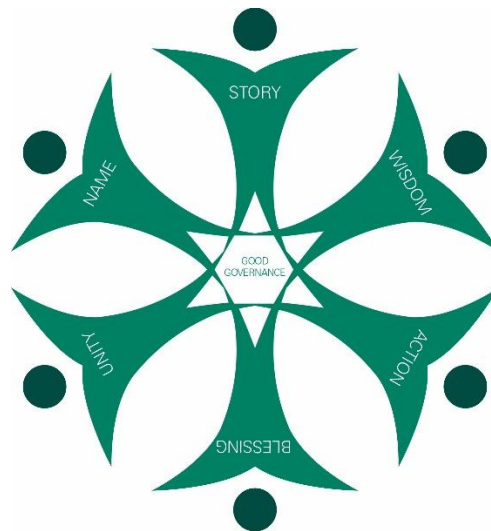


Governance and Community Capitals:

Understanding how governance has worked in three faith-based schools in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea.



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Abstract

This thesis, titled *Governance and Community Capitals*, explores the kinds of practical processes that have made governance work in three faith-based schools in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG). To date, the nation of PNG has been unable to meet its stated educational goals; however, some faith-based primary schools have overcome educational challenges by changing their local governance systems.

What constitutes good governance in developing countries and how it can be achieved in a PNG schooling context has received very little scholarly attention. In this study, the subject of governance is approached at the nexus between the administrative sciences and asset-based community development. In this space, the researcher provides an understanding of the contribution that community capitals have made to understandings of local forms of governance in the development context. However, by and large, conceptions of governance have a history of being positioned within a Euro-centric frame and very little, if anything is known about the naming of capitals by indigenous peoples. In this thesis, six indigenous community capitals are made visible, expanding the repertoire of extant capitals published to date. The capitals identified and named in this thesis are: Story, Wisdom, Action, Blessing, Name and Unity. In-depth insights into these capitals are provided and through the theoretical idea of performativity, the researcher advances an understanding of how the habitual enactment of the practical components of the capitals made governance work in this unique setting.

The study draws from a grounded and appreciative methodology and is based on a case study design incorporating a three-stage cycle of investigation. The first stage tested the application of an assets-based method to documentary sources of data including most significant change stories, community mapping and visual diaries. In the second stage, a group process method relevant to a PNG context was developed and employed. The third stage involved building theory from case study evidence using content analysis, language and metaphorical speech acts as guides for complex analysis.

The thesis demonstrates the contribution that indigenous community capitals can make to understanding local forms of governance and how PNG faith-based schools meet their local governance challenges.

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Finally, I would like to recognise the contributions of Elizabeth Bartell, Dr Ross James and Elite Editing for their editorial comments and advice.

List of Abbreviations

ABCD	asset-based community development
AI	appreciative inquiry
AusAID	Australian Aid Agency for International Development
BEDP	Basic Education Development Project
BUPNG	Baptist Union of Papua New Guinea
CCF	Community Capitals Framework
CPP	Church Partnership Program
CSG	Cultural Support Group
DFID	Department for International Development
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
IACD	International Association for Community Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSC	most significant change
NDoE	National Department of Education
NGO	non-government organisation
NLT	new living translation
NPM	New Public Management
OBE	Outcome-based Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PEB	Provincial Education Board
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PMV	public motor vehicle
PR	present researcher
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist

UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WHP	Western Highlands Province

Glossary of PNG terms²

<i>Tok Pisin</i>	Meaning
<i>As</i>	foundation, base, basis, bottom, origin, source, cause, reason
<i>Bihainim</i>	to follow, imitate, copy, pursue, obey
<i>Biknem</i>	big name
<i>Bilong</i>	belong, belonging to
<i>Bung</i>	assembly, meeting, market, to assemble, meet, to gather together
<i>Gut, Gutpela</i>	good, well, attractive, fine
<i>Hap</i>	a half, a piece, a part, a remainder
<i>Hatwok</i>	to do with difficulty
<i>Kaikai</i>	food, meal, to eat, to chew, to feed on
<i>Kamap</i>	to come up, to appear, to rise, to grow, to begin, to arrive, to reach
<i>Man</i>	a man, husband, human being, person, someone, male
<i>Mekim</i>	to make, cause, create, force, do, act behave
<i>Mumu</i>	something cooked by steaming with heated stones in a native pressure cooking pit, a method of cooking prevalent in the highlands
<i>Papa</i>	father, uncle, guardian, male owner or caretaker of a thing
<i>Pasim</i>	to fasten something, to tie something, to close, to shut, to hold back, to delay or hinder, to block or obstruct something or someone
<i>Pasin</i>	fashion, custom, manner, way of life, conduct, behaviour
<i>Pawa</i>	power, strength, might, electricity

² Except where referenced individually, word meanings in this glossary are derived from Mihalic (1986).

<i>Pinis</i>	end, conclusion, to be finished, over, through
<i>Rascal</i>	criminal behaviour, gang activity ³
<i>Senis</i>	change, to change, to be sprung
<i>Savē</i>	knowledge, wisdom and understanding, to know, to understand, to know how to, to be able to, to do often, frequently, habitually
<i>Savēman</i>	a wise man, a smart person, an educated man
<i>Sindaun</i>	to sit down, to live, stay, conduct, way of life
<i>Stap</i>	to stop, stay, remain, exist, live, be present, to remain
<i>Stori</i>	a story, a parable, to tell a story, to make a parable
<i>Stret</i>	straight, smooth, directly, right, correct, proper, honest, just
<i>Tambuna</i>	ancestor
<i>Tingting</i>	a thought, mind, intellect, idea, opinion, to think, reflect, remember
<i>Tok</i>	talk, word, to say, speech, message, complaint
<i>Tok Bokis</i>	a secret language
<i>Tok Pisin</i>	the language of Melanesian pidgin English ⁴
<i>Tok ples</i>	a native language, a mother tongue
<i>Tru</i>	true, really, very, to be true to, really, actually, to be faithful
<i>Wanbel</i>	agree
<i>Wantaim</i>	one time, once, at the same time, together, to express similarity or equality
<i>Wantok</i>	one who speaks the same language, of the same nationality, a compatriot, one from the same country, a neighbour
<i>Wok</i>	work, job, task, occupation, to be busy about, to be engaged in

³ As defined by Lindstrom (2014) and Kirkland (1992).

⁴ As defined by Brash (1971).

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Prologue

The Baiyer Valley of Papua New Guinea (PNG) can only be described as a timeless place of immense beauty that, once experienced, leaves a lasting impression. As I leave the busy township of Mt Hagen, the abundance of native pink mayflowers and wild yellow sunflowers are a telling reminder that coffee season has begun. Coffee prices are at an all-time high and there is a flurry of activity with families drying and selling coffee, men tying up bags of *kaukau* (sweet potato) for market, women digging and planting, and public motor vehicle (PMV) drivers constantly moving between the town centre of Mt Hagen and the valley's rural communities. The road, once easy to travel, is now difficult due to disrepair, but it awaits what appears to be a promising future due to the support of the Asian Development Bank and the PNG national government's reinstatement of provincial public works departments.

This activity brings with it a financial window of opportunity for families to meet the cost of school fees, and to purchase consumables such as cooking oil, noodles, tinned fish and soap. Alongside this positive seasonal change, I also observe a number of opportunistic local landowners charging a 'road tax' of 30 kina (K30)⁵ per vehicle for filling in with rocks a shallow pothole a few metres wide.

The harsh conditions of the valley road takes its toll on our Toyota Land Cruiser only 50 km north of the township. The engine suddenly seizes and comes to a grinding halt as another vehicle coming the opposite way loses a wheel from its front axle. After only a few short minutes, a PMV overloaded with passengers stops a little way down the road and the driver, dressed in his tattered grease-covered clothing, steps out to assist. I am personally humbled by the helpfulness, resourcefulness and resilience of PNG people. Despite the anxious wait of disgruntled passengers eager to arrive at their destination, the PMV driver lifts the bonnet of our vehicle to assess the situation. The driver asks for a size 10 spanner that, fortunately for us, happens to be the only spanner sitting on the front dashboard of our vehicle. Positioning himself above the engine, the driver begins to syphon petrol from the fuel lines, while locating his rolled and still-smouldering cigarette behind his ear. I start to fear the worst, imagining all my research notes and recording equipment going up in flames. However, as I consider the uncertainty of reaching my intended destination, I have a sense of ease as I am

⁵ The Papua New Guinea (PNG) currency.

aware that I am in familiar territory. I am in the Baiyer Valley, a place where I am known and accepted, a place I have come to call my second home.

Not much further along from our breakdown point lives the dying mother of a dear PNG national friend, her only son. He has invited me to attend a special feast celebrating her life. Traditionally, it is believed that the failure of an eldest son to hold such an occasion would result in the mother placing a curse on him. During the occasion, I approach the frail old lady and quietly call her name accompanied by a greeting in the local *tok ples* (mother tongue). She responds with a warm embrace and shows delight in my presence. Soon after, she approaches me and presents me with 20 kina and a pineapple, telling me that God knows her name but she never thought that a ‘white man’ would ever call her by her name.

Why this encounter was significant enough to prompt her to act towards me in that way I may never fully understand, but what I do know is that something deep was touched in that old lady. What has resonance for me is, first, a level of understanding that does not belong simply within the touch–see realm; and second, the idea that if we allow ourselves and others to penetrate below the surface of things, we may possibly uncover together the power to see more deeply, to see relations and make connections between things that may not be entirely visible.

This short introductory narrative sets the backdrop for a rich story that delves deeply into one aspect of the lives of some of the Kyaka people in the Western Highlands of PNG. The story is presented in this thesis that I have titled *Governance and Community Capitals: Understanding how governance has worked in three faith-based schools in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea.*