefit than the recipient. The culture of PNG encompasses the beliefs, traditions, rituals, and social behaviours associated with the Melanesian ethnic group residing in the Pacific Islands. This culture encompasses a diverse range of individuals from the Melanesian ethnic group. This category encompasses a diverse array of beliefs and practices, such as ceremonial gift-giving, preparations of traditional funerals, marriage arrangement, customary initiation rituals for males transitioning into adulthood, and beliefs on land ownership. Many individuals live in small rural communities, where they sustain themselves through subsistence farming or rely on the natural resources of the area as gardeners, fishermen, and hunters. Individuals place a high value on land, often passing it down from one generation to the next. The practice of ceremonial gift-giving is gaining popularity via the slaughter of pigs and the distribution of cooked meals to neighbouring tribes, as well as through the exchange of live pigs and traditional salt and the offering of gifts during burial rites. Narakobi (1983) anticipates that ritual participants will engage in exchanges commensurate with the value they receive

Mellam and Aloï (2003) define sharing in PNG as the practice of providing support and care not just to direct family members but also to extended family members, such as ethnic groups, tribes and clans. This notion refers to the process of allocating resources among a wide-ranging network of relatives. According to Mana (1999), the establishment and allocation of public goods and

services in PNG have been influenced by the social connections formed via tribal allegiance and family relationships. Larmour (2001) argues that immoral conduct often disguises itself as the act of contribution. During traditional burial ceremonies, authorities in PNG may provide funds for several political purposes, such as seeking favour from the government, settling inter-tribal disputes, or demonstrating favouritism towards family.

The gifts-giving corruption is a significant issue for PNG, impacting the whole of its administrative and political systems. It diminishes the feeling of accountability among legislators, who often prioritise their own interests and those of their allies, rather than fulfilling their main duties. There are several factors contributing to the widespread prevalence of corruption in PNG. Nevertheless, avarice and ego-centrism are prominent. In PNG, there is a prevalent culture of corruption that has undermined the integrity and effectiveness of public workers and politicians who are supposed to work in the best interest of the public. This has resulted in the erosion of the established norms and ethical standards of their positions. Corruption manifests in several ways, such as nepotism, cronyism, and patronage. The corruption that a tax auditor or tax inspector is most likely to meet in their profession includes bribery, extortion and embezzlement.

PNG, the largest Melanesian country, holds the act of sharing gifts in high regard (Walton, 2016). Traditional Papua New Guinean culture contextualises the act of giving gifts. The gifts consist of a variety of artefacts, including bows and arrows, stone axes, spears, shell currency, sculptures, and symbolic items like bilums, which are intricately carved string bags. The goal of these gifts is to convey appreciation for kind actions. As stated by Larmour (2006), the act of gift-giving is not intended to manipulate the recipient's decisions but rather to maintain a mutual connection. Larmour (2006) argues that culturally accepted norms dictate that socially sanctioned public gifts serve as symbols of appreciation and gestures of thanks. Those who belong to PNG view these gifts as an integral part of their cultural identity and expect them (Lamour & Barcham, 2013). However, the act of providing expensive objects with the purpose of influencing someone's decision-making is considered bribery (Svensson, 2005). The practice of gift exchange and reciprocity is prevalent in PNG, and it may sometimes include bribery (Payani, 2005).

The gifting culture represents a bond of friendship and implies a possible duty for the recipient to reciprocate based on mutual understanding (Ayius & May, 2007). As a result, these robust traditional institutions prioritise tribal alliances above national loyalty, which includes the allocation of public goods and services (Walton, 2016). In this system, the practice of reciprocity and gift exchange is customary and may include bribery. One such form of bribery is 'cola moni' or 'colamonism', a current trend of gift-giving corruption in PNG that involves offering money in exchange for a favour. The cola moni phenomenon is unique to PNG and particularly prominent in everyday life. It has versatile applications in both personal and professional situations, making it suitable for a broad variety of uses.

The concept of *cola moni* or *coca-cola money* is not entirely unfamiliar to the rest of the world; nonetheless, it is observed in a somewhat distinct and less extravagant manner. One of the most significant and destructive forms of corruption is the gifting culture of *colamonism*, which is a sort of bribery. This form of corruption undermines and even destroys the foundations of organised society and governments. It thrives in times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 epidemic, which is now occurring. One of the most fundamental aspects of bribery is the transaction in which public officials take advantage of their positions to accept the property of other individuals and seek advantages for other individuals in an unlawful manner (Dungan et al., 2014; Li et al., 2015; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993).

Approximately one-third of adult Papua New Guineans engage in *colamonism* while interacting with governmental authorities. The extent of public sector corruption in PNG becomes much more evident when considering the frequency of such illicit payments. Therefore, the customary practice of exchanging gifts and showing appreciation, which is common in many Papua New Guinean communities, establishes a direct connection between gratitude and expectation and unfairly benefits the one giving the gift, ultimately resulting in corruption. Sometimes, people give *cola moni* as a gesture of generosity to the giver, hoping for reciprocation in the form of favours, especially from governmental officials. *Cola moni* has the potential to covertly corrupt a government official. The act of gift-giving to elders, public officials, and influential individuals in government is a significant contributor to political corruption in the contemporary political system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is *Colamonism*?

Before exploring how *colamonism* affects bribery, we briefly describe *colamonism*. Papua New Guineans use the phrase *Colamonism*, also known as *Cola moni* (derived from "*coca-cola money*"), to refer to the act of offering money to someone in exchange for favours. It is someone who actually comes to you, gives you money, and then asks you to do something in his or her favour. Our systems ingrain it deeply, seemingly integrating it into people's daily routines. People perceive *cola moni* as a normal way of conducting business. *Colamonism* refers to a network of personal relationships that allows individuals to exchange favours. The *cola moni* theory posits that diverse social standards regulate various connections, each associated with distinct psychological and social significance. *Colomonism* is present in several sectors in PNG, including politics, business, government institutions, non-governmental organisations, and law enforcement. Public officials are the primary initiators of corruption, trading it for obligatory public services, which demonstrates a disregard for possible repercussions.

Colamonism often occurs covertly and deliberately, using a sum of money, a gift, or a reward of significant value to persuade a person in a position of power to favour the one offering the bribe. In addition to influencing officials' actions, *colomonism* also aims to sway the official's judgement in favour of the one receiving the bribe. According to Section 97H of the Criminal

Code Act 1974 of the PNG Government, it is unlawful to give gifts in secret. However, this law does not apply to publicly provided gifts, which hold significant value and can potentially sway the recipient's decision in favour of the giver.

Nevertheless, the absence of distinct demarcations between bribes and gifts creates possibilities for perplexity or exploitation. Therefore, the person receiving the bribe may perceive the act of giving a bribe as a form of colamonism, viewing it as a gift. Whether these gifts are considered bribery or not depends on the individual's viewpoint, as well as the importance and circumstances surrounding the gifts. According to Lemmergaard and Muhr (2011), gifts have a value that goes beyond the economic worth of the objects being given. Gifts that have the potential for repayment, promise anticipated benefits, or foster social and economic connections are particularly valuable.

Among the issues that are particularly relevant to colamonism and corruption in the public sector of PNG is the traditional culture of the Melanesian people. Ayius and May (2007) describe PNG as a community society, a complex network of individuals from extended families, tribes, clans, and linguistic groups. These individuals have traditionally assisted one another in order to ensure their own survival. According to Walton (2016), Melanesian cultural practices are believed to be an essential component of the identity of Papua New Guineans. These practices include the expectations or norms of support, compassion, gift exchange, and reciprocity.

Bribery of Colamonism in Public Sector

Academic research and practical experience have identified the political environment and public sector culture as two characteristics closely linked to corruption (Philp, 1997). Transparency International (2017) consistently categorises PNG as having an extremely high level of corruption in the public sector. According to Transparency International, PNG ranks 135th out of 180 countries in terms of corruption. Transparency International (2015) reports that bribery is the most widespread form of corruption in PNG, representing 47.9% of all cases. The three most prevalent kinds of corruption, ranked by their respective percentages, are misappropriation (30.2%), impunity (11.2%), and nepotism (10.3%). According to Philp (1997), the culture and values of the public sector and the political sector have a crucial role in determining government corruption. The public sector culture's acceptance of corruption and bribery stems from the belief that government officials receive inadequate compensation, leading them to rely on bribes to increase their earnings (Mookherjee & Bardhan, 2005). This is particularly true in circumstances when the expenses associated with daily life are exorbitant (Besley & McLaren, 1993; Van Veldhuizen, 2013). Organisational characteristics that are believed to influence bribery and the public sector's culture include, but are not limited to, insufficient internal controls, the absence of checks and balances, and deficiencies in internal management within public institutions (Ndikumana, 2006). These causes are secondary to economic considerations.

Colamonism is a widespread form of corruption that involves the exchange of gifts within PNG government agencies. Considering the collectivist

nature of PNG culture, individuals have deep connections with their clans, families, tribes, and ethnic groupings (Vitell et al., 1993). Additionally, they have historically accepted gift exchange systems (Walton, 2016). The government agencies of PNG recognise *cola moni* as a recurring issue. Our institutions and procedures firmly ingrain the practice of bribery or gift-giving corruption. The government must urgently identify the underlying reason for this persistent corruption epidemic. Colamonism appears to have become increasingly ingrained in people's daily routines. Individuals see consuming *cola moni* as a conventional and customary practice. Certain public employees expected to receive remuneration, referred to as *cola moni*, not just from the public and service providers but also from their counterparts in other government departments with whom they engaged. This interaction sometimes included following up on specific tasks on behalf of their customers, who are members of the general public. I understand that individuals receive impartial treatment regardless of their affiliation with a government agency or external entity. However, it seems that in order to accomplish tasks, bribery is required. This occurrence is really happening, and it is an unfavourable practice within the department. This exemplifies the epitome of corruption and bribery.

Colamonism is prevalent in PNG and manifests itself in a variety of settings, including businesses, police agencies, hospitals, and schools. Several of these businesses disclosed that they engaged in bribery proactively, without any prompting from the officials. *Cola moni* has grown ubiquitous, with an implicit understanding that both the giver and recipient do not need to explicitly state it. In a similar manner, firms provided unofficial payments in order to expedite the processing of their administrative papers by officials. Furthermore, businesses continue to engage in bribery, even if it is not mandatory. The aim for colamonism among Papua New Guineans is to establish relationships and streamline their work processes for increased efficiency and convenience. For example, colamonism's primary goal was to establish a relationship that closely resembled the *guanxi* notion. Businesses select this alternative as a kind of insurance, where a modest gift in the present day might assist them in managing unforeseen crises in the future (Nguyen, 2017a). Public workers compelled entrepreneurs to provide bribes to obtain basic services, such as the certification of house ownership (Hays, 2014).

The Influencing of Guanxi in Papua New Guinea

Guanxi is a significant phenomenon that is having a profound impact on the trade relationships between China and PNG. This is due to colamonism's rapid growth in PNG. *Guanxi*, as defined by Barbalet (2017), pertains to a link or personal relationship. Businesses often use the word "*guanxi*" to refer to the networks or connections that speed up negotiations and create opportunities for new enterprises. This term encompasses not only the existence of connections but also the qualities of those relationships, namely personal trust and a strong relationship. Moreover, it has the capacity to impose ethical obligations and require the reciprocity of benefits. When it comes to producing business, an individual with a substantial quantity of *guanxi* will have a more advantageous position compared to someone who lacks it. *Guanxi*, a concept deeply rooted in

Confucian philosophy, plays a crucial role in fostering harmony within a community. It emphasises the idea that one's sense of self expands to include not just their immediate family and friends but also the broader society. The concept of *guanxi* suggests a mutual obligation between individuals. In PNG, the Chinese community believes that *guanxi* is a crucial factor in facilitating business transactions and maintaining smooth economic operations. *Guanxi*, within the realm of giving conduct, serves to differentiate between two distinct types of providing behaviour: gift-giving and bribery. When considering the act of giving gifts, the ideas of *guanxi* and *colamonism* are easier to comprehend.

Guanxi ties have been extensively used at the political and business levels in PNG, with a strong focus on financial benefits, interests, authority, and influence during this era. The Papua New Guineans do not encounter any problems with the implementation of *guanxi* across the nation. There is a strong correlation between the *guanxi* and the *cola moni* culture. The political systems in both China and PNG are characterised by patron-client relationships and processes that exhibit similarities. In such circumstances, institutions, rules, and regulations often assume a subordinate position. Papua New Guinean politicians sometimes use the notion of *guanxi-colamonism* to persuade their Chinese counterparts to invest in their own projects, even though *guanxi* is theoretically supposed to empower Papua New Guineans in their dealings with China. The ultimate outcome of the strategic use of *guanxi* is that the elites in PNG are able to reap financial advantages and enhance their networks of influential supporters, while Chinese firms are able to profit from a rise in their political influence, which they subsequently use to further their own interests. In essence, it is a scenario where all parties involved have favourable outcomes, resulting in a "win-win" situation.

In 2018, China presented PNG with a new six-lane road in preparation for the forthcoming APEC conference. The infrastructure project consists of a six-lane road with two five-metre-wide walkways, street lights, path lighting, three traffic signals, and five nature parks. This project spans from Waigani to Parliament House and has a total cost of US\$16 million. The most expensive gift project in PNG since independence serves as a clear example of how Papua New Guinean politicians have skillfully used *guanxi* to their advantage. The idea originated with National Capital District Governor Powes Parkop, who had close connections with China and high-ranking PNG officials. He sent an invitation to China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) to collaborate on the construction of Independence Boulevard Road. It exemplified the traditional Chinese concept of *guanxi*. The Papua New Guinean authorities saw the concept as a project that could improve their chances of being re-elected and have a long-term impact. CHEC, however, embraced the chance to establish political ties with officials from PNG and exert influence by using CHEC's capacity to get loan funding from China. It was a mutually beneficial outcome for all parties. However, numerous critics have closely examined the negotiation process. While some may argue that the contract showcased adept negotiators, its stability was questionable due to its heavy reliance on personal

connections, guarantees, political intermediaries, and the trading of favours rather than formal norms and laws.

During the negotiations between PNG and China, the Chinese approach to partnership relations, which prioritises reciprocity, may provide opportunities for Papua New Guineans to exert influence. Indeed, officials in PNG have used guanxi-style relationships to further their own agendas. This has resulted in a lack of surveillance and a disregard for political morality. Although both parties benefit from the agreements, they only benefit the individuals directly involved, not the public's they represent. In order to enhance accountability standards on the continent, it will be crucial to possess the ability to monitor informal guanxi networks. The increasing establishment of the Papua New Guinean citizen agency and the formation of independent forums are contributing to a greater effect on policy debates in PNG.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The inhabitants of PNG maintain a profound cultural affinity, which extends to the workplace. Each of us has a designated location, a unique story, and a certain nation to belong to. Moreover, we are all intricately interconnected. In PNG, individuals from nuclear and extended families, tribes, clans, and larger ethnic communities view the act of gift-giving as a means to express care and support. A growing inclination towards greed and selfishness has replaced the ethical practices of gift-giving among Papua New Guineans. Furthermore, it is necessary to expand the scope of the moral revolution beyond the theological realm and into the sociocultural arena. Research has demonstrated that an individual's moral deficit significantly contributes to the emergence of corrupt conduct. The prevailing cultural norms and behaviours may partially contribute to the persistence of bribery.

PNG, an emerging economy, has been grappling with significant instances of corruption related to gift-giving, namely Colamonism. This corruption has inflicted severe harm on the nation's economy and the financial well-being of its citizens. Thus far, the discussion has shown a correlation between certain cultural elements and corruption in PNG. Clearly, the prevalent practices of illegal exchange, colamonism, and guanxi in PNG have evolved over time from this interconnected network. Those who steal from the public coffers do so to protect themselves and the community. Regrettably, some cultures see undesirable actions as acceptable within their framework for survival. This further substantiates the notion that cultural matters are a fundamental aspect of our existence, and any efforts aimed at progress should not disregard the domain of culture (Amartya, 2014). Unless we reduce the cultural factors that contribute to corruption in PNG within the cultural system, corruption will continue to exist at various levels.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is needed related to the topic of Examining the Gifting Culture of Corruption in Papua New Guinea in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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