



## Cultural Ideologies Influencing Papua New Guinea's Political System

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### ABSTRACT

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), unofficial ideologies have a significant effect on individuals' core beliefs. The traditional beliefs of bigmanism, kaikaimanism, wantokism, and other associated beliefs in PNG have an impact on these well-informed ideas. This articles aims to analyse and examine the ramifications of PNG's absence of a clear political ideology. This will provide a more detailed explanation of how the absence of political ideas in PNG allowed for the emergence of cultural ideologies such as the wantok system, kaikai man, big man culture, regionalism, nepotism, tribalism, and cola moni as a form of governance, thereby replacing the requirement for traditional political ideologies. These ideas are partially undermining the political system in PNG. The main contribution of this research is to raise awareness of the impact that cultural ideology in PNG has on the country. This perspective is crucial for comprehending the principles and beliefs of PNG. The research proposes that although PNG may appear to be impartial with regard to ideology, it is in fact profoundly influenced by a variety of formal and informal beliefs

## INTRODUCTION

Each individual has their own opinion on politics. Many of us define actions and behaviours unknowingly when we construct our own thoughts and ideas on the basis of political beliefs and concepts. Political science is increasingly using the concept of culture to provide an explanation. Unfortunately, no substantial study pointing to culture as a critical component of explanation or causality has emerged to coincide with the rise of a cultural shift in politics. On the other hand, ideologies are belief systems, structures based on values, and systems of ideas that serve as the foundation for political parties and a means of presenting answers to issues that their constituents encounter. Parties use political platforms as the basis for their ideologies in an effort to obtain victory in elections and establish their rules around certain standards, convictions, and policies. Social and historical contexts have a significant impact on ideologies, influencing political parties' programmes and goals (Heywood, 2012).

The absence of ideology leads to a party platform in PNG that lacks ideas, values and direction. The political process and debates greatly hinder public discourse in several ways, such as via partisan behaviour, favouritism, bribery, addressing corruption, and participating in tribal conflicts. The purpose of this paper is to interpret and dissect the consequences of PNG's lack of political ideology. I will further elaborate on how the lack of political ideologies in PNG gave room to cultural ideologies such as the wantok system, *kaikai man*, big man culture, regionalism, nepotism, tribalism, and *cola moni* as a form of governance, 'replacing' the need for ideologies. These ideologies are somewhat destroying the political system in PNG.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. *Cultural Ideology*

The cultural framework that directs people's behaviour is known as cultural ideology in a broad sense. Although ideology and culture have similar definitions, they are not the same. It is the set of principles and styles of thinking that individuals intentionally live by in both their words and actions. A variety of cultural forms, including law, politics, religion, philosophy, ethics, literature, and art, reflect it. It influences all facets of the educational, cultural, social, and economic spheres. A given group of people's common beliefs, customs, traditions, language, arts, and social behaviours are referred to as their culture.

Culture is the accumulation of historical events, a record of human behaviour, the wants and desires of individuals, their ambitions and aspirations for the future, and their matured spiritual state. It provides a framework for understanding nature, reflecting on oneself, and upholding the spirit of humanity. It includes ideas and beliefs on how individuals identify with and adhere to morality and order, as well as the means, procedures, and guidelines necessary for people to survive. The essence and centre of culture are ideas and theories. There can be no culture without ideas and thoughts. Every culture has its own set of beliefs, ideologies, and means of subsistence. Requirements are what we have to do; needs are what are real; ideals are desires; and wishes are what we may hope for.

On the other hand, ideology is a set of beliefs and precepts that form the basis of political or economic theory and practice. It consists of a wide range of beliefs, norms, and principles that shape a person's or an organisation's worldview and guide their actions. Ideologies are points of view that are social, political, religious, or economic in nature. They often influence how individuals see and interact with the outside world. The main contribution of this research is to increase awareness of the role that ideology plays, to a certain degree, in a country. This perspective is crucial for comprehending the values of PNG.

Politicians and the majority of the populace generally hold that cultural values, ideological preferences, biases, tendencies, beliefs, wishes, and fundamental ideas about a country's history, reality, and future have evolved over a long period of time, a phenomenon known as "informal ideology." Given its deep embeddedness in a country's history and culture, and its latent existence in unconscious consciousness, informal ideology may be more durable and stable than formal ideology. It might potentially have a more potent impact. In PNG, unofficial ideologies influence people's fundamental ideas. The traditional PNG beliefs of bigmanism, kaikaimanism, wantokism, and other related beliefs have an effect on these well-informed ideologies. After PNG gained independence in 1975, Christianity had an influence on the country's indigenous culture, which forms the basis of PNG's worldview. Western countries' attempts to influence and obstruct PNG's decision-making are politically legitimate due to their deep-rooted integration into their worldview.

Ideology is a manifestation of culture, including a wide range of beliefs and values. While culture often encompasses the overall characteristics and way of life of a whole country, ideology may be more specific and limited to a certain social class or group. An idea has the capacity to disseminate and acquire an independent existence among individuals from all socioeconomic strata. The Eastern regions have witnessed a proliferation of radical ideas, which have garnered extensive popularity owing to their capacity for profound change. Political power in PNG, which is founded exclusively on these new Western ideologies, has also been influenced by the positive framework of ideology.

Social unrest often lasts for many years when PNG community embraces other traditions. The blending of Christian culture to PNG culture has become an essential aspect of PNG culture due to years of social instability. PNG has seen social stability and cultural success for almost a thousand of years as a result of this combination. Therefore, the influence of Western metaphysical forces – which present themselves as the humanistic spirit and the idea of contemporary humanity – primarily affects the majesty and splendour of PNG culture today. The two major goals of this influence are to rebuild PNG culture and eradicate its harmful impacts on people.

## 2. *Cultures as a Concept*

There are many distinct kinds of civilizations; both upper and lower cultures are just two of them. Sociologists formerly viewed cultures belonging to various socioeconomic classes or ethnic groups in a hierarchical manner. Sociologists nowadays use cultural relativism as a tool to argue that we should evaluate cultures not in opposition to one another, but rather in relation to the society in which they reside. Both tangible and intangible facets of culture interact with one another to shape culture throughout time and have an impact on people's beliefs and behaviours. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor provided the first concept of culture in his well-known book *Primitive Culture* (1871). His understanding is that culture encompasses not only the societal behaviour, institutions, and norms present in human societies, but also the knowledge, arts, talents, laws, conventions, beliefs, and routines of the members of each of these groups. Subsequently, in the field of cultural anthropology (1928), Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose defined culture as the crystallised phase of human activity. It contains specific behaviours that are intimately linked to certain items and establishments; individuals may transmit habitual mental attitudes via the use of symbols and mental pictures. A few tangible goods and methods that enable men to live in the world and feel the highest level of pleasure are also considered to be part of culture. Discrete, isolated elements known as culture traits comprise each stage of culture. Culture is a collection of characteristics on three levels. A trait, consisting of a variety of elements, is a discrete and identifiable cultural unit. A trait is an intimate combination of specific behaviours, feelings, attitudes, and objects. Once again, the Trait Complex is the whole thing at a certain cultural level. Therefore, he employed these interconnected concepts to explain the structure of culture.

Neo-Marxist thinkers believe that culture has the ability to unite people and give them a sense of identity. We credit Antonio Gramsci with creating the theory of cultural hegemony. He argued that since each socioeconomic class has different social experiences, their cultures are different from one another. There is perpetual rivalry and strife between these various socioeconomic strata and their respective cultures. Either with the others' actual or coerced permission, one inevitably takes the lead. Symbolic interactionists, such as Erving Goffman (1958), contend that human relationships, language, and memory all contribute to the social construction of the world in which we live. According to interactionists, culture is a symbolic world of meaning that individuals attempt to make sense of by assigning labels and categories. Because people's interactions and understandings of meaning change throughout time, interactionists see culture as flexible.

One of the main issues with trying to use culture is that it's one of the two or three most difficult terms in the English language (Williams, 1976, p. 76). Due to this, people have used the idea in a wide variety of contexts: by the 1950s, there were over 150 definitions of culture (Crang, 1998, p. 2), and it's unclear how many more have emerged since then. Culture (with or without the apostrophes) seems to be a prime example of an inherently disputed notion (Gallie, 1955/6),

one that might have many different meanings and lacks a well-defined method for deciding which definition is most accurate.

The talks that have taken place inside these conflicts, however, have generated a number of discussion points relevant to the study of politics, or more accurately, the analysis of political culture. We can understand how crucial they are when we examine the ways in which politics has traditionally attempted to take advantage of culture.

### ***3. Culture and Politics***

The discipline of political science has undergone a cultural shift in a variety of ways due to discussions about culture. Political science hasn't changed all that much from other academic disciplines so far. The study of politics has a tendency to deviate from other interpretations of the concept due to the widespread use of behavioural methodologies in the field. When one examines the usual starting point for talks of politics and culture – an attempt to investigate a civic culture – this methodological choice becomes clear (Almond and Verba, 1963). In this case, the interpretation of culture naturally focused on people's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs towards politics, political parties, and political personalities.

This was clearly not the same view of culture as it has extended to other regions, particularly in terms of its restricted scope. Instead, it gives the idea that politics is essentially a subculture that is quite different from all other subcultures and from the broader culture that it is a part of. A more common problem is that when politics is seen as a subculture, the links between politics and the larger culture of a society are overlooked, and political culture is not linked to the larger standards of behaviour in society. Despite the broad interpretation, it is evident that the identified categories of political culture – participant, subject, and parochial – have limitations. For instance, it is hard to pinpoint the reasons behind the various patron-client relationship patterns. At first, we might perceive these interactions as a specific type of subject culture, but this would ignore crucial aspects of these relationships, especially their impact on the political system's overall functioning.

It is undeniable that politics and political activity occur under certain circumstances, but the early attempts to clarify this reality conceptually and methodologically actually raised more questions than they addressed. The easiest way to see this in action is to measure how positive people feel about the political system by using the term pride. Among them was also the tragically prevalent behavioural model of study, which assumed that language had a common meaning when it was first employed. Due to this point of view, which often resulted in cases of cultural misunderstanding, it became difficult to ascertain whether the research was identifying similar qualities across systems. Despite these challenges, literature today offers a wide range of uses of culture in politics. Among these are the following definitions and interpretations of culture: political culture, which is the social context in which politics takes place; societal culture, which is the subset of society devoted exclusively to politics; and administrative culture, which is the regulated patterns of behaviour. They all fundamentally make the same assumptions about how culture impacts politics

and participates in it, despite having different perspectives on the broad notion of culture.

The common, if not straightforward, assumption that differences in the sociocultural settings in which politics is conducted should be expected to produce variations between political systems is the least significant of these presumptions. Secondly, the underlying premise is that different spheres of human behaviour have different implications for politics. Thirdly, these effects are not the same as those resulting from the distinctively political elements of social activity (such as ideology). We then make a number of methodological assumptions about how we may assess, if not precisely measure, the impact and influence of these modifications. These assumptions often employ a crude positivist approach to data and information. A brief summary of some of the research in the aforementioned areas must support these claims.

Numerous studies emphasize the importance of various combinations of elements that influence the adoption of a particular viewpoint within the social framework of politics. This characteristic is exclusive to the specific civilization under study due to its unique functioning or composition. The fact that the "cultural" aspect under study is often just a different term for another component entirely rather than being cultural at all presents a significant challenge in this case. For instance, the debate in Lockhart (1999), which argues for a cultural explanation of the structuring of states' organisational capabilities, identifies an ideology explanation rather than providing any evidence of this kind. In a similar spirit, Rose and Page (1996), for instance, noted discrepancies between politicians from East and West Germany that influenced their perspectives on the nature of the newly united German state. Rose and Page did not assert that these distinctions were cultural; rather, it is uncertain whether or not these differences constituted an aspect of a separate cultural development and how it would do so. These disparities were undoubtedly ideological.

At this level, even though there are suggestive indicators of a causal link between the two, it is evidently impossible to pinpoint the exact processes by which broad social cultures influence politics. Taking into account the early iterations of political culture – discussed briefly above – increases the challenges. To have any real meaning, the concept of political culture may need to transcend assessments, emotions, and understanding to be seen as something that directly affects political behaviors. Undoubtedly, gaining a fundamental understanding of the real political processes is essential to grasp the essence of the subject, despite the emergence of definitional and methodological challenges when distinguishing political components from cultural ones (e.g., mistaking culture for ideology). This includes fundamental questions that require additional exploration, like the methods of negotiation, bargaining, and compromise.

It is neither novel nor particularly noteworthy to assume that culture affects politics on an instinctive level. We cannot begin an investigation unless we address a number of concerns and problems that arise from trying to truly understand the mechanisms and pathways by which culture exerts its effects. In general, traditional behavioural approaches to culture have not impressed; they either give a limited grasp of the idea that is essentially useless or they confuse

cultural with other types of explanation. Since behavioralism is ultimately a controversial term, other techniques and theories of knowledge are more likely to have some promise in elucidating the links between politics and culture, which are now completely opaque.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Background: Papua New Guinea Political System***

PNG, situated in the Oceania region, is a democratic nation. A democracy is a system of government in which the authority to enact laws rests with the people, or the entire populace. It simply implies that the people are in charge of the country. The ancient Greek terms "demos" (the people) and "kratos" (to govern) are the source of the word "democracy." All citizens of a democratic nation such as PNG are entitled to participate in the process of making choices. Every democracy is unique among the others and functions differently. Voting directly influences decision-making in certain democratic nations regarding proposed laws and policies. This is what is known as "direct democracy." In some cases, such as in PNG, the people elect politicians to act as their representatives. We call this kind of government representation. In a representative democracy, the selection of the administration is carried out through electoral processes. Across nations, the notion of "the people" and the delegation and distribution of authority among its constituents have evolved at different rates and over the course of history.

Democracy has undergone substantial transformations over time. Historiographic evidence supports the existence of direct democracy, wherein community assemblies make decisions. As in a presidential or parliamentary system, representative democracy, in which citizens elect officials to rule on their behalf, is the most prevalent form of government in use today. With a prime minister serving as head of state, PNG politics are conducted within the framework of a parliamentary representative democratic multi-party system.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Kaikaimanism Ideology***

Many elected representatives in PNG have been known to make pledges during election campaigns in order to win support. But when promises are given transactionally, with a wink and a clear benefit in return, they become corrupt practices. This specific kind of political bribery is known as *kaikaimanism*, or *kaikai man*, and it continues to be a ubiquitous yet subtle form of corruption in PNG. Political *kaikaimanism* results in corruption and a lack of openness in the administration of PNG. People now believe that the political system is biased in favour of those in positions of power and influence, which has undermined public confidence. In PNG, corruption has become the new normal due to *kaikaimanism*, which is the practice of opportunists feeding themselves off of the weak and impoverished. Policy choices may be skewed as a result, favouring particular interests above the larger welfare of society. Legal repercussions are

another possibility for *kaikaimanism*, as they could be against the norms of political behaviour, such as those pertaining to ethics or campaign funding.

In general, *kaikaimanism's* effects on politics may be harmful to democracy and the smooth operation of the executive branch. There may be repercussions on the legal front from corruption, improper influence, and representation. Political institutions must uphold openness and accountability to ensure the representation of the general public's interests, not just those of those in positions of power and influence. Re-imagined *wantokism* is what *kaikaimanism* is all about. The people bear responsibility for the ascent of the *Kaikai man* and his entitlement to a life of prominence and royalty, while others struggle. *Kaikai Man's* actions are truly devastating PNG's population.

### ***Wantokism Ideology***

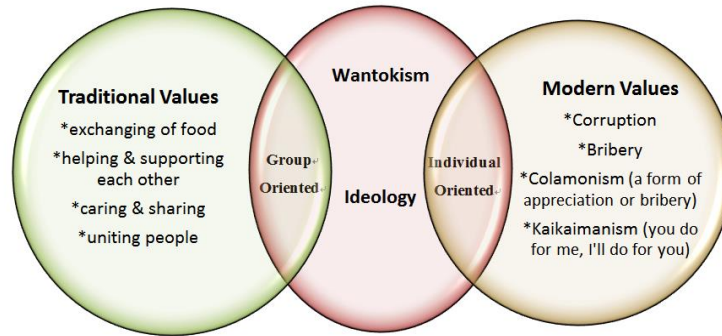
We refer to this particular cultural ideology system as "*Wantokism*" or the "*Wantok system*" in PNG, which governs relationships between friends, tribesmen, and family members. People use the pidgin term "*Wantok*" to refer to their family members or friends. Think of PNG as a patchwork quilt, encompassing approximately a thousand traditional cultures and ethnic indigenous communities. There are almost 850 distinct languages woven into that tapestry. This represents one-third of all languages currently spoken worldwide. The majority of people in PNG speak Tok Pisin, which is also a popular language. Tok Pisin is the universal language in PNG, much as Mandarin is in China. It works with all of those languages, with traditional civilizations, and with the many indigenous ethnic groups.

*Wantok*, or one talk, may also refer to the language of one's tribe or clan in Tok Pisin. The *wantok system* is defined by Janssen as "a group of people who speak the same language (one talk) and come from the same area." *Wantok* are different ideological and cultural groups that link the pre-contact and post-colonial eras and control resources. Wards, provinces, and constituencies are examples of artificial *wantok* political entities created by legislative procedures. Indeed, the meaning of "*wantok*" varies among individuals depending on the situation and context. In Melanesia, networks of diverse language, tribal, ethnic, and geographic groups connect to the crucial concept of *wantok*.

In the context of PNG, *wantokism*, also known as the *wantok system*, is an ideology that loosely refers to relationships between members of the same ethnic grouping, whether they be from the same village, tribe, or workplace, or whether they attend the same school or follow the same religion. The old welfare system that sprang up around that tribe is known as *wantokism*. The overall well-being of the tribe and its individuals is the central concern in any tribal community. However, since PNG gained its independence, the nation has changed, with *wantokism* rising to the top of the *saddlebagger* movement. In PNG, the *Wantok system* touches every aspect of daily life. Yet this is especially true in business and public administration.

As the safety net that requires family and clan members to assist one another, this ideological structure is one of the essential components of the social environment. The traditional and cultural *wantok system* aims to forge strong ties among family, clan, and tribe members. It is, nevertheless, a sociological

practice that evolves throughout time. Its evolution is in line with the phases of our society; therefore, rather than criticising it for its shortcomings, the entirety of this activity needs to be the main focus (Diamana, 2016). Determining the membership of wantokism and defining its boundaries is a challenging task. This philosophical concept encompasses all the Melanesian nations of Oceania.



Picture 1. This Model Diagram Provides Insights Into the Modern and Traditional Values of Wantokism Ideology Practices in PNG Societies.

### 1. *Traditional Practices of Wantokism Ideology*

For centuries, Melanesians have adhered to the wantokism belief. This approach is universally recognised and familiar to individuals of all genders and ages. True wantokism is not based on individualism but rather on a collective orientation. This philosophical system is deeply rooted in an individual's culture. Their trading system, food trade, assistance in family matters such as bride price, compensation, sickness, or death, performance of specific moka ceremonies, and provision of pigs to a needy tribe have all been influenced by it. The reciprocal system in PNG is characterised by the provision of help and the expectation of reciprocation of equal value. Furthermore, the act of sharing meals and demonstrating hospitality towards unexpected visitors serves as a demonstration of the understanding that they will reciprocate by sharing their own food in due course. Reciprocity is a necessary aspect of Papua New Guinean culture in the present day.

Wantokism encompasses significant ideals and meanings that serve to unite and fortify the Melanesian people and their cultural customs. Wantokism has a significant influence on several aspects, including lifestyle, advantages, and interpersonal connections (Arua & Eka, 2002). The Melanesian people deeply ingrain Wantokism as a cultural phenomenon in their lives. Their lifestyle, actions, and approach to every circumstance are consistent with this ideology. The existence of oneness and mutual comprehension is robust. According to Bernard Narakobi, our unity as a nation stems from our shared vision. Indeed, it is accurate to state that the text in question has not been authored but rather has undergone a gradual development over many millennia. For every endeavour in life, they relied on each other's assistance, without which no one could endure. Wantokism offers substantial and noteworthy advantages. Due to the existence

of this structure in people's lives, hunger is not a concern. Wantokism facilitates the collective sharing of resources obtained via hunting, fishing, or harvesting. Upon the death of a cherished individual, the adjacent tribes demonstrate profound compassion by delivering sustenance and other precious commodities to the residence of the grieving. Regarding wantokism, inquiring is completely futile. One individual gives to another, trusting that they will return the favour in the future when they are in need. All individuals get significant advantages from this arrangement.

Wantokism is a practice that fosters close connections among groups of people, clans, and families. According to Michael Rynkiewich, in Melanesian society, the most important values are community, relationships, and trade. Individuals engage in collective activities. Hermann Janssen provides a comprehensive list of the benefits of wantokism, which include activities such as fishing, protecting friends who are under attack, seeking revenge for victims of violence and vehicle accidents, establishing small businesses, and striving for social status and political power. Interpersonal interactions are the basis of shared understanding in this system. Wantokism is effective in fostering strong social bonds among the tribe, clan, and family. This provides an opportunity for the tribes to acquaint themselves with one another and initiate a fresh connection. Wantokism fosters genuine and strong relationships throughout society. Wantokism is a culturally distinct phenomenon characterised by a shared idea of mutual support and strengthening. This system facilitates the establishment of interpersonal connections among individuals as they engage in activities like gardening, constructing homes, fulfilling financial obligations for marriage, and providing compensation, among others.

For the average Papua New Guinean, wantokism is already a prevalent custom in their community. It inherently immerses them; they develop alongside it; they use it; it becomes an integral part of their identity; it shapes their societal standards and principles; and it exerts significant influence. The key characteristics of wantokism are a shared common language, a common ancestry, a common geographical or ancestral origin, shared social or religious connections, and importantly, a shared belief in the principle of mutual reciprocity. In the past, the wantok system was beneficial. This system has always been and continues to be the system of the people. The wantok system continues to fulfil significant functions in contemporary society, particularly in the realm of fostering interpersonal connections. Human beings never live in isolation. In order to be recognised and included in society, it is necessary to actively seek the assistance and backing of others. An individual's power and optimism lie in his wantoks. Without wantoks, individuals would lack the self-assurance and courage to pursue excellence and recognition. However, wantokism has acquired fresh significance and comprehension, leading it on a different trajectory. From a pessimistic perspective, it incites feelings of frustration and fosters corruption.

## 2. *Modern Practices of Wantokism Ideology*

The wantokism philosophy was beneficial only in the past, but it is no longer applicable in the present. The contemporary impact of the wantokism philosophy is disheartening. The advent of modernization has had a significant impact on individuals, rendering their lives incompatible with the traditional wantok system. The current system fosters corruption in several locations, shields wrongdoers from accountability, undermines individual strength and initiative, fosters financial vulnerability, and exacerbates racial tensions. Recent studies have furthermore shown that when individuals comprehend the consequences of corruption in their communities, they are more inclined to overcome challenges in collective action and disclose instances of corruption. Peiffer and Walton conducted a social experiment in the capital city of PNG, involving more than 1,500 citizens. There is no rationale for retaining anything that has become devoid of significance. Implementing a real wantok system in the latest updated generation is not feasible. The cultural significance and worth of wantokism have undergone significant transformations as individuals have become acquainted with civilization and modernization.

Currently, wantokism is being used as an immoral means to fulfil personal ambitions for selfish benefits. Abuse now plagues this once robust system. The overuse of wantokism leads to consequences such as public humiliation, tribal and familial conflicts, shame, emotional pain, and incarceration. Corruption has emerged as one of the negative characteristics of this abused system. In contemporary society, the significance of talent and credentials is diminishing. In the past, individuals had to exert a great deal of effort and work very hard in order to achieve their desired goals. However, the current abuse of this system greatly facilitates the acquisition of rights for those who are indolent.

Another matter of significant concern is the abuse of the wantok system as a political defence. It is important to understand that politics itself is not inherently negative, but an excessive amount of political activity may impede a nation's advancement. Political parties could successfully accomplish the primary objective of governing the state if they collaborated with the existing wantok system. The wantok system is mostly based on personal connections rather than individual knowledge or skills, and this may have a detrimental impact. This mechanism, when used negatively, allows political parties to choose individuals they are familiar with, even if those individuals lack the necessary skills for the position. James Chin asserts that 'wantokism', referring to loyalty and connections based on tribe, clan, or ethnic affiliations, influences politics. It is not surprising that individuals often see a limited number of fundamental services, advancements, and alterations.

The misuse of Wantokism and its practice have undermined its credibility as a system. The fundamental principles and significance of this system have lost all relevance in today's modernised society. The phenomenon of wantokism, particularly in its detrimental manifestation, has become excessively problematic.

### ***Bigmanism Ideology***

Lederman (2000:1162) defines "big man" or "bigmanism" as the "Anglicization of the descriptive phrase *bikpela man*," which translates to "prominent man." This term is employed to elucidate male leaders who attain political power through the adept utilisation of private and public wealth exchange, public oratory, and informal persuasion. It represents a type of governance closely associated with Melanesia's ethnography, signifying the achievement of leadership (Lederman, 2000). Anthropologists have distinguished two classifications of leadership within traditional PNG society. Anthropologists refer to the first individual as the Big Man and distinguish the second as the Great Man. The majority of leaders were Great Men, not Big Men, who attained prominence as warriors, hunters, or ritual experts rather than as economic entrepreneurs or administrators. Further, leadership was nonexistent or even deficient in a minority of additional communities, the majority of which relied significantly on gathering and hunting (e.g., Townsend 1969: 8). Contrary to the Great Man, which is more commonly observed in the coastal and island regions of PNG, the Big Man is exclusive to the highlands. Traditionally, the peoples of PNG endowed authority to individuals deemed "big men" who excelled in social, political, economic, and ceremonial endeavours (Waiko, 1993).

The term 'Big Man' or 'Bigmanism' denotes an affluent individual in numerous traditional PNG cultures. Unlike monetary or tangible assets, social capital, or perceived reciprocity, primarily served as the measure of this wealth. The Big Man is considered a valuable member of the community. A big man, wielding immense power, dominates a PNG tribe. While lacking official tribal or other forms of authority (such as inheritance of rights or material possessions), this individual can sustain recognition by employing persuasive skills and exhibiting wisdom. With adherents from both his clan and other clans, The Big Man possesses a substantial following. According to Affleck-Tamakoshi (1997), the affluent individual, who has accumulated significant wealth, must also contribute this wealth to the exchange system to uphold their status in their communities. The prohibition of gift exchange undermines the identity and cohesion of the kinship group (Abraham and Miller, 2011; Curry, 2003).

The term 'Big Man' or 'Bigmanism' denotes an affluent individual in numerous traditional PNG cultures. Unlike monetary or tangible assets, social capital, or perceived reciprocity, primarily served as the measure of this wealth. Although this person does not hold any formal tribe or other kinds of power, such as inheritance of rights or material goods, they may maintain respect by using persuasive abilities and demonstrating knowledge. With adherents from both his clan and other clans, The Big Man possesses a substantial following. According to Wikipedia, he acquires assistance that he uses to enhance his social status in return for providing security and financial assistance to his followers. According to Affleck-Tamakoshi (1997), the affluent individual, who has accumulated significant wealth, must also contribute this wealth to the exchange system to uphold their status in their communities. The prohibition of gift exchange undermines the identity and cohesion of the kinship group (Abraham and Miller, 2011; Curry, 2003).

In the absence of other institutionalised mechanisms of social control and the traditional authority that is primarily conferred by status, big men attain and maintain power. If an influential individual fails to meet expectations or places excessive demands on himself, his peers and devotees may disregard him. However, they must also be amenable to the economic equivalence and political cooperation requests of others. Leadership is often achieved through cajolery or personal demonstration, with the expectation that others will follow the Big Men's lead, which is not always realised.

In exchange for prestige and the appearance of riches, the Big Man had an obligation to distribute his wealth. In addition, people would regard him as a paternal figure when they needed assistance. The advent of financial instruments and the accessibility of bank accounts, which enabled individuals to amass wealth indefinitely, called into question this age-old practice. Additionally, wealth could be developed through a variety of means (including paid labour) and subsequently retained or utilised as needed. Furthermore, multiple parties could effortlessly transfer the asset, requiring minimal public awareness or observation of the transaction. In consequence, the conventional means by which individuals in PNG amassed wealth through social capital and reciprocal obligation have evolved into the contemporary capacity to acquire and amass personal wealth. In its place, individuals who amass wealth through any means possible are now able to conceal it from the public. Traditional PNG culture has rendered the initial advantages of reciprocity obsolete. A significant divide has emerged between those who possess it and those who do not. However, status and prestige acquisition through the donation of wealth remains a constant concept.

Big men often gain their influence by engaging in economic production and trade. Their desire for political power drives them to generate surpluses within PNG's horticulture and cash economies, as seen by Sahlins. The practice of Big Man competitive politics motivates individuals to create subsistence and prestige products in excess of local need and to engage in trade networks that distribute these items over wide-ranging areas. Instability in community allegiance and the death of a prominent figure are among the typical factors that might lead to the removal of a powerful individual. According to Sahlins (1963: 293), the big-man political system is considered to be unstable in the short term, characterised by a constant change of leaders and the formation and dissolution of groups. The performance of indigenous big men is influenced by another significant cultural practice known as the 'infamous' wantok system, which has infiltrated politics and public service (McLeod, 2008: 8).

In some regions of PNG, political manoeuvring has led to an increase in traditional bride price payments. For example, the elevated expectations that their families have over the dowry sometimes result in young women from Hela province in PNG being referred to as 'Wandari Warabu'. An imbalanced trade system generates this type of political power, which is also prevalent here. However, instead of trading with physical currencies like shells, yams, or pigs, individuals here engage in transactions involving information and services (Harrison, 1993). Big Men establish and sustain their political power over their

followers by participating in continuous, unbalanced reciprocal trade, regardless of whether the transactions include pigs, money, or knowledge. The decline of social stratification, social coherence, and customary rules that govern conduct is evident. The current leaders lack the ability to effectively manage, rally people for progress, and establish peaceful relations with other warring factions. Many young individuals may not have a high level of regard for some older individuals, and the same is true in reverse, for various reasons.

In the highlands of PNG, individuals get the status of "big men" by either earning it through their own efforts or inheriting it through traditional means from their fathers. Traditional great men must possess economic prowess, accumulating money via the management of several pig herds, food gardens, and the acquisition of an abundance of feathers and kina shells, among other valuable assets. Traditional big men must possess physical fitness, moral integrity, assertiveness, respect, and problem-solving abilities. Traditional leaders or big men do not exert their beliefs through coercion or imposition to compel others to comply. They actively and carefully listen to their people, using all their senses – ears, hearts, eyes, and intellect. Prominent individuals refrain from discussing themselves or speaking on behalf of others only to enhance their reputation but instead engage in dialogue with the public. Individuals who had significant stature or held positions of authority were recognised and bestowed with designations such as Luluai, Tultuls, and other such titles, which symbolised their leadership roles.

In the present situation, provinces like Hela and the Southern Highlands illustrate that the impact of *kaikaimanism* on voters' electoral achievements suggests that political parties are actively pursuing prominent local figures who are widely recognised in the community, financially prosperous, and possess strong ties with community members. *Bigman*, a person, clandestinely offers financial assistance to politicians, often evading public scrutiny. It refers to a situation when a well-known person with considerable political power selects a candidate for an election. The influential individual will use maximum effort, within reasonable limits, to ensure the selection of his preferred candidate for a position within the government.

The *bigman* must have substantial power, often as a past or present political officeholder. In Papua New Guinean politics, people distinguish between financiers and moneybags. Wealthy individuals who are politically influential publicly contribute money to the political process with the explicit aim of advancing their own interests. Financiers are those who use their fortune to have a considerable amount of influence on political affairs. The primary objective of the *bigman* is to exercise control via a representative. He circumvents legal consequences by selecting his mentee, leading to the connection of all forms of support. Expanding on the issue, he underlined that the relationship between a renowned character and his candidate is neither disconnected nor autonomous. The agreement is legally binding and may be formalised either by a written contract or, in more serious situations, by a spiritual oath or ceremony performed at a shrine.

The client becomes dependent on the bigman for all political choices and acts as a result of this, which gives the bigman the ability to govern both the physical and spiritual worlds of political influence over his client. The powerful person becomes a mysterious parasite in the candidate's governance activities after the bigman has provided financial assistance to the campaign of the political candidate. This occurs after the candidate has reciprocated the gesture to an excessive degree. As a result, the prominent person's initial support transforms into an investment that generates a substantial return. Furthermore, the renowned figure is the recipient of huge profitable contracts or gets exorbitant stipends, and they are also accountable for making important and critical political decisions and appointments. An important person is able to negotiate the political environment with tremendous influence and authority, and they make a significant profit from a belief system that is opposed to democracy.

The contemporary manifestation of Bigmanism is a debased entity that bears little resemblance to its original precursor. The creature is only motivated by avarice, without any understanding or consideration for honour, integrity, or respect, which are abstract concepts. Describing overtly corrupt Members of Parliament (MPs) of PNG as 'Bigman' is a disrespectful insult to the esteemed Bigman figures of the past. Regrettably, the current Bigman-MPs often engage in conspiracies with foreign criminals, both from the Western and Asian regions, to unlawfully benefit from 'commercial ideas' that exploit their own citizens. According to Sam Koim, the head of Task Force Sweep, these corrupt leaders are the ones responsible for gradually turning the country into a corrupt and failing state, often referred to as a banana republic.

Fortunately, the prevailing mindset and those who adhere to it are now facing opposition, as seen by the election of new Members of Parliament in 2012. These individuals have run their campaigns on a platform that opposes corruption, with the goal of bringing about tangible and significant change. One might expect this emerging generation to displace the older-type Members of Parliament, characterised by a lack of confidence in their own abilities and those of their constituents. An absence of ethical principles and morally dubious behaviour. The absence of fundamental leadership abilities creates a detrimental connection that perpetuates a harmful pattern of disregard and mistreatment within the public sector.

The concept of the big man is still pertinent in contemporary PNG. However, there are assertions that other causes are contributing to its declining significance. The traditional big-man leadership positions in PNG have become more diverse due to several factors, including the influence of capitalism, Western education, missionization, the establishment of new forms of state and local administration, and the rise of gender, generational, and class differences (Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997). Some of the emerging leadership positions include village councillors, clergymen, MPs, and leaders of delinquent gangs. The emergence of a knowledgeable and administrative ruling class, wielding the authority of the government and offering sought-after commodities, has diminished the influence of traditional leaders known to be big men (Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997).

Ketan (2013) also highlights the transition of the classic big man into contemporary politics. The two share similarities in their pursuit of prestige through competitive excellence, the maintenance of ceremonial exchanges, and the investment in social bonds. The contemporary political equivalent, on the other hand, would prioritise their own portion before distributing it to others. However, cultural practices like the big man system and wantok still persist and influence society in PNG. Stewart and Strathern (1998;132) provide an illustration of the transition from the traditional 'great man' to the modern 'large peasant' or 'kulaks' as representatives of the capitalist system.

### ***Big Man Corruption in Papua New Guinea***

It is imperative to restructure the value system in PNG to prioritise democracy and the rule of law. PNG has a constitution that is applicable to all individuals residing within its borders. It is disheartening to see people attempting to exert influence on state institutions in order to corrupt and manipulate the system, which is detrimental to democracy. In 2016, the former Prime Minister of PNG, Peter O'Neill, declined to participate in questioning on charges made against him, resulting in a new development. The Police Force, Ombudsman Commission, and other government officials must fulfil their pledged obligations to the citizenry. It is promising that there are several strategies available that may enhance well-being and reduce ill-being (Kinjap, 2016).

The prevailing culture of influential people thrives on the anguish and discontent of others. Thus, by minimising the condition of illness, the concept of "bigmanism" that advocates for oppression will be deprived of its influence. This is impacted by the phenomenon known as "big man syndrome" and the impact of financial resources. The phenomenon known as the "big man" syndrome has evolved into a system of governance. Authorities allegedly established state institutions to achieve autonomy, protect democratic values, and uphold the rule of law. Nevertheless, the O'Neill Bigmanism syndrome fails to acknowledge the significance of state institutions and their commitment to the rule of law (Kinjap, 2016). Moreover, there is a total lack of any social security system to tackle the problems of unemployment, old age, or poor health. An empathetic Prime Minister has the authority to effectively narrow the gap between the apathetic affluent and the underprivileged poor by creating a favourable work atmosphere. Contrary to expectations, O'Neill has actually caused the country to experience a fall in both its constitutional and economic status (Kinjap, 2016).

The rule of law is an effective remedy for the excesses of morally bankrupt and wealthy individuals. If PNG can enhance the legal and judicial system and effectively address the issue of judicial corruption, it would significantly contribute to the growth of PNG. PNG must consistently prove that an individual's financial status has no bearing on the application of the law. Currently, there is widespread scepticism in PNG about the impartiality of the court system, with concerns that it may be deliberately turning a blind eye to certain issues (Kinjap, 2016). It is essential for everyone to vigorously follow the path of justice. Papua New Guineans should possess a comprehensive understanding of their entitlements and be well-versed in effectively

participating in the judicial system. Everyone receives the appropriate level of respect.

PNG should advocate for the adoption of the western paradigm of "bigmanism." Display your stature as an individual by showcasing your dedication, willingness to make sacrifices for the greater good, craftsmanship, strong work ethic, honesty, selflessness, and unwavering love for your nation. Without these ideals, your "bigmanism" is only indicative of foolishness. Political power closely intertwines with bigmanism. He does not believe in the efficacy of the law. In his perspective, the affluent person functions as a self-governing entity. He establishes vast dominions centred on himself and coerces the impoverished to pledge allegiance to him in a manner akin to their allegiance to the government.

The affluent and emancipated individuals, who often occupy positions of authority, have used the collective resources to sustain their privileged positions. Politics has become a matter of life and death for them. The votes of the impoverished are now irrelevant. That is, provided they are granted the right to vote. The prominent individual has developed a unique electoral method that obstructs the voting process, yet the results still appear. By engaging in this activity, we exhaust the resources and potential for progress in our nation, and it prompts significant concerns about our understanding of citizenship. The existing and unnecessary division between the affluent and disadvantaged members of society has caused many individuals to question if we really have an equal share in the nation, including in the electoral process.

### ***Regionalism Ideology***

Regionalism, as defined by Wikipedia, is a political philosophy that aims to enhance the political authority, impact, and autonomy of the inhabitants of one or many sub-national areas. According to Agbola (2004), the word "region" is a fluid notion that refers to a continuous and localised territory that is in between the national and urban levels. Objective proponents argue that a region may be defined as a vast geographical area having distinct physical, political, or cultural features that set it apart from other regions, regardless of whether it is inside one nation or spans many countries. An administrative unit refers to a sizable independent political or administrative division within a nation or an ecological region.

In this context, the term "region" mostly pertains to the limits or borders of political or administrative divisions, such as districts or units. These political zones delineate the historical, cultural, and ethnic-linguistic divisions within a nation that has a federal framework. Geographically, PNG divides its nation into four regions: Southern, Highlands, New Guinea Islands, and Momase. These regions serve as the largest administrative divisions within PNG. PNG is a country characterised by a wide range of cultures, languages, traditions, beliefs, customs, and values, among other things. The promotion of regionalism and ethnicity by influential individuals in our society, often referred to as 'Big Men', is a primary concern. These individuals may not necessarily be affluent, but they hold respected positions and have significant influence in our communities.

The majority of individuals in PNG reside within their own tribal or ethnic communities, mostly in villages located either along the coastline or in the highlands area. Annually, a multitude of individuals from the four regions flock to Port Moresby, the capital city of PNG, in search of opportunities. As these individuals migrate to the city, they carry with them their cultural legacy, which is characterised by regionalism, and this has a varied impact on the metropolis. The "Wantok system," a social structure, serves as the foundation for regionalism in PNG. In these cities and metropolitan centres, distinct currents of regionalism and ethnicity are dominant, apart from our rural areas. Regionalism and ethnicity are aspects that all Papua New Guineans readily identify with and take great pride in. However, these factors also pose both a significant challenge and an opportunity for aspiring leaders to demonstrate authentic contemporary Melanesian leadership in the face of urbanisation and globalisation.

The present issues faced by influential leaders in this large PNG village include making the bold decision to deviate from the prevailing trend of favouring regionalism and ethnicity. These leaders must demonstrate their commitment to maintaining their learning principles and values, thus setting themselves apart from others. These concepts are specific to our country and do not transcend beyond our regions. Using regionalism and ethnicity as the guiding principles for governing a diverse society like ours would be inherently faulty and, at best, highly contradictory. These principles are particularly vulnerable at their origins. The sense of regionalism and ethnic identity, such as being Sepik, Engan, Tolai, or Motuan, diminishes significantly when we transition from province, capitals to districts, local-level governments, villages, and clans (Hamanbi, 2012).

The adverse consequences of regionalism and an ethnic worldview are clearly seen and deeply experienced. Instead of promoting togetherness, they have a tendency to create divisions, especially in the most extreme areas where their effect is seen (Hamanbi, 2012). Regionalism poses a significant risk of fragmentation at the political level in our nation. The existence of diverse ethnic groups at the district level hinders the equitable distribution and obstructs the efficient delivery of essential government services. Given our ability to incorporate regionalism and ethnicity into the political and bureaucratic aspects of our country, it is reasonable to expect that we should also be able to apply the same degree of commitment when it comes to delivering basic services to our inhabitants, especially at the district and village levels. I have not seen politicians, regardless of whether they were successful or not in their campaigns, coming together and use their individual skills, weaknesses, physical resources, and networks to effectively provide important services to our residents.

The world is becoming more interconnected and unified due to the progress of contemporary communication technologies, resulting in a global village. With the rapid urbanisation and shrinking of PNG, a growing number of Papua New Guineans are gaining knowledge and education due to the progress of the information age. Due to affordable, secure, and efficient transportation options, our ethnic members now reside and engage with other Papua New Guineans more often than in the past. Prospective intellectuals should not isolate

themselves from these truths but rather begin developing their thought process in order to survive and exert their positive and persuasive effect in this large national community of PNG (Hamanbi, 2012).

### *Nepotism Ideology*

One of the major challenges in Papua New Guinean politics is the pervasive issue of "tribalism and nepotism." These problems have deeply affected our national identity and cultural unity as a nation. Dismissing them as insignificant or unworthy of discussion is akin to denying the existence of gods. Nepotism refers to the act of favouring relatives or friends based on their relationship rather than on a fair assessment of their skills or suitability. An example of this is when someone offers a job to a relative, despite the existence of more qualified and willing candidates. The term "nepotism" originates from the Latin word "nepote," which translates to "nephew" or "grandchild." We might describe the situation as "square pegs in round holes." Ethical dilemmas arise in several domains, including familial relationships (such as intermarriages), the workplace, news organisations, and the realm of politics. Within the context of family dynamics, ethical dilemmas may occur when parents impose strong warnings on their children, prohibiting them from entering into marital relationships with individuals from certain tribes. Children develop this character at an early age. Tribal sectors, not regions, divide PNG due to significant tribal disparities.

In contemporary times, securing employment is no longer just dependent on one's qualifications but rather on their network of personal connections. For example, if someone belongs to your tribe, your likelihood of obtaining a job increases. Nepotism is prevalent in family-owned firms when owners hire family members, relatives, and others from their communities to work without considering their merit, competence, and capacity to perform (Uhlenbruch, Balkin, & Reay, 2013; Firfiray et al., 2018). When individuals develop a sense of superiority towards members of their own tribe compared to those from other tribes, they have a tendency to preferentially associate with their own tribesmen when assuming positions of responsibility and trust. These actions deprive the country of the most qualified candidates for each specific position. Tribal affiliations are placing individuals without the necessary qualifications in positions, a situation akin to trying to fit square pegs into round holes.

Nepotism is a prevalent and undesirable practice that is gradually being eliminated, particularly in the current political system of PNG, where political favours are granted. Nepotism is classified as a kind of corruption when special privileges are given to relatives of the owners or management of an organisation. The cited sources (Gjinovci, 2016; Kayabase, 2005) highlight the negative impact of governmental bureaucracy. Some say that the public sector has become a breeding ground for nepotism owing to ineffective institutional governance. This implies that senior management personnel are hiring spouses, uncles, cousins, and brothers for significant jobs, irrespective of their qualifications (Ziogani, 2012). In order to promote sustainable development in the administration of publicly owned institutions, it is necessary to ensure that the structure and governance of these institutions adhere to human resource practices that are fair,

just, and equitable. This involves addressing any practices that go against these principles (James, 2018; Hope, 2016).

While nepotism is a global phenomenon, it is more prevalent in communities with insufficient legal and regulatory safeguards. Nepotism is a kind of corruption that poses a danger to legal standards, democracy, human rights, and freedom. It weakens the system of governance, social equity, and impartiality, distorts equitable competition, and obstructs economic progress and the ethical foundation of society. Nepotism hampers economic progress by impeding the development of human capital. However, the public sector often lacks quantifiable objectives, especially in underdeveloped nations, forcing people to accept public service results regardless of their quality.

### ***Tribalism Ideology***

Wikipedia defines tribalism as a structure that centres around or promotes tribes or tribal ways of life. The process of human development has mostly taken place inside small communities of hunter-gatherers rather than in bigger and more recently established agricultural societies or civilizations. Tribalism, while a source of pride, coexists with this variety, potentially leading to detrimental effects on social cohesion and national unity. The European powers' entry brought about significant changes, such as the establishment of territorial borders and the introduction of foreign influences, which played a crucial role in shaping tribal identities (Dale, 2023).

People in PNG often identify themselves based on their ethnic group or clan affiliation, deepening the phenomenon of tribalism. Tribal ties have a pervasive influence on several elements of life, such as social relations, politics, and resource distribution. Although it is normal to take pride in one's lineage, issues occur when these attachments cultivate a feeling of superiority and result in marginalisation, discrimination, and confrontations amongst various tribes (Dale, 2023). In the Highlands area of PNG, clans engage in armed conflict to protect their honour and pursue their own interests. Traditionally, the individual who first experiences the grievance is considered the 'initiator of the conflict' (or an older guy representing a lady with the grievance) and assumes the responsibility of initiating and concluding the battle, with the expectation that his clan will provide him with support. The prominence of traditional elders and leaders has waned in recent times due to the shifting dynamics of traditional tribal systems. Recently, tribal conflicts in PNG have escalated to a very lethal extent, resulting in the deaths of at least 49 individuals from different tribes (Kaur, Kenin, & Chang, 2024). The area has had persistent challenges with inter-tribal conflicts.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), communal violence in the Highlands area resulted in the displacement of roughly 30,000 individuals in 2021. A peaceful settlement has resolved the conflict between the Yalingin tribe and the Yambalekin tribe in Enga Province, which started the previous year and resulted in the loss of 80 lives (Lari, 2021). The scarcity of chances and the restricted job market in the area compel several young individuals to resort to violence. Youths have initiated conflicts against the counsel of elder clan members and the fight organiser, who has shown a

preference for peaceful resolution. They have established customary laws of warfare, with the notion of neutrality serving as the most enduring principle. This principle dictates that participants in battle should refrain from attacking structures or individuals that are considered neutral. Although there are only a few methods available to enforce these laws, often transmitted from father to son or discussed at clan gatherings, elder members of the community see a lack of respect for these traditions among younger generations. The increased frequency of external contacts is diminishing the stabilising impact of traditional elders and leaders. Although the bow and arrow have served as the primary weapon for ages, the advent of modern weaponry, particularly automatic ones, has resulted in more devastating consequences (ICRC, 2022).

Currently, tribal differences often infiltrate the political sphere, influencing the establishment and operation of the government of PNG. Elections have incited violence as tribes have grouped themselves around local candidates and party affiliations (Whiting, 2023). Whiting (2023) reports that the 2022 national election resulted in the relocation of over 89,000 individuals nationwide, primarily from the Highlands area. Tribal politics' predominance may obstruct policy formation and inhibit growth since choices are often guided by the interests of certain groups rather than the overall well-being of the country. The presence of tribalism in PNG presents substantial obstacles to both social unity and economic progress. It obstructs efforts to promote inclusive development, worsens socio-economic inequalities, and restricts chances for individuals who are not part of prominent tribes, therefore reinforcing feelings of inequity and animosity. We need a comprehensive strategy to tackle tribalism, which includes legislative initiatives, education, and the promotion of inclusive discussion. Promoting a national identity that highlights common values and ambitions helps overcome limited tribal attachments. Promoting marriages, fostering cultural exchanges, and facilitating social integration may also enhance the dismantling of obstacles and the reinforcement of social cohesion.

Education is crucial to addressing and overcoming tribalism. By including an educational programme that fosters comprehension, admiration, and respect for all cultures and races, we can cultivate a new generation that prioritises harmony instead of division. Political leaders have the duty to rise above tribal differences and strive towards the common welfare of the country. Leaders may endeavour to construct a society where all residents feel esteemed and included by advocating for comprehensive policies, guaranteeing equitable representation, and resolving concerns. To eradicate tribalism and create a more peaceful and prosperous future for all its residents, PNG may do this by cultivating a strong national identity, encouraging inclusive education, improving political leadership, and facilitating communication and interaction to eliminate obstacles (Dale, 2023).

### ***Colamonism Ideology***

China has significantly influenced PNG, which boasts the largest economy in the Pacific. Despite its formidable reputation in the global economy, PNG suffers from pervasive levels of corruption across many sectors. Historical, political, social, administrative, geographic, and economic factors deeply root corruption in PNG. The prevalent types of corruption seen in PNG include nepotism, misappropriation of funds, falsification of official records, and coercion. The country's enterprises heavily rely on strong ties to function due to a deficient legal framework and a prevalent culture of wantokism, nepotism, and favouritism.

In PNG, 'Colamonism' or 'Cola moni system' refers to the practice of giving or receiving anything valuable, such as money or presents, in order to exert influence on the acts of those in positions of power or authority. People widely view colamonism as a corrupt practice, as it goes against the fundamental principles of fairness, justice, and transparency. Public officials initiate most instances of corruption in exchange for obligated public services, indicating a lack of concern for potential consequences. For instance, in PNG, individuals seeking employment or admission to schools often encounter limited availability. In such cases, they may resort to offering bribes, often referred to as 'Cola moni', to the human resources manager or school principal in order to secure enrollment for their kid or get a job position for themselves. Nevertheless, even those who participate in such behaviours may not necessarily see themselves as constituting corruption. This is in contrast to the stated principle of the Papua New Guinean civil service, which claims to prioritise merit-based recruitment rather than personal relationships. Implementing rigorous legal and disciplinary procedures against corrupt officials may effectively diminish any sense of impunity. Additionally, implementing strategies to enhance ethical behaviour in the public sector and fostering a culture of responsibility and openness might significantly contribute to the mitigation of corruption and the restoration of public confidence (UN, 2014).

Colamonism is a substantial obstacle to the effective administration of government, the progress of the economy, and the achievement of social equity. Political colamonism is a frequent phenomenon in PNG, especially around election years. Politicians often use financial resources and other incentives to purchase votes, which poses a significant issue in PNG. This practice weakens the democratic process and hampers the capacity of voters to make well-informed choices. Business professionals often use the practice of bribery, commonly referred to as 'cola moni', in order to obtain government contracts or exert influence over the choices made by government officials. Such a kind of corruption may have a substantial influence on the economy since it can result in the improper allocation of resources and the ineffective utilisation of public funds. Colamonism is prevalent in the law enforcement sector in PNG. Police personnel, prosecutors, and judges often engage in colamonism, which is the act of exerting influence to manipulate the result of criminal proceedings. This kind of corruption may have a harmful impact on the integrity of legal systems and the functioning of judicial processes.

Corruption in PNG is pervasive and inherent, infiltrating every stratum of society. Colamonism is a substantial obstacle to the achievement of good government, economic growth, and social fairness in PNG. It erodes the fundamental values of equity, impartiality, and openness, and it has a substantial influence on the daily existence of regular people. The majority of residents lack knowledge on the appropriate channels and methods for reporting instances of corruption, and they typically dread facing violent retaliation as a consequence. The PNG government has implemented measures to address colamonism, such as the creation of anti-corruption institutions and the enactment of anti-corruption legislation. It is quite promising that PNG has achieved tangible advancements in implementing some crucial anti-corruption measures in recent years. However, PNG needs to take more measures to address this issue, and it is crucial that every citizen actively participate in the fight against corruption.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The present bureaucracy and political system of PNG have been impacted by some traditional cultural norms, which have created a possibility for corruption. The National Research Institute prominently emphasises the ideas of the "big man mentality" (a system that maintains reputation by substantial wealth distribution), gift-giving, and the "wantok" system. Employing traditional customs within a modern framework of governing might result in occurrences of corruption, cronyism, improper influence, and favouritism. In addition, politicians accused of corruption may seek to justify their behaviour by using the concept of "tradition." The distinction between customary gift-giving behaviours like 'cola moni' and bribery is often debated by various courts in PNG, especially in regards to election matters. Engaging in public and political positions offers the chance to amass significant wealth via earnings from natural resources and aid. The leader's family and followers may thereafter receive this money in order to sustain their authority and impact.

According to the National Research Institute (2007), there are benefits associated with the hiring of members of the same social circle to specialised jobs and crucial positions. During the elections that took place in 2012, there was a discernible rise in the practice of "money politics" due to the large quantities of money and gifts that were distributed, notably at campaign headquarters and among key persons. There were recorded incidents of vote-buying in every election district, which included the giving of gifts in the form of monetary donations, food items, animals such as pigs, and vehicles such as boats and trucks (Haley & Zubrinich, 2013). According to a study published by Transparency International PNG (2012), 35 percent of the observers saw incidents of bribery and intimidation being used to influence vote decisions.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations, so further research needs to be carried out on the topic of Cultural Ideologies Influencing Papua New Guinea's Political System in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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