

# LEADERSHIP IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA: EXPLORING CONTEXT AND BARRIERS

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## ABSTRACT

The unique context and challenges of leadership in Papua New Guinea are not adequately explained by the extant literature. This paper investigates the context of, and barriers to leadership, in Australia's closest northern neighbour, as PNG attempts to actively participate in a dynamic, rapidly changing global environment. Historically, PNG is a diverse Nation of tribal societies organised on the basis of kinship. Major leadership challenges include more than 800 distinctive, often mutually unintelligible languages, a community based society each functioning on a basis of local custom, tradition, values, and dissimilar governing systems. The paper finds that leadership theories based on 'Western' culture are not directly transferable to PNG, and that significant contextual barriers exist to inhibit the leadership process in PNG.

**Key Words:** Papua New Guinea, Leadership, Context, Barriers

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership research in the developed world continues to increase rapidly (Daft, 2005, Littrell, 2002). However, the issue of leadership in less developed countries, and Papua New Guinea (PNG) in particular, has not attracted the attention of leadership researchers with the same level of enthusiasm. Leadership research is at a definitive stage (Littrell, 2002), with significant deficiencies in our understanding (Rost, 1991, Baker, 1997, Hay and Hodgkinson, 2005). Bass (1990) and House and Aditya (1997) note that the majority of leadership studies surveyed looks at the relationship between the leader and followers. However, the organization, and culture in which leaders function, leader and superior relationships, external constituencies, peers, and products and services of the leaders organisations, are largely ignored. Further, Littrell (2002 p: 10) notes that *'the bulk of leadership literature is based on a self-limiting set of assumptions, mostly reflecting Western industrialised culture. Almost all the prevailing theories of leadership and almost all of the empirical evidence are rather distinctly American in character'*. Shahin and Wright (2004 p: 499) add that the majority of leadership studies of the past 40 years originate from North America, and such theories 'might not be

appropriate to be applied on a worldwide basis, especially in cultures, which differ significantly from the American culture’.

Leadership is a word with a wide connotation (Nicholls, 1990, Nicholls, 1994, Mastrangelo et al., 2004) ‘meaning different things to different people’ (Nicholls, 1994). Oliver (2001) argues that the majority of definitions do not take into account the particular context of what is trying to be accomplished. Further, leadership has been studied from a variety of perspectives (Mastrangelo et al., 2004). Ambiguity surrounds our understanding (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2005). Leadership is ‘deeply attached to culture’ (Shahin and Wright, 2004 p: 499) or context, and the culture of national or regional societies impacts on leadership (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997).

This exploratory research aims to (1) develop an understanding of the situational variables (Dubrin and DalGLISH, 2005), or context, of leadership processes currently practiced in PNG, and (2) to identify significant barriers inhibiting the exercise of effective leadership in the country. This moves some way towards satisfying Littrell’s (2002) call for emic research for the identification of emic manifestations of generic leader behaviours in all cultures to which leadership theories might be applied. (Littrell, 2002 p: 7). Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1997 p: 107) observe that there is a diversification of leadership roles in PNG formed from a confusion of, and intrusion by, capitalism, western education, missionization, and new forms of national and local government, into traditional leadership ways.

## **METHOD**

This phenomenological study is based on fieldwork conducted between 2001 and 2005. Data was collected from 97 students attending the first leadership Masters programme conducted in PNG, at the University of Vudal in East New Britain Province. Participants were drawn from a broad cross section of national and local government, business and third sector organisations, and from most regions (Provinces) of the country. Research consisted of (1) individual semi-structured interviews, (2) focus groups, (3) semi-structured interviews with ex-patriate PNG citizens living in Australia, and (4) a personal journal kept by the author throughout the fieldwork. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in English following an interview guide, taped, and transcribed for analysis. Respondents

were asked to consider leadership practices in the organisation in which they were working or had worked, as well as the province in which the organisation was located, and to describe (1) the context of leadership, (2) leadership barriers, (3) key leadership issues, and (4) leadership differences in other provinces and organisations that they were familiar with. Data analysis employed a categorising strategy to identify data similarities and differences, to distinguish categories and themes emerging from the data (emic approach), and explain the phenomenon under investigation (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). Following Rossman and Rallis's advice, transcripts were read and then put aside to 'incubate' in the mind of the researcher, and then reread at least two times to develop an 'intimate' familiarity with the data. A modified long table approach was employed to facilitate the data analysis. A descriptive summary was written of each response, and then compared and contrasted to each interview transcript. Specificity, emotion, extensiveness, and frequency of comments, guided the analysis within an overarching framework of constant comparing and contrasting (Krueger and Casey, 2000). The following discussion of leadership context is drawn from the analysis of the data collected during the research process.

## **CONTEXT OF PNG LEADERSHIP**

### **A Heterogeneous Country**

PNG is an independent country consisting of over 600 islands located just to Australia's north. PNG occupies the eastern portion of the Island of New Guinea, with a land border shared with Indonesian controlled West Papua (Tivinarlik and Wanat, 2006). PNG history is littered with colonisation by European, and more recently, Australian powers dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, land claims did not occur until the Dutch acquired control of West Papua in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the Germans settled in the northern part, with the British taking the southern region known as Papua. Papua became a protectorate of England in 1884, subsequently passing to Australia in 1905 as the territory of Papua. The German region was won by the Australians during World War 1, and later mandated as the Territory of New Guinea in 1920 by Australia. PNG gained independence from Australia on 16 September 1975 (Johnson, 1993, Rannells, 1995).

Historically, PNG is a nation of tribal societies organised on the basis of kinship (Tivinarlik and Wanat, 2006). Whiteman (1995 p: 103) notes that 'kinship is a system that prescribes how people

living together should interact with one another'. PNG has several thousand communities, most with only a few hundred people. Traditionally, tribes lived for one common purpose; to defend the tribe from foreign invasion. McLaughlin (1997 p: 4) assesses that there are over 1000 tribes living in 'almost total isolation', often divided by language, customs, and tradition. Grimes (2000) estimates that there are in excess of 832 distinctive, mutually unintelligible languages, in a country with a population of 5,670,544 people (CIA, 2006). As late as the 1990's at least three 'unknown' or 'lost' tribes were discovered (Connell, 1997). Each tribe, language group, and culture acts to influence people to behave in quite distinct ways, peculiar to each individual tribe or group. Communities see themselves as 'central with other communities peripheral, and in turn central from their own perspective' (Busse, 2005 p:445). Divisions created by language, custom, and tradition have repeatedly resulted in on-going low scale tribal warfare with neighbouring communities, as Melanesian men, particularly leaders suffer an inability to trust neighbours (Herdt, 2003).

### **Customs and traditions**

Customs, norms and traditions in PNG are complex, diverse, in many instances unique, and operate to significantly influence the practice of leadership at all community, regional, organisational, and governmental levels. Customs, norms and traditions practiced in one region may embrace similarities with other regions but may also be radially different.

### ***Leadership initiation ceremony***

Initiation ceremonies, to pass leadership from big-man (Sahlins, 1963), or elders, to younger generations, are practiced in almost every PNG society. However, actual practices are not uniform across all societies. In Sepik culture, for example, young men and women are not regarded as being ready to assume a leadership role until they have successfully passed through the initiation ceremony. Initiations are regarded as important and testimonial periods for potential leaders, and signify that the young person is recognised as mature. The Yatmul people of the Sepik River for example, practice the 'skin cutting custom', requiring selected men to enter into Haus Tambaran (men's house) for between six and eight months. They fast, and are forbidden to undertake specific commandments, as determined by elders. To pass the test to be crowned with the man ship title, the elders commandments must not be broken. Following successful completion of the Haus Tambaran period,

the young men endure an initiation ceremony where crocodile tattoos are cut into their bare bodies. Tattoos identify that the young man has passed from boyhood to manhood, and is ready to assume leadership roles.

***Taboos*** [check “heading” font]

Depending on the customs of the community to which people belong, men and leaders are not permitted to do certain matters. Such taboos are determined by community elders, reflecting taboos passed from generation-to-generation. In Sepik societies, for example, during yam planting seasons, men, especially elders, must sacrifice eating fresh meat, salt, or sugar, the day before planting yam, as it is believed that if these foods are eaten, a poor harvest may result. Further, the men must not sleep with their wives the night prior to planting. They can be woken only by the early morning calls of the birds, and leave for the fields while others are still asleep. The men are not to be seen, or speak to anyone, until planting is completed. It is believed that if the taboos be broken, a failure of the harvest or the destruction of the garden by pigs, or strong winds will almost certainly result.

**Traditional Societies**

Societies commonly practice either the patrilineal system where descent is through the father, or the matrilineal system with descent passing through the mother. Approximately three quarters of the country practices patrilineal society, while the matrilineal system is largely confined to coastal provinces.

***Patrilineal Society***

Men are the legitimate head of the decision making process (Yala, 2005). Women and children may contribute to discussions; but men have the final say. Patrilineal society is common in the mainland regions, the Highlands, and some coastal provinces including West New Britain, Manus and New Ireland, Central, Gulf, Western and Northern provinces.

***Matrilineal Society***

Women take the leading role in decision-making, assuming land and properties ownership (Lahui-Ako, 2001, Flaherty, 1998). Referred to as ‘string culture’ by the Toloi peoples of East New Britain, men follow the women after marriage, as men have no rights to land. Daughters claim land ownership and sons follow the wives. Men must go with the women’s tribe or clan to win the hearts of the wife’s

relatives. Otherwise they may not have land on which to settle. Where a woman marries into an outside culture, she is permitted to bring her husband to her land. Nevertheless, the man remains a stranger to the land, and their children have no rights over the land. Here, the decision, or priorities, will go to the man's sister, and she decides whether to provide for him to settle his family. However, somehow the culture manages to handle such situations, with harmonious relationships amongst the resulting extended families. Three major provinces practice the matrilineal society; Bougainville, East New Britain, and Milne Bay.

### **Leadership Categories**

Leadership in PNG is largely culturally orientated, embracing traditional beliefs, norms and values, and a preoccupation with *kamap* (Tok Pisin: become developed) (McKeown, 2001). Thus, leadership style is significantly influenced by the leader's immediate and extended family, clan, and tribe. However, there is no single, or even widespread culture, embracing a common set of beliefs, values, and traditional practices. Values vary from province to province, while diversity is customary within provincial areas.

### **Traditional Leadership**

Traditional leadership is mainly practiced in an informal setting, at the village or community level, particularly where the tribe or village structure is not formalised. To gain leader status, a person must display leadership qualities, such as being a good spokesperson, have status with wealth, the number of pigs or boars tusks owned, special hunting spears, fishing nets, kina shells, land held, big food gardens, house, or other 'essentials'. Also, the leader must be capable of leading people and congregating them to participate in all traditional ceremonial activities, such as initiation of young men, marriage, feasting, and dancing. Leadership can also be gained through inheritance, either from family, clan or tribe. Clan heredity also enables a person to become a leader, where the essence of leadership is the birth right of the family, and characterised by inherited wealth.

### **Leadership Practices in Major Cultural Regions**

*The Traditional Highlanders* practice chiefly, or big-man methods to develop leaders and to preserve the passing of leadership from father to son, family to family, or clan to clan. Leadership is based on the individual's status in the community in terms of wealth and money. Where a man has numerous

wives, pigs, gardens, or businesses, the community recognizes him as a leader. Leadership is also based on threat. Highlanders are an aggressive people, and leadership positions are often taken through violence and killings, with the gun replacing the traditional spear. For example, during elections supporters of candidates can resort to physical assault, even killing rival supporters.

*Sepik* leadership is based on respect, trust and integrity of the individual. The onus is on the elders to appoint community leaders. To be considered for community leadership, potential qualified leaders must be reputable and have community standing. Leadership appointments are reached through general consensus as opposed to inheritance. However, younger generations, and women in particular, are not considered as potential leaders. Women are seen as second class to men, and struggle for equal rights and opportunities. Men dominate leadership and preserve the right to disregard women. However, change is gradually occurring in the major centres where women are beginning to occupy important positions in government and corporate sectors.

*Tolai* women assume traditional leadership roles and are vested with land ownership rights. However, men may also assume leadership responsibilities, with most decisions made by the men in consultation with women. Still, the onus for discussion remains with the women, who provide wisdom and knowledge to the men. Tolai women increasingly are assuming leadership roles in statutory and government organisations.

*The Samarais* practice a variation of the chiefly or big-men leadership. The first-born son inherits the leadership role from the father, which passes from generation to generation. However, like the Tolai people, women are recognised in the leadership role, retaining the right over land titles, and automatically assume the traditional leadership role. Women play an influential role in discussion and decision- making in the communities.

*Papuans* practice chiefly or big-men leadership in all five Papuan provinces. Generally, sons inherit traditional leadership. However; younger generations from different clan groups are assuming contemporary leadership roles. Papuan young people are not considered for any form of leadership. Women, nevertheless, hold an equal status with men, and participate in the decision-making process, and generally take greater responsibilities in their communities and families than the men.

## **Traditional Governing Systems**

The structure of leadership varies greatly between communities (Tivinarlik and Wanat, 2006). Chieftain, inheritance, hierarchal, and contemporary governing systems are widely practiced throughout PNG.

### ***Chieftain***

Traditionally, PNG societies were well organized and governed through indigenous governing systems. Societies looked upon certain people as their leaders, chiefs, and bigmen. The chief makes all decisions for that society, and then communicates decisions to leaders of each clan within the society. The chief tends to be a leader who has high social status with wealth, in terms of owning many pigs, wives, money, and sometimes is a wise warrior as well. The Chief controls the activities of the society, and its traditional legal system. Members of society are told to comply with all decisions made by the Chief for the common good of the society. Ethnic and cultural values restrict information and knowledge sharing within the society, with much information restricted to men only. This is to protect the identity of men and women from other cultural conflicts or influences, which are viewed as degrading to their identity. The Chiefly or Bigman system of leadership is widely practiced in patrilineal societies in the central provinces, and is common around the Papuan region particularly in the Mekeo, Gulf, and the Milne Bay districts.

### ***Inheritance***

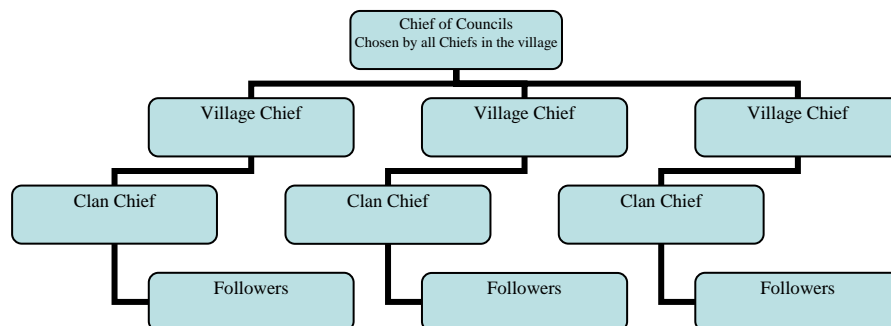
Inheritance is the most commonly practiced governing system in PNG. Inheritance allows leadership responsibilities to be passed from father to son, or from generation to generation. Elders also pass leadership skills and knowledge to younger generations.

### ***Hierarchical***

The hierarchical governing system is an organized system of democratic leadership lead by a Chief of Council, Figure 1. This unique governing body in Melanesian society commands a lot of respect in the few communities that practice its use.



Figure 1 Chieftain System practiced in the Trobrian Islands



Source: Adapted from (Essacu, 2005)

### Contemporary

Contemporary leadership has been shaped by a number of key influences on the country: colonisation, the introduction of Christianity, and adoption of the Westminster system of government (Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997). Colonisation introduced into the PNG government sector a paradigm of stability, control, competition, and uniformity. Contemporary management is more formal than traditional leadership. Organisations, and the work performed, are formally arranged with leaders and subordinates working in accordance with a specified duty statement or position description. This management mindset introduced an extreme form of the bureaucratic system, which requires all government decisions to be made by senior managers without consultation with employees, restricts knowledge sharing, and fails to recognise the value of employees. As a consequence, a leadership crisis has resulted in bankruptcy, political instability, poor service delivery, bribery, and mal-practice, such as misappropriation of public funds and wontokism, in both the public and private sectors. These elements are now firmly woven into the structure of PNG politics and government departments.

### LEADERSHIP BARRIERS

The preceding section outlined the complexity of leadership in the PNG context. This section identifies, from the analysis of the data, particular barriers which impact on the leadership process and practices in communities, organisations, and government in PNG.

### PNG Time

'PNG time' is a 'disease' that has spread across all sectors of the economy, but particularly in the public sector. Leaders spend considerable work time pursuing personal interests rather than attending to work matters. 'PNG time' is frequently identified as a reason for the slow, or non-delivery, of government programs. Where leaders are seen as poor time managers, a chain reaction occurs throughout the organisation with employees adopting similar practices and attitudes.

### **Lack of people skills Barriers**

A lack of understanding of human behaviour is a significant leadership barrier. Papua New Guineans at all levels have a tendency to behave in ways consistent with self-image, self-concept, self-interest, and traditional practices. Leaders expect that if employees want to work with their leader, they need to know how to relate to the leader on the leaders' terms. Leaders expect followers to accept and respect the leader, because they are the leader, and that is the 'way of things' regardless of the situation.

### **Communication Barriers**

Three primary communication barriers are evident: linguistics, information technologies, and distance gap. With over 832 spoken languages, the communication process is fraught with complexity and difficulty. While cultural uniqueness and diversity is recognised by the national government, English is promoted as a common language to bridge the divide. The government officially recognizes three languages; Pidgin, Motu and English. Pidgin is spoken by approximately two thirds of the population, while Motu is spoken by the remaining population, mainly in the Papuan coastal provinces. However, English is spoken within the major centres, and under recent educational reforms, is taught in primary schools. English, however, continues to be regarded by many as a foreign language. Governments, at all levels, struggle to translate information into common languages with the message frequently being distorted or lost, fermenting an environment for corruption and misappropriation to flourish.

The telecommunications sector lacks cost effective and reliable technologies such as e-mail, voice mail, video conferencing, internet and intranet technologies, other types of collaborative software systems, and a broad national coverage. Whilst such technologies are frequently available in the larger cities and towns, connections between provinces are sparse, resulting in slow communications

across the country. Radio is an important communication medium, particularly throughout provincial areas. However, not everyone has access to a radio or is able to afford to purchase batteries. Geography imposes a third communication barrier, the 'distance gap'. Provinces are isolated from each other, separated by mountain ranges, and seas, in the case of the islands. Such geographical barriers have prevented the development of effective transportation and logistics systems, and telecommunication systems.

### **Cultural Barriers**

Papua New Guineans associate themselves with a variety of social groups. Social groups can be just two people who identify and interact with one another. The diversity and complexity of social groups has a significant impact on the development of leadership processes and practices. For example, when a leader identifies himself within a social structure, that social structure is used to support the drive for change in an organisation. Conversely, where a leader does not openly support or identify with a particular social group(s) the leader is likely to encounter strong resistance, with open conflict resulting. This identity with social group(s) is particularly apparent within political and government circles.

### **Educational Barriers**

Recent educational reforms require that students undertake three years elementary, six years primary, and four years secondary education (3-6-4 education system). However, most Papua New Guineans remain illiterate, as schooling is unavailable in remote and isolated provinces. English is the language of instruction in some elementary schools, though Pidgin and Motu are also used, with a majority of Elementary schools teaching in their mother tongue. It is very difficult to integrate children into a common classroom setting where they speak in their mother tongue (tokples) such as tok pidgin, tok Motu, or English. Of the literate population more than 50 percent cannot read or write English.

### **Pride**

When people take a leadership role the tendency is to draw a great deal of pride from that leadership role. The custom of many of these societies is for the leader to adopt the belief that all power has been vested in them, and that it is their right to rule the society without considering the rights and privileges of others. The position of leadership leads to a gaining of personal pride, and the use of society power

for personal gain. This then frequently translates into the business and government circles resulting in widespread abuse of power and misappropriation

### **Wealth**

Wealth is regarded as the foundation for attaining leadership in most communities. Traditionally, wealth qualifies a man as a potential leader, and provides a base to influence others with money and wealth to buy support. Individuals receive money and gifts and in turn choose that person to be the leader. This can result in 'blind' leadership - leadership without vision.

### **Sorcery or Sanguma**

The practice of sorcery appears to be increasing as traditional cultures and values come under sustained attack by outside influences. Sorcery affects people at all levels of society, bringing fear to people's hearts and minds. Religion has not been effective in changing or removing the fear delivered through the practice of sorcery. It still remains a common practice to kill suspected sorcerers in the highlands, with sorcery suspected where small businesses fail. People in both the public and private sector are frequently fearful of making decisions, while disciplinary actions can be difficult to make, which impacts on people's willingness to seek positions of contemporary leadership.

### **Pay back, or an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth**

Pay back is commonly practiced at all levels of society. The pay back system is particularly strong in the playing out of the political processes. Frequently, resulting from a change of government, senior public sector officers are replaced by rival tribesman, who delay or abandon adversary's initiatives, thus creating a climate of constant fear and mistrust.

### **Wantok System**

Deeply entrenched in PNG culture is the wontok system. Swatridge (1985 p: 4) describes the wontok system as 'friendly society, welfare system, and life-assurance all in one'. The tok pisin term Wantok, means friend, relative, 'who you know', or someone who speaks the same language (one talk). MacDonald (1984 p, 4) argues that wontok is a 'bond of people with a basic, kinship community, speaking the same tongue, living in the same place, and sharing values'. The Wontok system of inclusion of a person in a clan or community is often blamed for the abuse of patronage in organisations and government, misallocation of resources, or the allegiances formed during disputes.

## **Regional Politics**

Thirty years after independence, PNG continues to demonstrate strong regionalistic patriotism. Prior to independence, the public sector in the provinces was composed of people from across the country. With the adoption of the provincial governing system following independence, public sector employment reverted to a practice of employing people from the district or province in preference to those from other provinces or regions. The catch cry was ‘Western Highlands for Western Highlands’, ‘West New Britain for West New Britain’, for example. This practice is firmly entrenched in organisational and government politics, adversely impacting on the delivery of goods and services, and effective government. ‘Corruption and fraud is easily covered up, largely ignored, and often condoned by leaders and employees alike’ (Essacu, 2005).

## **Religious Associations**

The practice of appointing leaders according to religious associations is increasing in PNG. The widely held belief is that people who have religious associations or links are regarded as more trustworthy, honest and reliable, and therefore will have less difficulty influencing followers. This practice has been made explicit and embedded into human resource policy in many organisations

## **Globalisation**

The impact of globalisation is being felt throughout the country in all facets of business, government, third sector, and rural village communities. Businesses and governments are under continual and increasing pressure to produce increasing levels of production at higher quality, with less cost, and fewer errors, whilst delivering higher profitability, consistent with TQM philosophies. However, traditional leadership practices of PNG time, wontokism, self-interest, and power retention, are noteworthy impediments to reaching the challenges of globalisation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Acknowledging Littrell’s (2002) assertion of the ‘distinctly American’ character of prevailing leadership theory, and Shahin and Wright’s (2004) claim that North American leadership frameworks may not be appropriate in cultures significantly different to America, this paper examined the

particular context of leadership in PNG, and identified a number of barriers which act to prevent a unified approach to leadership in the country, Table 1. The examination of leadership in the context of a nation's cultural context has been largely overlooked by leadership researchers (Littrell, 2002). However, a thorough examination and knowledge of context and barriers offers an alternative approach to understanding the leadership role, tasks, and processes necessary for the unique situation of an emerging country such as PNG.

**Table 1 Leadership Context and Barriers in PNG**

| <b>Leadership Context</b>  | <b>Leadership Barriers</b>  |
|--|---|
| Heterogeneous nature of the country  | PNG Time  |
| Colonial history   | Lack of people skills   |
| Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· tribal traditions</li> <li>· values</li> <li>· culture</li> </ul>   | Communication barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· linguistics</li> <li>· information technologies</li> <li>· distance gap/tyranny of distance</li> </ul>  |
| Multiple governing systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· chieftain</li> <li>· hierarchical</li> <li>· inheritance</li> <li>· Westminster</li> </ul> | Cultural barriers between social groups. Such differences are commonly maintained in an organisational or work setting frequently resulting in strong conflict between employees from different social, provincial, or tribal areas |
| Vast vicissitude of mutually unintelligible languages  | Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· not available to all</li> <li>· conducted in mother tongue</li> </ul>  |
| Societies based on patrilineal or matrilineal systems  | Pride - leader taking the belief that all power rests with him/her  |
|  | Wealth is commonly regarded as the foundation of leadership. Wealth may be in the form of number of pigs, wives or spears owned, land ownership or ability as a hunter or orator  |
|  | Sorcery of Sannguma<br>Pay back<br>Wontok<br>Regional politics<br>Religious associations  |

It would appear that extant leadership models have limited capacity to adequately explain, and foster, leadership practices and processes in PNG, as the cultural context and leadership practices are sufficiently different to the context in which such frameworks were developed. If a more integrative approach to leadership, suited to the particular context of PNG as the country attempts to engage with an increasingly globalised world, is to emerge, a framework that recognises the diversity and complexity of existing leadership practices throughout the country, and one which addresses the

barriers identified in this paper, is required. Further research is required to test the strength of the relationship between the contextual issues and barriers identified in this paper, and their impact and influence on leadership practices in organisations in PNG. The challenge then, is to test those relationships and to identify the significant issues that must be addressed from a national strategic perspective to move the conduct of leadership to a new level appropriate for PNG's context.

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