Contents

Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi
Introduction .................................................. 1

Part One
The State and National Identity .............................. 17
Peter Larmour
State and Society in Papua New Guinea .................. 21
Pamela Rosi
Cultural Creator or New Bisnisman ......................... 31
Norrie MacQueen
National Identity and the International System ............ 55
David King
Refugees and Border Crossers on the Papua New Guinea–Indonesia Border ............................... 67

Part Two
Economic Development ......................................... 85
Oskar Kurer
Politics and Economic Development ........................ 89
Scott MacWilliam
Plantations and Smallholder Agriculture .................... 107
Fred L. Olson and Tim T. Kan
The Fishery Resources of Papua New Guinea ............... 133
Colin Filer
The Melanesian Way of Menacing the Mining Industry .......... 147

Part Three
The New Society ................................................. 179

David King
Elites, Suburban Commuters, and Squatters .................. 183

Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi
Women in Town .................................................. 195

Martha Macintyre
The Persistence Of Inequality ..................................... 211

Jeanette Dickerson-Putman
Men and the Development Experience in an Eastern Highlands Community ............................................. 231

Part Four
The People's Welfare ................................................ 253

Lawrence Hammar
AIDS, STDs, and Sex Work in Papua New Guinea ............. 257

Michael Crossley
Ideology, Curriculum, and Community .......................... 297

Michael Monsell-Davis
Education And Rural Development ............................... 315

Sinclair Dinnen
Law, Order, and State .............................................. 333

Christine Bradley
Changing a 'Bad Old Tradition' ................................... 351

Philip J. Hughes and Marjorie E. Sullivan
Environmental Impact Assessment, Planning, and Management in Papua New Guinea ............................. 365

Betsy King and Philip J. Hughes
Protected Areas in Papua New Guinea ........................... 383

Contributors .......................................................... 407

Index ................................................................. 413
Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi

INTRODUCTION

Papua New Guinea is a country of great diversity. With over seven hundred languages, as many cultures, diverse physical types, and a landmass encompassing coral reef, mangrove swamp, rain forest, mountain ranges, and extensive river systems, Papua New Guinea has long attracted the interest of scientists and others seeking to understand or control some part of its rich diversity. Today, with a changed political structure, involvement in the global economy, a diverse national and expatriate community, and the exposure of its peoples to new ideas and values through interactions with other Papua New Guineans and foreigners, Papua New Guinea is even more multilingual, multicultural, multiracial, and socially complex than a century ago when European explorers, missionaries, traders, and colonizers began arriving in significant numbers on New Guinea’s shores.

To get a taste of this diversity, one need only visit Jackson Airport in the nation’s capital of Port Moresby. There, in the international arrivals area, one sees expatriate children and the children of mixed-race marriages and elite Papua New Guineans arriving home from school in Australia, wearing western fashions, and speaking a mixture of English, Tok Pisin, Motu, or Tok Ples.¹ As children leave the airport in their parents’ air-conditioned cars and head for the comfort of European-style homes, less affluent youth stare openly, their expressionless

¹ Tok Pisin is a widely used form of Pidgin English. Motu is a trade language commonly spoken in Papua. Tok Ples is the Tok Pisin expression for “native language”.

1
faces masking whatever feelings they have about the differences between their own and the students’ lifestyles. In the domestic terminals, individuals from all parts of Papua New Guinea crowd into lines for planes taking them back to their home areas or to jobs in other towns or remote government and mission outstations. Women dressed in colorful 
*laplaps* and *meri* blouses and carrying small children and heavy *bilums* jostle for place with women in high heels and men carrying briefcases.\(^2\) Those who come to see the travelers off may follow the departing passengers to the gate to give last-minute instructions to attend to this or that matter back in the village. Or, they may chance to meet an old schoolmate or former work partner and engage in gossip or enlivened discussion of the latest gold find.

Discovering order in this diversity is not easy. Part of the difficulty lies in the different histories of contact and involvement with the outside world which affected the regions and peoples of Papua New Guinea in different ways, and part of it lies in the varied responses of individuals and discrete cultural groupings to similar forces for change. At the University of Papua New Guinea, for example, students coming from the more remote and more recently contacted areas of the country and who are the first of their particular societies to attend school sit beside students whose parents were among the first graduates of the university. At the same time, although early contact gave certain advantages to groups living on the coast, some of the longest-contacted groups are among the more culturally conservative, while in the more recently contacted highlands are some of the brash-est, most westernized businessmen in the country.

Given the complexity of modern Papua New Guinea, the reader should view this book of readings as an attempt to bring some perspective and understanding into Papua New Guinea’s varied social scene and the challenging political and economic realities of a recently independent Third World country. Unlike most such books, many of the readings also focus on issues of more personal concern to Papua New Guineans—such as AIDS, domestic violence, and the restructuring of the education system to fit the needs of a primarily rural population. To assist the reader who has little knowledge of Papua New Guinea or its peoples, the remainder of this introduction includes a brief history of Papua New Guinea’s colonization and

\(^2\) *Laplaps* are pieces of cloth which women and sometimes men wear as ankle or knee-length skirts or loincloths. *Meri* blouses are loosely gathered smocks which come down over women’s *laplaps*. *Bilums* are net bags used as carryalls by women throughout much of Papua New Guinea.
emergence as an independent nation state in 1975, a discussion of
the papers in this reader, a table of significant dates in the develop-
ment of modern Papua New Guinea, and suggestions for further
reading. More suggested readings are referred to in the part over-
views.

The original idea for Modern Papua New Guinea arose as a result of
a course (with the same title) the editor put together and taught at the
University of Papua New Guinea in the late 1980s. Lacking a text, the
editor relied on photocopies of relevant journal articles and chapters
from published books for classroom materials but set about soliciting
contributors for a proposed reader. This volume, then, is geared
towards upper division and graduate level courses on Papua New
Guinea or the contemporary Pacific. It is also useful for specialists in
Third World development who do not know much about Papua New
Guinea, and as a reference work for Papua New Guinean specialists.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Papua New Guinea is the creation of Australian colonialism and
Papua New Guinean nationalism. This section focuses on the first
while the following section looks at the contributions of Papua New
Guineans to the making of an independent and unified Papua New
Guinea state. In 1828, the Dutch claimed the western half of the
island of New Guinea as part of their empire in southeast Asia. It was
not until much later, however, when other Europeans and Australians
had begun to take more than a passing interest in the eastern half of
the island and its outer archipelagoes, that the Dutch announced the
interior boundary of their claim as a straight line along the 141st
meridian, from the eastern shore of Humboldt Bay in the north to the
mouth of the Bensbach River in the south.

Prior to the 1880s, Australian interest in New Guinea was primarily
economic, with labor recruiters visiting the islands in search of men to
work on the Queensland sugar plantations and pearlers, traders, and
bêche-de-mer fishermen operating in the Torres Strait and the island-
strewn waters to the east of the main island. In the late 1870s and early
1880s, however, many persons in Britain’s Australian colonies—partic-
ularly those living in Queensland—were alarmed by the growing
German presence in the northeastern portion of New Guinea and var-
ious proposals were put forth for Britain to acquire the eastern half of
New Guinea along with the islands of New Britain, New Ireland, and

Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi

the Solomons to protect Australian economic interests and to provide a barrier against invasion from foreign powers. At first, Britain was reluctant to extend its holdings in the Western Pacific, and in 1883 the Queensland Colonial Government took it upon itself to annex all of New Guinea east of the Dutch border in the name of the Crown. Although the Queensland annexation was not ratified by the British government, it did bring the New Guinea question to a head. When a German protectorate was proclaimed over the northeastern section of the island in October 1884, the British Government moved quickly to protect Australian interests, establishing a protectorate over the southern shores of New Guinea in November 1884 and extending its claims even further in December of the same year to include the northern shores of Papua and the adjacent D’Entrecasteaux Islands. In 1888, the Protectorate of British New Guinea became the Crown Colony of British New Guinea, and in 1906—five years after Australian Independence—came under Australian control as the Territory of Papua.

Until the Second World War, the two halves of eastern New Guinea were administered separately, at first by Britain (1884–1906) and Germany (1884–1914) and then by Australia, both in Papua (1906–1942) and New Guinea (1914–1942). From the beginning, German New Guinea was administered for the economic benefit of privately owned German businesses. Thousands of New Guinean men and boys were employed as cheap labor on German-owned cocoa and copra plantations. Even after 1899, when the German government took control of the colony from the New Guinea company of Berlin, administrative policy focused on pacification by force and the opening up of new labor recruiting grounds. Such education as the New Guineans received was left primarily in the hands of missionaries.

On 17 September 1914, Australia took possession of the German colony—a move that was later formalized when the League of Nations gave Australia a mandate to administer New Guinea in the interests of the indigenous inhabitants. Like the Germans before them, however, Australian policy was to make the territory of New Guinea pay for itself and to make it an attractive and safe venture for Australian businessmen. After the First World War, German plantations were expropriated and given to ex-servicemen. Throughout the time period between the two world wars, labor recruiters, prospectors, missionaries, and government patrols pushed inland, discovering the populous Wahgi Valley in 1933 and bringing much of the interior under at least nominal control. On the eve of the Second World War, New Guinea had a flouris-
ing economy based on gold mining and plantations. Few New Guineans, however, could be said to have benefited much from Australia’s stewardship, in spite of the novel experiences gained as wash boys, plantation labor, and workers in the gold mines.

It was otherwise in Papua, where more paternalistic British and Australian administrations were less inclined to foster such naked exploitation of the local peoples. Altogether, there was less violence in the extension of government control in Papua and numerous acts were passed preventing large-scale alienation of customary land and excessive abuse of native workers. Nonetheless, although according to official government policy Papuans were to be encouraged to take part in the economic development of the region, it was expected that Australians would be the owners and managers while Papuans would be the unskilled labor. In any event, the economy was stagnant, few Australians made their fortunes in Papua, and, lacking sufficient funds, the administration left the education of Papuans in the hands of overburdened missionaries. In 1942, Papua was far less developed than New Guinea and many Papuans were as frustrated as their Australian masters over the virtual absence of economic opportunities.

On 23 January 1942, Japanese troops captured Rabaul Harbor and from there spread out to occupy the north coast of New Guinea and many of the offshore islands. Pushing southward to within forty-eight kilometers of Port Moresby in September 1942, the Japanese invasion posed a serious threat to Australia’s security. It also brought about widespread destruction in New Guinea as Australian and American forces spent the remainder of the war engaged in fierce battles on land, sea, and in the air to get the Japanese out of New Guinea. For their part, while some Papua New Guineans welcomed the Japanese as ‘liberators’, many directly assisted the Allied troops as soldiers, laborers, and stretcher bearers while others looked after and hid pilots who had crash-landed behind Japanese lines. In the aftermath of war, there was a change in attitudes in both Papua New Guineans and Australians towards their former relationships. Having seen the vulnerability of Australians at war and having fought beside them as equals, few Papua New Guineans were willing to return to the old inequality. Indebted to Papua New Guineans for their assistance during the war, many former Australian soldiers called for a ‘new deal’ for Papua New Guinea, one which put Papua New Guineans first and expatriates second. This change in attitudes was matched by a change in Australia’s international role in New Guinea. In 1942, the two territories were combined
Contributors

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Contributors


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Colin Filer taught sociology and anthropology at Glasgow University from 1975 to 1982, and at the University of Papua New Guinea from 1983 to 1994. In 1991 he was appointed as the Projects Manager of the UPNG consultancy company, Unisearch PNG Pty Ltd. Since 1995 Filer has been Head of the Social and Cultural Studies Division at the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (formerly IASER). Filer’s early fieldwork was in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea. He has since focused on the social impact of the mining industry and the social context of forest policy, and has recently edited a volume entitled The Political Economy of Forest Management in Papua New Guinea.

Lawrence Hammar’s ethnographic fieldwork on Daru island, capital of Papua New Guinea’s Western Province, 1990–92, focused on sexual transactions and sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS knowledge, and the political economy of sex. He received in 1996 his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. His publications on these topics can be found in Genders, Research in Melanesia, Anthropology and Humanism, and in Transforming Anthropology (forthcoming). He is currently interested in the changing relations of space and time in early colonial Papua. Other research interests include history of venereology, AIDS/HIV issues, medical anthropology, gender and sexuality, and prostitution studies. He has taught at, among other institutions, Lewis and Clark College (Portland, Oregon) and the University of Oregon (Eugene, Oregon).

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Tim T. Kan received his Ph.D. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Oregon State University in 1975. He has research experience through works in Taiwan, Canada, U.S.A. and, especially, the South Pacific. His areas of specialization include all aspects (science and technology, production, management, socioeconomics, and marketing) of fisheries and aquaculture systems. During the past twenty years, he taught at the PNG University of Technology and the University of Papua New Guinea, and was the President of Overseas Fisheries Development Council of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Currently, he is Vice Chairman and CEO of Niugini Fishing Co. Pty. Ltd., a Port Moresby–based purse seiners company.

Betsy King was Senior Tutor in Geography at the University of Papua New Guinea between 1986 and 1990 where she was particularly concerned with issues of conservation and environmental awareness. She is currently Executive Director of the Scottish Environmental Education Council based at the University of Stirling.

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Norrie MacQueen was Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer, in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Papua New Guinea between 1986 and 1990 where his research was concerned mainly with Papua New Guinea foreign policy and regional organization in the island Pacific. He is currently Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Dundee in Scotland. His latest book is *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa* (1997, Longman).

Scott MacWilliam is employed by Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. He researches and writes on Papua New Guinea, Kenya, and Australia. MacWilliam currently is working on the third volume of the history of Burns Philp, which deals with the activities of this major South Pacific firm from 1946 to 1979. Between 1983 and 1985 he was senior lecturer in public administration at the University of Papua New Guinea, and has subsequently published extensively on the late colonial and postcolonial political economy of the country. He is a visiting fellow in the Department of Political and Social Change, School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University during 1997–98, completing research for a monograph on agriculture’s role in development in post–Second World War Papua New Guinea.

Michael Monsell-Davis first went to Papua New Guinea in 1964 where he completed teacher training in Rabaul and taught in vocational schools in Mt. Hagen and Kairuku (Yule Island). He graduated with a B.A. from the University of Papua New Guinea in 1971, and later undertook his Ph.D. through Macquarie University. His dissertation, *Nabuapaka: Social Change in a Roro Community* (1981), is an ethnography concerned with the traditional leadership and religion of the Roro people, and with local entrepreneurship as villagers attempt to take advantage of the opportunities of the cash economy. Monsell-Davis has taught at the University of the South Pacific, in Fiji, where he
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Fred L. Olson, after receiving a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Minnesota, worked with several state and federal agencies for more than three decades. He retired from the National Marine Fisheries Service as a Chief Economist and subsequently took up an appointment as Visiting Professor at the University of Papua New Guinea 1988–90. He has since been associated with the Hawaii-based Global Ocean Consultants, Inc., as a senior partner in fisheries planning and development.


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Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi has conducted research in Papua New Guinea since 1982, most recently in 1994—studying a Papua New Guinea business woman—and in 1995 as a mining consultant at the Ramu (Kurumbukare) prospect in Madang Province. She was a Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Papua New Guinea from 1986 through 1989. In 1990 and 1991 she taught anthropology at Bryn Mawr College and the University of Pennsylvania and was a participant in an NEH Seminar on The Politics of Culture in the Pacific, held at the East-West Center in Honolulu in the summer of 1991. Since 1991 she has taught in the Social Science Division at Truman State University (formerly Northeast Missouri State), where she is now Associate Professor of Anthropology and author and co-producer of the award-winning website, *The Anthropologist in the Field* which focuses on her research among the Gende in Madang Province (http://www.truman.edu/academics/ss/faculty/tamakoshi/index.html). Zimmer-Tamakoshi’s most recent professional appointments include Media Review Editor for *Pacific Studies*, board member of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO), and secretary-treasurer of Central States Anthropology Society (CSAS).
Index

A
Abaijah, Josephine, 179, 195
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), 257–89
activity. See occupations
Africa: accelerated development plans, 98–99; economic development, 89–90; economic nationalism, 95–96; political comparison, 91–92; prostitution practices, 279
age stratification, and social relations, 232, 241–42
agricultural development, 85, 377–78
agriculture and capitalism, 110–18
in colonial period, 108–9
and conservation, 385
crops: cocoa, 119–22; coconuts, 119; coffee, 119–22; copra, 119–22; oil palm trees, 119; rubber trees, 76, 119; of smallholders, 121, 123
household consumption of, 107n1, 108
and labour, 18–109
and land ownership, 71–72
large holding production, 118–21
smallholdings vs. plantations, 107–29
and social transformation, 235–39
Akis, Timothy, 33, 34, 44
Ako, Jakupa. See Jakupa Ako
Allen, B. J., 386
Amadio Co., 163–65
Amanas village, 79
Amuan village, 79
Amungme people, expropriation of land, 72
Anglin, F. C., 123
anthropology: ‘cargo cult mentality,’ 169, 170; millenarian desperation syndrome, 169
aquaculture, and economic development, 133–44
architecture, and contemporary art, 37
Arso village, 78
art/artists: ‘Oshogobo School,’ 35n2; roles of, in PNG, 31–52; in school curricula, 307–8; social value of, 50–51
Asia: and African development, 96; fish imports from PNG, 137
Asia-Pacific region: islands compared, 59t; and PNG foreign policy, 57–58
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) treaties, 58, 62
Atkamba village, 79
Australia: arts grant to PNG, 36; and Bougainville Crisis, 163–65; and colonial period, 3–6; and economic development, 118; and foreign policy, 56–57; immigrants from, 97; influence on urban morphology of PNG, 186; Joint Declaration of Principles (JDP), 62; and regional identity, 61–62; social goals of colonialism, 235–39
Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), 237
autobiography, and anthropology, 196–97
Awin people: and Ok Tedi development, 76; vs. refugees, 79–80
Axline, W., 22

B
Bacchus, M. K., 299
Bankim village, 79
Barnett (Judge), 344
Beardmore, Edward, 261, 266
Behar, R., 208
Beier, Georgina, 35, 43, 46
Beier, Ulli, 32, 35, 46
Bena Bena, men, and post-colonial development, 231–49
Bewani village, 78
bibliographies (listed by chapter headings)
AIDS, STDs, and sex work, 290–96
changing ‘bad old’ tradition, 364
cultural creator/new bisnisman, 52–54
economic development, 86–87
education and rural development, 331–32
elites, commuters, squatters, 194
environmental impact, 381–82
fishery resources, 145–46
ideology, curriculum, and community, 313–14
law, order, and state, 349–50
menacing the mining industry, 176–77
men and development experience, 249–52
national identity and international system, 65
new society, 181
people’s welfare, 255
persistence of inequality, 229–30
plantations and smallholder agriculture, 130–31
politics and economic development, 104–6
protected areas, 404–5; general, 16
refugees and border crossers, 82–84
state and national identity, 18–19
state and society, 29–30
women in town, 209–10
Blackwater Creek, and transmigration, 79, 80
Bobbitt, F., 298
border crossings, and refugees, 67–81
Bougainville Copper Ltd (BCL), 369
Bougainville Crisis: origins and implications, 147, 151, 152, 155–61, 288;
and state authority, 333
Bradley, Christine, 9, 351–363
Britain: fish imports from PNG, 137;
19th century economic interests, 3–4
Broken Hill Pty. (BHP), and Ok Tedi mine litigation, 147–75
Burton-Bradley, B. G., 277
C
Canadian High Commission (Canberra), 360
capitalism: and agricultural economy, 110–18; and economic development, 97–98; and industrialism, 114; and large holder agriculture, 118–21; merchant capitalism, 112–13; and small-holding agriculture, 121–28
Carmon, M., 298
Carpenters Pacific Resources Co., 165
Carrier, J. G., 317, 324
Catholic Church, 361; and missionar
y education, 300; and Ok Tedi develop-
ment, 76
census: 1966–90, 188, 386; socioeco-
nomic characteristics, 189t
Chan, Julius, 18, 59, 150, 153, 333
Chevron Niugini, 374
Chia, J., 52
China: fish exports to, 137; immigration from, 97
Christianity: and leadership ethic, 226; and millenarian desperation syn-
drome, 170–71; mission schools, 236, 243–44, 300; and STDs, 260
Christians, and transmigration, 72
chronology of PNG, 12–16
civil service: and education, 99; in emerging PNG, 91, 95–96
clan. See society
Clark, J., 282–83
Cochrane, Susan, 36n4
coffee. See under agriculture, crops
cold war, and foreign policy, 63–64
colonialism, 21–22; in Africa, 95–99, 112n2; and agriculture, 108–9; and art, 33–35; and Australia, 3–6; develop-
ment under, 236ff.; and the economy, 3–6; and education, 4–6, 298–99, 303–4; and ethnic representation, 213; and law and order, 342–43; and prostitution, 279; and societal trans-
formation goals, 235–39; and STDs, 260–61; and trade, 108; and urbanisation, 184–86; and urban zoning, 188
compensation agreements, and environmental concerns, 156–57
copper mines. See mining
Index

Cory, Jenny, 217
Craig, Tom, 35, 36, 37
CRA Minerals (PNG), 161

crime. See law and order issues
Crossley, Michael, 10, 297–312, 319, 329
culture: and academic relevance, 301–3, 306–8; and art, 31–52; change, and society, 179–80; and environmental concerns, 147–75, 365–81; resource dependency syndrome, 169; wantok system, 190
customary law, 218–19, 352–55, 359–61

D
Daulo people, wok meri movement, 86
Declared Fisheries Zone (DFZ), 133
deforestation, in PNG, 72, 372, 374, 380t, 397, 402–2
democracy: and distributive justice, 173–74; and policy instability, 171–73
destabilisation: oppression, 71; resource exploitation, 71–73; transmigration, 73–74
development. See agricultural development; colonialism; economic development; postcolonial development; resource development
Diaries Affair, 344
Dickerson-Putman, Jeanette, 9, 11, 231–49
Dinnen, Sinclair, 9, 333–348
diplomacy: and foreign policy, 62; and national identity, 55–64
Diro, Ted, 345
diseases. See also health and welfare; prostitution: AIDS, STDS and related diseases, 257–89
diversity: biophysical, 366, 383; cultural, 1–2, 366, 383; socioeconomic differentiation, 184–94; stereotypes and, 168, 213; urban in nature, 184
divorce: for nonsupport, 222; rates of, and education, 221
Dole, Elizabeth, 275n14
domestic relations, and Okiafu Gende women, 195–208
Dome village refugee camp, 79, 80
Dorney, S., 93
Dutch New Guinea. See Irian Jaya
Dwyer, Mike, 237
Dyson, K., 29

E
East Awin refugee camp, 79–80

Eastern Highlands Province: men, and postcolonial development, 231–49; national park area, 390–91
economic development overview, 368
acceleration of, 98–100
and BHP-Ok Tedi litigation, 147–75
commercial fishing, 135–44
economic consequences of, 100–104
fishery resources, 133–44
and gender inequalities, 86
international loans, 118, 124–26, 151
and landlessness, 117–19, 122–23
men’s experiences, 231–49
and natural resources, 150–55
nurture capitalism, 97–98
parastatal sector, 98–99
and politics, 89–104
and prostitution, 259–60
resources for: and foreign policy, 59; violation of, 71–73
social consequences, 99–100
and state power, 117
and transmigration, 81
wok meri movement, 86
women’s role in, 212, 213–14
economic nationalism: Africa vs. PNG, 95–98; and economic development, 90
economy: and agriculture, 108, 111; and the arts, 40, 41–43; capital and smallholder production, 110–18; in colonial period, 3–6; commodity price stabilisation, 124; current GDP, 22; decentralisation and urbanisation, 187; domestic markets, 122–23; and education issues, 306; globalisation of, 116, 117–18; and household production, 108–10, 115; and land laws, 117n5; and living standards, 112; and mining, 109; populist, 28; and prostitution, 278–79; resource dependency syndrome, 169–71; resource development, 147–50; subsistence agriculture defined, 111; and women, 211ff.
education: among Okiafu Gende, 201–2; in art, 35; and civil service, 95, 96; in colonial period, 4–6; contemporary, 303–12; curriculum issues, 305–12; enrollment statistics, 22–221; of girls, 225; Goroka Teachers’ College, 35–36; historical foundations, 299–303; ideology, curriculum, and community,
education (continued)
297–312; language curricula, 300–301, 305, 310; mathematics skills, 96n20; missionary schools, 236, 243–44, 300; National Arts School, 31, 36, 39, 48; Philosophy of Education (Matane Report 1987), 308–9; postcolonial, 245–46; and rural development, 315–31; and social stratification, 312; socioeconomic benefits, 214–15; and socioeconomic characteristics, 189–90, 189t; and STDs, 260–61; student profiles, 317–19

electoral development fund (EDF), 345
employment: in agriculture, 108–10; for artists, 39, 40; and copper mining, 77; in oil industry, 72; and rural-urban migration, 187–88; and socioeconomic characteristics, 189t
Enga Province, 154, 161
environment/environmentalists: BHP-Ok Tedi case, 147–75; biophysical diversity, 366, 383–84; and development, 80, 85, 365–81; legislation implementation, 377–78; proposed conservation areas, 399–401; protected areas, 383–404; and social conflict, 160; World Heritage Areas, 372, 401, 403
ethnography: men, and postcolonial development, 231–49; on sexual practices, 283–85
Europeans, and prostitution, 277–78
exchange payments: brideprice, tupoi, and death price, 203–4
exports, 72; overview, 368; agricultural, 107–10; artistic, 50, 52; crude oil, 154; and economic development, 118; fish, 134–35, 134t, 137; minerals, 110, 151, 154; from smallholdings, 121; value of (1980-84), 142t

F
Faber report, and economic nationalism, 95
Fame, Ruki, 35, 36n4, 40
family. See society
feminism, and social inequalities, 212
feminist anthropology, 195–208
Filer, Colin, 9, 147–75, 288
Finney, Ben, 238
firearms, and crime, 340–42
fish: catches, by species, 136t; consumption of, 135
fishery resources, 133–44; administration of, 141–43; development of, 139–41; management of, 138–39; varieties of, 135–38
Fly River region: BHP-Ok Tedi litigation, 147–75; refugee camps, 79, 80
folklore, and resource dependency syndrome, 169
foreign investments in PNG, attitudes toward, 97
foreign policy, and national identity, 55–64
forest disturbance rates, 380t
forestry. See deforestation; logging; resource development
France, and PNG foreign policy, 63–64

G
gambling, and redistribution of wealth, 86
Ganaga, men: in contemporary community, 240–48; in pre-contact era, 231–33
gardening. See agriculture
Gazelle Peninsula, squatters, f127
Gender people: and economic development, 85–86; and women's lives, 195–208
gender. See also men; women: allusions in academic discourse, 288–89; and the arts, 33, 36n3, 36n4; equality, and the Constitution, 212; preconceptions of, 214; and social services, 217–18; and societal change, 179–80; and STDs, 259ff.; and violence, 340–41; women in town, 195–208
genital ulcer diseases (GUDs), 258ff.
geography: biophysical diversity, 366, 383–85; border demarcation, 68–69; and foreign policy, 57–63
Germans, 19th century occupation, 3–4
Goddard, Michael, 180
gold mines: Eastern Highlands, 237; Lihir, 154; Mount Kare, 161–66; Tolu-kuma, 154; Wapolu, 154
Goroka, women's lives in, 195–208
Goroka Teachers' College, 35–36, 197
Goroka Valley, colonial development, 237–38
government: and artistic community, 48; coordination of agencies and policies,
government (continued)
25–26; corruption, 93–94, 343–48; and economy, 23–24; foreign debt, 102; judiciary, 100; and resource development, 150; support of the arts, 31–32

government agencies/policies
Artisanal Fisheries Development Project, 141
Bipartisan Select Committee, 25, 29
Central Planning Office, 17, 93nn15
Coastal Fisheries Development Plan, 141
Commission of Inquiry (1986, 1987), 344
Constitutional National Goals and Directive Principles, 211, 352
Constitutional Planning Committee, 24, 152, 347
Constitutional Review Commission, 25, 26
Creative Arts Centre, 35, 36, 48
Department of Community and Family Services, 217
Department of Education, 220
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), 373, 375, 387, 394, 402
Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources (DFMR), 142, 143
Department of Forests, 141
Department of Home Affairs and Youth, 360–61
Department of Primary Industry, 141
Development Bank, 99
Development Forum, 172
Draft Management Plan for Mt. Gahavisuka Provincial Park, 390
Eight Point Plan, 95, 211, 227, 304
Electoral Development Program, 93n14
Generalist Teaching Policy, 304
Investment Corporation, 99
Law Reform Commission, 351ff., 353; and domestic violence, 354–62
Mineral Resources Stabilisation Fund, 151, 154
National Arts School (NAS), 31, 36, 39, 48
National Crime Summit (1991), 333
National Cultural Council, 48
National Development Strategy (1976), 214, 304
National Educational Plans, 304
National Fisheries Authority (NFA; 1995), 142, 143
National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme (NFCAP), 372, 401–2
National Investment Development Agency (NIDA), 17, 93, 93nn15
National Plantation Management Agency (NPMA), 125
National Training Policy (1989), 306
Non-Formal Education Service, 217
Office of Censorship, 275n14
Philosophy of Education (Matane Report 1987), 308–9
Plantation Redistribution Scheme (1975), 97
PNG Banking Corporation, 164
Prospecting Authority 591, 161, 164
Provincial Executive Council, 25
Rapid Deployment Unit, 166
Resource Management System (RMS), 306
Secondary Schools Community Extension Project (SSCEP), 305, 307, 310, 323n3
GPL (Wild Terrorist Gangs), 74
Great Britain. See Britain
green alliance. See environment/environmentalists
Green River village, 78, 79
Griffin, J., 157
Groves, W. C., 302, 303
Guthrie, G., 301
Index

H
habitats cover, 384t
Hahl, Albert, 300
Hammar, Lawrence, 9, 257–89
health and welfare: domestic violence cases, 355–56; health care, 217; stress of artists, 42; and transmigration, 79
Highlands region: agricultural production, 124–25; urbanisation, 185
Hill, L., 134
history, of PNG independence, 69–74
Holmes, J. H., 275
homemakers, in Okiufa, 200–202
household managers, 204–6
housewives, 204–6
housing; under colonialism, 185; diversity in, 184; socioeconomic characteristics, 189–90, 189t
Hughes, J., 282–83
Hughes, Philip J., 9, 365–81, 383–404
Hugo, Apa, 36
Huli people, and gold mining, 161
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), 257ff.
human rights violations, by Indonesia, 71
Hyden, G., 94, 99

I
Iangalio, Masket, 164
Imonda village, 78
imports: fish, 134–35, 134t; rice, 107
independence: and education, 304–6; and self-government, 7–8, 91–106
Indonesia: and ASEAN, 58, 62; and displaced people, 67–81; oppression and OPM, 74; and PNG foreign policy, 57; and post-war independence, 69–70
industrial capitalism, 114
initiation rituals, 240, 242, 243; and male life stages, 233
Iogi village, 79; refugee camp, 80
Iowara village, 79, 80; refugee camp, 80
Irian Jaya (Dutch New Guinea): establishment of, 69; and foreign relations, 57–58; and Indonesia, 70; resource exploitation in, 71–73

J
Jackson, R., 75, 76, 185
Jakupa Ako, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44, 44n5, 50; Wari long hai bilong mi, 45
Japan: and Asian independence, 69–70; fish imports from PNG, 135, 137
Javanese transmigration, 73
Jayapura, and human rights violations, 78
Johnstone, Joan, 277
Josephides, L., 215
justice, distributive, 174

K
Kafaina (women’s organisations), 224–25
Kamanget village, 79
Kamberatoro village, 78
Kamisese Mara, Ratu, 60
Kan, Tim T., 12, 133–44
Kangewot village, 79
Kare-Puga Development Corporation (KDC), 162, 164
Kauage (artist), 35, 36n4, 40, 43
Kawangtet village, 79
Kawentigin village, transmigration of, 77
Kenya, developmental history of, 112n2
Kiki, Albert Maori, 31, 91
King, Betsy, 9, 383–404
King, David, 9, 11, 67–81, 183–93
Kiunga District, and transmigration, 73, 76–77
Kombit, transmigration to, 77
Komopkin village, 79
Korowi, Wiwa, 343
Kundrun, Gickmai, 42
Kungim village, 79; refugee camp, 80
Kurer, Oskar, 89–104, 112n2
Kutubu Joint Venture, 154, 374, 377
Kuyu village, refugee camp, 80

L
labour force: and agricultural capitalism, 109, 111–12, 115–16, 121; forms of prostitution, 279–85; and industrial capitalism, 114; and merchant capitalism, 112–13; urbanisation of, 183
Lae, and rural migration, 187–88
landlessness, and economic development, 117–19, 122–23
land ownership, 71–72, 75, 119; among Okiufa Gende, 204; and conservation, 385–91; and wildlife management areas, 394–95
land tenure systems, 27–28
Larmour, Peter, 9, 21–29
law and order, 337–46
Clifford Report (1984), 334, 342, 346, 348
Corrective Institutions Service (CIS), 335–36
and corruption, 92–93, 343–48
current concerns, 337–46
customary vs. Constitutional, 352–55, 359–61
domestic violence, 354–62; defined, 354
firearms, 340–42
Morgan Report (1983), 334
and the state, 333–48
tribal fighting, 341–43
law and order issues: and gender, 218–19; illegal drugs, 339; in Maus, 316n2; rascalism, 239, 247, 316, 333, 338–39
Lawes, W. G., 300
Lea, David, 86
League of Nations, 4
Leahy Brothers, 237
legal services, 217, 218
Levine, H., 183
Levine, M., 183
Libya, and PNG foreign policy, 64
life stages, among Bena Bena men, 233–35
Lihir gold mine, 154
Lini, Walter, 60
literacy. See education
logging, 371–72. See also resource development; and environment, 85; forest disturbance rates, 380t; in PNG, 72; and political corruption, 94
London Missionary Society, 300
Louth, Martha, 216
Lovell, Frideswide, 222
Lower Ok Tedi Fly River Development Trust, 158
Lutherans, 236
M
Macintyre, Martha, 9, 11, 211–28
McKinnon, K. R., 304
MacQueen, Norman, 9, 55–64
MacWilliam, Scott, 107–29
Madang Cultural Centre, 40
Madang Province, 195
Maino, Charles, 343
magic. See sorcery
Malaya, prostitution practices, 279
Mann, John, 31, 36n4, 40, 42
Manus Province, education, and rural development, 315–31
maps: development projects, 367; national parks, 388; proposed conservation areas, 398; wildlife management areas, 393
marketing, of artworks, 48–50
marriage: among Okiufa Gende, 195–208; in pre-contact era, 234–35; and prostitution, 279
Marx, Karl, 116
Marxism, 157
Matane, Paulius, 31
Matbob, Patrick, 31, 41
Matu Mining Co., 165
May, R., 78
media: African vs. PNG, 100; AIDS-related headlines, 274t; articles about prostitution, 278, 280, 282t; health information, 273–74, 287; and Placer Pacific share incident, 153; and public awareness against violence, 360–61; and sexual abuse, 269
medical tests, for STDs, 258
Mellesa, and resource development, 147–50
Melanesian Spearhead Group, 60
men: Bigmen defined, 235; and economic development, 231–49; life stages of, 233–35, 240–48; in pre-contact era, 231–33; ‘roads’ to prestige, 234–46
Menzies Gold Co., 163, 164
merchant capitalism, 112–13
Migdal, J., 27–28
migration. See transmigration
Milne Bay Province, 214, 215, 225
Mindiptana, and transmigration, 73, 79
mining. See also resource development: BHP-Ok Tedi litigation, 147–75; Bougainville Copper Ltd (BCL), 369; characteristics of, 370t; under colonialism, 236–37; development concerns, 369–72; Environmental Planning Act (1978), 377–78; Mt. Fubilan copper deposit, 76; and national economy, 109; in PNG, 72; ‘time-bomb’ social disintegration thesis, 158–59
Misima Mines, 153
missionaries: under colonialism, 236; educational curriculum, 300–303; and Ok Tedi development, 76; and prostitution, 279; schools, 236, 243–44, 300
Mobutu, Joseph (Mobutu Sese Sekou), 92
Momis, John, 343
Monsell-Davis, Michael, 10, 315–31
Morauta, Mekere, 343
More, Benny, 36n4
Morubububa, Martin, 50, 51
Mount Kare Alluvial Mining (MKAM), 161–66
Muslims, transmigration of, 73
Muyu people. See Yonggom

N
Namaliu, Rabbie, 31, 333, 344
Narokobi, Bernard, 31, 42, 222
National Council of Women, 225; and domestic violence policy, 354
national identity: and foreign policy, 55–64; and the state, 17–84
nationalism: and cultural diversity, 212–13; and economy, 28
national parks, 387, 389t; field personnel, 390t
natural resources. See also deforestation; economic development; resource development: exploitation of, 71–73; fish, 133–44; minerals, 150–55
Nenta, Bob, 337
Nettl, J., 23
New Caledonia, 60
New Ireland Province, 154
Niakombin Village, 79
Nigeria, economic development, 102–3
Ninaite village, 78, 79
Ningerum people, and Ok Tedi development, 76, 77
Nkumah, Kwame, 91
nonalignment, as foreign policy concept, 56
nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), 376; Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), 58; Catholic Bishops Council, 361; Conservation International, 402; Council of Churches (PNG), 173; CUSO (Canadian), 360; Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific, 376; Friends of the Earth, 376; Global Environment Facility (GEF), 404; International Commission of Jurists, 80; International Fund for Aquacultural Development (IFAD), 141; International Labor Office (ILO), 216; Kafaina (women’s organisations), 224–25; Melanesian Environment Foundation, 376; Melanesian Spearhead Group, 60; National Alliance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), 376; National Council of Women, 361; PNG Bird Society, 376; PNG Grower’s Association, 110; South Pacific Appropriate Technology Foundation, 376; South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), 138–39; Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), 397; Wau Ecology
nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) (continued)
Institute, 376; Women and Law Committee, 359, 361; World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), 402; YWCA, 360
North America, fish imports from PNG, 137
North Fly River region, refugee camps, 79, 80
North Solomon Province: agriculture decline, 107–8, 120; and Bougainville Copper Agreements, 150
nurture capitalism, 97–98
Nyamekye, K., 78

O
occupations, as socioeconomic characteristic, 189–90, 189t
O’Collins, Maev, 319
Oeser, L., 195
O’Faircheallaigh, C., 157, 160
oil industry, employment practices of, 72
Okiu’a, households of, 198–200, 199t
Okiu’a settlement, women of, 197ff.
Ok Ma region: tailings dam landslide, 153, 159; and transmigration, 77
Ok Tedi Mining Ltd., 150, 151, 369
Ok Tedi river area: BHP litigation, 147–75; development of, 76–77; and displaced persons, 67t.
Olson, Fred L., 12, 133–44
Ona, Francis, 155, 158, 159, 162
oppression. See human rights violations
Orchid Society, 41
Organisasi Paupa Merdeka (OPM), and transmigration, 69, 74, 78–79
Ortiz de Retes, 68
overviews, 8–11, 17–18, 85–86, 179–80, 253–54

P
Paiela people, and gold mining, 161
Panguna copper mine, 150, 151, 155, 157
Pangu Party, 7
Parliament House, architectural features of, 38
Parnetta, J., 134
Passingen, Linda, 227–28
patronage: and accelerated development plan, 98; and corruption, 92–94; and economic development, 90
Pentanu, Simon, 346
Pertamina (oil co.), 72
Petromer Trend (oil co.), 72
Philippines, and tuna fishing, 137
Piot, Peter, 286
Placer Pacific share incident, 153, 344
PNG Council of Churches, 173
PNG Grower’s Association, 110
political activity: and Bougainville Crisis, 156–57; comparison of Africa with PNG, 91–92; corruption, 92–94; and economic development, 89–104; and gold rush, 162; links with public service sector, 25; and national mineral policy, 152; transmigration, 81
political environment, instability of, 171–73
politics: and corruption, 343–48; electoral development fund (EDF), 345
population: growth rate, 366; and small-holding agriculture, 127
Porgera Joint Venture, 154, 166; Community Affairs Division, 167
Port Moresby: and contemporary art, 33, 36, 36n4, 41, 43; law and order issues, 335n2; and rural migration, 187–88; social homogeneity, 192t, 193; women’s lives in, 195–208
postcolonial development: and law and order issues, 335ff.; and men, 231
poverty: and industrial capitalism, 114; and merchant capitalism, 113
Premdas, R., 78
prostitution, 259–60; ethnographic research, 283, 284t, 285; issues of history, 275–76; labour forms of, 279–85; in PNG, 275–85; and tradition, 277–78
public service sector: and expenditures, 22t; at independence, 24; links with elected politicians, 25
Pula, A., 75, 76

R
Rabaul, 97
Ralston, Caroline, 275, 276
Ramsgate Resources Co., 163–65
Ranck, Stephen, 207
refugees: of PNG-Indonesia border, 67–81; transmigration of, 77–81
regional identity, and foreign policy, 60
resource dependency syndrome, 169–71
resource development: overview, 368; and Bougainville Crisis, 155–56; cost-
resource development (continued)
benefit analyses, 368–72; and environmental concerns, 157; and Environmental Planning Act (1978), 365–81; of land, 72–73; logging, 371–72; planning acts, 373–74; socioeconomic impact, 214–17
Roscoe, G. T., 303
Rosi, Pamela, 18, 31–52, 195, 297
rural development: and conservation, 385–86; and education, 315–31; protected areas system, 386–91
rural life: and agriculture, 108–9; homogeneous, 184; mobility, and border crossing, 75–76; and social inequality, 215–16
S
Santana, Larry, 44, 46, 49n6, 51
School, J. W., 76
Second World War, 4–5; and foreign interests, 69, 70, 237; and Okiuafa, 198; and STDs, 261, 267n8; and village life, 329
Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), 236, 243–44
sex industries. See prostitution
sexism, and STDs, 259–60
sexual discrimination, 218
sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), 257–89; Donovanosis, 263; HIV and AIDS, 264–65; introduction of, in the Pacific, 260–61; non-GUDs, 262–63; syphilis, 263–64
Shaw, B., 111
Simbu Province, women’s organisations, 224
Siune, John, 36n4
Skate, Bill, 18
Slater and Gordon Law Firm, 147–75
passim
Smith, P., 301
social services: and economic development, 99–100; underutilization of, 217–18
society
artistic, 40, 46–48
and cultural change, 179–80, 328–30
customs: brideprice, 196, 203, 205, 351, 352; and economic development, 85–86; and gender relations, 212; wantok system, 42–46, 190
disintegration of, and mining activity, 158–59
domestic violence reform, 351–63
and economic development, 102–4
education, 297–99; and divorce rates, 221; and rural development, 315–31
social organization, of Okiuafa, 198–200
and the state, 21–29
and STDs, 265–71
stratification, 183–93, 312
strengths of, 27
and transmigration, 73–74
tribal fighting, 341–43
unemployment, and agriculture, 108–9
and urbanisation, 188
village community, and education, 320–25
and women, 204–6
and women’s working, 196ff.
socioeconomic characteristics, and urbanization, 189–90, 189t
Solomon Islands: fishery development, 136–37; and PNG foreign policy, 60, 63
Somare, Michael (mentioned), 7, 8, 31, 41, 59–60, 150, 211, 344, 345
sorcery, 43, 44, 44n5; alleged, among Gende, 202; and illness, 317; and STDs, 259, 266, 267, 272–73; and village life, 322–23
Southern Highlands Province, 162
South Korea, and tuna fishing, 137
South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), 138–39; Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Arrangement (1994), 139; Palau Arrangement (1993), 139
Spenceley, A. P., 375
squatter settlements, 186
state: and agricultural economy, 116; definition of, 23–26, 29; and society, 21–29, 28t; theories of, in PNG, 28–29, 90
Strathern, A., 17
Strathern, Marilyn, 221
Stürzenhofecker, G., 169
Suki people, and copper mining, 88
Sullivan, Marjorie E., 9, 365–81
Surridge, Jonette, 367, 388, 393, 398
Index

T
Tabubil, and copper mining, 76
Taiwan, and tuna fishing, 137
Tanzanian Philosophy of Education for Self Reliance, 304
Tapol bulletins, 70, 71
Taylor, James, 198
Tilley, C., 23, 26
timeline, 12–16
Timkwi village, refuge camp, 80
Tinika village, 78, 79
Tinpis (canned fish), 135
Toft, Susan, 207
Tohukuma gold mine, 154
tourism, and law and order concerns, 334
Towa, Oscar, 36n4
trade. See also exports; imports: and ASEAN partners, 58, 62; cross-border, 75–76
transmigration: economic and political, 81; and prostitution, 280; rural-urban, 187–88; social consequences of, 73
Treaty of Friendship (1986), 63
Turner, Ann, 226
Turner, M., 123
Tyler, R., 298

U
Ubrul village, 78
unemployment, and emigration, 186
UNESCO, and World Heritage Fund, 404
UNICEF, and violence awareness campaign, 361, 363n12
Unisearch PNG, 379
United Nations (UN), 6, 7; AIDS education views, 286–87; High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), 79, 80; International Women’s Year (1975), 211; and PNG independence, 70; report on STDs, 268n9, 287–88
United States, and tuna fishing, 137
universalism, as foreign policy concept, 56
University of Papua New Guinea: arts education, 39; research on domestic violence, 354–57; and wildlife management project, 395
Upetjetko village, 79
urbanisation, 183–93; population growth, 188t; status levels of towns, 192t; women’s roles in, 195–208
urban policy, 186–87
urban-rural contrast, 184; in Milne Bay, 184; in Okiufo, 197; and prostitution, 278

V
Vanimo village, 78–80
Vanuatu, 59–60
venereal diseases. See sexually transmitted diseases
victim support services, 358–59
Vileka, Henry, 40, 44
village life, and labour opportunities, 216
voting rights, and Constitution, 212

W
Waigani Seminar on State of the Arts in the Pacific, 39
Wangatkimbi village, 79
wantok system, 42–46, 190, 197, 203, 335n1
Wapolu gold mine, 154
Waris village, 78
Waropko district, and transmigration, 79
water pollution, 80, 371
Weber, M., 28
Wedgwood, Camilla, 220–21
Weeks, Sheldon, 227, 325
welfare of the people, overview, 253–54
Wena, Gigs, 36n4
Wendt, Albert, 39
Western Highlands Province: border area, 75, 78–79; national park area, 391
West Papua: and transmigration, 81; transmigration from, 77
White, Luise, 279
Whiteman, J., 195
wife-beating. See also violence: attitudes to, 353n6
wildlife management areas (WMA), 392t, 394, 396–97
Wild Terrorist Gangs (GPL), 74
Williams, F. E., 302
Index

Wingti, Paias, 58, 60, 61, 64, 164  
Wok Meri (women’s organisations), 224–25  
Women. See also gender: and brideprice, 202, 204–5, 351–52; and cultural change, 179; daily routine, in Okifu, 201–2; distinctions between homemakers, housewives, and household managers, 196ff.; and education, 220; finance, and men, 202; and household production, 121; inequality, 211–28; role of, in village settlement, 198; status, and STD transmission, 286; status of, and STDs, 259–60; violence against, 339–41; wife-beating, and Law Reform Commission, 351–63  
Women and Law Committee, 359, 361  
World Bank: and PNG conservation plans, 397, 399–401t, 402; and PNG logging operations, 372; and PNG mining operations, 151  
World Health Organization (WHO), 257, 263  
World War II. See Second World War  
Woropko village, 78  
Wunge, Cecil King, 36n4, 44  
Y  
Yaki, Roy, 94n14  
Yeteteam village, 79  
Yonggom (Muyu) people: and copper mining, 76; and cross-border trade, 75; and Ok Tedi development, 76; repatriation of, 80; and transmigration, 67, 73–74, 79  
YWCA, 360  
Z  
Zimmer-Tamakoshi, Laura: introduction, 1–16; on economic development, 85–86; on state and national identity, 17–18; on the new society, 179–80; welfare of the people, 253–54; town women’s lives, 195–208  
zoning, 185, 186; and social stratification, 188, 191