EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN A DECENTRALISED SYSTEM: THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN EXPERIENCE

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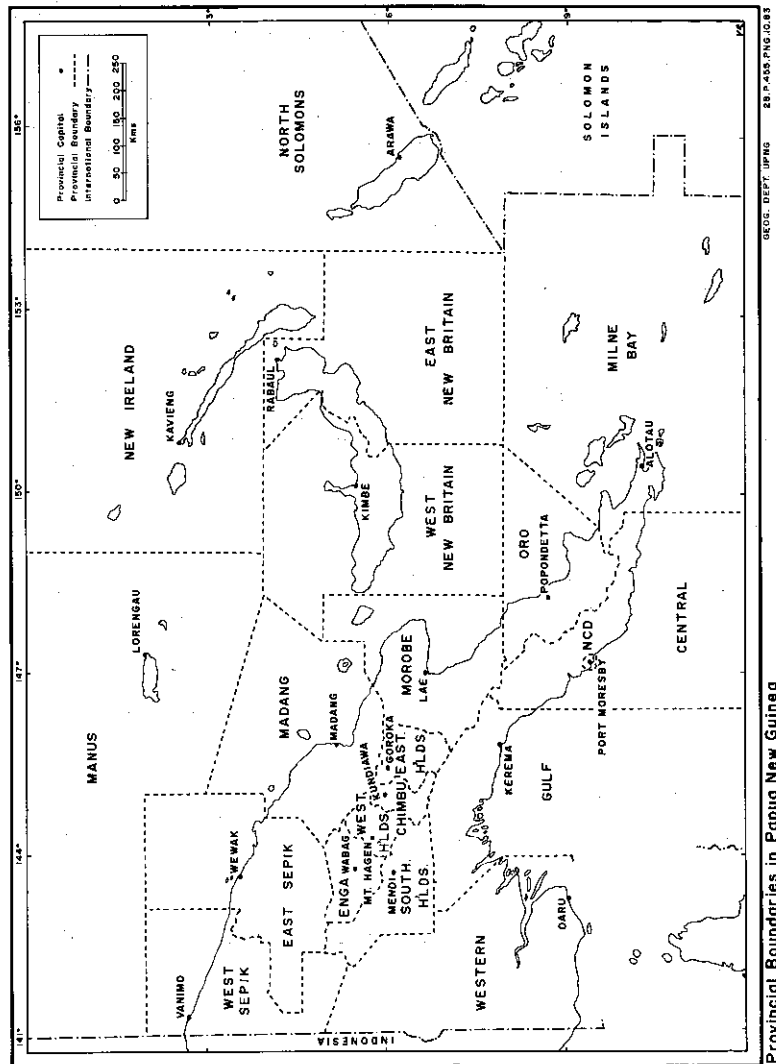**University of Papua New Guinea.**

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Provincial Boundaries in Papua New Guinea

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ABBREVIATIONS

BIPG	Bougainville Interim Provincial Government
COES	College of External Studies
CPC	Constitutional Planning Committee
CV	Coefficient of Variation
DDC	District Development Committee
DEB	District Education Board
DES	Diploma in Educational Studies
EO6	Education Officer [Level] 6
ERU	Educational Research Unit
IASER	Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
K	Kina
LGC	Local Government Council
NCD	National Capital District
NEB	National Education Board
NEC	National Executive Council
NFC	National Fiscal Commission
NPEP	National Public Expenditure Plan
NPO	National Planning Office
PEB	Provincial Education Board
PPEP	Provincial Public Expenditure Plan
PSC	Public Services Commission
RPA	Regional Planning Adviser
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SPA	Senior Professional Assistant
SSCEP	Secondary Schools Community Extension Project
TEB	Territory Education Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VTPS	Viles Tok Ples Skul

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, decentralisation has become something of a fashion among development planners. During the last decade, a large number of decentralisation schemes have been launched in both industrialised and less developed nations, and they have been particularly popular among newly independent countries. The objectives and structures of these schemes have varied widely, and they have been advocated by governments whose political persuasions have ranged from revolutionary left to reactionary right. Decentralisation has also been widely supported by major international agencies. Among such bodies as the World Bank and USAID, this represents a major policy shift and a reversion to a stance generally held in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The achievements of these schemes have varied considerably. In some countries decentralisation has been regarded almost as a panacea, and has been expected to achieve objectives which have been unrealistic and sometimes even contradictory. More circumspect governments have also encountered the complexities of decentralisation. Many projects have proved unexpectedly difficult to operate, and some planners have found their intentions frustrated by the activities of pressure groups within the population. For example, decentralisation of powers is often resisted by officers at the centre who do not wish to lose their political influence and means of livelihood, and it is sometimes abused at local levels by factions which become petty tyrants. In some cases, even the direction of change has not always matched expectations, for from some viewpoints a number of schemes have involved decentralisation but from other viewpoints have involved the opposite. Abolition of rural local governments was a deliberate part of the Tanzanian decentralisation scheme, for example (Nyerere 1972, 3), but weakening of local government powers has occurred in a less deliberate and unplanned way in Papua New Guinea.

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One conclusion which emerges from these experiences is that advocates of decentralisation should be much more cautious in their claims, should be much more clear in their objectives, and should pay much more attention to the mechanics of their projects. This book can assist them to do this, for it records in detail the experiences of one country. Although some features and experiences of this country are unique, many are comparable and relevant to other nations, particularly in the developing world.

Probably the greatest obstacle to clear analysis of decentralisation is that the term is often used loosely, and covers a wide range of processes and structures. A necessary starting point for the book, therefore, is clarification of the meaning of the term. This is embarked upon in a comparative framework, and it is pointed out that neither the supposed advantages nor the supposed disadvantages of decentralisation can be taken for granted. It is not necessarily true, for example, that a decentralised system is more egalitarian than a centralised one, or that decentralisation fosters democratic participation. Similarly, decentralisation need not result in an unacceptable level of regional diversity, nor threaten the cohesion of overall structures and national unity. To a large extent, the outcomes of any particular project depend on the circumstances of the country concerned; but they also depend on the type of decentralisation that has been initiated.

The chief focus of this book is decentralisation in Papua New Guinea. With just three million people but 19 provincial governments, Papua New Guinea appears at first sight to have one of the most decentralised systems in the world. In each major sector of government there are 20 Ministers — one for the national government and one for each provincial government — and provincial governments have considerable autonomy. The Papua New Guinean structure contrasts sharply with that in India, for example, which has over 685 million people but only 22 states, and with that in Pakistan, which has over 80 million people but only four provinces. Within the Papua New Guinean system are contradictions, however. The advent of provincial government was a form of centralisation when viewed from the local government level, and has been followed in the early 1980s by creation of voluntary regional associations. There are also significant centralist strings within the system, particularly in

financial regulations.

This book concentrates on the implications of decentralisation for the education sector. The Department (Ministry) of Education has taken decentralisation more seriously than most other Departments. Early administrative decentralisation was established in the structure which unified the education system in 1970, and the authorities found it relatively easy to adapt the structure with the creation of provincial governments. However, the national government has retained control of teacher training, teachers' conditions of service, most aspects of the curriculum, inspectors and large parts of finance. For better or worse, this provides a significant element of central control within the system. As this book shows, the personalities of individuals at different levels have also influenced the way the system has operated in practice.

Most of the data presented in this book have been collected under conditions which other researchers might envy. Since 1981, the author has been employed in Papua New Guinea under a project known as Education II. The project acquired this name because it is partially assisted by the World Bank, and is the second education project launched with World Bank funding. Its principal objectives are to improve the quality and quantity of community (primary) schooling, and one sub-project is concerned with educational planning. To staff this sub-project, five specialists were recruited in 1981. One, who is the author of this book, is based at the University of Papua New Guinea and is responsible for a new in-service course in educational planning. The other four officers, called Regional Planning Advisers (RPAs), were initially recruited for a fixed term of two years and were employed directly by the Department of Education. Their principal task has been to provide training and advice in educational planning within their respective regions. In three cases the RPA positions were phased out at the end of their two years, but one has been retained until the end of the Education II project in 1987.

From the beginning of the project, the RPAs and the university lecturer have worked as a team. The RPAs have helped with the university course, and the lecturer has helped with training and advice in the provinces. The first cohort on the in-service course consisted entirely of provincial education planners, and the course organiser found himself able to observe and attempt to tackle the

problems of the 'real world' in a way that was far less easy for many of his university colleagues.

This book, therefore, is the result of what has transpired to be a highly enjoyable and fruitful combination of the worlds of academics and of administrators. The author has had to advise on specific problems in the decentralised system, and has benefitted from his frequent visits to all 19 provinces, from access to educational administrators at national, provincial and local levels, and from a relatively detached environment in which to record his observations.

Finally, two terminological points should be noted. Before the introduction of decentralisation, Papua New Guinea was divided into 19 Districts, each of which was divided into a number of Sub-Districts. With the advent of decentralisation, the 19 Districts became 19 Provinces, and the Sub-Districts were renamed Districts. This can cause confusion if care is not taken to check the dates to which statements refer.

Secondly, in the early and mid-1970s, policy makers considered a radical reform of the education system in which the primary schools would be converted into 'community schools' (Kemelfield 1972; Department of Education 1974). It was envisaged that school curricula would be oriented much more towards village life, and that institutions would cater for adults as well as children. During the mid-1970s the primary schools were renamed community schools, but the reform did not go much further. The institutions remain primary schools in the sense that the majority of teachers, parents and pupils see them as the first stage in a system leading on to secondary and tertiary education, and they have not become community schools in the sense that adults learn in them as well as children (Bray 1983a).

CHAPTER 1
THEORETICAL ISSUES AND PRACTICAL CONSTRAINTS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Meaning of Decentralisation

The first obstacle to analysis of decentralisation is that the term is vague, and embraces a multitude of processes and structures. A necessary starting point, therefore, is clarification of what the term covers.

Many observers consider that forms of government can be arranged along a continuum, with highly centralised systems at one end and highly decentralised ones at the other. As analysis becomes more refined, it becomes evident that systems which are decentralised in some respects are centralised in others, and that categorisation is much more difficult than appears at first sight. Nevertheless, it is necessary to begin with a simple model before adding complications.

Decentralisation refers to a process in which subordinate levels of a hierarchy are authorised by a higher body to take decisions about the use of the organisation's resources. Conventional classification distinguishes between three types of decentralisation, namely deconcentration, delegation and devolution. A central authority deconcentrates when it establishes field units. Sometimes deconcentration merely extends central government power and improves supervision, but deconcentration can be a stage towards greater local sensitivity and local influence. Delegation implies a greater degree of decision-making at the local level, though powers in a delegated system still basically rest with the central authority, which has chosen to 'lend' them to the local one. The third category is the most decentralised, for in a devolved system decision-making powers have been formally transferred to local bodies (see Rondinelli 1981, 137-9; and Faltas 1982, 5-7).

These categories may be clarified by examples. Before a set of recent reforms directed by President Mitterand, France had a highly centralised administration, albeit one with a large number

of tiers. The basic structure had been established by Napoleon in 1800, and the country was divided into 21 regions, 90 provinces, 313 sub-provinces, 3,052 districts and approximately 38,000 municipalities (Humes and Martin 1969, 531). Within this structure, the decision-making powers of the lower units were limited, and the central government had authority to review local policies. The Italian system was specifically based on the French one, and thus was also highly centralised (Humes and Martin 1969, 43). And in the developing world, the system in Madagascar was also based on the French one, though has also recently been reformed (Razafindrakoto 1979).

When a centralised administration introduces extra tiers of government without handing over significant decision-making powers, it is said to have deconcentrated. Such a process was recently embarked upon in the Philippines, and the chief official reason was to improve sensitivity to local issues. In 1975, 13 regions were created. An official education document (Republic of the Philippines 1977, 17) stated that regional offices should 'prepare and submit plans ... for approval and/or incorporation in the overall program of the Ministry'. Although the Regional Directors were expected to inform the Ministry of local conditions, however, basic decisions of appropriate action still lay at the central rather than the regional level.

Decentralisation is carried further when powers are delegated. In Papua New Guinea, the National Executive Council delegated a wide range of powers to provincial governments in 1977, and similar projects have been developed in the Solomon Islands (Wolfers et al. 1982; Premdas 1982). The fact that powers were only delegated was significant, for the central authorities still had the right to withdraw them without major legislative changes.

Finally, powers are most firmly decentralised when they are devolved. In this situation, powers are specifically transferred to sub-national bodies by law. This is true of federal systems, such as the USA, Canada, Australia and Nigeria. While some powers were only delegated to Papua New Guinean provincial governments in 1977, others were devolved and thus ceased to be within the sphere of central government direction.

These examples refer to decentralisation on a geographic basis, which is the type with which this book is chiefly concerned. It

should be pointed out, however, that powers can also be decentralised on a functional basis. During the 1950s and 1960s, a large number of public corporations and special authorities were established in Western countries to take charge of specific projects, and similar structures have also been used extensively in East Africa (Rondinelli 1981, 138). Taking an educational example, in 1975 the Benin Republic Ministry of Education was split into a Ministry for Primary Education, a Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, and a Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports (Yannakopoulos 1980, 18).

The Complexities of Decentralisation

This basic framework is adequate for general categorisation, but fails to allow for many complexities. In 1979 Brian Smith published a paper entitled 'The Measurement of Decentralisation'. He did not go as far as the development of a common yardstick against which to measure the nature of any one system, but he did point out factors which would have to be taken into account when doing so.

Of obvious initial importance to this task would be legal provision. Even where the provisions of the law are subject to different interpretation, they provide the basic framework for administration. Within the framework, Smith points out, allowance would have to be made for overall structures and for regional variations. He cites the example (p. 215) of a 1974 reorganisation of public utility responsibilities in England and Wales, in which some regional authorities assumed more functions than others. Similar allowance would have to be made for the different degrees of financial autonomy accorded various provinces in the Philippines and in Papua New Guinea.

Secondly, Smith discusses the importance of revenue and expenditure indicators. One analysis of the USA (Grumm and Murphy 1974) suggests that there is a correlation between the degree of decentralisation and the proportion of total public spending incurred by area governments. Provinces with large tax bases or other sources of independent revenue are often particularly strong in this respect, though considerable decentralisation can still exist even when almost all funds are originally derived from the central authorities. Papua New Guinea is a clear example

of the latter, for few provinces have significant local tax bases, and it is also true of Nigeria, Australia and several other federal systems.

Thirdly, Smith points out, absolute levels of expenditure are also important. For example, a devolved function requiring local government expenditure of $12 million could be interpreted to entail greater decentralisation than one requiring $8 million. The greater the level of spending, the greater the discretion involved, and the greater the effective degree of decentralisation.

Fourthly, the extent of deconcentration varies widely and can significantly influence the degree of local decision-making. Probably the most important factor is the number of field offices and the number of different levels in the hierarchy. Even if all field offices are staffed by central government employees, there is a stronger opportunity for local influence if the offices are numerous. One important indicator of centralisation within this framework would be the frequency with which field officers have to refer to headquarters, and the nature of the matters on which they do so.

Fifthly, Smith points out, each model of decentralisation presents a different pattern of controls and influences at the disposal of the centre, and there may be an important distinction between central power to initiate and power to veto. It has been argued, for example, that France is less centralised than is often assumed because, though the state can intervene to prevent the execution of local decisions, it cannot force municipalities to adopt a specific policy. The power to initiate programmes makes the councils more important than they would otherwise have been.

Smith lists several further points which should also be taken into account during the construction of a yardstick. Because they are not such major considerations, they will not be detailed here. The chief conclusions are that decentralisation is a complex subject, and that to be realistic, administrative comparisons of different countries have to detail the particular aspects on which the comparison is based and to make a large number of qualifying statements.

Nevertheless, it is still possible both to make broad statements and to suggest that Papua New Guinea, which is the principal focus of this book, has one of the more decentralised administra-

tions in the world. The legal framework in Papua New Guinea distinguishes between some areas, such as defence and foreign policy, which are of national importance and should be nationally controlled, and others which should be provincially controlled. The latter are not usually entirely within provincial control, for some powers are still retained at the centre, some are delegated and only the remainder are devolved. The practice of decentralisation does not always accord with its theory, but even in a situation in which the periphery derives most of its finance from the centre, the provinces are still given a high degree of autonomy. And the ratio between population size and provincial self-determination is one which few other countries can match.

The Reasons for Decentralisation

One should not assume that administrative changes are always embarked upon voluntarily or even consciously. While academics may point to the advantages and disadvantages of various systems, changes are often undertaken in response to political events which pay little heed to supposedly ideal forms of administration. Power distribution in practice also often depends on the personalities involved, and uncontrolled economic and political circumstances may cause undirected shifts in the balance of power. Moreover, even when decentralisation has been embarked upon for more deliberate reasons, the justification is often based more on hopes than on empirically tested propositions. Nevertheless, since hopes lead to action, they are a necessary starting point for discussion.

Among the most common arguments for decentralisation is that it can improve the relevance and accuracy of planning, and provide greater sensitivity to local variations. By virtue of their location, it is argued, central planners find it difficult to collect data on distant regions, and are less likely to be sensitive to local needs (see, for example, Nyerere 1972). Allied to this is a second argument, that decentralisation may promote local participation in plan formation. Underlying this proposition is the philosophy that participation is one aspect of development. In some countries, participation has also appeared attractive because it has enabled national governments to request material and financial inputs from local communities and thus to reduce financial pressure on the centre.

A third widespread argument favouring decentralisation concerns the execution of plans. Particularly in the Third World, populations have grown rapidly during the last two decades, and in many countries they have doubled. Some form of deconcentration is often advocated, therefore, simply to help deal with increased numbers. When decentralisation goes further and takes the form of delegation or devolution, it is also argued that improved execution will arise from increased participation. When people contribute to plans, it is suggested, they become more aware of them than they would otherwise be, and they may be more committed to them.

The issue of equity is also frequently raised in the context of decentralisation. Equitable distribution of resources is often said to be improved by decentralisation first because each region becomes specificially and separately accounted, and second because the regional headquarters can act as 'growth poles' to spread development to the hinterland. In turn, it is sometimes felt, this improvement in equality can promote national cohesion. Madagascar is one country in which this has been argued (Razafindrakoto 1979).

National unity can also be an objective of decentralisation in rather different circumstances. In Sudan, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, decentralisation was to a large extent implemented in response to secessionist threats from particular regions. By according these regions greater autonomy, it was felt, it would be possible to permit greater diversity and preserve the unity of the whole (while also preventing the rather extreme form of decentralisation which would have resulted had the regions actually seceded).

Yet a third variation on the theme of national cohesion is provided by Nigeria, in which the authorities sought to preserve unity not by permitting greater regional autonomy but by breaking it. The chief justification in 1967 for breaking the four regions into 12 states was to 'divide and rule', and prevent the domination of specific sub-groups (Crowder 1978, 272).

A somewhat different justification for decentralisation is that, by creating an alternative means of decision-making, it can offset the influence of entrenched elites who might be unsympathetic to national development policies and insensitive to the needs of

poorer groups in rural communities. Alternatively, it could be a means to penetrate remote areas in which central government plans are unknown or ignored or undermined by local elites. Whereas the former would normally imply a strategy of delegation or devolution, the latter would imply one of deconcentration. In both Tanzania and Zambia, however, a high degree of decentralisation has been accompanied by increased central control. New types of local authority have been established with much wider responsibilities, but they have been composed of people whose views have been unlikely to conflict with those of the central government (Nyerere 1972, 3, 6; Apthorpe and Conyers 1982, 6).

Finally, decentralisation is often associated with innovation. Here the argument is that regional, provincial or district administrations have potentially greater opportunities to experiment in selected areas without having to justify them for the whole country. If the experiments fail, their impacts are limited to small areas; but if they succeed, pre-conditions for their success can be tested or created for replication in other parts of the country. In Papua New Guinea decentralisation has permitted one provincial government to experiment with vernacular pre-schools. The experiment appears to be being successful, and other governments are now thinking of introducing similar projects.

Although this list is already long, study of other specific projects would readily reveal items which could be added. They have been excluded here for reasons of length and because the list already serves to highlight two principal points. These points are first that common arguments for decentralisation are diverse, and second that some of them are oriented in opposite directions. In view of this, it is perhaps not surprising that the results of decentralisation projects often fail to match the hopes of their initiators.

The Problems of Decentralisation
Against these potential benefits from decentralisation should also be set out some potential problems. One of the most commonly cited is that decentralisation permits and even encourages regional diversity within the country, and may threaten national cohesion. This is not always the case, and several examples in the previous section refer to hopes of the opposite kind. Nevertheless, the threat of excessive diversity can be serious, and has implications

for the balance of powers within a decentralised system.

The introduction of decentralisation can also make it more difficult to achieve such other national goals as reduction of social inequalities, promotion of the economic and social role of women, and development of a coherent manpower policy. Particularly if the centre still controls finance, it may be possible to achieve these goals even in a decentralised system, and this book will show how the Papua New Guinean government has achieved greater inter-provincial educational equality despite the introduction of decentralisation. However even in Papua New Guinea, decentralisation has obstructed some policies which the national government would have liked to implement and direct from the centre. One of them is the abolition of community school fees, and another is the elimination of push-outs at Grade 8 (see Chapter 6).

There is also a tendency for decentralised administrations to be more costly than centralised ones. They may require a larger number of administrators and politicians, and frequently the central authorities resist the idea that they should contract their staffing to match an increase in the provinces. Coordination also becomes a major exercise, and the result of spreading decision-making can be that it takes a much longer time to reach a conclusion. Moreover the whole democratic process can be destructive as well as constructive. In their American study of the democratic movement at the school level, Smith and Keith (1971, 235-78) found that a great deal of time was wasted at meetings during which individuals were not interested in every agenda item. Differences of opinion also tended to become polarised and exacerbated, resulting in long wrangles and animosities, and in the absence of firm leadership it became difficult for decisions to emerge at all. There was also a tendency for implementation to be monitored and supervised less effectively. It would not be hard to document similar problems at other levels of the system and in different countries.

Moreover, although decentralisation may permit greater local involvement in decision-making, it cannot be assumed that everybody is either able or willing to participate. Decentralisation can mean that distant autocracies are merely replaced by local ones, and regional planners may find that they are more highly exposed to pressure groups and political interests which do not

reflect the opinions of even the majority of the population. Effective participation, furthermore, requires a lot of the participants' time and sometimes considerable skill in analysis of specific types of information. In practice, therefore, participation can transpire to be very difficult to promote and can be something of a mixed blessing when it has been achieved.

Two examples from East Africa further illustrate the potentially tenuous links between decentralisation and effective popular participation. In both Kenya and Tanzania, a principal objective of decentralisation has been the fragmentation of traditional bases of political influence, first by establishing new administrative structures, second by creating planning and management procedures designed to bring younger leaders into community decision-making and thus to weaken the power of local elites, and third by strengthening the role of centrally appointed officials within rural communities. In both cases, however, local elites have combined with central ministry technicians or members of parliament to obstruct the changes and to resist reforms proposed by district development committees (Barkan 1979; Rondinelli 1981).

A system of effective participation also presupposes an adequate data base, particularly on such matters as finance. Experience shows that regional and local governments are often short of information, and especially of easily digested information. In many cases this is merely the result of a limited information infrastructure, but in some instances it is caused by deliberate, if unofficial, policy at the centre.

The tendency for some officials at the centre to control information flow is part of another, wider problem. Several countries have experienced central obstruction of decentralisation reforms. In many cases obstruction has arisen from the unwillingness of ministries and individuals to transfer functions that have provided their financial resources and political influence. In other cases it has simply reflected a deep distrust that technicians and professionals within central ministries often feel towards local administrators and tribal, religious and community leaders. Rondinelli (1981) documents both sets of attitudes in Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan, and they are also evident in Papua New Guinea.

Finally, there are occasions when it is difficult to foster

participation even when the central authorities are keen on it and even when the potential participants are highly skilled. Alutto and Belasco demonstrated this in an American context in their 1972 study of participation in schools. Policy formation attracted only a small proportion of teachers, most of whom were young, male and ambitious. The other staff preferred to concentrate on teaching and other activities, and to leave administration to the minority.

Changing Fashions at the International Level

The preceding two sections have chiefly considered decentralisation from the viewpoints of national governments. It is also useful to note views within international aid organisations, first because they are more likely to undertake comparative analytical studies than are national governments, and second because they are likely to back their views with money and technical advice and thus to have a strong influence on individual countries.

At the international level, the last three decades have witnessed two waves of enthusiasm for decentralisation, which have been fuelled by rather different philosophies. As Conyers (1982, 4-7) and Faltas (1982, 1-4) have both noted, decentralisation featured prominently in technical assistance programmes during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and was particularly concerned with establishment and reform of local governments. It was widely assumed that development of newly independent countries required 'autonomous' municipalities to replace colonial models of district administration and to supplant tribal or other additional authority structures. In the belief that democracy was an integral part of development, local government structures were established to channel and encourage its growth. Several 'classics' were published during the early 1960s to support this argument. They included Hicks (1961), United Nations (1962) and Maddick (1963).

As the 1960s progressed, this outlook tended to change. It was widely discovered that many local elections either maintained the power of traditional local elites or led to their replacement by new self-seeking power groups, and thus failed to lead to the type of democracy that had been anticipated. Similarly, whereas it had been generally thought that local government would foster civic responsibility and lead to greater local self-reliance, in practice it

was widely found to promote increasing dependence on central resources. Moreover, the demands of economic growth seemed in many contexts to require centralisation of resources, nationally organised industries and demands for equal standards of public service. In many cases, therefore, disillusion with the benefits of local government was accompanied by increased demand for centrally directed organisation. These trends were clearly identified by another United Nations Report in 1971, by which time local governments were widely considered to have become an appendage to the machinery of government, playing a minimal role both in provision of public services and in contribution to national development.

Just a few years later, however, interest in decentralisation grew again. This resulted partly from growing awareness of inequalities in developing countries and partly from disenchantment with central planning and the goal of economic growth. In 1975 Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, asserted that 'in most countries, the centralised administration of scarce resources — both money and skills — has usually resulted in most of them being allocated to a small group of the rich and powerful'. He also suggested that if developing nations were truly interested in alleviating poverty and balancing development, 'experience shows that there is a greater chance of success if institutions provide for popular participation, local leadership and decentralisation of authority' (World Bank 1975, 90-8).

With a similar view, USAID analysts asserted in 1979 that 'decentralisation is necessary to increase the scope of decisions, and thus incentives, available to local participants, as well as to build institutions and to encourage, structure, focus and stabilize such participation' (quoted by Rondinelli 1981, 133). The United Nations Development Programme, in an evaluation of 200 rural development projects funded during the 1970s, also found that the poorest groups in developing countries could not rely on central government to meet their needs. 'The efficient delivery of services to rural communities', it noted, 'must depend on effective organization at the community level in order to have meaningful interaction with the delivery agencies in the establishment of priorities' (UNDP 1979, 104).

Whether the new emphases and philosophies will last longer

than their predecessors is something that only time will tell. The swings of fashion within a relatively short period of time might lead one to expect disillusion and further swings in the future. But if it is being found that development problems are more intractable and complex than they appeared 20 years ago, it is to be hoped that innovations will at least be given a chance to work.

Centralisation versus Decentralisation

Ultimately the nature of administration in most countries is probably determined more by political factors beyond the control of the planner than by readily manipulated variables. In Papua New Guinea, decentralisation was largely introduced because of the threatened secession of the most affluent district, and it is therefore less productive for planners to ask whether to decentralise than to ask how to decentralise. Nevertheless, there is considerable scope for manipulation within the system, and careful study of its operation, both in a comparative and in a country-specific context, is important both to assess how decentralised the system really is and what tools are available to planners at each level.

Those who favour centralised systems usually point to the ease with which national authorities are able to direct overall development efforts. It is generally agreed that functions such as defence, internal security and foreign affairs should be conducted by central authorities. Advocates of centralisation add that if their system covers other functions as well, it can be more efficient than a decentralised one, it can be less costly, it avoids the dangers of different regions competing with each other to the detriment of the whole, and, by permitting resources to be directed to disadvantaged and needy areas, it can actually be more egalitarian.

It is notable, however, that a high proportion of those who advocate extreme centralisation are themselves at the apex of such a system. Others may dislike the structure, both because of its autocratic overtones and because of the suffocating effect it may have on the nation. Henry Bretton's study of Kwame Nkrumah documents a well-known instance of the dangers of over-centralisation. He points to the stifling of innovation in Ghana during the early 1960s when even minor decisions had to await Nkrumah's personal approval. As a result, he suggests (1966, 142),

'the learning and correcting capacity of the government and administration of Ghana was submerged in a welter of irrational, contradictory, erratic, highly emotional perspectives concerning events at home and abroad: the learning capacity of Ghana was reduced to the learning capacity of Kwame Nkrumah.' In practice, however, the debate rarely focuses on extreme forms of centralisation or decentralisation, but rather on the many and complex middle grounds.

From discussion on the meaning of decentralisation, it will have become apparent that the term is vague and covers a multitude of processes and situations. It has become fashionable for international agencies and governments, both in the developing and the developed worlds, at least to say that they favour decentralised administration, although in education Great Britain is one of the few countries moving in the opposite direction (Hurst 1983, 2). The extent to which actions match words varies widely, however, and is to some extent dependent on the viewpoint of the observer. The creation of sub-national units on the Philippines model, for example, may appear to be a form of decentralisation when viewed from above, but may actually be a form of centralisation from yet smaller units when viewed from below.

Conyers' 1982 paper ends with five observations which also provide an appropriate conclusion to this chapter. First, she points out, in spite of the fact that decentralisation can be seen as a means of achieving a wide range of objectives, it should not be seen as a solution to all problems and a panacea for all evils. Second, the extent to which decentralisation will achieve any objective depends on its degree and form. Third, most of the objectives which decentralisation is intended to achieve, such as improvements in the management of rural development programmes and increased popular participation, cannot be achieved by decentralisation alone. Fourth, decentralisation can itself create new problems, the nature and extent of which depend on its degree and form and on factors specific to the country in question. Finally, any attempt to unravel the complexities of the issue is further complicated by the difficulty of distinguishing between changes resulting (or not resulting) from decentralisation and those attributable to other factors. In many cases, governments mistakenly accuse centralisation of being the political villain when in

fact they should be looking at other political and economic forces. Some also adopt an unfortunate 'all or nothing' attitude which neglects a more realistic understanding of the potential middle ground.

CHAPTER 2
THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF DECENTRALISATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

This chapter documents the forces which led to and shaped decentralisation in Papua New Guinea. It points out that the introduction of decentralisation was forced by political and economic necessity, for the reform was a means to hold the country together in the face of secessionist threats. More positive attitudes also underlay the move, however, and have been reinforced with time. By the early 1980s, the original secessionist tendencies had subsided and had largely been forgotten. Because of this, attitudes towards decentralisation had changed, and while many people still had grave reservations about the scheme, pragmatic points about secession had given way to more ideologically oriented discussion about regional diversity, popular participation, efficiency and costs.

Towards the end of the colonial period, the administration became over-centralised, and it was clear that some change was essential. However, during the late 1960s and the 1970s, the arguments about decentralisation showed discontinuity, inconsistency and ambiguity. Battles were fought in several different arenas, often with little coordination or communication, and many official decisions were made in conditions of crisis rather than through cool, careful deliberation. To understand this situation, it is necessary to begin with an outline of the features of the country and some background history.

The Features and Colonial History of Papua New Guinea
Papua New Guinea is an unusual country. Although it has only three million people, it has a very diverse population. It also has geographic features which make it a difficult place to administer, it has a checkered colonial history, and it only became independent in the recent past.

Beginning with the geographic features, Papua New Guinea

has an exceptionally difficult terrain, which poses considerable obstacles to communication. A major road network has been developed in the Highlands, but even in that region outlying villages remain very isolated. Outside the Highlands, few provinces have road links with each other, and no provincial capitals are linked to the national capital except by air, or, in a few cases, by sea. The coastal peoples do not have to contend with the same types of terrain as do the Highlanders, but even relatively small islands such as Bougainville have major mountain spines. Other parts of the coast are very swampy, and in some provinces the population is scattered on small islands separated by vast expanses of sea.

One result of this geography has been the creation and maintenance of cultural diversity, for in the past peoples have lived in extreme isolation. Over 700 distinct languages are spoken within the boundaries of this small nation. To some extent, this simplifies matters, for English and Pidgin English have had to become linguae francae by force of necessity, and Papua New Guinea is spared the fierce and divisive arguments over appropriate national languages that have been conducted in such places as Nigeria and the Philippines, where some ethnic groups are significantly larger than others. However, the ethnic and linguistic diversity also corresponds to a diversity in traditional forms of administration, and a situation which has made the country a paradise for anthropologists has posed major problems for governments. Moreover, many ethnic groups have traditions of warfare with their neighbours, and it has not always been easy to persuade them to change their ways in modern times.

Another result of the physical terrain has been an exceptionally low level of urbanisation. In the mid-1970s, over 12,000 'essentially independent villages' (Levine and Levine 1979, 8) contained 90 per cent of the population, and only eight towns had populations exceeding 7,000.

In a political context, the most significant result of the geographical constraints on communication has been that different parts of the country were colonised at different times over a period stretching from the 1880s to the 1950s. Whereas most islands and coastal parts of the country have been influenced by missionaries, government officers and other outsiders for over a

century, the Highlands only came into contact with the outside world in the 1930s. The first Australian patrol only penetrated the area at the beginning of that decade, and only since the 1950s have the cash economy, the formal education system and the communications network been substantially developed. Within a few decades, therefore, the Highlands region has been propelled from a stone age into the technology of the twentieth century. The experience of many individuals has been the passage, in the title of Albert Maori Kiki's (1968) book, of 'ten thousand years in a lifetime'.

The administration of the country has also undergone several major changes within the last century. From 1884 to 1914, the two halves of present-day Papua New Guinea were administered entirely separately by different colonial powers. From 1884 to 1906, the southern half was under British administration and was known as British New Guinea. In 1906, responsibility for the territory was handed over to newly independent Australia, and it was renamed Papua. Further north, the territory of German New Guinea had been a German colony since 1884. With the outbreak of war in 1914, an Australian naval force seized control from the Germans, and at the end of the war administration was formally mandated to Australia by the League of Nations. For the next twenty years, however, the two halves were administered separately. Only during the second world war was the administration unified — a situation that was formally ratified in 1949. From this time the country was known as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and only in 1971 was it renamed Papua New Guinea.

The fact that Papua had a historical identity separate from New Guinea was important during the 1960s and 1970s, for a significant political movement advocated Papuan nationalism and independence. New Guinea was more fragmented, and secessionist threats there concerned parts of the territory rather than the whole. Papua New Guinea achieved self-government in 1973, but the period was one of considerable turmoil which had still not been resolved when the country finally became independent in 1975.

Systems of Government under Australian Rule
A common procedure during the early colonial years in many

British territories was delegation of government to commercial companies (see, for example, Crowder 1978 and Meredith 1979). This model was also adopted in German New Guinea (Griffin et al. 1979). It was not employed in British New Guinea, however, nor was it used by the Australians either in Papua or in New Guinea. In that sense, the Australian model of administration was direct and centralised.

In two other senses, however, the early Australian model was decentralised. On the one hand the administration delegated major powers in clearly defined geographical areas to various mission agencies, and broadly left them to conduct tasks which it would otherwise have had to have done itself. At the same time the government appointed officers to oversee District administration, and gave them wide ranging powers. These officers were known as kiaps and were generalists rather than specialists. Their chief qualifications were a sense of adventure and an ability to survive in lonely and inhospitable conditions, and it was to a large extent because communications networks were poor that they were authorised to handle most affairs themselves. Only the broad policy and administrative decisions were made in Canberra and in the territorial headquarters of Port Moresby and Rabaul.

After the second world war, greater controls were placed on the missions, and the powers of the kiaps were reduced. To a considerable extent this was the result of the philosophy of Paul Hasluck, who became the Australian Minister for Territories in 1951 and retained the post for the unusually long period of 13 years. Hasluck assumed that Australia would administer Papua and New Guinea for a long time, and developed his policies accordingly. His successor, C.E. Barnes, carried on his policies in a similar, though more conservative spirit (Oram 1973, 4).

Hasluck felt that British withdrawal from Africa and elsewhere had been over hasty, and his philosophy was confidently paternalistic. 'For some years to come,' he stated in 1952 (quoted by Oram 1973, 4), 'it is inevitable that Papua and New Guinea will be administered as a territory and that the administration will become increasingly centralised in Australia.' Six years later, he claimed that 'one of the substantial and lasting achievements' of his term of office had been 'the building of sounder foundations for a better public service' (Hasluck 1958, 114). His answer to the

problem of inefficiency had been to concentrate as much work and decision-making as possible in his own hands. 'In thinking about their welfare we recognise that for a period we will have to make most of the decisions on what will best promote their welfare' (ibid., 78).

The result of Hasluck's philosophy was a reduction in the kiaps' powers and a reorganisation, in 1955, of their Division of District Administration. The kiaps' role was largely taken over by specialist departments which had been established in considerable number during the previous decade, and which caused a dramatic increase in government employment (Conyers 1976, 6-7). These departments were highly centralised, and as late as 1968 the United Nations Trusteeship Council (1968, 58) 'received the impression that measures within generally established policy are still required to be referred to Canberra for decision and that the Administration does not have the scope to exercise its discretion and initiative'. Over the previous decade and a half, the Papua New Guinean public service had effectively, though not formally, become an extension of the Australian one. The real executive was based in Australia rather than in Papua New Guinea, and the administrative model had come to resemble an earlier French colonial one (Deschamps 1971; Gifford and Weiskel 1971).

In practice, the effects of this centralisation were rather different from those envisaged by Hasluck. Inter-departmental coordination at both the local and the national levels was seriously lacking, and there was a loss of initiative in the field. Conyers (1976, 6) points out that even though technological developments permitted field and headquarters staff to communicate with each other more easily, decision-making was often unnecessarily, and sometimes disastrously, delayed. In turn, this demoralised both public servants and the general population.

The period in which specialised departments were established also saw the growth of Local Government Councils. They were initiated in a few areas in the 1950s, and by 1972 covered 92 per cent of the population (Ballard 1981, 97). The extent of their size and powers varied widely, and they were not always welcomed by either the Australian administrators or the local people. The councils' official aims were to educate people for democracy, coordinate resources at the village level, and teach industrious

habits, 'ultimately fitting the native population, in a way they can understand, into the Territory's political system' (Plant 1962, quoted by Oram 1973, 20). In practice, these objectives were too amorphous. The Administration did not devolve its own major functions in health, education, and natural resources to the councils, and their main source of revenue, a local head tax, provided too small an income for the councils to be effective in spheres other than administration of market places and representation on District Education Boards and similar bodies. Lack of tangible benefits led to resistance to taxation in some areas, and it was widely felt that the councils were merely agents of the central administration.

This attitude, indeed, was not completely unfounded. Whatever the constitutional situation, most councils were forced by their small revenue base to rely heavily on central administrative officers for support and advice. In many cases, kiaps attached to councils as advisers ended up effectively running the bodies. Writing at the end of the period of Australian rule, one major analyst (Oram 1973, 15) was of the opinion that:

In spite of the development of local government and an independent judicial system, the system of direct rule established at the beginning of the colonial period, although it has become more sophisticated, has remained basically unchanged. The system is not only direct but over-centralized. Decisions relating to minor matters, especially those involving expenditure of money, have to be referred from district headquarters and below to department headquarters. . . .

The Rise and Decline of the Secessionist Movements

The late 1960s and the early 1970s were years of turmoil in which a large number of groups campaigned for greater political recognition and in some cases threatened to secede. The most important secession movement was based in Bougainville, though several others followed the Bougainvillean example. Ballard (1981a) and May (1982b) document the evolution of a multitude of unofficial associations which attempted to promote regional interests in the 1960s, and from which some later groups drew inspiration. Some of these associations were dismissed by the administration as

cultist, but others, especially those controlled by traditional leaders or educated elites, were taken more seriously.

The groups which had the greatest impact were based in the Gazelle Peninsula (East New Britain) and in Bougainville. Opposition there focussed specifically on the Local Government Councils, though more broadly it expressed antagonism to the whole of Australian rule. Initially, the Australian regime reacted against these groups. By the late 1960s, Australia had become embarassed by her status as a colonial power and was seeking a rapid route to Papua New Guinean independence. However, since Australia was committed to transferring power to a single government, the initial Canberra response to demands for autonomy was a campaign to develop national symbols and stress the advantages of national unity. Only with the visit of Prime Minister Gorton in 1970 did Australian attitudes begin to change. Gorton was sufficiently impressed by the force of feeling in the Gazelle and Bougainville to propose that more substantial powers should be devolved to regional or district authorities.

Much of the pressure for increased autonomy also arose from feelings of cultural distinctiveness and from the rejection of the potential domination of, or even the more neutral interaction with, other ethnic and cultural groups. In Bougainville, these feelings manifested themselves in the formation of the Mungkas Association. Mungkas is a Buin (south Bougainville) word meaning 'black', and referred to the extremely dark skin colour of peoples in that area. The Association was established in 1968, and was based on widespread antipathy towards 'Redskins' — the name the peoples of the area gave to other Papua New Guineans, and particularly to Highlanders. At that time, an influx of other Papua New Guineans to Bougainville was becoming particularly noticeable because of the opening of a large copper mine on the island.

This copper mine also exacerbated secessionist demands in another way, for it was widely felt in Bougainville that land for the mine had been alienated in an arbitrary way with inadequate compensation, and that insufficient wealth from the mine was accruing to the peoples of the province. The latter claim was considerably strengthened by a boom in copper prices during the 1970s, and in 1974 led to renegotiation of the agreement between

the mining company and the national government.

Even after the renegotiation, however, secessionist aspirations remained strong. The Bougainvillean leaders at one stage favoured amalgamation with the Solomon Islands, a British protectorate to the south which itself achieved independence in 1978. This idea was never implemented, though, somewhat ambiguously, the Bougainvillean leaders did rename their province North Solomons.

The climax of the Bougainvillean secession movement came on 1st September 1975 — just 15 days before Australia was scheduled to confer independence on Papua New Guinea — when the flag of the so-called North Solomons Republic was raised at Arawa. Papua New Guinea as a whole received independence in uncertain circumstances, but within a few months, Prime Minister Michael Somare had once again brought the North Solomons back into the Papua New Guinean fold. It had been a narrow avoidance of a permanent national split and a form of decentralisation that would have been even greater than that finally agreed upon.

Though less dramatic, the other secession movements were also important. The most flamboyant was led by Josephine Abaijah, who advocated an independent Papua, and called her movement Papua Besena. This party was established in 1972, and was originally concerned only to establish regional autonomy within the country, with Papua as one of the regions. By 1973, however, Abaijah advocated complete secession, and in March 1975 she also hoisted an independence flag at Tatana near Port Moresby. Ultimately, her movement lacked cohesion and came to little. By 1975 Papua Besena had spawned a series of secondary groups variously named the Papua Party, the Papuan Group, the Papua Black Power Movement and the Papua Liberation Movement. This lack of cohesion, again coupled with effective manoeuvres by Somare, finally led to the subsidence of secessionist threats (Griffin et al. 1979, 206-9).

In addition, the Highlands was also a base for secessionist forces. In 1972 a group of university students formed a Highlands Liberation Front which condemned 'colonialism and neo-colonialism', wanted all industrial and economic development to be shared on a '50-50' basis, and also at points advocated secession (Griffin et al. 1979, 170, 205-6). Even more than their Papuan

counterparts, however, the Highlanders were disunited, and in view of their land-locked and economically dependent status, their threats were rarely taken seriously. In so far as the Highlands movement did affect the overall picture, it was more a case of it fuelling demands for secession in other parts of New Guinea and Papua because, the leaders in those places argued, after secession they would be able legitimately to expel Highlanders from their own regions and boost indigenous employment.

Finally, there were at various times a considerable number of micro-nationalist movements. The Mataungan Association in the Gazelle and the Kabisawali Movement in the Trobriands were among the better known, but others included the Hiri, Boera, Domuni, Eriwo, Koiari, Puari Action, Negros, Tuale and Hood Lagoon Associations. With these movements also, Somare demonstrated his impressive powers of negotiation and persuasion, and probably again to him should belong the chief credit for the subsidence of their antagonism. In their case, the country's extreme diversity proved an asset, for none of the groups could have survived on its own, and their clearest interests obviously lay in being part of a larger unit. At least some of the Papuan associations were afraid as much of domination by the Motu people as by Highlanders and other non-Papuans, and Somare and his supporters persuaded them that their prospects looked best within a united Papua New Guinea.

From this catalogue of secessionist movements, it will be evident that the creation and maintenance of a united country has been no mean accomplishment. This has only been achieved, however, through major political and administrative reform.

Official Policies during the Build-up to Independence: 1972-75

The most salient political event of 1972 was a general election. From it was formed a national coalition government in which the Pangu (Papua and New Guinea Union) Party was the major partner. As the leader of Pangu, Michael Somare became Chief Minister.

In its election platform, Pangu had opposed the centralised tendencies of the administration, especially with regard to the Gazelle and Bougainville. From the start, therefore, there was a general commitment to greater local control, and the new

government attracted at least the tolerant goodwill, and often the active support, of most advocates of local autonomy. The commitment to decentralisation was specifically laid out in a set of eight development aims devised at the end of 1972. The third aim was:

Decentralisation of economic activity, planning and government spending, with emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade, and more spending channelled to local and area bodies.

Pangu's main coalition partner, the People's Progress Party, warmly favoured the establishment of Area Authorities to advise the central government on development priorities in each district and to provide a means of coordination between central and local governments. Pangu itself was ambivalent about the idea, but the government nevertheless proceeded with their establishment and gave them substantial funding through a Rural Improvement Programme (see Conyers 1976, 12ff and Ballard 1981a, 99ff).

The first Area Authorities were set up towards the end of 1972 in Western, Northern and New Ireland Districts, which had appeared politically stable in the sense that they had no major conflicts either internally or with the central government. Other districts followed rapidly, and by the end of 1974 the only districts without Area Authorities were Bougainville, East New Britain, Central and East and West Sepik. Bougainville by this time had its own interim provincial government, having refused an Area Authority in order to press more fundamental demands, while in East New Britain formation of a district level body had been prevented by internal conflicts. In the other three districts there was no political reason why the Area Authorities had not been established. Their absence was probably due chiefly to a lack of district identity on the part of both people and public servants, and by the time these districts thought seriously about Area Authorities, it seemed likely that provincial governments would soon be introduced, and therefore that they would be superseded (Conyers 1976, 13).

The concept of the Area Authority had been built on that of the District Development Committees (DDCs), which had first been

established in 1964 and which were also intended to coordinate development. Both bodies proved disappointing, however. The DDCs tended to be little more than a formality and were largely ignored by specialist departments, and the Area Authorities failed to do much better. Because the Authorities' voting members were Local Government Councillors, only in those areas in which the Councils were effective could the Area Authorities also be effective. Their powers were never clearly defined, and many spent excessive energy on minor projects, including the well-being of specific members, to the detriment of larger ones.

As time proceeded, therefore, general attitudes towards Area Authorities became increasingly negative. Some worked better than others, but by independence most advocates of decentralisation had decided that the Area Authorities, at least in their existing form, were not the answer to the nation's needs. When provincial governments were finally introduced, it was stated that no Area Authority could exist simultaneously.

In September 1972, a further major step was taken with the establishment of a Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC). Its brief (1974, iv) was 'to make recommendations for a constitution for full internal self-government in a united Papua New Guinea with a view for eventual independence', and specifically to report on 'central-regional-local government relations and district administration'.

One proposal placed before the CPC, which had been partly based on alleged ethnic homogeneity, was for regional government. The CPC rejected this proposal, partly because it disputed the existence of such homogeneity, and partly to prevent the creation of units which were too large and powerful. The CPC final report (1974, 10/3) suggested that:

The experience of a number of recently independent states, including Nigeria, should serve as a warning of the dangers attendant upon the existence of a small number of large, powerful regions, in which ethnic sentiments serve as a basis for regional unity and deep national division.

Accordingly, the CPC recommended that Provinces should be based on the existing Districts, and that the Sub-Districts should

be renamed Districts. On the basis of the CPC Second Interim Report, Bougainvillean leaders proceeded to organise an interim provincial government. They did so without official central government sanction, however, for the central authorities had not yet developed a clear commitment to decentralisation.

The reasons for official ambivalence were perhaps most colourfully set out several years later by Iambakey Okuk, who at that date was Leader of the Opposition. By that time, decentralisation was more or less a foregone conclusion, but Okuk raised objections that had been current in the previous few years. He suggested, for example (1978, 21) that the country would become ungovernable, chiefly for the paradoxical reason that:

there will be too much Government, too many Politicians, too much Bureaucracy, and people just won't get adequate and effective services from Government at all levels.

Making international comparisons, he continued:

Papua New Guinea is to have more than 600 paid politicians. We have three million people. Australia has about 600 paid politicians, and it has 14 million people. It took Australia almost 100 years to develop to the stage where it now has 600 politicians. It has taken us three years. Britain, which has a population of 40 million has about as many politicians as Papua New Guinea. Does anyone seriously believe that a developing country like Papua New Guinea can afford that much government?

On a matter about which national politicians were even more sensitive, Okuk also pointed out that:

the elected members of the National Parliament are losing responsibility for virtually every area of Public Service, roads, education, health, community development and so on. The question I ask is this — what will the National Parliamentarians be responsible for? Defence, Foreign Affairs, and very little else. They are losing the right to represent their people in the areas that are of real concern to villages and towns throughout

Papua New Guinea — and they are losing their right to Non-elected people, many of whom are defeated and failed National Parliamentarians.

Finally, Okuk pointed out (p.22) that this challenge to national parliamentarians' status was combined with abuse and wastage of resources:

Mr. Chairman, our Nation now has about 140 Cabinet Ministers. I do not deny the national Ministers their entitlement, but they are now being challenged by Provincial Ministers who are getting expensive government vehicles for themselves. In one Province which has hardly any roads, every Minister has been given a government car. The Provincial Ministers are travelling around the country almost as if they were National Ministers, and the Premiers are travelling around like mini Prime Ministers. "Fact Finding" overseas trips are now the order of the day for Provincial Assembly Ministers and Members.

Okuk was repeating arguments which had been voiced before, and which had considerable force. Returning to the historical sequence, however, the momentum of decentralisation built up in the mid-1970s. It was given further impetus in March 1974 by the commissioning of a report by two political scientists, Professors Tordoff and Watts.

One major contribution of the Tordoff-Watts report was a clarification of the alternative types of decentralisation open to Papua New Guinea. The authors distinguished three major types (p.3/1), namely:
(1) unitary systems...characterized by the feature that central government is legislatively supreme and that the provinces (if any) are subordinate to the central government in exercising legislative or administrative functions;
(2) federal systems...characterized by the co-ordinate legislative and administrative authority of the central and provincial governments; and
(3) confederal systems...characterized by the subordinate legislative and administrative authority of the central government in relation to the confederated states.

To Tordoff and Watts' knowledge, a confederal system had never been advocated in Papua New Guinea, and in their opinions a federal system would have been inappropriate because of its inflexibility. They themselves strongly favoured the introduction of full decentralisation within a unitary system.

A second major contribution of the Tordoff-Watts report was the emphasis on both administrative and political devolution (p.2/1):

> Decentralization within a unitary framework has both political and administrative aspects. To emphasize the latter alone would ... [be] unlikely to satisfy aspirations at the political level... [It] might prove as politically risky for the central government to ignore the aspirations of political leaders at the district level as for a colonial government to be unresponsive to the demands of prominent nationalists.

They might have added the corollary that it is equally essential for administrative devolution to coincide with political devolution. As Conyers stated one year later (1975, 32):

> Political decentralisation gives people in the districts the right to participate in development by making decisions but it is administrative decentralisation which gives them the ability to implement decisions and therefore to make their participation effective. Political decentralisation on its own only leads to disappointment and frustration.

Thirdly, the Tordoff-Watts report pointed out that there are degrees of transfer of power even within a decentralised unitary system. They suggested that the government should ultimately aim to devolve all administration and all aspects of legislative power that could not be clearly identified as being desirable for national retention. They recommended, however, that the government might wish to proceed towards this goal by stages, according to administrative and legislative capacity in the provinces.

The official response to the Tordoff-Watts report and to the final report of the CPC, which appeared at approximately the same time, was a statement that provincial government would be available to any province requesting it through a properly

representative body. However the central government insisted, in opposition to the CPC, that only the principle of provincial government should appear in the constitution, with details left to ordinary legislation. The CPC wanted stronger safeguards than this, and ultimately the legal basis for provincial government was enshrined in an Organic Law which, although not having the status of the constitution, was more difficult to amend than ordinary legislation.

The Organic Law was not finally passed until after independence, however, and during the next few months the government operated at loggerheads with the CPC. Matters were not improved by a major transfer of official staff, which caused a loss of experienced and sensitive personnel. Bougainvillean leaders were suspicious of what they interpreted to be delaying tactics, and forced another confrontation in order to speed up the pace. Meanwhile, the central government had collected disquieting evidence on the financial implications of decentralisation which, it seemed, would be substantial and would favour the better endowed provinces to the detriment of others. Finally, in one of the greatest surprises of all, in July 1975 the National Assembly voted completely to exclude the constitutional chapter containing provisions for provincial government. To the Bougainvilleans, this was the last straw, and four days later they announced the date for their self-declared independence. By the time of Papua New Guinean independence on 16th September, therefore, Bougainville was in a state of secession and the issue of provincial government had been completely excised from the national constitution.

Decentralisation Resurrected: The Post-Independence Era

After the July constitutional excision, the central government maintained that it still intended to proceed with provincial government. Other than an immediate K2,000 grant for each district commissioner to finance constituent assemblies, however, for a few months there was little evidence to back up this statement (Ballard 1981a, 121ff).*

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*The currency in use before Independence was the Australian dollar. At Independence, a new currency, the kina, was created. One kina (KI) is subdivided into 100 toea, and at present is approximately equivalent to Aust $1.3, US$1.2 and Stg £0.8.

The international reaction to the Bougainvillean secession was not generally supportive. Australia and Britain had substantial investments in the copper mine and were critical of events, and the Bougainvilleans also failed to win support in the United Nations (Ghai 1982, 65). Two reasons for the latter were that memories of the violence following Biafra's secession were still vivid, and too many governments felt threatened by similar movements in their own countries.

This international reaction assisted Somare, whose response was deliberately low key. He did move to plug a legislative gap by pushing through provision for suspension and abolition of interim provincial governments, but the door to reconciliation was left open and K4.14 million was allocated to Bougainville in the 1975/6 budget. On 16th October the government suspended the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government — an action which, not unexpectedly, led to demonstrations in Bougainville itself — but Somare did not seek to push this to the limit by sending in troops or evicting officers from government houses. There ensued a further period of uncertainty, but by February 1976 both sides showed willingness to compromise. Finally the central government agreed to recognise the interim provincial government and to revive the constitutional chapter on provincial government, and the Bougainvilleans agreed to re-enter the national fold. The conditions for this agreement were set out in a document entitled the Bougainville Agreement.

Meanwhile, pressure had been mounting for provincial governments in other districts, and particularly in East New Britain and East Sepik. Since it was increasingly clear that provincial government was inevitable and that the new system would be based on the old set of Districts, the government set out to put the operation on a legal footing. Drafting of the Organic Law on Provincial Government began in 1976, though it was not finally enacted till March 1977, by which time the North Solomons had had a full provincial government for six months.

Even after the enactment of this law, however, numerous practical details still had to be sorted out. The framework for this was established by a report produced by a team of consultants employed by a company called McKinsey, which had had previous experience with decentralisation in Tanzania.

In contrast to the Tordoff-Watts report, the McKinsey report recommended that decentralisation should be implemented immediately, rapidly and simultaneously. Only with rapid action, it suggested, could the government undercut resistance to the scheme, reassure those who were worried by the vagueness of the enterprise, and reduce political frustration in the provinces. To assist with the interim arrangements, it recommended the establishment of a custodial 'holding' ministry to coordinate activities and help resolve conflicts between the emerging provincial governments and the centre. Consequently, an Office of Implementation was created within the Department of Provincial Affairs, which was then renamed the Department of Decentralisation. The Department was headed by Fr. John Momis, a Bougainvillean member of the national House of Assembly who had spearheaded the secessionist movement.

Table 1: Election Dates of First Provincial Governments

North Solomons	31st May	1976
East New Britain	25th March	1979
Eastern Highlands	24th Nov	1978
Milne Bay	24th Nov	1978
New Ireland	24th Nov	1978
Central	23rd April	1979
Manus	23rd April	1979
East Sepik	22nd Sept	1979
Gulf	10th Nov	1979
Oro	10th Nov	1979
Madang	24th Nov	1979
Western	24th Nov	1979
Enga	3rd May	1980
Morobe	17th May	1980
West New Britain	17th May	1980
Western Highlands	31st May	1980
Southern Highlands	31st May	1980
Chimbu	31st May	1980
West Sepik	29th Nov	1980

Source: Tordoff (1981, 4).

One particular organisational concern had focused on the public service. Following the McKinsey recommendations, the government decided that only one public service should exist, arguing that the operation of separate provincial and national services would be too complex. It also established a framework in which public servants working at the provincial level were employed through a single Department of the Province. Thus the Department of Western Province, for example, appeared in the national budget documents on the same footing as the Departments of Health, Education, Primary Industry and so on. Within the Department of Western Province, however, were separate Divisions of Health, Education and Primary Industry, each of which had links with its parent national department as well as with the Department of Western Province. In practice, many complexities continued, for while the majority of Division officers were provincial employees (albeit within the single public service), national government employees were still assigned to most Divisions to look after national functions. The complexities this has caused in the education sector are documented in Chapter 7.

By 1978, the issue of 'to be or not to be' had been settled. Though at the Waigani Seminar Iambakey Okuk continued to argue against decentralisation, either an elected or an interim provincial government had already been established in all but two provinces. The date of election for the first provincial government in each province is shown in Table 1.

Summary and Conclusions
This chapter has pointed out that in the pre-colonial period the area now known as Papua New Guinea in effect had the ultimate in decentralised systems. The peoples living in this area are very diverse, and most ethnic groups are very small. In the pre-colonial period, each ethnic group had its own system of government which operated largely independently of its neighbours.

In one sense, therefore, the imposition of colonial rule, even if it was many years before it penetrated the interior of the country, was a form of centralisation. At least some peoples came under the control of the new regimes from the beginning, and for the first time they became part of larger units called variously New Guinea, Papua and then Papua and New Guinea.

From another viewpoint, however, the colonial regime was highly decentralised. By force of circumstances, most kiaps had to make many administrative decisions themselves, and by comparison with most other 'Western' administrative systems there was relatively little control from the centre, especially until the second world war.

After the war, however, administrative styles began to change. Many specialist departments were established, and the role of the kiaps was eroded. By the end of the colonial period the position was such that Tordoff and Watts found (1974, 2/2) "almost universal agreement...that government is at present over-centralised on Konedobu and weakly coordinated at the District level". They were told of an instance in which clearance had to be obtained from eight departments before a particular financial scheme could be initiated, and they continued:

in our experience of political systems of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, we have not come across an administrative system so highly centralized and dominated by its bureaucracy.

This statement should perhaps be viewed with some circumspection, for Pakistan, for example, is a large country with a highly centralised administration. It is also worth noting that Tordoff and Watts proceeded to recommend the opposite extreme, namely a system that was among the most decentralised in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, but which became even more dominated by its bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the overall picture was clear. The administration was considered excessively centralised, and reform was an urgent need.

In practice, however, decentralisation was still forced on the Somare government rather than being entered into voluntarily, at least in the form and on the time scale that it eventually took. Despite the fact that Pangu had been highly critical of local governments and had recognised the need for greater local autonomy, the years surrounding independence showed that Bougainville was the real pace-setter while the central government was principally reacting to events.

One reason why the government dragged its feet was that national ministers perceived decentralisation as a threat to their

own status. Other reasons concerned the costs and complexities of the scheme, and a general reluctance to embark on a major administrative upheaval in the midst of so many other fundamental changes. At least the first of these factors is still significant in the 1980s, even though, at least in legislative terms, decentralisation has become a long established fact. In this respect, as was noted in Chapter 1, the Papua New Guinea experience has parallels in such countries as Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan.

To a large extent, therefore, even though some form of decentralisation would have been implemented eventually, the actual model was forced on Papua New Guinea by political and economic circumstances. One province led the way, and eventually it won for the others a form of autonomy which some had neither been seeking nor, in the short run, could cope with. Moreover, it was with the appearance of a little naivete that the Department of Decentralisation asserted in 1978 (p.1) that:

> There are two main reasons for the decentralisation of government...
>
> The political reason is that decentralisation allows more people to participate in decision-making and second National Goal in the Constitution. In a centralised system of government, all decisions are made by a few national politicians. All the other people in the country have some say in choosing the national politicians but they have no direct involvement in government and decision-making.
>
> The administrative reason is that decentralisation should improve the way that decisions are implemented in the provinces and districts. It will do this by coordinating the public service and making more responsive to local needs.

Indeed, this statement totally glosses over the facts that the whole chapter on decentralisation was actually cut out of the constitution shortly before independence, and that the national government had little choice but to reintroduce it if it wished to maintain a united country.

Nevertheless, these other rationales for decentralisation should not be ignored, for they provide a more positive ideology for the

scheme and they became increasingly important as guidelines once the initial threats of secession had subsided. The preoccupation then became how to make decentralisation work, now that it had arrived, and how to make these more positive ideals a reality.

Finally, it is worth commenting on some of the personal characteristics of Michael Somare and his assistants, which undoubtedly both had a major impact on the shape of decentralisation and prevented the fragmentation of the nation. Ballard (1981a, 132) has pointed out that throughout the period the national leaders showed a preference for compromise which amounted to a determination to reach solutions through negotiation rather than confrontation:

> This preference for compromise, often seen as a Melanesian cultural trait, was reinforced in the case of Somare and his lieutenants by a capacity to keep lines open to all parties in dispute and a willingness to take risks...It also entailed a tolerance for ambiguity and a dislike of difficult decisions and crisp solutions, which tended to be left to the lawyers and consultants once a general compromise had been struck.

In practice, these characteristics were a source of vulnerability as well as of strength, for mobilised groups who knew what they wanted and were willing to engage in confrontation were able eventually to get it. However, it was also of considerable value in coping with the overall complexities of the transition to independence.

CHAPTER 3
DECENTRALISATION AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Department of Education began the process of decentralisation earlier than other departments, and has made more positive efforts to implement the spirit of the Bougainville Agreement and the Organic Law. Early decentralisation was established during the creation of a National Education System in 1970, in which administration and mission educational work was incorporated into a single framework and in which specific powers were formally laid down for local governments, District Education Boards and other bodies. At the time of the Organic Law, the Department of Education found it easy to convert the District Education Boards into Provincial Education Boards and to increase their powers. From the perspective of the National Planning Office, there are some problems with Department of Education strategies, and some financial measures still reflect centralist tendencies. However, the Department has recognised that effective decentralisation depends on the political and administrative capacity of provincial governments to take up new responsibilities, and has provided both a major training programme for administrative personnel and an annual conference at which provincial Ministers for Education can air their views and update their knowledge.

This chapter begins with an outline of the situation before the creation of the National Education System. It then highlights the early operation of the system and the development of national education plans during the 1970s. Thirdly, the chapter examines the legal framework for education in the decentralised system, before finally charting the growth of provincial educational planning in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The Development of Education until 1970
During the colonial period, the history of education in Papua New

Guinea was principally one of mission activity. As in many parts of Asia and Africa, Christian missions considered schools to be an essential instrument for the inculcation and propagation of their faith, and the first Western-type schools were opened in the area later known as Papua in 1873 — a decade before the colonial government was established in the area. Towards the end of the colonial period the government showed more interest in education, but even today there are more children in church agency primary schools than in government ones.

The pattern of official policies also paralleled that in Asia and Africa. Governments generally approved of the 'civilising' role of schools, and found it convenient to have a supply of indigenous people able to read and write the colonial language. In the early years, however, the colonial regime left education entirely to the missions. One government school was opened by the German administration in New Guinea in 1907, but it did not play a major role, and the colony was soon taken over by the Australians who also lacked interest in education. At the time of the unification of New Guinea with Papua there were still only six government schools in the former, and one member of the 1939 Permanent Mandates Commission 'knew of no territory under mandate in which native education progressed so slowly' (quoted by Geoffrey Smith 1975, 20). Moreover the situation in Papua was not very different. Missionaries in Papua received more financial help than did their counterparts in New Guinea, but until the 1940s the administration made it a point not to open any schools of its own.

The real growth of education and of official involvement, therefore, did not come until after the establishment of the Department of Education in 1946. The basic structure for government and mission interaction was laid down in an Education Ordinance in 1952, and, following a widespread British colonial pattern, an Education Advisory Board was set up to 'tender advice to the Administration concerning any matter relating to education in the Territory' (quoted by Weeden et al. 1969, 12). Although the board had only advisory functions, it was an important body in which government and missions were equally represented. The Ordinance also provided for the creation of education districts and of District Education Committees. The latter were another forum for both government and missions, and

were also permitted to tender advice to the Administrator. They were a fore-runner to the District Education Boards, which were created in 1970.

Although the 1950s and 1960s witnessed considerable growth in education, it was largely uncoordinated. Only in the early 1960s, under pressure from the World Bank and the United Nations, was a small unit established in the Department of Education to gather data and publish systematic pupil and teacher projections. Even then, the task was not easy, for as the 1966-73 Director of Education (McKinnon 1973, 17) noted, during the 1950s and 1960s

a bewildering variety of missions established themselves and commenced 'schools' which were sometimes effective institutions, but were often merely evangelical or catechetical centres. Efforts at detailed planning in the late 1960s met with the practicality of over 50 mutually suspicious mission groups operating in fairly tightly defended areas all within a country with a population of slightly over two million people.

Through tacit agreement, individual missions and the administration did not open schools too close together. However, many primary schools, especially in the mission sector, were small and only catered for the lower grades. Because transfer was frequently difficult, pupils often did not have the opportunity even to complete the basic primary unit. Teachers' salaries also varied widely, and were generally higher in government than in mission schools.

The Establishment of the National Education System
The basic framework for a unified structure was laid out in the 1969 Report of the Advisory Committee on Education written by W.J. Weeden, C.E. Beeby and G.B. Gris. This report led to the 1970 Education Act, which established the Territory Education Board (TEB) and a system of District Education Boards (DEBs). An accompanying Teaching Service Act in 1971 established uniform conditions for teachers.

The majority of missions involved in education agreed to become part of the national system. They paid the price of having their development plans subjected to district and national approv-

al by boards on which they were represented, and in return the government agreed to pay all teachers' salaries. Only the Seventh Day Adventists (SDAs) declined to join the system. Today the SDAs educate about 4 per cent of 7-12 year olds and 0.5 per cent of 13-16 year olds. Any consideration of total educational provision would have to include the SDA schools, but since they are not part of the National Education System, they are not within the scope of this book.

In the sense that the National Education System incorporated the mission efforts and reduced autonomy, its creation was a form of centralisation. This was officially justified by improved transferability for teachers and pupils within the system, standardisation of curricula, creation of uniform teachers' conditions, and the economies of scale which followed amalgamation of small schools. Moreover, churches were still represented on the DEBs, and the considerable degree of DEB autonomy incorporated into the structure meant that the unified system was still highly decentralised, albeit in a different sense.

Four main reasons may be identified for this high degree of decentralisation. The first concerned participation, for the system of DEBs permitted both greater district control and, at least in theory, greater Papua New Guinean control of education. In 1969, Papua New Guinea had only three indigenous university graduates, none of whom worked in the Department of Education. The degree of administrative localisation was slight, and the top seven positions in the Department were held by expatriates. By according district and local bodies greater control, therefore, it was hoped to increase Papua New Guinean control. However in practice this proved difficult to achieve at first, for many foreign missionaries and other workers remained highly influential at the bottom level.

Secondly, the new system was introduced in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion. In this situation, to quote Geoffrey Smith (1975, 81),

the missions were no more eager to accept dictation of planning and staffing arrangements than was the administration to allow half a national system to go its own way. It was in both parties' interests therefore to locate substantial powers in district and

local levels which would be widely representative, open in their conduct and responsive to local opinion. This solution required some decentralization.

Most churches in Papua New Guinea are regionally based. The Lutherans, for example, are strong in Morobe, the Anglicans are strong in Milne Bay and Oro, and the Asia-Pacific Christian Mission has concentrated its work in Western Province. The decentralised structure permitted individual churches to have a greater impact in policy-making in their own regions than they would have had in a centralised system. For the central government, decentralisation had the added benefit of partly removing government-mission conflict from the national arena. One irony of the situation, however, was that negotiations necessitated key mission spokesmen spending so much time in Port Moresby for discussions with the Department, the Advisory Committee and each other that in some respects even mission administration became more centralised. Two of the five largest mission groups moved their offices to Port Moresby, where two others were already established (Geoffrey Smith 1975, 81).

Thirdly, the new arrangement still permitted the government to require considerable contribution to education from both the missions and village communities. Contributions of buildings and physical maintenance have greatly reduced the financial burden on the central government.

Finally, the decentralised system was made necessary simply by the numbers involved. With the establishment of the unified system, Department of Education responsibility increased from 3,400 teachers in 600 institutions to 7,800 teachers in 1,700 institutions.

Within the new system, the national government retained control of the universities, teachers' colleges, Australian curriculum schools and most aspects of the curriculum. Other powers were devolved as shown in Table 2. It will be observed that specific provision was made for local control, chiefly to be exercised by Local Government Councils, primary school and vocational centre Boards of Management and high school Boards of Governors. Theoretical local powers were extensive, and Boards of Management, for example, were made responsible for 'determining the

Table 2: The Distribution of Powers under the 1970 Education Act

	Centre	District	Local
ACCESS	a. Establish national criteria for selection b. Determine limits and conditions of fees	a. Approve primary school enrolments b. Select entrants to sec. and technical schools c. Determine appeals on suspension or expulsion d. Determine fees	a. Enrol pupils b. Approve disciplinary rules, suspension and expulsion
MATERIAL RESOURCES	a. Draw up plans for est. and dev. of schools b. Supervise implementation of approved plans c. Provide facilities for adult education	Supervise implementation of approved plans a. Provide and maintain school buildings. b. Ensure availability of adequate teachers' housing	
HUMAN RESOURCES	a. Allot quotas of teachers to districts b. Allot quotas of students to colleges c. Appoint, promote, transfer and suspend teachers	Appoint, promote and suspend teachers	(Secondary & technical schools) a. Appoint teachers b. Engage locally employed ancillary staff
ASPIRATIONS	Advise Administrator on achieving the objects & purposes of Territory Education System	Not applicable	Within the general framework of policy established under the act and the philosophy of the agency conducting the sch. to determine aims & goals and supervise their achievement
CONTROLS	a. Approve membership and functions of teachers' coll. governing councils b. Hear appeals from other authorities c. Measure and check the economical & efficient working of the ed. system	Approve membership and functions of boards of management of primary, secondary and technical schools	Not applicable

Source: Geoffrey Smith (1975, 81).

aims and goals of the school or centre and for supervising the achieving of those aims and goals' (1970 Education Act, Section 72).

In practice, however, very few Boards have had so strong an influence as is suggested by these powers. Their role has varied widely, and has particularly depended on the personalities of headteachers, on the strength of church involvement in the community and on the activities of individual leaders. Since the advent of provincial government, efforts to foster local level involvement have been relatively slight. The general focus on the middle level of government has been at the expense of that lower down.

Educational Planning during the 1970s

Once the National Education System had been established, officers in Port Moresby embarked on a major process of educational planning. After considerable expenditure of energy and compilation of four drafts, eventually an Education Plan was given official approval in 1976 (Bray 1984a). Almost immediately it was overtaken by the Organic Law and substantial delegation of powers to provincial government, however.

By contrast with Headquarters, at the sub-national level there was relatively little activity during the early 1970s. For several years, Headquarters personnel resisted handing over control of staffing to the DEBs, especially for secondary schools, and no DEB or Local Government plans were prepared. The chief difficulty at the District and Local Government levels was a lack of skilled manpower, and its implications were both underestimated and far-reaching.

Vin McNamara, who was Deputy Director of Education during the early 1970s and remained influential throughout the decade, was particularly concerned about the need for training. He points out (1981, 1/4) that the lack of skilled manpower during the early and mid-1970s led to serious frustration at the provincial level, for politicians were keen to make adaptations to the education system but found it difficult to operationalise their proposals. McNamara suggests that the drive leading to the Organic Law derived at least part of its momentum from a reaction against the failure to realise the promise of the 1970 Education Act. Behind this situation were

two factors which were inadequately recognised at the time — that effective decentralisation depends as much on provincial administrative capacity as on the legal framework, and that a lack of implementation capacity can cause frustration and continued political instability.

Despite these shortcomings, however, the period leading up to the Organic Law was notable for progress on some fronts, the clearest of which was that a document entitled the Education Plan had been written and given official approval. The document had major defects, among the most obvious of which were that its enrolment projections were unrealistic. Indeed this had become apparent even between the drafting and the official approval of the plan, and was mentioned by the Minister in his preface. It was also very centralist in orientation. Nevertheless, the document did at least exist, and even if it was weak in its future projections it did provide a good statement of past trends and the current situation.

Education and the Organic Law

As well as on the law, the distribution of powers in practice depends on the control of finance, the capacity of bureaucracies and the personalities of key individuals. Few people at either provincial or national levels have a good knowledge of the law, and in any case legal rationalisation has frequently followed de facto arrangements rather than preceded them. Nevertheless, since the law provides the basis for distribution of powers, it is worth examining in some depth.

In education, the powers conferred on the provincial governments by the Organic Law were rather minor. They have only been enlarged because the education authorities have wished to enlarge them, and in this respect the Department of Education has been unusual. Whereas in most sectors decentralisation was forced on recalcitrant central authorities, the Department of Education has led the way to a more significant form of devolution than would otherwise have occurred. At the same time, however, it has retained important 'strings' within the system.

The Organic Law distinguishes between 'primarily provincial' and 'concurrent' legislative fields. Provincial governments can pass any law they wish on primarily provincial subjects provided that they do not infringe basic rights guaranteed by the national

constitution. Where both provincial and national laws exist on primarily provincial subjects, the provincial laws take precedence. In concurrent subjects, by contrast, provincial legislation is only operative where the area is not already covered by national legislation. A third category, of unoccupied subjects, covers all areas not actually listed as primarily provincial or concurrent. Provinces are permitted to legislate on unoccupied areas until the national government declares them to belong to one of the other categories.

Section 24 (1) of the Organic Law indicated that primarily provincial subjects included:

Primary schools (including community schools and village self-help schools) and primary education other than curriculum,

and that concurrent subjects included:

primary school (including community school and village self-help school) curriculum; and...high schools, and vocational and technical schools.

The chief unoccupied areas were adult and nonformal education.

In practice, this law did not confer great powers on provincial governments. As before, the national government retained control of the universities, teacher training, international schools, all schools in the National Capital District, and curriculum at all levels. Provincial governments only had the absolute right to legislate on primary education other than curriculum. Moreover, this was a smaller part than had been envisaged by the 1976 Bougainville Agreement. The Agreement had stated that primary school curriculum would be a primarily provincial subject, and when the bill was presented to Parliament this provision was a part of it. During the debate, however, the Opposition amended the bill and placed curriculum completely on the concurrent list. The Bougainvilleans considered this a breach of the Agreement, but Parliament nevertheless accepted the amendment (Regan 1982, 9-10).

However, the national education authorities have been willing and keen to devolve much more power than were the national

parliamentarians. In the Bougainville Agreement, the national government undertook to review all legislation on the concurrent list with a view to vacating all areas not clearly in the national interest. During the next six years, the Department of Education was the only body to do this. Other Departments did undertake some devolution in practice, but it was unsupported by the necessary legal changes.

In the legal system, the national government is able to delegate concurrent powers as it sees fit. In 1977, the National Executive Council (NEC) delegated a series of educational powers, among the most important of which was the placing of PEBs under provincial rather than national control. Several other powers were also delegated, as shown in Table 3. However delegations can be withdrawn at any time, and legal instruments of delegation do not prevent the original holder of the power from exercising it at the same time as the body to which it is delegated. By itself, therefore, delegation is not a full form of devolution, and did not satisfy either the national or the provincial education authorities. Both were keen for delegated powers to be transferred more firmly and to be made primarily provincial subjects in a new act.

Ultimately, the new act was not passed until 1983. Whereas some provinces had stated their inclinations and preferences very clearly (see for example Ogio 1981), others hardly responded at all. The negotiating process was therefore arduous. Some national government officers, perhaps unrealistically, felt that they deserved support and thanks but in fact found only criticism in some quarters and inertia in others. Moreover, despite strong national government encouragement, before 1983 no province ever passed an act of its own. Eventually Sam Tulo, the national Minister for Education from 1980 to 1982, became disillusioned with the act and put the whole process on the shelf. It was only under Barry Holloway, Tulo's successor, that the matter was taken up again and the new act eventually pushed through in mid-1983.

National Control within the System
Despite the willingness of the Department of Education to transfer major powers to provincial governments, however, it has retained several important controls. All teachers, for example, are trained in national government institutions and must be registered with

Table 3: The Distribution Powers according to NEC Decision No. 19, 1977

A. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

1. *National Education Planning and Policy*, including:
   (a) setting of guidelines for control of curriculum in all schools and colleges, including the language of instruction, course content, amount of schooling, the school year, pupil-teacher ratios, the inspection and assessment of schools and staff.
   (b) Control and supervision of examination, standards, certification and teacher registration.
   (c) Definition of national policies for the expansion of the Education System, including the distribution of educational resources among the provinces.
   (d) The Teaching Service Commission, including personnel functions of service, discipline, Staff Establishment, etc., in the National Education System.

2. *Pre-Schools, Primary Schools, High Schools and Vocational Centres:* Goals, registration of teachers, foreign relations, enrolment policies, overall national planning, educational standards including inspection and certification, school broadcasts, distribution of teaching staff, conditions of service and appeals.

3. *Adult and Community Education:* Goals for Adult Education; dealing with overseas bodies and nations in relation to Adult Education.

4. *National High Schools, Technical Colleges, Teacher Training, Higher Education and National Library:* All matters, including the location of institutions.

B. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

1. *Provincial Education Boards:* Appointment, suspension and administration of PEBs. A PEB is to be appointed by the Provincial Government and is to work subject to its direction, but within the overall national plans of the National Education Board.

2. *Village Self-Help Schools (Permitted Schools):* All matters.

3. *Pre-Schools, Primary Schools and Provincial High Schools:* Provincial planning for the opening, recognition, administration and closing of institutions, enrolment of pupils, obtaining land, providing buildings and materials including teaching materials and text-books, provision of school libraries and guidance services, appointing teachers, promotion of teachers to vacancies within the province.

4. *Vocational Education:* Provincial planning for the opening, recognition, administration and closing of vocational centres, for the enrolment and termination of students, for obtaining land, providing buildings, equipment and materials including school libraries, broadcasts and guidance services. Powers to decide curriculum content and language of instruction and to award certificates; power to appoint (but not dismiss) teachers and to promote teachers to vacancies within the province.

5. *Adult and Community Education:* This function includes correspondence education (e.g. community secondary education) but not formal correspondence lessons based on the regular school curriculum. Full power to plan the development of adult and community education, including budgetting for development, the provision of land, buildings and materials, the opening of institutions, enrolment policies, the determination of curricula and language(s) of instruction, the employment of instructors (other than members of the Teaching Service), the inspection of institutions and the award of certificates, the provision of equipment and libraries.

6. *Public Libraries:* All matters.

the national Teaching Service Commission, which determines basic salaries, leave fares and other entitlements. Teacher training has been retained as a national function to provide uniformity within the country and to prevent provincial governments setting up their own colleges and thereby precluding economies of scale and perhaps upsetting the labour market. A single set of conditions of service was also justified by a desire for uniformity and by a wish to prevent affluent provincial governments from increasing wages and thereby attracting scarce teacher resources at the expense of poorer governments. This reasoning is logical, but the retention of powers does significantly reduce provincial autonomy.

The fact that the national government has retained control of the inspectoral system also has far-reaching implications. All inspectors are Department of Education employees, even if they are based in provinces. Accordingly, they operate according to national government guidelines and are subject to national government transfer. Provincial governments may provide vehicles and otherwise assist inspectors, but they have no powers beyond informal influence. The fact that teachers are inspected and promoted according to criteria determined by the national government is highly significant. A provincial government which wished to promote teachers in recognition of length of service in the province, meritorious community work or other criteria, would be unable to do so. Moreover, if there is a conflict between attitudes the provincial government would like to encourage and the attitudes the inspectors are looking for, teachers are likely to heed the latter rather than the former.

Thirdly, the national government has retained strong control over the curriculum, which it has defined very broadly. Curriculum was not defined in the Organic Law, but definitions were contained in a 1979 NEC delegation and in the 1983 Education Act. Section 27.1 of the latter states that curriculum includes:

    (a) curriculum content; and
    (b) curriculum standards and examinations; and
    (c) minimum age of entry; and
    (d) number of hours of instruction on the curriculum; and
    (e) number of days teaching each year; and
    (f) number of years of instruction; and

(g) maximum pupil-teacher ratio; and

(h) language of instruction.

This definition is much broader than that found in most dictionaries, and provides the national government with a powerful but hidden instrument of control. At the community school level, some parts of the curriculum have been delegated to provincial governments. Until 1983, they were all subjects other than English, Mathematics and Science, which were designated 'core subjects'. In 1983, however, Community Life was also made a core subject (Department of Education 1983c, 260), which was a recentralising action. In contrast to this measure, the 1983 Act did allow provincial governments for the first time to introduce vernaculars in non-core community subjects. Previously, all education had officially been conducted in English, and this aspect of the act increased decentralisation and potential provincial government involvement. Even this power was only delegated, however, and the national government was empowered to withdraw it simply by inserting a notice in its official gazette.

Finally, although the fact that provincial governments were allowed to pass their own education acts appeared to reflect major decision-making powers, in practice the range of subjects on which they could legislate was very minor. As well as providing for vernaculars in non-core community school curriculum, provincial governments were also allowed to change the composition of PEBs and, subject to the national minimum, to set their own minimum ages for entry to community schools. These and other provisions only allowed them to tinker with the system, however. East New Britain was the first province to pass an education act, in 1983, and was closely followed by Milne Bay, East Sepik and a few others. The fact that they had made an effort was significant, for it did at least indicate a concern to make use of the powers conferred upon them. However, the national act already accorded provincial governments full control over vocational centres and over secondary education other than curriculum (which had previously only been delegated), and the changes envisaged by the provincial acts were very minor. Indeed, several other provincial governments felt that the extra control that could be gained by drawing up a provincial act was so small that it did not merit the effort.

Staffing and Training Needs

In view of the fact that chief responsibility for planning most parts of the education system was transferred in 1977, it was ironic that only in that year did the Department of Education establish a full Planning Services Division. Until that time, responsibilities had mainly rested with a smaller Planning Branch.

The desire for a full Division arose chiefly from increased Departmental awareness of the need for planning and from developments in a wider context concerning the National Public Expenditure Plan (NPEP). The NPEP is a four year 'rolling plan' drawn up by the National Planning Office (NPO). The first version covered the years 1978-81, and subsequent versions covered 1979-82, 1980-83 and so on. The NPEP is a major mechanism for coordinating expenditure, and each project is carefully classified according to a set of nine strategic objectives (see NPO 1978; and Allan and Hinchliffe 1982). Because it is complex, the NPEP requires considerable paper-work, and in the Department of Education this created a major task for the newly upgraded Planning Services Division.

At the time of decentralisation, the NPO envisaged that planning at the provincial level would centre on a Provincial Planning Office. Each province had its own planner, and it was anticipated that each one would produce a Provincial Public Expenditure Plan (PPEP) on a similar model to the NPEP.

In practice, this model was slow to develop. In 1983 West New Britain and North Solomons did produce PPEPs, but the documents were the first to be written and the provinces were the only ones to do so. Many provincial planning offices lacked skilled personnel, and though the NPO had its own Regional Planning Advisers, it did not have its own training programme for provincial planners. The NPO probably assumed that the skills of provincial planners would improve as they learned on the job and as poorly qualified ones were replaced. If this process happened, however, it was slow.

Perhaps because senior Department of Education officials foresaw this situation, they insisted on their own programmes to develop provincial planning capacity, and to support and inform both provincial Assistant Secretaries for Education and provincial Ministers for Education. In the process, they developed stronger

links 'between the Department and Divisions of Education than had been anticipated in the NPO model, but their action led to greater activity than would otherwise have occurred.

The Assistant Secretaries for Education are the heads of the provincial Divisions of Education. Before the advent of provincial government, they were called Superintendents, and were appointed by the Department of Education. Since the creation of a separate Department for each province (see Chapter 2), they have been appointed by provincial governments. The Divisions of Health, Primary Industry and so on also have Assistant Secretaries, all of whom are responsible to the Secretary of the Province (or, in some provinces, to the Administrative Secretary).

Although the Department of Education no longer has direct control over Assistant Secretaries, it has maintained strong links. There is a considerable flow of information both on a day-to-day basis and at an annual Senior Officers' Conference. The 1983 conference, in Rabaul, specifically focused on 'provincialisation of the education system'. The Department of Education has also sponsored in-country and overseas training for Assistant Secretaries (Bray 1984b). Part of the former has been an Associateship Programme to provide a pool of experienced and competent officers. It has had an important impact, though the Department has sometimes felt frustrated at its inability to ensure appointment of successful associates.

The Department has also organised annual conferences for provincial Ministers for Education. The first were held on a regional basis in 1980 in Madang, Port Moresby and Rabaul, and specifically focused on decentralisation. Subsequent ones brought all the ministers together in one meeting, and were held in Port Moresby in 1981, Arawa in 1982, Goroka in 1983 and Wewak in 1984. The 1981 conference also specifically focused on decentralisation, and the 1982 meeting focused on education planning. During this period, Education was the only department to hold conferences of this sort, and they played a major role both in informing the provincial ministers of their powers and in giving them a sense of identity.

On the professional side, however, it was some years before the Department was able to secure the appointment of provincial education planners. Because the Departments of Finance and

Decentralisation and the Public Services Commission (PSC) were wary of the implications of decentralisation for bureaucratic growth and felt that the work could be performed by the Provincial Planners, for two years they blocked the establishment of the positions. Though there was a logic in their approach, McNamara (1981, 1/6) argued that it betrayed a lack of understanding of the magnitude of the work and the importance of implementation capacity of effective decentralisation and political stability.

When the PSC finally did establish the positions, it was only on a two-year trial basis and with a confusing title. The Department of Education wanted the officers to be known as Provincial Education Planners. However, the PSC argued that with this title they might be confused with the Provincial Planners, and, perhaps more to the point, might aspire to the same salary level. Because the PSC was only prepared to allow a post at the Education Officer 6 (EO6) level, and because the national government had posts entitled Senior Professional Assistants (SPAs) at that level, the PSC decreed that the officers should be called Senior Professional Assistants (Planning). The title has led to the officers being asked to perform duties which might not have been expected had they had a simpler title, but has so far remained unchanged.

Once the post had been established, however, the national authorities found that several provinces were unwilling to fill it. In the decentralised system, the national government had no authority to compel recruitment, and several provinces were unconvinced of the need. Ultimately, it was only with major persuasion that the posts were filled, and the last province to do so, Chimbu, only appointed an SPA in March 1982.

Even when establishment and recruitment had been sorted out, the national department experienced other frustrations. One was a problem of skills, for at that time Papua New Guinea was short of trained personnel at all levels. Moreover, even had a greater number of skilled officers been available, it would have been difficult to attract them to an EO6 position. Few provincial governments were clear about the type of person needed for the SPA position, and the majority of appointees were former community school teachers with almost no planning experience and often with shaky English and Mathematics.

In order to upgrade the skills of the SPAs, in 1980 the Department organised a pilot training programme which combined a series of workshops with on-the-job supervision. By itself, this project was considered indequate, however, and it was clear that a more thorough and comprehensive training scheme was required. Ultimately it was provided under a project known as Education II.

The Education II Project

Education II derived its name from the fact that it was partially funded by the World Bank. A previous World Bank-assisted project, which had become known as Education I, had concentrated on teacher, technical and vocational education, and a subsequent project, known as Education III, concentrates on high schools. Education II was intended to increase the quantity and improve the quality of community schooling. It was launched in 1981, and had a 1981-87 budget of K25 million.

Among the sub-projects of Education II, two were concerned with educational planning. Four Regional Planning Advisers (RPAs) were recruited from abroad and initially appointed on two-year contracts. They were based in Mount Hagen, Arawa, Madang and Port Moresby, and each worked in five provinces (or four provinces plus the National Capital District). They were broadly responsible for provision of training in educational planning and administration and for liaison between the national and provincial governments.

The second sub-project was also concerned with training, and took the form of a special in-service course known as the Diploma in Educational Studies (Planning) at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). Its coordinator, who is the author of this book, occupied a supernumerary post at the university, and the post was initially established for four years. The course coordinator and the RPAs worked closely as a team, for the coordinator assisted with advice in the provinces and the RPAs helped teach the course.

The first group of students for the course consisted entirely of SPAs. Because of recruitment difficulties in Central, Eastern Highlands and Chimbu provinces, only 17 SPAs joined the first group, though the three provinces were represented in subse-

quent ones. The course endeavoured to provide very practical training, and was greatly assisted by flexibility permitted by the university. UPNG did require the course to have the same overall requirements of other Diploma in Educational Studies (DES) courses, but these were only that students should study for two years, during which time they should attend at least 16 weeks of full-time study and submit a series of field assignments. The course began in March 1982, and in the first year the participants studied for two weeks in Port Moresby, another two weeks in Goroka, and a further four weeks in Port Moresby. Between these sessions, they wrote assignments under the supervision of the RPAs and the course coordinator.

Recruitment for the course and incentives for the planners were greatly improved by another aspect of Education II which also has interesting implications in the context of decentralisation. The entire K25 million for Education II, 48 per cent of which came either as a World Bank loan or an International Development Agency credit, was controlled by the national government. Among the provisions of Education II was an NPEP grant for provinces to spend on community education. The provinces were permitted to spend this on quantity or quality as they saw fit, but the national government insisted that the grants would only be provided if the provinces wrote education plans and had them formally approved within a specific time scale.

Under the NPEP system, Community Education Sectoral Programme funds are allocated to recurrent expenditure for an indefinite period. Each year there is a 'new start' which is added to ongoing funds. Over time, therefore, the Community Education Sectoral Programme funds increased, as shown in Figure 1.

Originally, it had been intended that the 1983 new start would be conditional on provinces having written five-year plans covering all provincial education functions, and having had them approved by the provincial authorities by December 31st 1982. In practice, Education II started late and it became clear that the condition was unrealistic. It was therefore revised, and the 1983 new start was made conditional only on the community school chapter of a plan.

In this situation, provincial governments had good reasons to recruit planners and to write plans. Such an inducement fell

Figure 1: Growth of Community Education Sectoral Programme Funds in the NPEP System
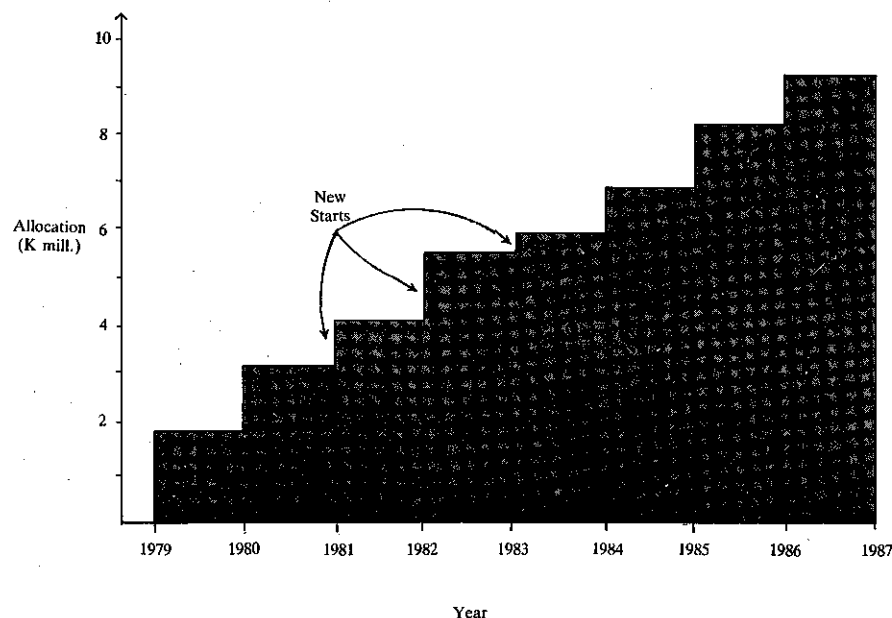
Sources: National Public Expenditure Plans 1979-82 — 1983-86. Allocations for 1984-87 are projected.

within the division of powers established with the decentralisation scheme, and also ensured both that the education system did not stagnate and that it was coordinated. Every province except the Western Highlands did write a community school chapter by the end of 1982, and some provinces wrote complete plans. Provinces which did not write a whole plan by the end of 1982 were still encouraged to write a full plan before the end of 1983, and though there was not the same financial incentive, most of them did so. The Western Highlands also wrote a community school plan in 1983.

Conclusions

Whereas the national government as a whole was pressured into decentralisation, the education authorities have reacted more positively. A high degree of administrative decentralisation was incorporated into the structure adopted in 1970, and the education authorities also made specific provision at an early date to extend the coverage of the Organic Law. Equally important, the Department of Education has also taken steps to develop administrative skills at the provincial level, and to encourage provincial Ministers for Education to see a role for themselves. Critics can point out that decentralisation has been very much within the framework determined by the central authorities, that there are significant 'strings' within the system, and that Department of Education strategies to some extent run counter to those devised by the NPO. However, the education authorities have at least achieved more than other departments, and have something to show for their initiatives.

The events of the 1970s were not without their contradictions and ironies. The establishment of the National Education System, for example, involved a process of centralisation and diminution of mission autonomy. Moreover, one unintended consequence of the bargaining process was that two of the five main missions joined another two by moving their headquarters to Port Moresby.

Complex forces have also operated in the legal sphere. When the Department of Education introduced legal questions at the Ministers' and Assistant Secretaries' conferences, some provincial governments demanded more powers than the Department was prepared to give, while others barely responded at all. The North Solomons was in the former category, and in 1981 strongly demanded greater curriculum powers (Ogio 1981), but even it did not pass a provincial act for several years. One reason for this may have been that it felt the potential subject matter for a provincial act to be too small, but by failing to pass an act it was failing to make use of the powers that were available.

Similarly, although Education in the early years was the only Department to organise national conferences for provincial ministers, the forums were not always models of cohesion and harmony, and from the viewpoint of the central authorities in

some ways were counter-productive. It was certainly the case that less sophisticated ministers learned a great deal from their more sophisticated colleagues, and that all ministers left the conferences better informed about both educational developments and their own roles. However on several occasions provincial ministers used the gatherings aggressively to criticise the Department, often in a destructive and unrealistic way.

This chapter has also documented frustrations in the professional sphere. Department of Education officials perceived the link between skills and effective decentralisation, and had not expected to encounter opposition in the Department of Decentralisation and in the provinces themselves. The question about the cost of specialist education planners was a good one, but during the early 1980s the planners certainly justified their existence.

Finally, it is ironic that only in 1977 was the Planning Services Division created. Thus at the very time when powers were being transferred out of the Department, planning was upgraded in status and given extra staff. This process was carried one stage further in 1981, when five more specialists were recruited under Education II, and whereas it had originally been intended to employ the RPAs only for two years and the DES coordinator for four, in 1983 it was decided to extend funding for one RPA and for the DES coordinator until 1987 (Bray 1984b). Moreover, even after that date overall staffing in the Planning Services Division is likely to remain high simply because decentralisation has created a major task of coordination.

CHAPTER 4
DECENTRALISATION AND THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM

At the time of decentralisation, a new and complex system of finance was introduced. It permitted a few provinces to generate major sources of independent revenue, though in all provinces the majority of funds continued to come from the national government. The financial system operates as a substantial controlling device for the national government, but it is not always the case that 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'.

This chapter begins by outlining the basis of the financial system and the pattern of controls which it entails. It shows that some provinces have greater financial independence than others, and highlights the significance of the NPEP system in the context of educational planning. The chapter then turns to the experiences of the 'free education' scheme in 1982, which shed interesting light on the balance of powers in practice.

Nationally Controlled Education Funds

Within the financial system, the balance of control between national and provincial governments varies. It is useful to examine several different parts of the system.

First of all, the national government has complete control over institutions which remain fully under its direction. International schools are administered directly by the Department of Education, and each year are shown separately in the national budget. Because there is no overlap of powers with provincial governments, the question of control has a straightforward answer.

In other parts of the education system, the situation is more complex. In some cases the national government has deliberately retained control; in others it has handed control over to the provincial governments; and in the third category provincial governments have financial control in their own right through provincially generated revenue.

Two sources of finance which the national government tightly controls are official borrowing and foreign aid. The Organic Law prohibits provinces from borrowing for periods longer than six months unless they have national government permission. The national government will not readily give permission, and is anxious to discourage provincial deficit financing. It is also anxious to prevent provinces from receiving direct foreign aid. Officially, this is because it wishes to discourage an unhealthy form of provincial competition and to protect Papua New Guinea's overseas image (Manning 1979, 19). In practice, the ruling also gives the national government considerable control over provincial development.

In the education sector, two of the largest foreign aid projects are Education II and Education III. Both are assisted by the World Bank, and their respective budgets are K25 and K65 million. Because the national government negotiated the projects, it has been able to determine their shape and focus even though their target areas are officially a provincial responsibility. Similar schemes in the early 1980s were a K17 million Asian Development Bank technical education project, and a K5 million European Economic Community project for provincial high schools.

Most foreign aid projects are channelled through the NPEP. The NPEP also uses finance from general government sources, and is another major instrument of national control. Provinces may submit projects to the National Planning Office for funding, but the final decision on their suitability rests completely with the national government. As well as Education II and III and the other projects mentioned above, the NPEP has several other nationally directed projects which affect areas which are nominally provincial responsibilities. One example of this is the Secondary Schools Community Extension Project (SSCEP), which explores the links between secondary school curricula and pupils' attitudes. From 1978 to 1983, SSCEP covered five schools in five provinces. In 1984 it was expanded to eight schools in seven provinces.

The fact that a project is included in the NPEP does not necessarily imply complete national control, however. One of the largest NPEP projects is the Community Education Sectoral

Programme, which was allocated K36.5 million in the 1983-86 plan. Although this money comes through the national government, provinces are free to spend it on projects of their choice within the community education sector. A similar, though smaller, high school sectoral programme is also partly shaped by the provinces, though it is not so flexible. Funds under this programme are only allocated to disadvantaged provinces, and though these provinces have some power to decide which schools to establish or expand, final approval rests with the national government.

Even though the national government has chosen to delegate decisions on how to use Community Education Sectoral Programme funds, it is still aware that it controls the programme and can use it as a weapon. In 1982 it was used as a weapon, for the national government threatened to deny 1983 Community Education 'new starts' to provinces which failed to write community education five years plans. This threat stimulated considerable activity, and every province except one did produce a plan. The exception was Western Highlands, against which the threatened sanction was indeed implemented. Had the threat not been made, and had the national government not appeared serious in its threat, it is doubtful whether more than a handful of provinces would have produced plans.

Finally, the national government retains control of teachers' salaries, the Kina-for-Kina scheme through which church agencies may acquire matching grants for construction of school buildings, and inspectors at all levels of the system. The national government can therefore raise teachers' salaries, even though provincial governments have to foot the bill; it can influence the development of church agency provincial high schools without informing provincial governments; and on its own initiative it can increase or decrease the number of inspectors and the funds available to them.

The Structure of Provincial Revenues

To gain a full understanding of the balance of powers between the national and provincial governments, it is necessary also to examine the overall structure of provincial finance. The composition of provincial revenues in 1980 is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Composition of Provincial Revenues, 1980 (Per Cent of Total)

Province	Locally Generated Revenue	MUG + Division 248	NFC Grants	NPEP Conditional Grants
Western	0.4	69.8	5.1	24.6
Gulf	1.9	73.8	5.9	18.4
Central	6.6	83.7	3.6	5.1
Milne Bay	1.7	76.6	3.6	18.1
Oro	2.8	81.6	4.4	11.2
Southern Highlands	0.4	86.8	5.0	7.6
Enga	0.8	80.7	5.3	13.2
Western Highlands	7.6	79.7	5.6	7.1
Chimbu	3.8	82.2	5.1	8.9
Eastern Highlands	6.5	75.6	7.1	10.2
Morobe	5.8	80.8	4.8	8.6
Madang	4.6	81.3	5.8	5.8
East Sepik	1.8	85.0	5.6	7.6
West Sepik	1.5	73.7	3.7	21.0
Manus	2.5	79.4	6.0	12.1
New Ireland	6.5	85.6	2.7	5.2
East New Britain	11.1	81.5	2.2	5.2
West New Britain	6.4	77.5	4.8	11.3
North Solomons	39.3	55.8	1.5	2.4
AVERAGE	7.2	78.2	4.5	10.1

MUG = Minimum Unconditional Grant
NFC = National Fiscal Commission
NPEP = National Public Expenditure Plan.

Source: Chelliah (1981, 18).

One major change which accompanied decentralisation was in the law permitting provinces to raise their own revenue. District Development Committees and Area Authorities had always been able to generate some funds, but they were limited in comparison to that permitted by the Organic Law. The law allowed provincial governments to take over head taxes, entertainment levies and other taxes previously imposed by Local Government Councils, and to add to them several other sources of revenue. Provincial governments were also permitted to conduct their own business operations, to license mobile traders and alcohol sales, and to impose retail sales taxes. The last named became increasingly important during the early 1980s in a few provinces (Regan 1982b, 7; Tordoff 1982, 14).

More significant than any of these revenue sources, however, were arrangements for royalties and export derivation grants. Under the Organic Law, a grant of 1.25 per cent of the value of exports became payable to the provinces from which the goods originated. Royalties were also refundable, though where the province was eligible to receive both derivation grants and royalties, special arrangements were made (Manning 1979, 5).

Table 4 shows that in 1980, most provinces' locally generated revenue provided only 0.4 to 6.6 per cent of the total. However, in East New Britain it reached 11.1 per cent, and in North Solomons 39.3 per cent. The latter allocation chiefly reflected royalties from copper. These revenues conferred a measure of independence from the national government, for richer provinces had greater leeway to devise projects of their own.

The second column in Table 4 refers to Minimum Unconditional Grants (MUGs) and 'Division 248' disbursements. These payments were another part of the system established at the time of decentralisation. Within the MUG framework are two groups of provinces. One group has been given full autonomy to organise expenditure on provincial functions, while the other only receives grants in 'tied' form. All provinces receive some MUGs, but in partially autonomous provinces the grants only cover the provincial legislature and secretariat, capital works and the Rural Improvement Programme. In these provinces, the remaining seven activities (of which education is one) are covered in tied form. Until 1982, they were known as Division 248 disbursements because they were administered through the Office of Implementation of the Department of Decentralisation under that vote number. At the end of 1982, the Office of Implementation was abolished and the Department resumed its old name of Provincial Affairs. From 1983, the funds have been budgeted under each Department of the Province.

Taken together, MUGs and Division 248 funds in 1980 comprised 78 per cent of provincial revenue, and were thus the most important part. In that year, only North Solomons, East New Britain, New Ireland and Eastern Highlands Provinces had full financial autonomy, though they were joined in 1982 by East Sepik, Morobe and West New Britain, and in 1983 by Madang.

One might expect the achievement of full financial autonomy in provincial functions greatly to increase the extent to which provinces can control their own affairs. However, for two reasons this is often not the case. First, the shape of the budget in any one year is chiefly determined by commitments inherited from the previous year. Because the provinces usually wish to maintain existing levels of service, in most cases the MUGs have to be allocated the same way each year, and the fact that they are untied does not make a great difference. In this situation, the real areas for growth and change are NPEP projects and schemes financed from new sources of local revenue.

The second limit on the flexibility conferred by full autonomy is that the funding formula can actually make provinces poorer when they opt for full autonomy. The details are beyond the scope of this book, and the situation does not apply uniformly to all provinces. However, it has meant that a few provincial governments are not even seeking full autonomy at present (Tordoff 1982; Axline 1983b).

Finally, it is necessary to mention National Fiscal Commission (NFC) grants, which in 1980 amounted to 4.5 per cent of total provincial revenue. The NFC is an independent body created to help solve problems which were expected to arise because of the complexity of the financial system. Once NFC grants have been allocated, the provinces have control over their expenditure, and the fact that they have the money provides the provinces with some power which otherwise they would not have. In general, however, the NFC has not solved structural problems in the financial system as successfully as had originally been hoped (May 1981, 41-2; Chelliah 1981, 24-9).

Financial Domination and Provincial Autonomy: The Experiences of the 'Free Education' Scheme

The evidence presented in this chapter so far suggests that the

national government controls most of the important sources of revenue, and that this gives it a high degree of control over provincial development. However, control of finance does not always enable the national government to have its own way — a fact that was clearly demonstrated during the whole establishment of the decentralised system. In the education sector, this fact was also demonstrated during the 'free education' debate of 1981 and 1982.

The free education scheme originated in a motion passed by the national House of Assembly in March 1981. According to the

Table 5: 'Free Education' Offers from the National Government, 1981

Province	Community School Enrolment	1981 'Average Fee' (Kina)	Allocation (Kina)
Western	9,238	7.75	71,000
Gulf	7,732	2.40	18,000
Central	14,311	10.89	155,000
NCD	13,011	15.88	206,000
Milne Bay	15,288	4.90	74,000
Oro	8,894	10.10	89,000
Southern Highlands	19,324	4.33	83,000
Enga	12,539	6.00	75,000
Western Highlands	20,360	14.60	297,000
Chimbu	14,610	6.00	87,000
Eastern Highlands	24,799	8.70	215,000
Morobe	30,710	7.75	238.000
Madang	19,309	7.60	146,000
East Sepik	23,027	7.44	171,000
West Sepik	11,410	4.00	45,000
Manus	3,875	5.75	22,000
New Ireland	8,473	6.50	55,000
East New Britain	19,423	5.85	113,000
West New Britain	12,085	19.50	235,000
North Solomons	14,448	15.80	228,000
TOTAL	302,866	8.66	2,623,000

Source: Department of Education, Waigani.

Hansard record, the working of the original motion, which had been introduced without notice by the member for Moresby North West, was:

> That education be made compulsory for all children of Papua New Guinea origin who reached the age of 6 years at the commencement of 1982 Primary or Community School year and to continue studies up to grade 10. . . .

At an early stage in the debate, one member questioned the desirability of introducing compulsion when the schools still charged fees, and, rather changing the form of the motion, he moved that the word 'free' be substituted for the word 'compulsory'. No other member spoke against the motion, and it was carried in its amended form.

When the motion was made public, however, it was pointed out that control of community and secondary schools had been decentralised to provincial governments, and therefore that the national motion was inappropriate. When this became apparent, one might have expected the matter to have been dropped. One powerful reason why it was not dropped was that the country was due for an election, and several national parliamentarians hoped that a free education scheme would increase their prestige. The project roused some angry sentiments at the provincial level, however, and ultimately it backfired.

During the six months which followed the National Assembly motion, the Department of Education prepared a policy submission for the National Executive Council (NEC). Somewhat arbitrarily, the NEC dropped those aspects of the resolution which covered fees in secondary and vocational schools, and the national Minister for Education initiated moves to abolish fees in community schools the following year. Realising that he had no stick with which to force the issue, he decided to use a carrot. Provinces were entitled to retain fees if they wished, his statement implied, but the national government would offer generous subsidies to permit their abolition (Bray 1983b, 283).

Even at this stage, however, the project encountered major difficulties. The first was that the national authorities did not

know how much community school fees actually were. They knew about a K1.50 School Equipment Trust Account (SETA) fee which in most cases had been maintained after decentralisation, but most schools also charged individual Board of Management, and Parents and Citizens fees. Moreover, information on fees was also unavailable at the provincial level, for it had never previously been required. To record actual fees in every school would have been a major exercise, and the question was eventually side-stepped with a series of guesses. On scanty information, Department of Education officers calculated what they called provincial 'average fees', and towards the end of 1981 provinces were invited to accept grants as shown in Table 5 to permit them to abolish fees.

When the deadline for acceptance arrived, only nine of the 19 provinces had accepted. Six provinces were insufficiently organised to decide one way or the other, and the remainder decided against it. The latter group rejected the offer because (1) the national government was interfering in their affairs and they preferred to forego the money rather than forego their independence, (2) the grant was for 1982 but was based on 1981 figures and was likely to be too low — especially because abolition of fees would raise demand, (3) the NPEP had made provision for free education only in 1982, generating doubt about subsequent years and leaving a distinct possibility that provinces would have to reintroduce fees later, (4) community support was an essential ingredient in a successful education system and would, many provincial governments feared, decline if parents were no longer required to pay fees, (5) in some provinces the alleged average fee was too low, and grants would be inadequate to cover costs, and (6) acceptance would make it difficult for the provinces to increase revenue from fees in the future.

The national minister was clearly disappointed by the poor provincial response, and during the next few months engaged in major bargaining to change it. Several grants were increased, and the minister exerted considerable informal pressure. He was particularly disappointed that North Solomons had refused the grant, for his own constituency lay in that province and a scheme which would have increased his personal prestige was in danger of doing the opposite.

In the final outcome, there seemed to be three groups of provinces. Some accepted the national government strategy and abolished fees in order to gain extra grants; others accepted the money but did not abolish fees, and thus seemed to be manipulating the national government as much as the national government was manipulating them; and the third group resisted the national government proposals, and neither accepted the grants nor abolished fees. The provinces in the last category were North Solomons, Morobe, Madang, Eastern Highlands and East New Britain. In the long run they were proved to have been justified in part of their fears, for one of the first acts of the government which came to power in July 1982 was to abolish the scheme.

Conclusions

The first part of this chapter showed that the bulk of financial control rests with the national government. Although the national government has handed over funding for transferred activities, either as MUGs or as tied grants, the fact that most of these funds are committed to maintenance of the system greatly reduces their flexibility. The greatest source of growth and change is the NPEP, which is controlled by the national government. In some cases the national government does give provincial governments control over NPEP resources, as is the case with the Community Education Sectoral Programme, though even this can be used as an instrument of national control. Also, by prohibiting provincial governments from taking out long term loans or receiving direct payments of foreign aid, the national government effectively restricts the independent flow of finance to the provinces.

Within this picture, however, a few provinces have greater autonomy derived from the size of their internally generated revenue. The North Solomons is the most prosperous in this regard, and provincial revenues have been a major factor permitting the province to establish a sizeable number of vernacular pre-schools. East New Britain is also prosperous, and has used provincial revenues to develop in-service teacher training and other schemes. These specific projects will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 6 in the context of inter-provincial diversity.

Finally, the chapter has documented the experiences of the 'free education' scheme which provided further evidence of varia-

tion in the extent to which access to money has permitted national leaders to impose their own ideas on the provinces. In some cases the offer of the financial 'carrot' for free education was readily accepted. In other cases the provinces took advantage of the general confusion, and in the third group all national proposals were clearly and often aggressively refused. It appeared that the personalities of the people involved affected the final outcome at least as much as the system within which they were working.

CHAPTER 5
DECENTRALISATION AND INTER-PROVINCIAL
INEQUALITIES

One common apprehension about decentralisation, it was pointed out in Chapter 1, is that it may permit and encourage the growth of regional inequalities. Conversely, it is argued, when power is concentrated in a central authority it is relatively easy to direct resources to needy areas. In a decentralised system, direction of resources may be more difficult, especially when provinces can generate and retain their own revenue.

In Papua New Guinea, this issue was raised in the early days of decentralisation by the National Planning Office (1978), Jackson (1978), Hinchliffe (1980), and Berry and Jackson (1981). These authors concluded that in most sectors there was a tendency for inequalities to enlarge, though in education the tendency was not so strong. It was noted in Chapter 3 that the Department of Education has been better organised than most, and has taken active legal steps to implement the spirit and the letter of the Organic Law. The Department has also taken more careful steps to reduce inter-provincial inequalities.

The Extent of Inequalities: The Quantity of Education
Imbalances in formal educational provision have persisted since its first introduction by the Christian missions, and on a regional level enrolment rates have adhered to their historical pattern. Enrolment rates are highest in the Islands Region, followed by Papua, the North Coast and the Highlands.

To calculate enrolment rates, one requires enrolment and population statistics. The former have not always been completely accurate, because of both arithmetic errors and deliberate attempts by headteachers to inflate them in order to upgrade their schools. Official statistics also describe enrolments rather than attendance. Nevertheless, the data can be taken as a broad reflection of reality, and in Papua New Guinea are considerably

more accurate than in many other developing countries.

Most population estimates are taken from the 1971 and 1980 censuses. For the nation as a whole, population projections from the 1971 census proved strikingly accurate, but data for individual provinces were less reliable (Bray 1982a). Because of these shortcomings, it has not always been easy to decide which set of census figures to use. Unless otherwise stated, the enrolment rates presented here for the years 1971 to 1976 are based on 1971 census data, while subsequent ones are based on 1980 data.

A second difficulty arises from the ages of school children. Because in practice not all children in community schools are aged 7-12 or in high schools are aged 13-16, the enrolment rates overestimate the true proportion of age groups enrolled at school. When the figures are used merely to compare inequalities, however, this factor ceases to be so important. In effect, enrolment rates tell us the proportion of young people in school, and permit comparison on this basis.

Table 6 shows community and high school enrolment rates in the years 1972, 1977 and 1982. To give a clear picture of inequality, SDA schools have been included, even though they are outside the National Education System and educate a very small number of chuldren. From these figures, coefficients of variation (CVs) have been calculated by dividing the standard deviations by the means. The CVs for the years 1971-82 are shown in Figure 2. It will be noted that inequalities are substantial, and that they are greater in secondary education than in community education. In community education they have clearly been reduced over time, however, and in that sector the CVs decreased from 0.40 in 1972 to 0.19 in 1982. This was achieved by collapsing the range of enrolment rates at both ends.

To some extent, this movement might have happened anyway as the Highlands 'caught up' in development. But it has also been a result of official policy. Before decentralisation, resource allocation was easier to direct from the centre, but even after decentralisation some financial arrangements have been specifically designed to reduce inequality. The extent of equalisation has not always been as great as has been planned (Department of Education 1976, 28). Nor, as Figure 2 shows with the hindsight of the 1980 census data, has it been so direct as had appeared from

Table 6: Enrolment Rates for Grades 1-6 and 7-10, by Province (including SDA Schools) (%)

Province	—Grades 1-6—			—Grades 7-10—		
	1972	1977	1982	1972	1977	1982
Western	68.3	63.6	68.6	14.1	15.2	17.1
Gulf	67.5	64.2	70.6	7.2	13.4	14.3
Central	72.5	72.1	72.2	16.7	24.3	21.3
NCD		77.1	82.2		17.5	29.4
Milne Bay	67.5	58.4	64.7	12.9	14.7	12.9
Southern Highlands	35.5	45.0	49.4	3.0	9.9	9.3
Enga	33.6	41.1	53.8	4.2	8.0	8.5
Western Highlands		53.4	48.2		9.1	11.4
Chimbu	52.5	51.2	56.4	6.7	15.5	12.4
Eastern Highlands	29.9	44.8	59.5	6.6	8.7	9.2
Morobe	46.6	53.9	61.1	7.8	9.1	10.3
Madang	57.0	48.8	55.9	12.1	13.7	10.5
East Sepik	56.4	61.4	65.6	11.3	10.9	10.3
West Sepik	47.4	56.1	64.4	6.5	12.2	12.0
Manus	88.0	66.9	94.2	27.7	32.7	26.1
New Ireland	98.6	78.4	81.8	19.3	27.7	29.9
East New Britain	112.7	78.8	87.6	34.4	26.8	31.0
West New Britain	76.1	75.8	78.5	3.9	11.9	15.9
North Solomons	90.0	68.4	75.4	13.1	15.4	17.2
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	55.5	57.6	63.1	13.1	14.5	17.2
STANDARD DEVIATION	22.1	11.5	12.3	8.1	6.8	7.2
COEFF. OF VARIATION	1.40	0.20	0.19	0.62	0.47	0.54

Notes: (1) Figures for 1972 are based on the 1971 census. Figures for 1977 and 1982 are based on the 1980 census.
(2) SDA = Seventh Day Adventist. The SDA schools are not part of the government-run National Education System.

Sources: 'Comparative Statistics on Enrolment by Province 1971-1978' and '1982 Provincial Education Staffing and Enrolment Statistics', Department of Education, Waigani; Information from SDA Mission, Lae; Information from National Census Office, Konedobu.

Figure 2: Coefficients of Variation in Community and High School Enrolment Rates (including SDA schools)
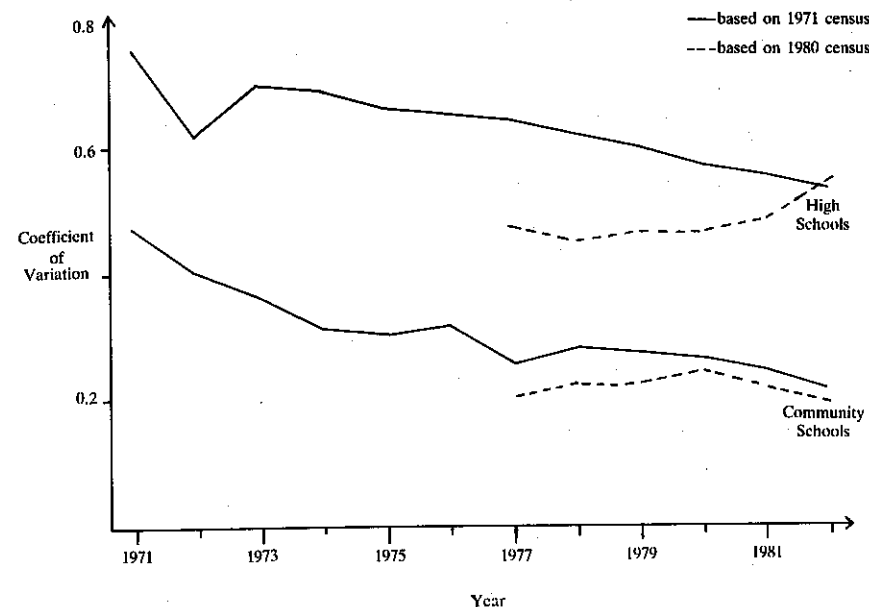
the 1971 census data. Nevertheless, the movement towards equality in community education has been considerable.

At the high school level, policies have produced less significant results, though in some respects they have also been notable. From 1971, every province has had at least one high school, and over the decade 1972-82 the enrolment rate of the bottom province increased from 3.0 to 8.5 per cent. The CVs based on the 1980 census show a rather different picture from those based on the 1971 census, but on either calculation inequality at the end of the decade was less than that at the beginning. Moreover, of the 26 new schools opened between 1976 and 1981, 19 were in less developed provinces.

The Extent of Inequalities: The Quality of Education
Information on the quality of educational provision is harder to obtain than information on quantity. First, there are difficulties

even with the meaning of the term, for quality should embrace students' attitudes and non-academic skills as well as cognitive achievement. No data classified by province are yet available on the former, and even data on cognitive achievement are unsatisfactory. Examination scores are one obvious index of academic ability, though they also are generally considered poor instruments for measuring achievement. In any case, Grade 6 results are not tabulated by province and centrally recorded, and Grade 10 results are not available for a long series of years.

Even with this paucity of information, however, it is possible to say that wide inter-provincial disparities in the quality of education exist. To date, the most comprehensive analysis on the subject has been conducted by Tuppen and Deutrom (1980) on 1979 data. They used several different measures for comparison, which included provincial ranking by (1) the percentage of Grade 10 students obtaining Distinctions and Credits, (2) the percentage of 16 year olds (projected from the 1971 census) who obtained Distinctions and Credits, and (3) the percentage of 16 year olds obtaining Distinctions and Credits plotted against the high school enrolment rate.

Certain aspects of Tuppen and Deutrom's methodology and the conclusions reached from the data have been challenged by Wilson (1981). They need not concern us here, however, for the main point is that inter-provincial inequalities exist and are substantial. Tuppen and Deutrom's rankings for the Mathematics and the Scientific Thinking examinations are shown in Figures 3 and 4. It is to be hoped that in the future more comprehensive data will be collected on Grade 6 scores as well as on Grade 10, and that the data will show changes over time and embrace other measures of inequality.

The Financial System and Inequalities

The principal reason for concern among those who foresaw a potential conflict between decentralisation and the reduction of inequalities was the structure of the financial system and the formulae for calculating Minimum Unconditional Grants and Division 248 disbursements. At the time of decentralisation, the national government agreed that, subject to availability of funds, it would guarantee finance to permit provinces to maintain at

Figure 3: Percentage of 16 year olds obtaining Distinction or Credit in Mathematics, by Province, 1979

Shaded area = Distinctions
White area = Credits
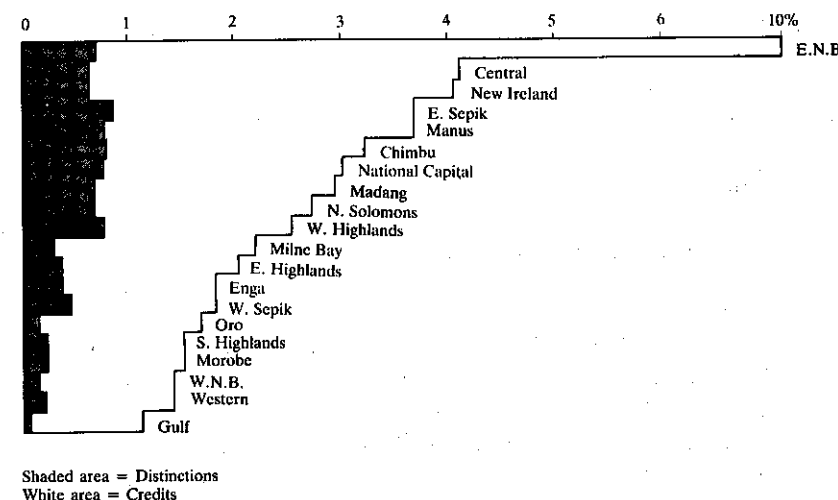
Figure 4: Percentage of 16 year olds obtaining Distinction or Credit in Scientific Thinking, by Province, 1979

Shaded area = Distinctions
White area = Credits
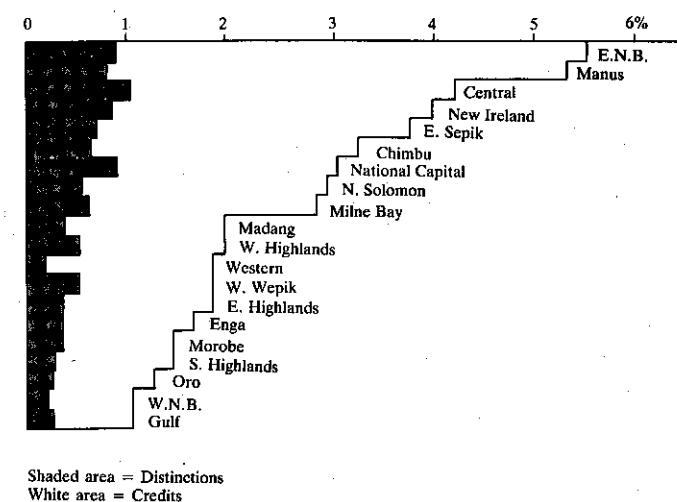
their 1976/77 level the services for which they took over responsibility. Crawley (1982a) has pointed out that the formulae have not been completely correctly applied, but in the years since 1976/77, the MUGs and tied grants have been based on the level in that year, with allowance for inflation.

With reference to inequalities, these formulae have caused a problem. First, in 1976/77 the provinces already provided highly unequal levels of service, and the grants seemed to fossilise these inequalities. Second, as Hinchliffe (1980, 83) has pointed out, the national government confused the level of service with the cost of that service. In 1976/77, a few provinces employed a large number of expatriates. Since then, they have localised the positions, and pay the local officers lower wages. They are therefore able to provide a higher level of service at the same cost. Third, the grant also made allowance for capital works in 1976/77. It seems somewhat inegalitarian to provide provinces with extra money for capital works as well as for their recurrent budgets. Provincial disparities in educational expenditure in 1976/77 are shown in Table 7.

In addition to the MUG/Division 248 formulae, imbalances were also caused by the impact of locally generated revenue. Table 4 has shown that some provinces have much greater sources of local revenue than have others. Richer provinces therefore have the ability to make greater educational investments than do the others.

Against these two parts of the financial system, however, must be set a third, namely the NPEP. Since 1981, community education sectoral 'new starts' have been graduated on a sliding scale in which the province with the lowest enrolment rate has received at least six times the per pupil allocation of the province with the highest enrolment rate. Table 8 shows the index used in 1983. Through this mechanism, the national government has been able to have a major effect on community school inequalities.

The national government also maintains a sectoral programme for high schools, though money is not disbursed according to a sliding scale. The allocations for 1982 are shown in Table 9, from which it can be seen that provinces with above average enrolment rates received no money at all. The national government also

Table 7: Per Capita Expenditure on Community and High Schools for the 6-12 and 13-16 Age Groups 1976-1977

	(a) 1977 pop. aged 7-12	(b) Community Sch. Expenditure (K)	(c) b/a	(d) 1977 pop. aged 13-16	(e) High School Expenditure (K)	(f) e/d
Western	12,476	772,881	62	6,166	211,257	34
Gulf	10,684	659,645	62	4,962	190,453	38
Central	18,759	1,274,591	68	9,405	542,707	58
Milne Bay	21,143	1,337,853	63	10,422	386,426	37
Oro	12,405	675,229	54	6,837	279,049	41
Southern Highlands	35,387	1,377,776	39	13,253	421,154	32
Enga	25,471	835,110	33	11,722	282,644	24
Western Highlands	35,053	1,532,550	44	17,868	516,574	29
Chimbu	25,960	1,224,965	47	11,172	383,762	34
Eastern Highlands	42,196	1,482,218	35	20,525	432,885	21
Morobe	45,103	1,894,986	42	26,760	785,658	29
Madang	32,842	1,549,772	47	16,448	471,913	29
East Sepik	33,891	1,624,002	48	18,411	510,707	28
West Sepik	17,842	899,070	61	7,973	236,172	30
Manus	4,849	331,953	68	2,266	229,796	101
New Ireland	10,148	847,545	84	5,574	467,538	84
East New Britain	21,106	1,560,990	74	14,017	864,293	62
West New Britain	13,936	1,035,684	74	7,572	298,736	39
North Solomons	17,971	1,381,124	77	12,221	488,528	40
TOTAL	437,222	22,297,944	51	223,594	8,000,252	36

Sources: Population data are taken from 1980 census print-outs. Expenditure data are taken from Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, file PP2-4-1, 1978.

Table 8: 1983 Community Education Sectoral Programme 'New Starts'

Province	Enrolment Rate	Money Index per Pupil (K)	1982 Gr 1-6 Enrolment	1983 Allocation (K)
Southern Highlands	49.1	6.00	21,427	125,000
Western Highlands	52.5	5.37	22,569	120,000
Enga	53.8	5.12	14,020	70,000
Madang	55.8	4.75	20,713	95,000
Chimbu	56.3	4.65	15,311	70,000
Eastern Highlands	57.7	4.40	27,364	120,000
Morobe	60.3	3.91	31,651	120,000
West Sepik	60.4	3.89	11,980	45,000
East Sepik	61.2	3.74	23,368	85,000
NATIONAL AVERAGE	62.5	3.50		
Oro	65.3	3.20	9,507	30,000
Western	68.0	2.92	9,626	25,000
Gulf	68.3	2.89	8,161	20,000
Milne Bay	69.7	2.75	16,564	45,000
Central	71.7	2.55	15,121	35,000
North Solomons	71.8	2.53	15,197	35,000
West New Britain	77.2	1.96	12,557	25,000
National Capital	78.1	1.87	13,630	25,000
New Ireland	78.4	1.83	8,670	15,000
East New Britain	85.5	1.09	19,445	20,000
Manus	86.4	1.00	4,165	5,000
TOTAL			321,046	1,130,000

Source: Department of Education, Waigani.

maintains a capital works programme for disadvantaged provinces in which funds are disbursed on a Kina-for-Kina basis.

Finally it is worth commenting on the role of the National Fiscal Commission, for although it has not played a very prominent overall role, its impact with regard to education has at least been greater than elsewhere. In 1980, some K7 million was made available to the NFC to distribute as unconditional grants. In 1981 and 1982 the sum was reduced to K5 million, but in all years part of it was used as an equalisation fund, and education was a principal item on which disbursements were based. In 1981 and 1982, K500,000 was allocated according to community and high school enrolment rates. In no case did East New Britain receive any money, and New Ireland was denied a high school allocation. For the other provinces, money was distributed on an equal per capita basis (unlike the NPEP community education funds) according to the number of children estimated to be not in school.

Although the NFC allocations could have been important to the education sector, one factor greatly reduced their impact. This was that the funds were paid into general provincial coffers and were not allocated specifically to education. Consequently, most of the money was dispersed among all government activities, and education only gained a share in so far as it had a portion of the overall provincial budget. One reason for this situation was that few officers in the education divisions were aware of the existence of grants specifically calculated on enrolment rates, and few, if any, even requested the funds for their divisions.

Inequality and Population Changes

Another factor which further complicates an already complex situation is that provincial populations are growing at different rates. Because of this, the unconditional and tied grant formulae have a less rigid impact than might otherwise have been the case. Table 10 shows that over the period 1966-80, estimated annual population growth rates ranged from Chimbu's 0.5 per cent to the National Capital District's 7.6 per cent.

With a slowed rate of migration to North Solomons and a much

Table 9: 1982 High School Sectoral Programme Allocations

Province	Ongoing from 1979/80 (K)	Ongoing from 1981 (K)	New Starts 1982 (K)	TOTAL (K)
Western	46,240	—	—	46,240
Gulf	43,610	13,535	4,435	61,580
Central	—	—	—	—
NCD	—	—	17,970	17,970
Milne Bay	—	—	—	—
Oro	—	17,970	17,970	35,940
Southern Highlands	35,940	28,270	14,135	78,345
Enga	43,610	28,270	17,970	89,850
Western Highlands	46,240	32,105	50,075	128,420
Chimbu	32,105	14,135	17,970	64,210
Eastern Highlands	75,715	75,715	35,940	187,370
Morobe	17,970	43,610	14,335	75,915
Madang	—	—	—	—
East Sepik	17,970	—	32,105	50,075
West Sepik	32,105	3,835	53,910	89,850
Manus	—	—	—	—
New Ireland	—	—	—	—
East New Britain	—	—	—	—
West New Britain	53,910	28,270	3,835	86,015
North Solomons	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	445,415	285,715	280,650	1,011,780

Source: Department of Education, Waigani.

Table 10: Annual Rates of Population Growth, 1966-80

Province	Rate of Growth (%)
Western	1.7
Gulf	1.1
Central	0.8
NCD	7.6
Milne Bay	1.7
Oro	2.0
Southern Highlands	1.7
Enga	2.7
Western Highlands	2.7
Chimbu	0.5
Eastern Highlands	2.2
Morobe	2.8
Madang	2.3
East Sepik	2.4
West Sepik	1.0
Manus	1.6
New Ireland	1.9
East New Britain	1.4
West New Britain	5.0
North Solomons	4.1
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	2.3

Source: National Planning Office (1982, 50).

higher rate to Ok Tedi in Western Province, migration patterns during the 1980s will be markedly different from those during 1966-80. In some cases population growth will cancel some of the disadvantages of the MUG/Division 248 formulae, though in other cases it will have the opposite effect.

The Implications of Locally Generated Revenue

Table 11 shows the number of teachers employed from provincial funds in 1982. Calculations are complicated by the facts that several provinces do not have clear budget procedures and that a few are not even sure how many teachers are paid from provin-

cial funds. It must be noted that poorer provinces commit funds to teachers as well as richer ones, and that the North Solomons, which has the highest per capita income of all, does not make education a major priority. Nevertheless, available evidence suggests that richer provinces do tend to employ extra teachers from their own funds, and that this increases inequality.

Further Complexities

In addition to these factors, two further complexities should be mentioned. The first is that although NPEP community education new starts are calculated on enrolment rates, the provinces are permitted to spend the money on either quantity or quality. Provided they do so efficiently, it is arguable that equalisation objectives can still be achieved, for disadvantaged provinces are generally as much in need of qualitative as of quantitative improvement. However, experience has suggested that money often is not used efficiently, and that sometimes it is not used at all. Enga, for example, has suffered from unattractive working conditions and sometimes administrative shortcomings, and was unable before 1982 to recruit sufficient staff to make full use of its allocations.

A second complicating factor occurs from the political nature of many decisions. The 1982 'free education' disbursements, for example, did not match the normal advantage/disadvantage criteria (Table 5). Similarly, the siting of high schools tends to be a strong political issue, and bureaucrats are much less likely to be left alone to determine their own expansion rates and strategies than they are with community schools. The authors of the 1976 Education Plan were conscious both of the desirability of equalising enrolment rates and of limiting school output to manpower requirements. However, for political reasons they felt unable to advocate redistribution of existing school places and instead attempted to hold advantaged provinces at their existing level while allocating resources to disadvantaged ones (McNamara 1977, 20). Even this plan could not be implemented with ease, for within advantaged provinces disadvantaged districts have often been able to demand extra facilities. They are probably able to do so more easily when decisions are made by locally accessible provincial politicians.

Table 11: Community and Provincial High School Teachers, by Province

Province	COMMUNITY SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
	1978 Teacher Base	NPEP Funded Teachers 1982*	Prov. Funded Teachers 1982	1978 Teacher Base	NPEP Funded Teachers 1982*	Prov. Funded Teachers 1982
Western	278	37	19	43	7	6
Gulf	231	24	—	28	11	1
Central	440	15	34	83	5	12
National Capital	304	81	—	81	9	—
Milne Bay	472	37	16	69	5	2
Oro	245	44	—	40	3	—
Southern Highlands	531	98	23	58	32	—
Enga	361	31	—	44	15	—
Western Highlands	591	—	50	67	20	13
Chimbu	430	43	—	72	13	—
Eastern Highlands	600	154	61	65	29	7
Morobe	700	220	18	103	13	12
Madang	524	111	—	86	5	—
East Sepik	613	96	—	77	8	1
West Sepik	333	50	22	42	12	—
Manus	113	12	11	29	—	6
New Ireland	290	—	35	62	5	2
East New Britain	555	—	83	130	—	14
West New Britain	374	55	—	39	14	12
North Solomons	455	26	9	72	—	9
TOTAL	8,440	1,134	381	1,290	206	97

*These columns show cumulative totals, comprising the 'new starts' of 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1982.

Sources: Provincial Divisions of Education; National Department of Education, Waigani.

Conclusions

Perhaps the clearest fact which emerges from this chapter is that the forces which govern inter-provincial equality/inequality are both numerous and complex. Not all of them are related to decentralisation, but several are directly linked and are worth summarising.

One of the chief factors which maintains inequality is the financial structure adopted at the time of decentralisation. The formulae for determining MUG/Division 248 funds, the arrangements under which provinces can raise local taxes and acquire greater revenue from natural resources which originally came from them, and the fact that richer provinces can invest more of their own funds in education all act as forces which increase inequality.

However, other factors reduce inequality, and have generally been stronger than those which maintain or increase it. It has been suggested that the NFC allocations have not been as effective as had originally been hoped, and that from an educational viewpoint it is unfortunate that funds allocated on the basis of school enrolments are sent to general provincial coffers rather than specifically to Divisions of Education. Nevertheless, in so far as they do increase revenues in less developed provinces, the NFC allocations can have some impact.

Much more important are the NPEP projects, and particularly the sectoral programmes. It was pointed out in Chapter 4 that as a proportion of total expenditure these programmes are small, but that because most other expenditure is devoted to maintaining the system, the NPEP funds occupy a special place in determining the nature of growth. The equalising impact of the NPEP has been particularly evident in community education. The Department of Education has announced that from 1984 it intends to base allocations on actual attendance rather than on official enrolments, and the availability of the 1980 census data further improves the sensitivity of the equalisation mechanism.

Among the factors which complicate the picture and reduce both the certainty and the speed with which it is possible to move towards equality are different population growth rates, administrative shortcomings which affect the efficiency with which money is spent, political factors, and the injection of different amounts

of provincial finance into the system. All but the first are connected with decentralisation, and to some extent vindicate its opponents.

Not all the negative forces will continue to operate in the future, however, for administrative shortcomings should be reduced with time, and the MUG tied grant formulae may be revised. National government planners are aware of the problems caused by the formulae, and a major report in 1982 (Papua New Guinea 1982, 6) recommended that it be revised. No system can be substituted in its place without considerable negotiation, but a new formula may be introduced within the next few years. If this happens, instead of obstructing equalisation, the new system may promote it.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the introduction of decentralisation has itself considerably increased awareness of inequalities. Many more statistics are now broken down by province than was formerly the case, and the mere fact that geographic areas are classified as provinces gives them a prominence that they would not otherwise have. Thus the fact that Enga has been split from Western Highlands, for example, focuses attention on the area and leads to allocation of resources which would otherwise be denied.

In conclusion, critics of decentralisation do have grounds for fearing that it will permit and encourage regional inequalities. Indeed, some of the financial arrangements introduced in Papua New Guinea very clearly have that effect. The problem is not insuperable, however, and the Papua New Guinean government has demonstrated a good way simultaneously to achieve its aims of both decentralisation and equalisation.

CHAPTER 6
DIVERSITY AND CONFORMITY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Linked to the question about inter-provincial inequalities is another about inter-provincial diversity. Opponents of decentralisation frequently argue that it permits and encourages provinces to modify educational structures, and that these modifications could threaten the coherence of the whole. As this chapter will demonstrate, however, this is certainly not a foregone event. In Papua New Guinea it is true that a certain amount of diversity has followed decentralisation, and it is also true that some of this diversity causes confusion. However the overall extent of diversity is far smaller than critics of decentralisation tend to predict, and in any case some aspects are beneficial.

One factor which limits diversity is the retention of control of key areas by the central authorities. Among these, as was pointed out in Chapter 3, are teachers' salaries and conditions of service and most aspects of the curriculum. All school inspectors are national government employees, and the curriculum has been defined broadly to include major examinations, the number of days' teaching per week and per year, and the number of hours allocated to particular subjects.

Apart from these legal forces for conformity, educational structures are also heavily governed by tradition and by the expectations of teachers and parents. The mere fact that most people have fairly clear ideas about what schools are and how they work suffices, for better or worse, to restrict experimentation and change. Indeed the force of tradition can be seen in the much wider context of the developing world as a whole. In one sense, decolonisation was a massive, global form of decentralisation. Yet although most developing nations in recent years have modified textbooks, ages of entry, number of years at primary/secondary school and so on, overall structures have remained remarkably constant. Without exception the new countries have

retained the basic distinctions between primary, secondary and tertiary education, and pupils in each unit are still classified by classes or grades. Schools are still expected mainly to cater for young people, there is still a clear separation between teachers and pupils, and there is still clear demarcation between lessons and recreation and between terms and vacation. In most cases even the basic paraphernalia of schooling have remained largely the same. Pupils sit in desks in neat rows in rectangular classrooms at one end of which are blackboards. Many still wear uniforms, are assessed by examinations, and learn a considerable amount from books. If this has been the experience of the developing world as a whole, the extent of change within any one country should only be expected to be marginal.

Yet although basic structures have remained constant, details of the system are more malleable. To begin with, therefore, it is worth examining the major aspects of diversity in Papua New Guinea which have arisen following decentralisation.

Diversity within the Papua New Guinean Education System
(a) The North Solomons Viles Tok Ples Skuls

Probably the most distinctive education project which decentralisation has permitted to develop is a system of 'tok ples', or vernacular, schools developed in the North Solomons. It is known as the Viles [Village] Tok Ples Skul, or VTPS, system.

The VTPSs were established in response to demand for education to be related more closely to indigenous cultures. In 1979, the views of a broad range of people were canvassed as part of a North Solomons Educational Research Project. Among the opinions widely expressed were that at least some teaching should be in local languages, so that the school system would be better able to support indigenous cultures and less likely to threaten them, and that children leaving primary schools were often too young to be productive members of the community (North Solomons Province 1982, 52ff).

Within the National Education System, languages of instruction were carefully controlled by the central authorities. The 1983 Education Act permitted flexibility in non-core community school subjects, but until that date English was officially the sole medium of instruction from Grade 1. This policy was justified by

desires to promote English in order to permit communication across the nation and to maintain coherence within the education system.

To achieve its aspirations, therefore, the North Solomons Provincial Government set up a system of pre-schools. Because they were pre-schools, they were not governed by the requirements of the National Education System. The structure envisaged that children would attend the pre-schools for two years and that they would both enter and leave primary school at an older age.

The VTPS project was launched in 1979 with 11 teachers being sent to Eastern Highlands Province to be trained by the Summer Institute of Linguistics. With these teachers, five schools were opened in 1980. Also in that year the provincial government opened its own training centre, at Tinputz, and in 1981 another 26 schools were opened. By 1982, 68 teachers worked in 33 VTPSs and taught 1,742 pupils. All the VTPSs were attached to community schools, and all were in Buka, Buin and the Islands districts. In 1983 a temporary halt was called to the opening of new schools, but a document produced later that year (Delpit and Kemelfield 1983) envisaged the eventual expansion of VTPSs to cover every child in the province.

The VTPS project was launched very much in response to locally expressed wishes. It was made possible by the existence of provincial revenues and the powers conferred by decentralisation. Although it was distinctive, in no way did it threaten the cohesion of the overall education system, and in general may be considered a very positive result of the decentralisation process. Similar projects were being considered in Enga Province in 1982 (Enga Provincial Development Programme 1982, 4.53ff), in West Sepik (Kelly et al. 1982, 27-34), and in East New Britain (East New Britain Province 1983, 2-12). The 1983 Education Act empowered provincial governments to introduce vernaculars without establishing pre-schools. The added flexibility provided by the act was likely to increase diversity, but to do so in a constructive way.

(b) Experimentation in East New Britain

With its long history of mission and government activity, East New Britain has become one of the most prosperous provinces

and has developed a strong sense of identity. The province has made use of the powers conferred by decentralisation to initiate several distinctive projects. Among them is a teacher support programme in which the government has built an In-Service Centre at Rabaul and appointed three Provincial In-Service Training Officers to run it, to develop teaching aids, and to organise teachers' workshops. In 1983 the province also drew up a series of diagnostic tests for pupils in Grades 4 and 5. The tests were initiated in response to widespread feeling that children and their parents should be given clearer information on scholastic achievement, and that academic weaknesses should be identified for remedy long before the Grade 6 examination. Thirdly, between 1980 and 1983 the provincial government developed a set of 19 readers for use in its primary schools (Henry 1983). Although these three projects may have increased diversity within the country, they did not threaten the coherence of the education system as a whole.

By contrast, one East New Britain proposal that could have been more disruptive of uniformity was initiated in 1979. In that year the provincial authorities announced (East New Britain Province 1979, 20-3) that pre-school would be compulsory for all children aged five and six and that:

> The Community School must have eight grades, starting from one up to and including eight. By the time the children reach grade 8, they should have had ten years of formal education before they proceed on to either High Schools or Vocational Schools.

The authors of the plan also wanted vernaculars to be languages of instruction up to Grade 2, and for the National High School (p. 29) to be "transferred back to Provincial High School" so that the province would take over Grades 11 and 12. Ultimately, this plan was never pursued. The cost and manpower implications were not carefully thought out and would have been prohibitive, and the vernaculars and transfer of Grades 11 and 12 would have required a change in the law. Had it been pursued, it would have increased diversity, and from the viewpoint of the central government would have been undesirable because the National High

School was designed to serve the entire nation rather than one province.

(c) High School Selection Policies

In recent years, policies on high school selection have become confusingly diverse. During the early and mid-1970s national government policy changed several times and itself caused widespread confusion, but after decentralisation the situation became even worse. Provincial Education Boards were made responsible for determining their own selection criteria, and in the early 1980s policies were different in almost every province.

The two principal components of selection were examination results and individual school quotas. During the early 1970s, the national Department of Education had realised that selection based solely on examination performance encouraged 'cramming' and 'coaching' at the expense of broader aspects of education, and discriminated against pupils in rural areas who would be unlikely either to have such good teachers as their urban counterparts or to have the same out-of-school support. Accordingly, in 1972 a system of quotas was introduced in which an equal proportion of Grade 6 pupils in every school was selected for Grade 7 (McNamara 1976). This system caused qualitative problems, however, and was later modified to combine quotas and examination. After decentralisation, most provinces retained a combination, but the variation in proportions was considerable. Some provinces also had special quotas for girls, for transfers and for special cases. The extent of the diversity in 1982, is indicated by Table 12 (see also Bray 1982b).

Delegation of the authority to determine selection criteria did have beneficial aspects. It permitted Enga, Southern Highlands and West Sepik to institute special provision for girls, for example, and thus to pay attention to a matter which might have been less problematic in other provinces. It also permitted PEBs to decide whether they were more concerned about issues of equity or academic standards.

Delegation of authority also caused a confusing degree of diversity, however, which would have been avoided if decisions had still been made centrally. Three other problems with selection at that time were that many provincial policies changed from

Table 12: Provincial High School Selection Policies, 1982

Province	% of Gr 7 Pupils Selected on Exam	Exam Cut-Off Mark (Max 120)	Comments
Western	34	75	No information on exam cut-off mark
Gulf	45	70	
Central	75	87	
NCD	61	80	
Milne Bay	59	62	Kiriwina dealt with separately
Oro	99	67	Different cut-off points for boys (62) and girls (76)
Southern Highlands	59		Boys 50% exam, 50% quota; Girls 75% exam, 25% quota
Enga	36	80	Special arrangements for girls' selection
Western Highlands	100	61	Six students with 60 marks also selected
Chimbu	98	63	Top 10% of each Gr 6 class plus 53 extras selected
Eastern Highlands	50	80	No information on lowest mark selected
Morobe	88	67	Exam cut-off 80 for urban schools and 67 for rural
Madang	65	70	
East Sepik	27	70	
West Sepik	40	67	Special selection for girls; Selection done by district
Manus	34	82	
New Ireland	100	60	
East New Britain	100	65	
West New Britain	72	63	
North Solomons	35	80	

Sources: Department of Education (1983a, 16-7).

year to year, that the criteria were not widely publicised, and that in any case implementation often did not match policy. These problems could easily have arisen in a centralised system, and are not germane to the present discussion. However, if one body had been responsible for determining criteria instead of 20, it would have been easier to find out what the policy was, and probably also easier to publicise it.

(d) Policies on a Four Year High School Programme

During the early 1980s, decentralisation also permitted and encouraged diversity and confusion with regard to policies on Grade 8 leavers. Until 1981, it had been the practice for schools to allow approximately two thirds of Grade 8 pupils to proceed to Grade 9, and to terminate the rest. This policy restricted the size of secondary schools and consequent expenditure, and maintained academic standards. However, it also frustrated the Grade 8 students who were terminated, and many teachers held that it unfavourably affected the general atmosphere of schools.

In 1981, the national Minister for Education recommended that all provinces should adopt a four year programme (Ministerial Policy Statement, 6/80). Since the power to make decisions had been delegated to PEBs, the Minister could only recommend and could not direct, and during the next few years considerable confusion developed. In several cases, clearer policies were formulated during the writing of provincial education plans in 1983, but the overall picture, indicated in Table 13, was still one of considerable diversity.

(e) Other Types of Diversity

Several other areas of diversity are also worth noting, though they are less prominent. All provinces have freedom to spend Community Education Sectoral Programme funds as they see fit, and some have used the money to build Education Resource Centres to assist teachers. Southern Highlands was one of the earliest to do this, and also built a Transit House where the teachers could be accommodated. East Sepik, Madang, Morobe and Oro Provinces decided in 1982 that they would allocate funds to a project to reduce school wastage and improve attendance, and appointed Community Liaison Helpers to work closely with

Table 13: Provincial Policies on the Four Year High School Programme, July 1983

Province	Is a 4 Yr Progr Planned for no/one/some/most/ all school(s)?	COMMENTS
Western	All	All schools will block up by 1986
Gulf	All	All schools will block up by 1987
Central	Most	All schools will block up by 1988 except Yule Island
NCD	All	All schools will block up by 1986. Policies determined by Nat. Govt.
Milne Bay	Most	Three already blocked up. Plans for the other 2 uncertain
Oro	One	Neither existing school will block up, but the new one will do so
Southern Highlands	All	All schools will block up by 1986
Enga	Most	Four schools will block up, but the church will not block up Pausa
Western Highlands	None	No school will block up
Chimbu	None	No school will block up
Eastern Highlands	One	Goroka will have a 4 year programme, but the others will push out Gr 8s
Morobe	None	All schools will continue to have Grade 8 push-outs
Madang	Some	One has blocked up, and another will do so. The other 3 will not.
East Sepik	Unclear	One has blocked up. Plans for the others are unclear.
West Sepik	Some	Two schools will block up, but the other 4 will not.
Manus	None	All schools will continue to push out some Grade 8s.
New Ireland	One	One has blocked up, but the other 4 will push out Grade 8s.
East New Britain	All	7 schools will block up by 1985 and the 8th by 1987.
West New Britain	None	No schools will block up.
North Solomons	One	4 schools will push out Grade 8s, but Asitavi will block up.

Source: Senior Professional Assistants (Planning); Draft Provincial Education Plans.

headteachers and Boards of Management. Southern Highlands has increased its administrative structure by appointing District Education Officers in every district; North Solomons, East New Britain, East Sepik and Madang have contributed finance to enable UPNG to open Extension Studies University Centres in the provinces; East and West New Britain have initiated 'feeder schools' in which primary schools have campuses in different places and are able to be physically closer to children's homes; and North Solomons and Western Highlands, having been concerned about excessive generalisation in vocational centre curricula, have encouraged their centres to specialise in a limited range of subjects.

The Forces of Conformity
It must again be emphasised that these features are relatively minor, however, and that the similarities between provincial education systems are much more striking than the differences. Moreover even the innovations which have been mentioned are rarely distinctive to one province alone. The most powerful forces of conformity, namely the retention of key areas by the national authorities and the strength of tradition, have already been mentioned. To them should be added several others.

The efficiency of educational administration can, it seems, operate either to diversify or to harmonise. In the areas of high school selection and Grade 8 leaver policies, inefficiency during the early 1980s led to diversity. In many cases, policies were never made clear in the first place, and even where they were clear there was often a divorce between policy and practice. In these cases, inefficiency acted as a force for diversity. However, when East New Britain proposed to introduce the eight year primary school system and take over the National High School, inefficiency acted as a force for conformity. Had the East New Britain government paid greater attention to the practicalities of planning and implementation, the project would have had a much greater chance of survival, and diversity would have been increased.

Another force for conformity lies in the large number of meetings in which key decision-makers gather together. At the professional level, this includes the annual Senior Officer's Conference for provincial Assistant Secretaries and others, the annual inspec-

tors' Ratings Conference, and, during the early 1980s, the series of Education II regional conferences and the UPNG DES course for SPAs (Planning). At the political level, the Department of Education organises annual conferences of Ministers for Education which are also attended by Assistant Secretaries, and the Office of the Prime Minister organises annual conferences of provincial Premiers. At all these meetings, senior officers collect ideas from each other on innovations that might or might not be tried.

There is also considerable mobility of staffing within Papua New Guinea, which, though it has unfortunate consequences for continuity, also helps spread ideas. During the early 1980s there was a trend towards provincialisation of positions, i.e. posts were sometimes given to indigenes of the province even when other candidates arguably with better qualifications were available. However in February 1982 seven of the 20 SPAs (Planning) and 15 of the 20 Assistant Secretaries for Education were not indigenous to the province in which they worked. Moreover during the next year the Assistant Secretary in West New Britain, himself from East New Britain, had moved to Southern Highlands; his colleague from New Ireland, a New Irelander, had moved to West Sepik to replace a man from Madang; the Assistant Secretary in Gulf, a native of Central, had moved to Headquarters and had been replaced by a man from East New Britain, and the new Assistant Secretary in West New Britain had returned to his native New Ireland and been replaced by a Manusian who had been working in North Solomons. This rate of transfer was not abnormal, and showed no signs of slowing down.

In the writing of plans, the influence of the Regional Planning Advisers was also evident, and also acted as a force for conformity. The four RPAs consulted closely with each other, and broadly adopted a uniform approach. However, in some regions the influence of the RPA was even more apparent. Thus the facts that the four provinces which appointed Community Liaison Helpers were all from the North Coast Region, and that the majority of Highlands Region plans retained provision for Grade 8 push-outs, were not entirely coincidental.

Conclusions
This chapter has shown that a few elements of diversity did arise

from decentralisation and that some of them were confusing and threatened the coherence of the overall framework. Others were beneficial, however, and were an expression of provincial governments' attempts to meet local needs. Overall, the extent of diversity was significant, but the basic structure of the education system has not so far been changed by decentralisation.

Five principal factors have been identified to explain this situation. First, it has been pointed out, decision-making powers on key areas were retained by the national government. Second, the education system is inherently conservative and resistant to change, especially where there has been no corresponding change in social and economic reward systems. Third, although inefficiency can act as an agent for diversity, it can also help conformity. Fourth, the national government hosts a number of major conferences which act as forums for coordination and harmonisation. And fifth, there is still considerable mobility of staffing between provinces.

In the future, it is probable that inter-provincial diversity will increase. As the level of available expertise increases at the provincial level, it is probable that more projects will be initiated and effectively implemented. However, it is unlikely that many of the innovations will seriously threaten the coherence of the education system. Even though the 1983 Education Act conferred greater powers on the provinces, the national government has been careful to retain control of the teaching service, inspections and most parts of the curriculum. The balance of beneficial and problematic aspects of diversity is positive, and it is likely to remain that way.

CHAPTER 7
DECENTRALISATION AND EFFICIENCY

So far, this study has not focused on the question of efficiency. References to increased manpower requirements, to annual meetings for provincial ministers, and to the tasks of coordinating the enterprise have implied that decentralisation is costly in both financial and human terms. It is useful to examine these matters more carefully.

At the outset, however, it must be pointed out that efficiency is a subjective concept, dependent on the values assigned to different outcomes. In particular, the views of bureaucrats and politicians do not always match. Among bureaucrats, two main criteria of efficiency are cheapness and ease of administration, but politicians may be more concerned with the responsiveness of the system to their direction and different criteria.

Decentralisation and the Growth of the Administration

One of the clearest changes which has accompanied decentralisation has been a massive expansion of the bureaucracy. This has been especially evident at the provincial level, but is also true of the national level, where more staff have been required for coordination and training. Increased staffing can partly be justified by growth of enrolments. However, in recent years the bureaucracy has grown faster than the rest of the system.

At the national level, it was pointed out in Chapter 3, the Planning Services Division in the Department of Education was only created in 1977 — just when decentralisation was taking off and the national government was actually handing over responsibility for planning. Among the positions created in 1977 were those of Primary Planner and Post-Primary Planner. They have continued to exist even after decentralisation, and have chiefly been justified by the need for coordination.

During the same period, an entirely separate Provincial Opera-

tions Division was also created in the Department of Education. This division had a more explicit function of liaison and coordination, and in practice the two sections have sometimes duplicated each other. On occasions, this has caused inefficiency not only at the national level, where the same job has been done separately in two places, but also at the provincial level where officers have been requested to provide the same information to two different bodies. Sometimes duplication of requests has arisen from ignorance. At other times one suspects, it has arisen because both divisions have been trying to justify their existence.

Decentralisation has also required expansion at the regional level. The four RPA positions created in 1981 under the Education II project to provide advice and training and to liaise between the national and provincial governments were originally funded for two years, and one was extended for another four years. The UPNG training post was originally funded for four years, and was then extended for another two. All five posts were filled by expatriates on overseas contract terms.

The growth of administration has been most dramatic at the provincial level. The first factor which greatly increased the number of posts was the decision to create provinces out of the existing districts rather than from regions. Thus although Manus, for example, had a 1977 population of just 25,000, which elsewhere would have been equivalent in size to a small town, it was made a completely separate province requiring the same basic infrastructure as the others.

Secondly, although many of the new positions were justified by the assumption of new responsibilities, others were merely a response to local political pressures. Moreover, since many officers appointed to the new positions lacked necessary skills, major problems of inefficiency arose, and it became necessary to recruit yet more personnel to supervise and coordinate the rest. Had the provincial government structure been based on the four regions rather than the 19 districts, fewer officers would have been required to run the smaller number of bureaucracies, and the limited pool of talent would not have been stretched so far.

The growth of provincial bureaucracy may be illustrated by the pattern in East New Britain. This province has been singled out not because it is unusual but because the author has detailed

knowledge of its structure. Other provinces have been able more easily to justify bureaucratic expansion by pointing to greater growth of enrolments, but in all provinces the bureaucracy has expanded much faster than the system as a whole.

Between 1977 and 1983, community school enrolments in East New Britain expanded by 15 per cent. Provincial high school enrolments expanded by 7 per cent, and vocational centre enrolments by 29 per cent. The number of senior administrative officers, however, expanded by 208 per cent. At the time of decentralisation, the Division of Education was administered by the following provincial officers:

1   Assistant Secretary,
1   Provincial Administrative Officer, and
1   Provincial Adult Education Officer.

These people were supplemented by cleaners and typists employed through the Bureau of Management Services, and by the following national government personnel:

6   Community School Inspectors,
1   Curriculum Adviser,
1   Regional Secondary Inspector (plus two based in Rabaul but who served other provinces), and
1   Guidance Officer.

Between 1977 and 1983, the following provincial positions were created in East New Britain:

1   Senior Professional Assistant (Planning) (1979),
1   Film Unit Distributor (1979),
2   Provincial In-Service Training Officers (1980),
1   Cultural Officer (1980),
1   Lands and Building Officer (1981), and
1   Associate Provincial In-Service Training Officer (1982).

These personnel were supplemented by the following new national government posts:

1   Regional Vocational Inspector (1982),
1   Appointments Officer (1982),
1   Materials Officer (1982),
1   additional Community School Inspector (1983), and
1   College of External Studies (COES) Officer (1983).

Moreover, in 1983 a draft plan proposed to upgrade some staff and establish the following provincial posts:

1   Deputy Assistant Secretary (1984),
1   Statistical Clerk (1984),
1   Professional Assistant (Nonformal Education) (1984),
1   Artist (1984),
3   Provincial COES Coordinators (1984, 1985 and 1986),
1   PEB Executive Officer (1985),
1   Professional Assistant (Community Schools) (1985),
2   Audio-Visual Producers (1985),
1   Additional Provincial In-Service Training Officer (1986),
1   Professional Assistant (High Schools) (1986), and
2   Assistant Cultural Officers (1986).

This draft plan contained no cost or income estimates, and was later drastically reduced. For three reasons, it was a significant document, however. First, it reflected the expectations of those who drew it up, for although they did not enquire into the financial side they assumed both that money would be available and that the projected growth was a legitimate aspiration. At the provincial level, the lack of emphasis on productivity or efficiency during that period was not unusual. East New Britain had the benefits of greater locally generated revenues than most other provinces, but the so-called disadvantaged provinces received such large allocations from the national government that in many cases their expenditure on administration was even more lavish. Enga, for example drew up a proposal in 1983 to upgrade staff and expand its Education Division administrative personnel from seven officers to 30 (Department of Enga 1983).

Secondly, the East New Britain document reflected a malaise in the existing administrative system, for it was clear that many jobs needed to be done. Somewhat inadvisedly, perhaps, the architects of the proposal sought to solve problems by recruiting more staff rather than by persuading the existing staff to work more efficiently, and in the process they would have created yet more work since there would have been a further need for coordination, supervision, housing, construction of office space and so on. Nevertheless, they did correctly identify a need.

Thirdly, the document also reflected another type of administrative inefficiency. Had the architects of the plan been more skilled, they might have seen its shortcomings more rapidly and saved themselves the labour of discussing, writing and reproducing it.

Bureaucratic Growth and the Availability of Skills

This scarcity of professional competence at the time of decentralisation was of major importance, and is worth examining in greater depth. Not only did decentralisation suffer from the scarcity, but it also contributed to it and reduced the efficiency with which the other sectors of the economy operated. During the 1970s a series of policy decisions created severe shortages of skilled personnel and what McNamara (1983, 22) has called 'a chain of manpower disasters'. With the advent of self-government, new bureaucratic structures were established on the models of Australia and other more developed countries. Simultaneously, the process of localisation replaced many experienced expatriates with younger and less experienced nationals, and exacerbated pressures in the system. The demands of the private sector further reduced the availability of talent for the public service, and at the end of the decade this culminated in the creation of 19 provincial governments and thus a dramatic increase in manpower requirements.

In field of educational planning, the shortage of available skills was clearly demonstrated by the type of officer recruited for the posts of Senior Professional Assistant (Planning). When the SPAs were appointed in the late and early 1980s, few provincial governments clearly understood their intended functions. Even if they did understand, however, the chances of securing good people were slight, especially at the EO6 level.

The first recruits for the SPA position, therefore, were mostly former community school teachers who had come up through the system (Table 14). Two were former adult education officers, and two (plus a third who was an expatriate) were former secondary school teachers. Apart from the expatriate, only one was a graduate, and his degree was in history — which later proved not to have equipped him with the skills required by a planner (Bray 1984b). All the SPAs except one had teacher training, but several had only Grade 9 qualifications and were weak in mathematics and English. Moreover, in most provinces even the Assistant Secretaries did not have much stronger qualifications, and some were unable effectively to supervise and guide the SPAs.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that educational planning lacked momentum. It began to improve with the appointment of the RPAs and the launching of the University

Table 14: Qualifications and Previous Experience of Officers hold the SPA (Planning) Positions, January 1982

Province	Teacher Training	Highest Sec. Grade Completed	Post-Secondary Qualifications	Previous Work Experience
1	Yes	8	—	community school teacher
2	Yes	10 (2 subjs)	B.A.	secondary school teacher (expatriate)
3	Yes	10 (2 subjs)	—	community school teacher
4	Yes		6 mths Aust; 12 mths USA.	community school teacher; Church Education Secretary
5	Yes	9 (3 subjs)	—	community school headmaster
6	Yes	9	—	community school teacher
7	Yes	10 (2 subjs)	—	community school headmaster
8	Yes	10 (2 subjs)	—	community school headmaster
9	No	9 (1 subj)	tech. cert.	clerk
10	Yes	9	DES (Adult Ed.)	community school headmaster
11	Yes	9	Dip. (Language)	community school teacher; Adult Education Officer
12	Yes	10	—	community school headmaster
13	Yes	10	B.A. (History)	community school teacher; inspector
14	Yes	9	—	community school headmaster
15	Yes	10 (1 subj)	—	community school headmaster
16	Yes	10	DES (Primary)	community school headmaster
17	Yes	10	Dip Sec Teaching	secondary school teacher
18	Yes	10	—	community school teacher; inspector
19*	Yes	10	Diploma in Sec. Teaching	secondary school teacher; Appointments Officer
20*	Yes	10	DES (Curric.)	community school headmaster; inspector Curriculum Adviser

* Holding positions as of March 1982

DES course, but even then was faced with major obstacles. For example, although the DES course was designed specifically for SPAs and began by taking all those who held the positions at the time, it soon became evident that a few could not keep up with the studies, even with the very practical assistance of the RPAs. Before the end of the first year of the course, three of the original cohort of 17 students had either dropped out or been terminated — but they remained in the SPA positions and only their provincial governments had power to move them. From the viewpoint of productivity in planning, their continued occupation of the posts was a major cause of inefficiency. The fact that they were not moved was partly attributable to political factors, but also reflected the scarcity of skills elsewhere, first because there was little effective competition for the post and second because another reason for inertia was the general lack of competence in the rest of the bureaucracy.

One of the problematic provinces, moreover, was New Ireland, which is in the supposedly more developed Islands Region. In that province the SPA rapidly dropped out of the DES course, but was soon given the even more important post of acting Assistant Secretary. While he occupied this post, the SPA position lay vacant and the administration ran into serious difficulties. For over a year, however, the provincial authorities showed no inclination to appoint either an assistant or a replacement.

The picture was not totally bleak, for others on the DES course did well and 18 of the 19 provinces did produce at least a community school plan by the end of 1982. Moreover the publicity connected with the project created a notable level of awareness and helped, among other things, to permit the planners to concentrate on their proper jobs.

The continuing scarcity of skilled personnel contributed to major turnover, however, which in turn increased inefficiency. Furthermore, when the studies of the first cohort on the DES concluded, another setback occurred. In order further to expand the availability of skills and improve the long term situation, the best students were offered places on the B.Ed. course. But since this course required two years of full-time study, in the short run it again reduced the level of skills actually available in the provinces — especially since only the best students were offered

B.Ed. places, and the poorer ones remained.

A general paucity of skills among national headquarters employees also reduced the efficiency with which the system operated. It was widely felt at the provincial level that headquarters staff were not providing adequate support and guidance, and indeed that they sometimes obstructed provincial activities. Similar criticisms were also levied in the opposite direction however. Thus both headquarters and provincial staff sometimes described each other as arrogant and incompetent.

In some provinces, tension also existed between provincial government officers and national government staff who were locally deployed. Although the inspectors, materials officers, appointments officers and curriculum advisers occupied provincial office space, they were not formally under the direction of the provincial Assistant Secretary. Some of the national government officers were frustrated because they felt caught in the middle of conflicting demands, and some Assistant Secretaries felt frustrated first because they had no formal control over the movements of the national officers, and second because the latter were sometimes unwilling to be co-opted onto committees. During 1983, one province was particularly concerned that the Regional Vocational Inspector arrived in the province on a regular basis but never submitted reports of his findings, let alone recommendations for provincial action.

Where tensions existed, once again they were often attributable to a general lack of skills and confidence. The people most likely to stick to the letter of a duty statement and to stand on their dignity are those who lack the confidence to do otherwise. Similarly, it requires a good grasp of the situation for an individual to be able to look ahead and to forestall problems rather than merely to react to events. Such confidence and ability could not be built up overnight, especially in the face of so many competing demands for skilled personnel.

Political Development and Efficiency

Since the structure adopted in Papua New Guinea involved substantial political devolution as well as administrative deconcentration, the costs, background and skills of the politicians were at least as important as those of the bureaucrats. Once again, the

decision to create 19 provinces had major implications for the nature of developments. In many provinces, the demand for experienced and sophisticated leaders was greater than could be supplied.

On the cost side, Tordoff (1982, 6-11) points out that the salary bills of provincial politicians are high, and are made greater by addition of elements which are not strictly essential. In 1982 East New Britain, for example, had 12 ministers out of an Assembly of 20, and Milne Bay had 10 ministers out of an Assembly of 17. Most provincial governments provided assembly members with sitting allowances, and several gave their ministers official cars. In East New Britain, moreover, the vehicles were intended to become the ministers' personal property after a period of two years. In 1982, a national government tribunal also raised the salaries of provincial politicians. On the new scale, premiers of large provinces received K12,735 per annum and ministers received K9,551, while in small provinces the premier received K8,295 and ministers K6,367 (*Post Courier*, 21 January 1982). This remuneration was very high when compared to the incomes of ordinary villagers, and added weight to charges that the system was elitist.

With regard to experience, Tordoff (1981, 10) pointed out that:

> The main political experience of provincial assembly members has been in small-scale politics at local government, community or village level, though many broadened this experience by subsequent membership of the Interim Provincial Assembly (some forty per cent in the case of Eastern Highlands) and the odd member has served as a national parliamentarian. Many assemblymen are farmers..., and some have business interests, usually on a modest scale. Members have limited or even no formal education: thus, only about one third of the members who were returned to the Eastern Highlands Provincial Assembly in November 1978 could speak English....

Inevitably, politicians who do not speak English are severely handicapped in a situation where all legislation and most government business is conducted in that language, and the efficiency with which they can operate is impaired.

Table 15: Background of Provincial Ministers for Education, May 1983

Province	Background
Western	community school teacher
Gulf	farmer; member of Gulf District Advisory Committee 1960-68; only reached Std 4; little English
Central	Bureau of Management Services clerk
Milne Bay	community school teacher
Oro	Corrective Services Institution officer
Southern Highlands	farmer; Grade 7 leaver; limited English
Enga	truck driver; businessman; very little English
Western Highlands	Lutheran Pastor; little English
Chimbu	Lutheran Pastor
Eastern Highlands	motor mechanic
Morobe	community school teacher; Primary Industries extension officer
Madang	farmer and Council member; no formal education
East Sepik	high school teacher trained at Goroka Teachers' College; businessman
West Sepik	community school teacher
Manus	community school teacher
New Ireland	community school teacher
East New Britain	community school teacher; businessman
West New Britain	community school teacher
North Solomons	community school teacher and inspector

Source: Provincial Divisions of Education.

The background of provincial Ministers for Education has tended to be more helpful to their role than that of most other provincial politicians, however. Table 15 indicates that a significant number were former teachers, and many were given the portfolio because of that fact. These people were at least able to speak reasonable English and to understand the basic operation of the education system.

Nevertheless, in the political context it is even more difficult to establish the meaning of efficiency, and the interests of politicians do not always coincide with those of bureaucrats. some politicians would consider the system efficient if they could direct a substantial portion of resources to their own constituencies. With this, however, bureaucrats might not agree. In many provinces there have existed tensions between the politicians and the bureaucracy which have raised the question who was the servant of whom. In questioning whether the politicians were really representatives of their people or whether their requests were always being made in the name of the people, some bureaucrats were effectively questioning the premises on which the entire system was based. On their part, many politicans felt that they were entitled to direct the operation of the system as they saw fit, and were frustrated when that power did not seem in reality to be accorded them. Another criterion of efficiency, therefore, might be the extent to which politicians and bureaucrats work in harmony.

Examples of what bureaucrats would call political decisions, meaning ones made by politicians principally on criteria other than administrative efficiency, are not hard to find. Two instances from Chimbu were provided by Standish (1981, 295-8). He showed that provincial politicians in the mid and late 1970s did not adhere to a list of educational priorities drawn up in their name and at their behest. The list gave first place to vocational training, and second place to incorporation of appropriate skills for village living in community schools. In practice, however, the politicians tended to make *ad hoc* decisions without consulting their professional staff. Standish documents a decision which led to the closure of the province's only National Education System vocational centre, the installation of a prison on its site, and, incidentally, the surrender to the national government (which is responsible for prisons) of the provincial government's best piece of flat land. He also documents confusion and inconsistency over SSCEP proposals for Kerowagi High School, in which the Premier reversed his earlier stands and abandoned the designs of both the Provincial Planner and the Provincial Secretary.

In similar fashion, political pressures were evident in proposals for Jimi High School in Western Highlands and Lufa High School in Eastern Highlands. In both cases, the schools were difficult to

justify in terms of economic efficiency, but in both instances they were actively demanded by senior provincial politicians. Lufa, for example, was the constituency of the provincial Premier, who had already arranged the construction of a road at great cost. However, it was very close to the existing Bena Bena High School, and in bureaucratic terms it was much easier to argue for a day high school in Goroka, where the population was greater.

Such pressures were not confined to the Highlands. Perhaps one of the greatest instances of political ascendancy over bureaucratic considerations was the opening of Bundrahi High School in Manus. The province has a very small population and revenue base, and already had a high secondary school enrolment rate. On narrowly defined criteria, it was difficult to justify the establishment of a third secondary school at all, and particularly one at Bundrahi, which was at the extreme western tip of Manus Island, accessible only by sea and frequently cut off. However, the provincial Minister for Education, who later became Deputy Premier, pushed hard for the school. Political considerations prevailed, and the school was opened in 1983.

From the viewpoints of the bureaucrats, in these instances the system of decentralised government caused inefficiency. Had the provincial politicians not existed, the bureaucrats would have had greater freedom to act according to their own wishes (though they would still have been subject to direction by national government politicians). However, one must ask whose criteria should be used during discussion of efficiency, for although the bureaucrats may not have approved of the decisions on school location, presumably neither the politicians nor the people of Jimi, Lufa and Bundrahi agreed with them. Moreover, when the Manusian bureaucrats said that the province did not have enough money for Bundrahi, what they really meant was not that the money did not exist but that the school did not rank high on the priorities they themselves preferred. The national Minister for Education applauded the opening of the Bundrahi school, and said that it showed how well the system of decentralisation was operating. In making this statement, however, he was using yet another definition of efficiency, for he was chiefly pleased that the school had been financed from provincial funds with no assistance from national government coffers.

The personalities and abilities of the national ministers for Education are as important as those of the provincial ministers. In Chapter 3 it was pointed out that the Department of Education has been at the forefront in its efforts to make decentralisation work, and that in recent years this has been to a large extent due to the personalities of its ministers. During the 'free education' debacle, the existence of decentralised powers proved less than convenient to Sam Tulo, who was the national Minister at that time. However, Tulo also initiated the annual conferences of Ministers for Education — a tradition which was carried on by his successor, Barry Holloway. Both Tulo and Holloway were also anxious to turn the NEC delegations into a stronger form of law, and though Tulo became disillusioned with its complexity and abandoned the project, it was taken up again by Holloway. Had these two ministers been either less able or more obstructive, the contradictions and inefficiencies of the education system would probably have been greater than they were.

Decentralisation and the Creation of Work

To a considerable extent, it is suggested, the introduction of decentralisation itself created work. The ratio between bureaucrats and teachers was reduced, administrative systems ceased to have economies of scale, and there arose needs for coordination and training. The introduction of decentralisation also meant that decisions which were formerly made by one body now had to be made by 19. Apart from creating work, this change also slowed down the process of achieving a set of decisions and introduced a confusing element of diversity. In some cases the change could be justified by the benefits of participation, but in other cases the benefits were peripheral and the costs were more apparent.

The policy on Grade 8 leavers provides one instance in which decentralisation would seem to have caused inefficiency without great benefits from participation. It was pointed out in Chapter 6 that until the early 1980s it had been the practice for high schools to terminate about one third of their Grade 8 pupils and to have a smaller Grade 9. In 1980, the national Minister for Education issued a policy statement (No. 6/80) favouring a four year programme for all secondary schools. Because planning of high schools had been devolved, the Minister could only provide guid-

ance, and could not issue a directive. In this instance, devolution caused confusion. Few provinces produced any clear policies until 1983, when they were pressured into doing so by the national Department of Education requirements for provincial education plans. East Sepik, for example, failed to produce a clear policy even then (East Sepik Province 1983). In the meantime, some schools in some provinces blocked up while others did not. And in some cases blocked up schools were later told to unblock when the provinces finally did produce clear policies.

If the Department of Education had issued a directive either favouring or opposing the four year programme, the confusion and inefficiency could have been avoided and it is doubtful whether many complaints would have been heard. Devolution of high school selection policy determination did have more positive aspects, but in this area also, decentralisation led to confusion and inefficiency. Had the national authorities been empowered to issue directives on these two subjects, a great deal of confusion, paper work and discussion could have been avoided in all 19 provinces.

Conclusions

When the National Education System was established in 1970, it seems to have been generally agreed that it could not be administered entirely from Port Moresby. Moreover, at that time there were only 1,600 primary schools, 66 high schools and 81 vocational centres. A decade later there were 2,100 primary schools, 97 high schools and 88 vocational centres, and the system was still growing fast. Only with a decentralised structure could one hope for realistic awareness of local conditions and therefore realistic planning.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, however, all sectors of the economy and administration were acutely short of skilled manpower, and suffered consequent inefficiency. The situation was made worse by decentralisation, and by the fact that the government chose to create 19 provinces rather than a smaller number based on the regions. Skilled personnel who were available were severely stretched, and the demands of the provinces also reduced the supply available to the national government.

To reduce these problems, massive investment was required.

Through Education II and other projects, a considerable amount was provided. Even so, more investment is needed, for the needs are major and the officers many. Even more necessary is experience, and that cannot be acquired overnight. In the early years therefore, it seemed that a lot of money was being wasted through inefficiencies in the system. One fact to be applauded is that the Department of Education was willing to spend yet more money, not 'to throw good money after bad' but to concentrate on improving the administration so that the resources which were already being used might give a better return.

The Department of Education also probably found the most effective balance between those powers it decided to devolve and those it decided to retain. Had it adhered to the letter of the Organic Law rather than encouraged the subsequent NEC delegations, provincial frustration would probably have had even more disruptive effects both in the education system and in the polity as a whole. The system in which some national government staff were deployed alongside provincial officers at the provincial level did not always work smoothly, but it is difficult to think of a system which would have maintained coherence more effectively. Moreover, as the 1980s progressed, tensions generally declined as both parties became accustomed to their own and each others' roles.

Because Papua New Guinea embarked on political as well as administrative decentralisation, this chapter has also examined the background of provincial politicians. The introduction of this political element makes it much harder to decide either what is meant by efficiency or what the final balance sheet looks like. The introduction of political decentralisation provided a safety valve and permitted leaders in the North Solomons, for example, to develop a system of Viles Tok Ples Skuls which they felt gave much greater prominence to their own culture and values. It has also led to less successful projects, among which could be included the East New Britain attempt to introduce universal schooling up to Grade 10. However, it is difficult to say where the balance of benefits and problems lay. Thus although the political input has influenced the siting of schools and often involved what the bureaucrats would call waste, the politicians themselves and the people in the areas where the schools were

sited might not agree with the bureaucrats' definitions.

As time goes on, the skills of provincial politicians will probably increase, and they will gain a better understanding of their bureaucracies. From the bureaucratic viewpoint, it is difficult to say whether this will improve efficiency. When politicians have very little understanding of the system, as was the case in several provinces during the early days of decentralisation, bureaucrats generally have more freedom to run the system as they like. At the same time, unsophisticated ministers are often accused of making unhelpful public statements, of making excessive demands, and of giving unrealistic promises. They are also less likely to be able either to guide legislation through provincial assemblies or to bargain effectively for extra allocations of funds. Better educated and more sophisticated politicians, on the other hand, may be more effective assemblymen, but may cause more problems for the bureaucrats precisely because they are more adept at manipulating the system.

From the standpoints of both bureaucrats and politicians, the system displayed considerable inefficiency during the early days of decentralisation, principally because it was so heavily decentralised and available talent was spread so thinly. The Department of Education has invested heavily in improving efficiency, and, despite obstacles, appears to be succeeding. The politicians are also becoming more efficient. When bureaucrats' views of efficiency clash with political views, the matter of which views are more important is too subjective to permit definitive judgement.

CHAPTER 8
PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

One fundamental objective of decentralisation in Papua New Guinea, as in most other countries (see for example, Nyerere 1972), is stimulation of participation in decision-making. The philosophy proclaimed by the Constitutional Planning Committee (1974, 10/1) was that:

> Power must be returned to the people. Decisions should be made by the people to whom the issues at stake are meaningful, easily understood and relevant. The existing system of government should therefore be restructured and power should be decentralized so that the energies and aspirations of our people can play their full part in promoting our country's development.

Advocates of participation argue that it is a form of development in itself, and is likely both to lead to the 'right' decisions and to promote effective implementation of policies. The extent to which participation has increased can therefore provide a major index of the success or failure of decentralisation. Like the concept of efficiency, however, participation is an imprecise term open to subjective interpretation and taking many forms.

Moreover even if one accepts these arguments in favour of participation, it must be recognised that organisational and financial factors limit participation in practice. Pushed to its logical extreme, full participation would require a referendum on every decision, and practice is impossible to organise. For financial reasons the exercises would be counter-productive, and in any case even referenda on major issues rarely stimulate responses from a proportion even approaching 100 per cent of eligible voters. Some people fail to perceive the ways in which issues relate to them personally, and others fail to vote even when they

do see how issues will affect them. Moreover, even when information is readily available, a large number of people lack the technical expertise and general background to reach a balanced decision. This is as true in education as in other spheres, and however much one might agree with the Constitutional Planning Committee's basic philosophy, it should be pointed out that issues which are relevant are *not* always easily understood.

Given that it is impossible for the whole population to participate in making all decisions, the question becomes who should participate, and on what basis. The Papua New Guinean answer has lain in both the bureaucratic and political spheres. The form of administrative decentralisation introduced by the 1970 Education Act allowed for participation of some groups on professional boards at all levels. The advent of democratic government and the replacement of the Director of Education and the Administrator by the Secretary for Education and Minister allowed for participation by popularly elected politicians, and the advent of provincial governments took political participation one stage further. Questions still arise over the nature of participation, however. Bureaucrats and politicians do not always operate in harmony, and it is sometimes questionable whether either really act on behalf of the people they claim to serve.

The Legal Basis for Participation in Educational Decision-Making

During the framing of the 1970 Education Act, the most important issue concerned the terms on which government and churches would join forces. The Weeden Report took considerable pains to appreciate mission educational activities and to stress that the new system would be one of partnership rather than take-over. Section 7 (1) of the 1970 Education Act emphasised the desire for 'maximum involvement' of the churches, and specific provision was made for church representation at all levels. While recognising 'the desirability of preserving the identity and character of schools and colleges ... (whether of a religious or other nature ...)', the Act did also specify that pupils could not be excluded from schools on religious grounds and that they could not be compelled to attend religious instruction. Section 12 (1) also prohibited the establishment or maintenance of facilities 'in a manner inconsistent with any applicable approved

[District or Territory] plan'. However, the overall tone encouraged involvement, and most of the original provisions were repeated in the 1983 Act.

The 1970 Act also made careful provision for participation by other groups. Membership of both the District Education Boards (DEBs) and the Territory Education Board (TEB) specifically provided for two Local Government Council (LGC) representatives. Membership of the TEB also included two representatives of business and civic interests, and on each DEB were two representatives of the 'District Community', nominated by the District Commissioner on the recommendation of the Superintendent of Education. Further, according to Section 49, one function of DEBs was:

in consultation with Local Government Councils and education agencies in the District, to draw up and submit for consideration of the Territory Education Board plans for the establishment and development of schools in the District.

Under the 1983 Act, PEBs were required only to submit their plans for information rather than approval. Provincial governments were also empowered to pass their own acts to change the composition of PEBs. Unless they did so, however, the requirements of local government and agency consultation were unchanged, and in practice no provincial government was anxious to alter the provisions.

Section 65 of the 1970 Act spelled out the role of LGCs in greater detail. They were permitted to become agencies which ran schools, and as such became responsible for their physical maintenance. Each one was also expected:

to draw up plans for the establishment of primary schools and vocational centres in its area, and to submit such plans to the District Education Boards with a list of suggested priorities and a statement of the extent to which it is prepared and is legally capable of financing any program ... and to advise and make recommendations to a District Education Board on such matters relating to education ... as to it seem proper.

Between 1970 and 1983, LGCs in some provinces were re-designed and renamed Community Governments, but the provisions of the 1983 Act are basically the same as before.

Finally, the 1970 and 1983 Acts also made specific provision for primary school and vocational centre Boards of Management and for secondary school Boards of Governors. Membership of the former was to be 'broadly representative of the community served by the school'. The Boards were responsible for planning, provision and maintenance of school buildings, pupil enrolments, and:

> within the general framework of policy established under this Ordinance, and the philosophy of the education agency conducting the school or centre, for determining the aims and goals of the school or centre and for supervising the achievement of those aims and goals (1970 Act, Section 72).

Boards of Governors were to include representatives of the agency, the DEB, the LGCs, the Parents' and Citizens' Association, and 'other persons with special knowledge and experience of education or with a special interest in the educational and cultural life of the area'. The functions of Boards of Governors were broadly similar to those of the Boards of Management.

Administrative Decentralisation and Participation in Practice

It is, of course, one thing to pass a law allowing for participation, and quite another to foster it and keep it balanced. The decentralised unitary framework introduced in 1970 endeavoured to devolve decision-making to local and District bodies, but in practice often led to indecision and domination. Throughout the 1970s, few local government or mission agencies, if any, forwarded written plans to a DEB/PEB for approval, and no DEB/PEB forwarded a plan to the TEB/NEB. Most Boards were constituted according to the legal requirements, but attendance was often poor and discussion was often dominated by technical staff. Many decisions, if they were taken at all, were often made in an *ad hoc* way and with little consultation.

In education, the chief role of local governments has been in the construction and maintenance of community schools. In the

North Solomons, Community Governments (as they were called after 1978) have also played an active role with the VTPS schools, and in several provinces local governments have helped establish high schools. It has usually been easier to promote participation during the early stages of a project, however, and it has been uncommon for enthusiasm to remain high for a long period of time.

In a broader perspective, the General Constitutional Commission was critical of the role of the local governments. It commented (1980, 78) that:

> What the kiap says in a Council meeting is what the Councillors will nod their heads to in agreement. Meaningful popular participation in decision making were [sic] virtually lacking. What was apparent was the tendency to deny the right of the people to acquire decision making responsibility on matters affecting their local situation.

The Commission did also note that almost every local government was different, and that this was one area in which the diversity of the country manifested itself most clearly. Apart from the North Solomons and East New Britain, however, the Commission felt that local government had been neglected by policy makers during the 1970s.

One reason why local governments were neglected was that general attention focused on the provincial level. Having only just acquired power themselves, few provincial politicians were inclined to hand it to local governments, and the Organic Law gave provincial authorities almost complete control of local ones. A council could not be abolished without NEC consent, but the financial arrangements introduced at the time of decentralisation allowed provincial governments to take over some forms of local government revenue, including head and entertainment taxes (Regan 1982b, 7). When viewed from the local level, therefore, the Organic Law centralised authority and decision-making power.

It has also proved difficult to promote effective participation at the school level. A few provinces have made periodic attempts to foster Board of Management and Board of Governors involve-

ment, but even in these provinces 'involvement' has tended to mean Boards acting as agents for the government. Boards have been able to levy fees within specified limits, but they have not been able to appoint or dismiss teachers, let alone determine the language in which children are taught or other major aspects of the syllabus. O'Hara's (1980) study of Boards of Governors indicated widespread uncertainty about their functions, and in some cases provincial and national government directives have failed to take the role of Boards into account at all. This problem appears to be longstanding. O'Hara (1981, 63) refers to a 1972 survey in which only 39 out of 58 headteachers who responded to a questionnaire correctly identified power of student expulsion as resting only with Boards of Governors, and suggests that general awareness of roles did not greatly improve during the decade. As Voi (1983, 61) has pointed out, effective participation also requires a great deal of time, and at both community and high school level, Board activities have been highly dependent on the personalities of the headteachers.

Another obstacle to Papua New Guinean participation has been the low rate of localisation in both the bureaucracies and the churches. The education sector has been relatively progressive in this area, and did achieve total localisation of primary school staff in 1974. The rate of localisation in the administration has also been relatively fast, for the number of Papua New Guineans holding posts at level nine or above rose from 7 per cent in 1968 to 21 per cent in 1972 and 40 per cent in 1974 (McNamara 1974, 178). By virtue of their cultural and educational backgrounds, however, expatriates have continued to have influential, though less obvious, roles.

The implications of localisation, and in particular of differential rates of localisation, were underestimated at the time of the establishment of the National Education System. In 1970, almost all Education Superintendents and Church Education Secretaries were expatriates. During the next few years, the Superintendent positions were localised more rapidly than the Church Education Secretary ones. This tended to give the latter greater power than they would otherwise have had, particularly because the manpower requirements of decentralisation caused indigenous talent to be spread thinly. At Independence, a large number of mis-

sionaries became Papua New Guinea citizens, and were thus able to continue to hold Church Education Secretary and other positions. In the early 1980s, some of these individuals still played a dominant role in PEBs, and their influence was greater than it would have been in a centralised system.

Expatriates also held other key positions during the early 1980s. Although the top posts of the Department of Education had been localised, a middle tier of project managers, curriculum writers, training officers and the legal officer were expatriate contract employees. During the 1981-83 thrust to get education plans written in every province, the expatriate Regional Planning Advisers and the coordinator of the university training course were key personnel. Even though these officers were not in obvious decision-making positions, they were influential from the background.

In another context, the influence of middle-level expatriates may be illustrated by a specific example, namely the formation of a policy on a four-year high school programme in East New Britain. For several years, the East New Britain government effectively had no policy on Grade 8 push-outs. Two of the eight schools did block up in the early 1980s, however, chiefly on the initiative of their expatriate headmasters, with verbal approval of the Assistant Secretary. In 1983, under pressure to draw up a provincial plan, the Assistant Secretary requested the SPA (Planning) and the RPA to produce a plan to push out some Grade 8s from all schools, but having a higher transition rate than before. This was done, and the draft was approved by most headmasters in individual meetings. At a subsequent meeting of all headmasters, however, the policy was reversed, and some headmasters adopted a different stance from the one they had taken previously. The majority were expatriate, and as a group were considerably more vocal than their Papua New Guinean colleagues. They successfully persuaded the Assistant Secretary to change the policy. This example is detailed not to suggest that one policy is better or worse than the other, but to illustrate how and by whom the policy was made. The Assistant Secretary recommended the four year programme to the PEB, which recommended it to the Minister, and it was duly approved. But if the Assistant Secretary had recommended the earlier policy to the PEB, there is no

reason to suppose that the Board or the Minister would have rejected it.

In this instance, although the decision was not necessarily to the detriment of the people of East New Britain, participation in decision-making was not completely by the people intended by the architects of decentralisation. With time, all the headmasters' positions will be localised, and decisions will at least be made wholly by Papua New Guineans. Even then, however, there is no reason to suppose that great reference will be made to the preferences of the majority of people in the province. In the example just given, the decision was chiefly based on professional criteria concerning the internal running of schools, and to the people of East New Britain there was no particular benefit from the decision having been made in Rabaul rather than Port Moresby.

Political Participation in Decision-Making

The architects of decentralisation hoped that the introduction of provincial government would generate a new set of politicians with particularly strong village links and accountability. This argument was partly based on the suggestion that it is more difficult to become divorced from village life-styles and aspirations in a provincial headquarters than it is in a Port Moresby air-conditioned office (Conyers 1981, 226). It was also suggested that ordinary people would find it easier and less forbidding to visit provincial offices than to come to Port Moresby, and many provincial politicians have spent a considerable portion of the year actually in their home villages, particularly when the provincial assembly has not been in session.

In practice, however, the attempt to generate a body of politicians representative of their electorates and to improve village links and accountability has worked poorly in some provinces. Standish (1981, 286-8) shows that in Chimbu, for example, the members of the first provincial assembly were part of a very small economic and political elite. The Chimbu people latched onto the democratic system with enthusiasm, and despite a K100 deposit to stand, the seven seats in the 1977 national election were contested by 105 people (Griffin et al. 1979, 241). However, a chief attraction of office seemed to be less a desire to serve a group of people than to gain access to power and the material

benefits which accompanied it. The impact of so many contestants for each seat was that the vote was split. Iambakey Okuk, for example, won his seat in 1977 with just 22 per cent of the vote, and some seats were won with just 12 per cent (Standish 1977). Standish concluded his 1981 study (p. 303) with the suggestion that:

> The interests of provincial government personnel as members of a tiny elite are not the same as those of the mass. Yet given Melanesian political cultures and the fragmented social structure, there is no effective electoral accountability because politicians need only cultivate a tiny sector of their electorate and can afford to ignore the majority and still survive.

While the number of people contesting seats was not so great in all provinces, questions of electoral accountability have been widespread. Saffu's (1983) criticism of West Sepik is as trenchant as Standish's analysis of Chimbu. Especially in the early days of provincial government, provincial politicians openly awarded themselves sitting allowances, overseas trips, business contracts and other benefits. The ostentation of these actions contributed to widespread hostility to decentralisation and in 1983 to national Parliament moves to withdraw the Organic Law. At this time, even Michael Somare told a conference of provincial premiers 'I don't believe all of you are representing your people' (*Post Courier*, 24 May 1983). Despite considerable turnover of politicians at each election, however, many reacted not by attempting to serve their electorates better but by grabbing as much of the spoils of office as they could while the going was good.

Bureaucratic-Political Relations and the Control of Knowledge

In an ideal situation, bureaucrats and politicians work in harmony for the benefit of the majority of the population, at the same time guarding the rights and needs of minorities. In practice, as this book has illustrated, the two groups have often failed to work in harmony, and politicians have frequently forced issues which bureaucrats have felt not to be for the greatest good of the greatest number of people. Some examples of schools arguably sited in less than optimal places were pointed in Chapter 7, and

other examples of 'political' decisions are not hard to find.

Despite the theoretical structure in which politicians, as elected representatives of their people, instruct the bureaucracies, on the way to allocate resources, in practice the bureaucrats have a great deal of power and are even less accountable to the people. In a broad context, Sir John Guise, commenting on the 1982 national budget, pointed out that there were

eight (8) documents totalling 1024 pages making up the budget papers.... The complexity of the appropriation/budget/ estimate cycle is such that even we seasoned politicians find it difficult each year to come to grasp the process which tends to concentrate the real power for the operation in the hands of a selected band of technocrats who devised the system (quoted by Crawley 1982b, 11).

Sir John, as he says, was a seasoned politician, and had a good grasp both of the English language and of bureaucratic procedures. For politicians with neither of these assets, control of the bureaucracy was much less. And for the general public, who do not even have access to budget documents, let alone the skills to interpret them, the obstacles to participation are greater still.

In this context, it is worth noting that very few official documents are translated into Tok Pisin or are abbreviated to bring out the salient points. Four exceptions are the National Development Strategy, the North Solomons annual budget documents, the Morobe Provincial Government 'Tuam Declaration' and the Chimbu Development Study (Howlett et al. 1976). In 1984, Morobe also began to translate its education plan into Tok Pisin, though it was the only provincial government to do so. The list of documents is not impressive, therefore, and would hardly give a politician, even in one of the three provinces to which the documents refer, a broad understanding of proposed development objectives and strategies. Moreover, the Tok Pisin versions are often published substantially after their English counterparts, and are still obscure to a large number of people. With reference to the Chimbu study, Standish (1981, 290) notes that the Tok Pisin version did not become available until November 1977 — a full year after the English version and long after the provincial gov-

ernment had held a major seminar on the study. In any case, Standish suggests, very few of the provincial leaders were functionally literate even in Tok Pisin. Moreover the Assembly members, Standish informs us (p. 290-1),

resented being lectured (as they appeared to be) by idealistic young university students, who not only tried to explain the Green Book (sometimes in very academically jargonized tok pisin), but who also promoted their own vision of a communal rather than individual enterprise.... During the March seminar, ... the exercise did not involve substantial participation by the provincial executive members, none of whom have sufficient literacy in tok pisin to handle the issues being raised in the documents circulated.

In other instances, politicians have taken a stronger role in policy determination, but have not always done so for the benefit of the rural majority. One such instance is that of high school selection. It was pointed out in Chapter 6 that during the early 1970s senior Department of Education officers became concerned about the impact of selection solely by examination which, they argued, discriminated against rural areas. Accordingly, a quota system was introduced to assist rural schools. The quota was not introduced in response to pressure from the villages, for the change was made before the advent of democratic government, and in any case, Department of Education officials pointed out, villagers were unable to exert pressure simply because they were educationally disadvantaged and could neither gain access to nor understand the selection procedures. In effect, therefore, the Department was acting as a benevolent autocrat.

With the advent of democracy and devolution, selection processes have moved towards total examination systems. Not all provinces adopted complete examination systems immediately after decentralisation (Bray 1982b). In at least one case (Southern Highlands) this was because on this matter the bureaucray still had greater control than the polity, however, and in other cases it was merely because both the bureaucracy and the polity were disorganised. By 1981, however, East New Britain, Western Highlands, Chimbu and New Ireland had moved to total ex-

amination selection, and Oro had done so with only minor mod-
ification.

To some extent, the bureaucrats favoured the change to a total
examination system because it was much easier to operate than a
combined examination/quota system. However, total examina-
tion was also demanded by politicians based in urban areas who
were aware that rural children with low marks were being
selected instead of some urban children with higher marks. They
favoured the total examination system even though it was easily
demonstrable that it discriminated against rural communities
(Guthrie and Kemelfield 1980; Bray 1984c; Seta and Weeks
1984), but, as the Department of Education had noted earlier,
they met little opposition from the villages simply because the
system was geared against them. Indeed, not only did few
villagers have a voice in the formation of selection policies, very
few understood either what existing policies were or that there
was a choice. Urban parents, on the other hand, tended to be
better educated, to have greater access to information, and to be
in closer touch with both the bureaucrats and the politicians.

Conclusions
The creation of 400 provincial politicians in addition to the 100
national parliamentarians has greatly increased opportunities for
individuals both to bring grievances to the attention of politicians
and to become politicians. The smaller sizes of provincial electo-
rates and the narrower foci of provincial assemblies have meant
that specific rural communities have received a degree of atten-
tion which would have been impossible in a centralised system.
Some districts, such as Pomio in East New Britain (Bray 1984c),
have also been able to attract more attention by campaigning to
become separate provinces and threatening to secede. It is true
that provincial ministers probably spend a greater proportion of
their time actually in their villages than do their national counter-
parts. And Conyers' point (1981, 226) about the mental as well as
the physical distance between the villages and air-conditioned
offices in Port Moresby as opposed to provincial headquarters is
also probably valid, though many provincial governments have
now erected prestigious buildings which are less in keeping with
village styles.

At the same time, the experiences of the late 1970s and early
1980s suggested that a large number of provincial politicians
merely exploited their positions for their own ends, and were
neither representative of their electorates nor particularly anxious
to hear their constituents' opinions. Some politicians were worse
than others in this regard, and one should not generalise too far
from the Chimbu experience, for example. Nevertheless, the
problem was widespread.

In addition, bureaucracies have continued to be at least as
powerful after decentralisation as before. Education is a topic on
which most people tend to have strong opinions, but it is also a
very amorphous subject, and opinions are frequently vague and
unrealistic. Thus opinions that the country should plan for instant
universal primary and secondary education, or for more agri-
cultural emphasis, or for improved (but undefined) standards are
generally of little use to the planner in practice. In reality, there-
fore, the politicians and people have to take a lot on trust from
technocrats, and the real decision-making is frequently left to
planners and other office workers. Information on staffing availa-
bility or the NPEP and budgetary processes, for example, has not
been readily available to ordinary people, and even if it were
available would still not be easily comprehended.

Considerable scope for formal consultation was institutional-
ised in the 1970 Act and extended in the 1983 Act. Even active
PEB members find it difficult to keep abreast of detailed events,
however, and some representation is little more than token.
Similarly, the appointment of Boards of Management and Boards
of Governors has provided a forum for village-level participation
in school, though in practice their powers have not been wide and
it is difficult to see how they could be made wider. Moreover,
although the 1983 Education Act repeated the provisions of its
predecessor with regard to local government participation, the
Organic Law actually reduced the powers of local governments.
They are now directly under the control of provincial govern-
ments, and it is not surprising that where the latter do not
operate too well, local governments do not operate too well
either.

Finally, it is worth commenting on the importance of participa-
tion itself. Conyers (1981, 218-9) suggests that:

There is ... a strong feeling in Papua New Guinea that parti-
cipation in government is an important end in itself. This may
be attributed partly to traditional systems of decision-making
which involved people at village or clan level. However, it may
also be due to the relative 'subsistence affluence' of Papua New
Guinea society, which allows more time and resources to be
devoted to politics and participation in decision-making for its
own sake. Activities which in many countries would be classed
as 'leisure' or part-time activities are valued highly in Papua
New Guinea, and involvement in local level politics is one of
the most important of these.

In practice, the system of government could continue to operate
in a 'top-down' fashion. However, especially in view of the
Melanesian traditions, the attempt to increase participation with-
in the new, westernised form of government is desirable.

In conclusion, decentralisation has increased the participation
of certain groups in decision-making. This has not always been a
straightforward process, and it has not always occurred accord-
ing to the original vision of the system. In some ways, moreover,
decentralisation has reduced participation. Nevertheless, the
overall balance is positive, and continued effort to improve the
operation of the system could increase participation further.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS FROM THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN EXPERIENCE

This final chapter ties together the threads that have been woven
so far. It summarises Papua New Guinea's experiences with
planning and decentralisation, and considers their implications
for future developments in that country and for other countries
which might be contemplating similar systems.

The Structure of Government in Papua New Guinea
During the early years of Australian rule, the administrative
structure was highly decentralised. At the District and Sub-
District levels, government centred on the generalist kiaps, who
had wide-ranging powers. The chief reason for this structure was
that communications systems were too poor for any other to be
feasible.

After the second world war, the role of the kiaps was substan-
tially reduced. Communications infrastructure was improved,
specialist departments were established, and more decisions were
made in Canberra. A major figure in the centralisation process
was Paul Hasluck, who was Minister for Territories from 1951 to
1964. Even Port Moresby became relatively unimportant as a
locus of decision-making.

By the late 1960s, it was widely considered that the centralisa-
tion process had gone too far. Both local and national inter-
departmental coordination was poor, initiative in the field was
stifled, and staff were demoralised. In many respects, the Austra-
lian model had come to resemble an earlier French pattern of
colonial administration.

A combination of administrative and political pressures there-
fore led to careful review of the system during the early and
mid-1970s, and to radical restructuring. With the advent of pro-
vincial government, a high degree of administrative and political
devolution was introduced. Formally, however, the central gov-

ernment retained a unitary, non-federal structure, with a single public and teaching service, no provincial veto on constitutional changes, and limited provincial capacity to raise independent revenue.

The decision to retain a unitary structure had been carefully thought out. As Tordoff and Watts pointed out (1974, 3/1), a confederal structure had never been seriously advocated for Papua New Guinea. Switzerland has a confederal government, and international organisations like the European Economic Community have confederal aspects. It would be difficult to conceive of such a structure in Papua New Guinea because in a confederal structure the provinces/states make grants to the federal government, and it would have required total reorganisation of funding arrangements. Greater thought was given to the possibility of a federal structure. However this was also considered inappropriate because it would have been relatively inflexible and would have necessitated full duality in administrations. In view of the small size of the country and the needs for flexibility and economical use of human and financial resources, it seemed most logical to retain a unitary system.

Despite this decision, however, some characteristics of government in Papua New Guinea have corresponded more closely to a federal than a unitary structure. May (1982a) has pointed out that the division of powers in the Organic Law and the subsequent delegations gave provincial governments potentially as wide a field of operation as is enjoyed in most federal systems. Moreover, he suggests, the real distribution of powers has depended more on political than on constitutional/judicial factors, and on some occasions provincial governments have asserted and acted as though they were equal in status to the central government rather than subordinate. The application even of key documents such as the Constitution and the Organic Law has often become blurred in practice.

Another crucial issue has been the number of provincial governments. In 1974 the Constitutional Planning Committee, citing Nigeria as an example, stressed the danger of a structure in which a few large regions could become major power bases and threaten national unity. Even though Nigeria had a substantially greater population, and even though it had an ethnic composition

which was a major factor in its troubles but which was not similar to that in Papua New Guinea, the CPC used this argument to support a structure based on the 19 Districts rather than the four Regions.

Despite misgivings in some quarters, therefore, the national government proceeded on the basis of 19 provincial governments rather than four (or five, had a special case been made for Bougainville). From one viewpoint this was an easy option which avoided conflict with District-based politicians. However, it has had major implications for the implementation of decentralisation. While it is arguable that the proliferation of provincial governments has permitted greater adaptation to local conditions and closer links between government and people, it has also had substantial costs. Financial costs have arisen from the organisation of provincial elections, the construction of secretariats, the payment of politicians' salaries and the general running of provincial governments. And further costs have arisen because of inefficiency resulting from the thin spread of skilled manpower. The creation of 19 governments has led to the paradoxical charge that Papua New Guinea has become ungovernable simply because it has too much government (Okuk 1978, 21). So many provincial governments, it has been argued, causes needless duplication, competition and inefficiency. Moreover, the manpower requirements of provincial governments have reduced the personnel available to the central government and the private sector, and have therefore had consequences reaching far beyond provincial headquarters.

Planning at the Provincial Level

Partly because skills have been severely stretched, few provincial governments have so far articulated clear and cohesive plans or priorities. In 1983, Southern Highlands, East Sepik, Enga, Manus and North Solomons did have documents called Integrated Development Plans, but in several cases they were produced more to attract foreign aid or NPEP grants than because of an inherent belief in integrated planning, and they were all basically 'once-off' volumes. Only West New Britain and the North Solomons had Provincial Public Expenditure Plans which they intended to revise annually on the NPEP model. Education was the most

most prominent example of a parent department having retained strong links with provincial divisions and demanded plans on its own terms. Certainly the Department of Education would not have objected if a provincial government had submitted an education plan which was in fact a section of a more comprehensive provincial document, but the Department set its own timetable and paid little more than token heed to the desirability of a broader framework.

To some extent, the lack of integrated planning may also be ascribed to the operation of the NPO. Although the NPO stressed the need for provincial planning, and although it was among the first departments to appoint regional officers to assist provincial personnel, its overall support was poor. It had no long-term training programme comparable to the Department of Education's DES course, and only once, in February 1979, did it call all provincial planners together for them to learn from each other in a central workshop. Moreover, it is also arguable that the Department of Education's initiatives were desirable in so far as they prevented excessive concentration of power in the NPO.

Parts of the NPEP itself also inhibited broad provincial planning. Although the NPEP was structured around nine strategic objectives designed to avoid compartmentalisation and departmentalisation, some of the biggest projects were sectoral programmes that could only be spent on transport, agriculture, education, health and so on. And although the NPEP provided a relatively small proportion of total provincial revenues, its impact was far greater than this proportion suggested. According to Allan and Hinchliffe (1982, 85), the sectoral programmes were deliberately designed to 'mesh' national and provincial planning. While the Department of Education might be criticised for not promoting integrated planning more strongly, therefore, it was attempting to improve efficiency in expenditure of one part of the NPEP.

The mere existence of the Department of Education also diverged from one pattern that had earlier been envisaged, however. Although Tordoff and Watts used the term 'department' throughout their report, they did so because it corresponded with current practice. They anticipated (p. 3/2) that with time most departments would be replaced by integrated ministries, each of

which would have several divisions. This idea was followed up in the Kilage Report in 1974, and a new structure was outlined by the government in December 1975. In practice, however, political exigencies have required as many ministries as before. To cater for all regions, reward supporters and try to maintain political superiority, in 1977 Michael Somare found it necessary to appoint 22 ministers, most of whom then insisted on separate departments to fit their portfolios (Ballard 1981b, 91-2). Before returning to power in 1982, Somare again announced that he would reduce the number of ministerial posts, but again found it impossible to do so.

The Philosophy of the Department of Education

When the National Education System was established in 1970, it was on a unified but decentralised administrative pattern. This structure was adopted to promote participation and at least some local flexibility. From the viewpoint of the central authorities, it also had the benefits of partly removing government-mission conflict from the national arena, of retaining educational contributions from church and village communities, and of facilitating administration of what would otherwise have been a monolithic enterprise. When provincial governments were introduced shortly after Independence, the Department found it relatively easy to convert the DEBs into PEBs and to allow for a degree of political decentralisation to accompany the administrative decentralisation.

Critics of the Department would point out that this decentralisation was within a framework and at a pace chiefly determined by the central authorities. They would suggest that to the Department, 'participation' has largely meant sharing the Department's load but basically operating according to the same philosophy. Thus although legal instruments have at first sight given provincial governments substantial control over community, secondary and vocational schools, the national government has retained several key powers. In particular, it has retained control of the teaching service and of the curriculum, which it has also defined very broadly. Provincial governments have been able to determine the siting of schools and, within resource constraints, the number of schools. They have also been able to allocate some

funds to quality or quantity as they see fit, and to make various other fairly minor adjustments. However, control of important sources of finance remains with the national government, and the extent to which provincial governments can alter the basic structure of the school system is limited.

When compared with other departments, however, Education appears more progressive. The powers conferred by the Organic Law were in practice rather minor, and it was partly at the Department's behest that the National Executive Council delegated more educational powers. During the 1970s, Education was the only Department to review existing legislation in line with the Bougainville Agreement, and though it took seven years to complete the new Education Act, it was the first department to transfer delegated functions more firmly. The Department of Education has also paid much more attention to training, and therefore to the capacity of provincial governments to take up their new responsibilities. And even if its planning strategy has conflicted with the vision of those who anticipated greater development of PPEPs, the Department of Education has at least achieved something which would otherwise have been lacking.

Moreover, those who suggest that provincial governments should have greater control over teachers' conditions and curriculum should consider the problems inherent in such a situation. Rich provincial governments would be able to attract better teachers, and imbalances within the country would be accentuated. Although before 1970 disparities were between agencies rather than between districts, it was partly to secure uniform teachers' conditions and avoid discrimination that the National Education System was established.

Similarly, the Department of Education has had good reason for retaining control of at least core curriculum throughout the system. The common core is essential for easy transferability of teachers and pupils within the country. At the secondary level the common curriculum also puts school leavers on an equal footing in the labour market.

The Outlook of Provincial Governments

Several provincial governments have been critical of the national government on a wide range of issues. The North Solomons has

traditionally been the most aggressive, and forced both the time-table and the shape of decentralisation. With time, some less outspoken provincial politicians have learned from their more outspoken colleagues, and those from the Highlands tended during the early 1980s to be more aggressive than they had been at the time of decentralisation itself. At conferences of provincial premiers and at other meetings, emotions often wax strong, and arguments from both national and provincial politicians are not always firmly grounded in fact.

Despite a certain amount of rhetoric, however, it is taking time for provincial governments to generate distinctive education policies. Chapter six highlighted the North Solomons VTPS scheme and a number of smaller projects. It pointed out that diversity will probably increase with time, but suggested that in general the forces of conformity are still greater than the forces of diversity. In 1981 the North Solomons Minister for Education demanded greater legal powers (Ogio 1981), but for several years even his government failed to pass its own education act and therefore failed to make full use of the powers it did have. To some extent, one suspects, many provincial politicians criticise the national government on principle rather than because they feel strongly about the specific issues on which they campaign. A similar attitude, it might be added, is also widespread among national politicians.

Moreover, while the majority of provincial politicians say that they favour greater decentralisation of powers, relatively few countenance decentralisation of provincial powers and functions to local governments. If the Department of Education can be accused of favouring decentralisation only on its own terms, such an accusation in even more pertinent with regard to provincial governments. The Organic Law gave provincial governments almost complete control over local authorities, and reduced the potential revenue bases of the latter. North Solomons, East New Britain and Morobe provincial governments have shown more interest than others in local level participation, but the general picture is at best one of neglect and in some cases abuse (see for example Saffu 1983, 31).

Similar comments are also applicable to church agencies and school Boards of Management. Provincial governments are hap-

py to encourage the 'participation' of the churches and boards provided they toe the government line. However, they are less anxious to promote a more balanced partnership. Moreover, bearing in mind the Department's point that participation and decentralisation can only be effective if the parties are equipped with relevant skills, it is worth noting that almost no training is available at the sub-provincial level. A few Church Education Secretaries have followed the DES (Planning) course, but so far they have been so few as to be barely significant. Also, few provincial governments have yet run sustained programmes to help Boards of Management with their roles.

One other disquieting trend has been the 'provincialisation' of positions both in education and in other sectors. One individual quoted by Voi (1983, 134) pointed out that:

> people are moving back to their villages under the pretext that they owe the provinces certain debts which they would like to repay by getting employment in their provinces. This happens in East New Britain, Central, North Solomons and Manus, and personally I feel that education has gone a little bit hay-wire by giving these people a sense of responsibility for their provinces and not for the nation as a whole.

The corollary of this situation was that many appointments at the provincial level during the early 1980s were made less with a view to the demonstrated abilities of the applicants than to their provinces of origin. In many cases this caused resentment, and threatened both efficiency and national harmony.

The Views of the Churches

Most churches in Papua New Guinea have regional strongholds, and it was pointed out in Chapter 3 that the decentralised structure created in 1970 allowed the churches to retain a greater decision-making role than would otherwise have been the case. Differential localisation rates, it was added in Chapter 8, have increased this power, for many Church Education Secretaries during the 1970s were of Australian or European birth, and their linguistic and cultural backgrounds often gave them greater influence over policies at the local level than they would have had in a

centralised system. At the same time, the Kina-for-Kina grants for churches to build schools have continued to be administered by the national government, independently of decentralised structures.

From the church viewpoint, the structure has also had disadvantages, however. Under the unified system, the churches had to submit their plans for DEB and TEB approval. The fact that the DEBs were District based did not in itself cause difficulties, and the requirement of approval is a separate issue not connected with decentralisation. With the advent of provincial government, however, many church representatives resented being subjected to what they perceived as the inefficiency of many provincial offices and the volatility of provincial politicians. A few churches have also encountered difficulty arising from differences in the geographical areas they serve.

One clear example of conflict arose during 1983 in Oro Province. Of the two high schools in Oro, one is owned by the Anglican Church. It is a boys' school called Martyrs Memorial High School, and has a arrangement with a sister institution called Holy Name High School in Milne Bay Province in which some Oro girls are 'exchanged' for Milne Bay boys. In 1983, 55 Oro girls went to Holy Name, and 35 Milne Bay boys went to Martyrs. In addition, Martyrs took 20 boys and Holy Name took 10 girls from Chimbu, Madang, West New Britain, Western Highlands and Central Provinces, where the Anglican Church has members and community schools but no high school.

Because Oro has only two high schools, the Oro Provincial Government was keen for Martyrs to take more Oro students. The Church refused to expand, and accordingly came under pressure to take only Oro and Milne Bay pupils and to exclude children from other provinces. In 1983, Oro and Milne Bay provincial government representatives 'came to an arrangement that Holy Name and Martyrs High Schools would enrol Grade 7 students only from Milne Bay and Oro' (Gosode 1983, 1). The Oro government particularly resented the fact that it was paying a per-student subsidy to Martyrs when some pupils came from neither Oro nor Milne Bay, and it threatened to withdraw the subsidy for students from other provinces.

In the event, the Anglican Church challenged the constitu-

tionality of withdrawing the subsidy. It held its ground, and at the end of 1983 seemed to have won its case. The example is extreme and was unusual. Because Milne Bay has five high schools, its government did not feel so strongly as Oro. However, the example does indicate the sort of conflict which could arise elsewhere and at other levels of education. Although in general decentralisation was advantageous for the churches, it also had drawbacks.

The View from the Chalk-Face
Finally, it is desirable to consider the impact of decentralisation on the schools themselves — on the teachers and the pupils. Many so-called reforms seem to have major implications when viewed from the bureaucrats' desks but make very little difference to what actually happens in the classroom. One should ask whether decentralisation is a reform of this kind.

The unification of the education system in 1970 had a fundamental impact on the schools. For the first time, all teachers were on the same conditions of service, truncated schools were abolished and all Preparatory pupils therefore had a chance to go to Standard 6, and all schools followed the same basic curriculum. The fact that schools were administered by District-level bodies rather than directly from Port Moresby was a convenience which facilitated access to administrative personnel and probably assisted pressure groups to campaign for new schools in particular locations. It also meant that unless teachers applied to another district, they could only be transferred within the district in which they were already employed. Apart from this, however, the teaching force probably did not consider the existence of DEBs very important or much more than an administrative convenience. They themselves were less concerned about opening of new schools, and once posted were more heavily influenced by centrally determined matters — salaries, inspections, syllabuses, school broadcasts, textbooks and so on — than by locally determined ones.

To a large extent, this situation has continued after the creation of provincial governments. The decline in local governments in most provinces but the rise of a body of provincial politicians has slightly altered the channel through which communities direct

their requests for new schools, and the fact that the PEBs do not need national government approval for plans may forge a stronger link between demands and action.

To the teachers, however, the most important matters other than postings are still centrally determined. Salaries, inspections, syllabuses, school broadcasts and textbooks still emanate mostly from Port Moresby. Teachers in some provinces might have access to an Education Resource Centre, or their curriculum might be supplemented by provincial government readers, but these are relatively minor matters. High school selection, blocking up, minimum age of entry and school fees policies are perhaps more far-reaching, but in practice very few teachers or parents even know what the policies are at any one time, let alone who determines them and how. So far as teachers do perceive the impact of provincial government, it is likely to be negative — to complain about 'political appointments' in the bureaucracy and inefficient administration.

Papua New Guinea in an International Context
The first chapter of this book presented some international perspectives on decentralisation, and periodic reference to other countries has been made in the main body of the book. It is useful to summarise these comparisons, and to discern the extent to which the Papua New Guinean experiences may have parallels elsewhere.

The book began with discussion of the term 'decentralisation' itself, and pointed out that it encompasses processes variously known as deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Even these terms are not entirely clear, and it is difficult to rank national governments along a continuum with centralised ones at one end and decentralised ones at the other. However, one can say that, with 19 provincial governments, a high degree of both political and administrative devolution in most spheres, and a small population, Papua New Guinea has one of the more decentralised governments in the world. Within the system there are contradictions, but it is in marked contrast to the Pakistani, Italian or traditional French models, for example.

It has been stressed that the driving force for decentralisation in Papua New Guinea was a desire to hold the country together

in the face of secessionist threats. This political motive arose from an economic one, for the country would have been much poorer had the Bougainvilleans carried out their threat. The attempt to avoid secession has strong parallels with Sudan, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In all cases, however, the leaders also justified their stances by asserting that the schemes were ways to improve administration and increase participation.

One important determinant of the nature and outcomes of decentralisation is the direction from which pressure emanates. Conyers (1983, 100) suggests that in the Sudan and to a lesser extent in Sri Lanka, decentralisation was principally a response to pressure from below, but that in Tanzania, Zambia and Ghana it was more a 'top-down' process. Both directions are identifiable in Papua New Guinea. Decentralisation was largely initiated in response to popular pressure in the North Solomons and East New Britain, but in the Highlands it was more of a top-down process and there was very little pressure from ordinary villagers and townspeople.

In the light of this fact, it should perhaps not appear a coincidence that so far decentralisation seems to have worked better in the North Solomons and East New Britain than in most other provinces. It was pointed out in Chapter 8, for example, that in most parts of the country it has proved hard to foster effective participation in decision-making. Only partly is this a consequence of general educational levels, for, as Smith and Keith's (1971) work indicated, it is hard to promote participation even in countries like the USA which have compulsory schooling, a much broader awareness of the mechanics of government, and considerably better information systems. Decentralisation projects which are initiated at the top are likely to be less committed to participation. The Kenyan and Tanzanian projects have been interpreted as mechanisms through which the central governments have strengthened control of the periphery (Rondinelli, 1981). Such factors have particularly important implications for international aid agencies. While the agencies may be enthusiastic about both decentralisation and participation and may be prepared to back their views with money, they are not able to force their ideology on national governments, and in any case decentralisation schemes which the agencies finance could have effects opposite to those they intend.

On a structural point, Conyers (1983, 103) indicates a general trend in developing countries towards creation of bodies which incorporate both locally elected and centrally appointed representatives. During the last decade, such bodies have been created in Ghana, Tanzania, Sri Lanka and Zambia. In some respects, Conyers suggests, this form of decentralisation resembles the French system of local government. Though the bodies are not intended to be autonomous, their powers are stronger than they would have been in a conventional deconcentrated model.

The Papua New Guinean pattern, at least in education, does not fit this model. PEB members are appointed by provincial ministers, and under normal circumstances do not include national government officials (unless in some different capacity). This partly reflects a greater degree of provincial autonomy than exists in the countries mentioned above.

However, the Papua New Guinean national government does employ officers to work at the provincial level. In education, the most important of these are the school inspectors, who oversee matters of quality and those aspects of the curriculum which are nationally controlled. In the early years of decentralisation this arrangement caused some problems. Provincial Assistant Secretaries found that they could not control the movements and activities of the national government officers, and the latter could not always gain cooperation to remedy the educational problems they identified or, on a more basic plane, gain help when their vehicles broke down or they faced other practical problems. Nevertheless, both parties became accustomed to each other's role with time, and friction became less frequent. The fact that employees of both tiers of government occupied the same office blocks was important and would be worth considering by other countries seeking to implement similar schemes.

The Swings of Fashion

Several authors have commented that decentralisation is a fashionable development strategy, and that the fashion is in danger of swinging like a pendulum. They point out the rise and decline of international interest during the 1950s and early 1960s, and suggest that many expectations of those who initiate decentralisation schemes are unrealistic. They fear that the reaction against failure to achieve aims could cause a reverse swing of the

pendulum (Rondinelli 1981; Conyers 1983; Cheema and Ron-
dinelli 1983).

In some quarters of Papua New Guinea during the early 1980s,
the pendulum had indeed begun to swing back. Many people had
never been convinced of the desirability of decentralisation, and
in the national parliament resentment had grown because mem-
bers found their powers restricted and they saw themselves being
upstaged by provincial politicians. By 1983 the fear of secession
had subsided, and the Organic Law was amended to increase
national government powers to suspend provincial governments.
Enga Provincial Government was the first to be suspended, in
February 1984 (*Post Courier*, 10 February 1984), and the sus-
pension doubtless served as a warning to other provincial govern-
ments.

There have also been swings in the Department of Education.
When Sam Tulo 'changed sides' from being a provincial Assistant
Secretary to becoming the national Minister for Education, he
also changed aspects of his philosophy. The 'free education'
debacle was detailed in Chapter 4, and Tulo also tried to use his
financial powers to promote the four-year high school programme
(Ministerial Policy Statement 6/80). In the event, the free educa-
tion scheme largely backfired, and the financial carrot for the
four-year programme was never offered. However, various cen-
tralist moves also emerged in the Education III project in 1983.
During the design of the project the Department did send teams
to consult provincial governments. Yet in 1983 it proved difficult
for provincial governments to gain information on project details,
and this led to suspicions that they were being withheld until the
package had been agreed upon with the World Bank and was no
longer negotiable. Moreover, one Education III sub-project com-
prised building grants which were sent directly to provincial high
school Boards of Governors. Provincial governments were not
able to decide either how much money should be allocated to
each school or how the money should be spent, and in effect the
arrangement totally by-passed them. The Education III proposals
also stated that the new schools would be built 'on the basis of
2-2-2-2' (Department of Education 1983b, 1). This implied both
that the new schools would have a four-year programme for all
students and that they would have a fixed size. When challenged,

national government officers stated that 'on the basis of 2-2-2-2'
meant that provincial governments could forego some of the
money and build 2-2-1-1 schools, or they could add extra money
and build 3-3-2-2 schools. However, the national government
officers were well aware of the powers of organisational arrange-
ments and financial inducements.

Against this pattern was the fact that the Education Act passed
in May 1983 gave provincial governments considerably greater
powers. There was also continued improvement in administrative
capacity. In 1983 it was decided to extend funding for one Re-
gional Planning Adviser until 1987, and to fund two more cohorts
on the DES course. In addition, provincial staff continued to
benefit from the UPNG B.Ed. course and from various work-
shops, and they learned a great deal simply from experience.

On the political side also, the trend was towards increased
capacity. Like their professional counterparts, individual politi-
cians learned a great deal from experience, and the 'new blood'
introduced at each election generally had a stronger educational
background (Turner 1984). Partly because of the increased
sophistication of provincial politicians, it seemed clear in the
early 1980s that the basic structure of provincial government
would be longlasting. Iambakey Okuk, who had lost his seat in
the 1982 elections but had returned in a 1983 by-election and had
again become Leader of the Opposition, stated shortly after his
return that he still felt that a structure based on four regions
would be more efficient. Even he recognised that the 19 provin-
cial governments were a reality to be accepted, however (*The
Times*, Port Moresby, 29 July 1983). The question by then had
ceased to be what basic structure would be the most appropriate
and had become how the existing system could be made to work
most effectively.

Though the 19 provincial governments seemed a permanent
feature, however, there remained considerable room for changed
emphasis within the system. Particularly significant in the early
1980s was a voluntary move towards regionalism on the part of
some provincial governments. This was first advocated by Pre-
miers in the Highlands and was taken up by their counterparts in
the Islands. The latter were the first to formalise arrangements,
and in 1983 they established a Regional Secretariat in Rabaul.

Activities began with a review of potential for cooperation in fishing and in other economic ventures, but soon turned to aspects of educational funding (Islands Regional Secretariat, 1983) and could easily be extended to include textbook development and similar educational projects. Although the other Regions were not so advanced in formalising cooperation, it seemed probable that they too would establish secretariats with similar functions.

In view of this trend, it is worth recalling that the CPC had originally opposed provincial government based on the four regions because it feared the development of major power blocs and the type of political division that had been evident in Nigeria. Other countries considering decentralisation would also be wise to bear the Nigerian experience in mind. However, the advent of regionalism in Papua New Guinea suggested a rising 'water level' and that larger units might give economies of scale. If political circumstances permit governments in other countries to make a choice, they might be wise at least in the first instance to establish a few provincial governments rather than a large number.

Finally, it might be suggested that the pressure in the national government for recentralisation was predictable from experience elsewhere. Several observers of politics in young nations have pointed out that decentralisation is particularly likely to be introduced at the time of Independence but then to be at least partially withdrawn (Ghai 1982, 62; Rowley 1971, 40). It is likely to be introduced at this time because Independence is seen as a good opportunity to bring in other major reforms, because new governments realise that they can no longer blame departing colonial administrations for problems, and because new governments perceive the strength of popular expectations and see decentralisation as a way both to spread responsibility and deflect criticism. In this light, one might expect power and authority to be recentralised a few years later, but for it to be done covertly in a manner which retains lip-service to ideals. It is too early to predict the extent to which Papua New Guinea will follow this pattern. It is worth recalling that aspects of the financial system are already being used for central control within the system, however, and the global economic depression could easily be used as an excuse to centralise control further.

Meanwhile, Papua New Guinea's decentralisation project has radically changed the direction of the country's development. To draw up a final balance sheet would require so many subjective judgements that it would be of questionable value. Despite the elusive nature of several outcomes, however, the experiences at least in education have generally been positive and have suggested several fruitful avenues for further attention by other Departments. And the Papua New Guinean model highlights features which deserve careful consideration from policy makers in other countries.

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