

Social Reproduction and Ethnic Boundaries: Marriage Patterns Through Time and Space Among the Wampar, Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

In this article we examine how partner choice and strategies of social reproduction among the Wampar of northeastern Papua New Guinea are implicated in currently pressing questions about the future of Wampar as a socio-cultural unit. We use long-term qualitative and quantitative data based on fieldwork and census surveys conducted between 1954 and 2013 from the village of Gabsongkeg to analyse temporal and spatial patterns of partner choice. We are especially interested in interethnic marriages and their effects on group boundaries and group identities, given a pre-existing pattern of ethnic endogamy. Our results show that intermarriages between Wampar and non-Wampar have constantly been rising; in younger marriage cohorts some 60% of Wampar individuals are intermarried with partners of other ethnic identities. The data reveal that local and historical particularities inflect partner choices in ways that impact on settlement patterns, modes of engagement with the economic institutions of the modern state and, ultimately, the taken-for-granted nature of the identity inhering in the name “Wampar”; these impacts, in turn, increase the likelihood of interethnic marriage and precipitate questions about the rights attaching to local corporate identities under conditions where land is increasingly related to its commodity values.

Keywords: intermarriage, partner choice, social relations, Papua New Guinea, Wampar

1. Introduction

Visitors travelling to Morobe Province, in the northeast of the state of Papua New Guinea (PNG), land at Nadzab airport. It is located near the Highlands Highway about 40 kilometres outside of Lae, the provincial

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capital and second-largest city of PNG. The airport is on land leased from the village of Gabsongkeg, one of several on the territory of members of the population bearing the name “Wampar”¹. Today they occupy a semi-urban area, with much of the population accustomed to engagement with the market economy. Whether the Wampar will remain a distinct ethnic group is not only an academic question but also an issue frequently discussed among themselves. Such discussions arise in diverse contexts initiated by actors in different social positions. One of the most pressing problems in 2013 was the selling of land to non-Wampar and conflicts over the rights to sell or lease land and who should get shares of the money. Several women were in conflicts with their brothers who, based on “traditional” patrilineal law, sold family land. The women argued that for modern financial transactions patrilineal land rights do not matter and that selling is not allowed anyway. Other contexts are pre- and elementary schools where Wampar parents discuss problems (real and assumed) of their kids outnumbered by *yaner*². Other areas of discussion of Wampar-ness are questions of access to health-care and village courts or *yaner* not following Wampar values and rules of closing the market on Sundays. Increasing violence, drug consumption, and the spreading of HIV/AIDS lead women’s groups, church activists but also ordinary Wampar to conclude that maintaining an ethnic identity and unit would help against these ‘outside threats’. The advent of mining and the imagined benefits (employment, royalties, income from subcontracting) and dangers (environmental pollution, being overrun by *yaner*) open up further areas for concern and discussion of ethnic unity in which nearly every Wampar is involved.

In times when their own language is used less and less frequently (as PNG’s lingua franca, *Tok Pisin*, grows in importance), individuals sell

¹ When we write about “the Wampar”, the reader should keep in mind that “Wampar” (like other ethnic groups in PNG such as the Maring, LiPuma 2000) have not always been a bounded social unit with its own territory. In pre-colonial times various groups fought and moved out of the mountains to settle the Markham Valley and coalesce into a population bearing the ethnonym “Wampar”. An overarching ethnic identity was strengthened or even substantially produced by missionaries as well as other colonial and post-colonial transformations. As in other parts of Papua New Guinea “ethnicity is based on continua of cultural difference in a population crisscrossed by flows of people” (Golub 2014: 118) and not on clearly bounded entities.

² Wampar call all non-Wampar from PNG *yaner*, they address and refer to specific people mostly with their first name and a place name of their area of origin, e.g. “Kaspar Sepik”. The ethnonyms we use in this article are used by Wampar for a specific person and refer to localities of different sizes, ethnic groups (“Simbu”) and regions (“Hailans”). Sometimes they match the ethnonyms used by *yaner* themselves.

land to non-Wampar (called ‘*yaner*’), and many aspects of routine social interaction are transformed by the prospects of large-scale mining (Bacalzo, Beer and Schwörer in press), the loss of their ethnic identity has become a real fear for many Wampar.

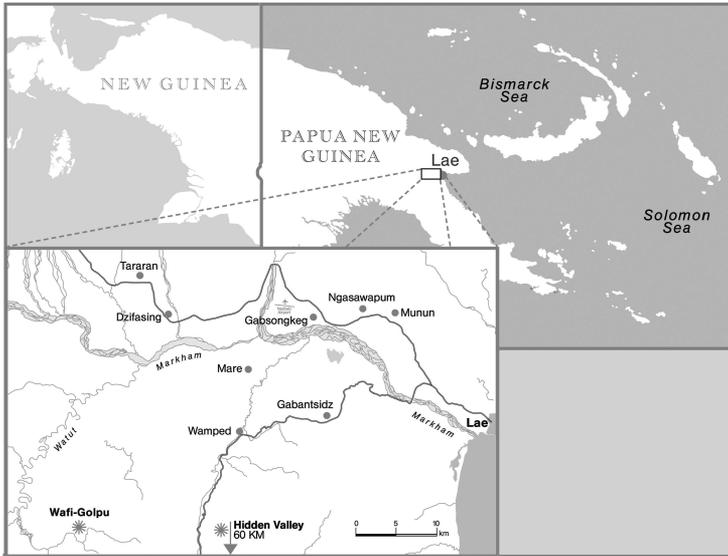


Figure 1: Map of PNG and Wampar Villages (Map H. Schnoor)

This article examines how patterns of marriage and social reproduction³ contribute to the transformations of “Wampar-ness” and the future of this population as a socio-cultural unit. We will analyse temporal and spatial patterns of partner choice and marriage in the village of Gabsongkeg, focusing on interethnic marriages between Wampar and *yaner*, as well as the partner choices of the descendants of these intermarriages. Interactions between Wampar and non-Wampar have a long history, beginning with inter-ethnic exchange and warfare before the arrival of Lutheran missionaries in 1909 and the movement of Wampar evangelists into neighbouring Watut communities after pacification in the 1920s. Current patterns of interethnic marriages across time and

³ By using the term ‘social reproduction’ we refer to the reproduction of social structures and systems with an emphasis on “the repetitive character of day-to-day life, the routines of which are formed in terms of the intersection of the passing (but continually returning) days and seasons.” (Giddens 2007: Time, the Body, Encounters) and not to the consolidation of social cohesion as Giddens clarifies.

space seem to imply a specific dynamic in their distribution that we want to expose. More specifically, we aim to explain the spatial and temporal processes affecting marriage patterns in terms of local and more general factors conditioning social reproduction.

Our analysis is in the spirit of Anthony Giddens's (2007) theory of structuration in linking the temporal and spatial positioning of actors to the possibility of the reproduction or transformation of Wampar social relations as a system. Giddens insists that structures are produced and reproduced constantly by the actions of the individuals, even while social resources (from rules to institutions) are a condition of individual action. Under the contemporary circumstances obtaining among the Wampar, in PNG, access to economic values associated with land are still tied up with ethnic and local corporate identities and the politics of affinity, notwithstanding the burgeoning pressures to bring land within the market economy as a means of non-traditional production.

Our account is an analysis of the effects at an aggregate level of the exercise of agency – referring to the capability of persons to take intentional action (Giddens 2007) – in the context of marriage and the changing historical profile of ethnic endogamy among the Wampar. Given the crucial role of marriage in social reproduction, and its explicitly acknowledged role in relations between corporate entities implicated in patterns of land use, marriage choices are especially liable to have trans-generational effects that are radically transformative of local structural relations. The situatedness, in time and space, of Wampar and non-Wampar partners (and potential partners) leads to patterns of partner choice which can only be explained by their subjectivity as it is inflected by historically situated constraints and chances. These constraints and opportunities have changed over recent generations; also, however, the constraints and marital opportunities have resulted in unions that have reconfigured local fields of social relations in ways that feedback (negatively or positively) on subsequent choices. It is these we wish to underline in this paper.

2. The Wampar: Historical and Sociocultural Context of Interethnic Marriages

The Wampar are one of the several hundred ethnically identified peoples of PNG. Such identities remain relevant to the distribution of politico-economic resources in times of increasing urbanization and the expansion of extractive industries. The state itself recognises “traditional” ethnic identity as relevant to access to land and other economic resources, but the legacy of PNG's colonial regime continues to find ex-

pression in the manner in which ethnic identity remains an aspect of the distribution and structure of social fields (education, physical and social mobility and local distributions of power).

The Wampar (others called them “Laewomba”) were first mentioned in reports of German gold miners and colonial officers at the beginning of the 20th century. After peaceful initial contacts with the medic and ethnographer, Richard Neuhauss, and missionaries of the “Neuendetelsauer Mission” in 1909, a mission station near Gabsongkeg village was built in 1910/11. The Wampar, like other early contacted lowlands populations in PNG, are relatively well educated (degrees reaching from high school, over vocational colleges to university) and many men and women have a stable income from (self-)employed work as teacher, craftsmen, employees, or graduates (e.g. law, geology, philosophy). In addition, they are settled on fertile land and had for a long time regular cash income by selling betel nuts in the markets concentrated in and around Lae. These regionally significant advantages make their settlement area attractive for migrants, and make the Wampar attractive marriage partners.

The Wampar live in eight villages. Five of them are situated along the Highlands Highway, which connects the coastal city of Lae with the Highlands provinces (see figure 1). In the 1970s, traffic between Lae and the Highlands increased when the Highlands Highway was upgraded from gravel to an asphalt road. Airstrips from World War II, which had been built on Wampar land, were extended and developed to become Lae’s airport in the 1980s. South of the Markham two villages are located near the road to Wau and Bulolo. Wampar traditions say that they came down into the Markham Valley via the Watut, a river that drains the mountainous interior to the south, under pressure from expanding populations in the higher altitudes (Fischer 1992: 16, Fischer 2013). They probably drove away earlier inhabitants in claiming their current territory.

Many Wampar families still depend upon subsistence production for the bulk of their food: they maintain gardens that supply bananas, their staple, and coconuts, vegetables, corn, onions, tomatoes, pineapples, watermelons, taro, yams, sweet potatoes, and peanuts. Areca palms, the source of the mild narcotic, betelnut, which is chewed all over PNG, were planted for consumption and for the market. A recent disease of the areca palm meant that cocoa became an important cash crop. Rice, sugar, tea, bread, biscuits, and canned goods (sardines and corned beef) that are mostly purchased from small tradestores supplement garden produce. Today, overall, the market economy is almost as important as the subsistence economy, for there are many necessities that can only be obtained with cash. Many Wampar work in towns, at the airport, or

as teachers, nurses and mechanics, or are engaged in commercial activities.

After the arrival of Lutheran missionaries and the pacification of the Markham Valley, the Wampar population began to increase. A 1937 census listed 1,841 Wampar (Vial 1937: 384); the national census of 1980 enumerated 5,150. Inter-marriage between Wampar and *yaner* began to increase soon after pacification. Initially, the evidence suggests, inter-marriage was predominantly between Wampar men and *yaner* women, but after the Highlands Highway and Lae's airport were built, local settlement and marriage patterns have changed dramatically. The 2000 national census, which does not differentiate according to ethnic group or language (Paliwala 2012: 6), gives a total number of 2,517 citizens for the ward of Gabsongkeg. Official estimates for the year 2000 suggest that the Wampar population stands at approximately ten thousand people, a fivefold increase in sixty-three years (National Statistical Office 2001). Nevertheless, demographic research indicates that Wampar fertility is declining (Kramp 1999), possibly as a consequence of Wampar women's interest in family planning, which many say is due to fear that their land will not be sufficient to support coming generations.⁴ Whatever factors underlie declining fertility, it is clear that the initial rise of the population was mainly caused by immigration.

Formerly, a Wampar person (*ngaeng Wampar*) was defined by birth, socialization, and affiliation to a named clan (which factors rarely came apart), in contrast to outsiders, those born and raised elsewhere. As elsewhere in Melanesia, the system always allowed for "adoption" into a kin group, but the individual's clan identity and association with specific places was rarely unclear. Over recent years, inter-marriage and new questions of affiliation have made it more difficult to construct clear categories differentiating Wampar and outsiders. Contestation over descent-group and ethnic identity has become stronger with increased prospects for mining (which entails differential employment and royalty entitlements), the expansion of the Highlands Highway to a four-lane road (entailing compensation payments and loss of residential plots) and the growth of many associated economic activities in the Markham Valley. How international capital articulates with local inequalities is a current research project of the first author and colleagues. The following section will provide information on the fieldwork and the data used in the analyses.

⁴ Other factors might be the level of education and infertility due to the spread of venereal diseases (Beer 2008: 99–100; Kramp 1999: 364), inter-marriage per se seems not to have direct influence as the number of children in mixed families is as diverse as in Wampar-Wampar families.

3. Methods, Sources and Data

Our analyses are based on both quantitative and micro-focused qualitative data. In our view, neither data-set would alone be sufficient to understand geographical and temporal aspects of the transformation of Wampar social relations. The data is mainly based on anthropological fieldwork that Bettina Beer has conducted in the village of Gabsongkeg. She did fieldwork in Gabsongkeg in 1997, 1999/2000, 2002, 2003/04, 2009, and in 2013. This fieldwork was additionally informed by the Research Focus Wampar, established by Hans Fischer in 1958. Fischer had conducted fieldwork in Gabmadzung in 1965, and then in Gabsongkeg in 1971/72, 1976, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 1999/2000, 2003/04 and 2009. In 2009/2010, Doris Bacalzo and Tobias Schwörer did research in Dzifasing, and Heide Lienert, Christiana Lütkes, Rita Kramp, and Juliane Neuhaus worked in different Wampar villages (Bacalzo, Beer and Schwörer, in press; Fischer 1975, [ed.] 1978). Beer's data is complemented by information on marriages⁵ from a 'village register' (1954) instituted by the colonial Australian administration, and from earlier ethnographic censuses, conducted by Hans Fischer in 1971, 1993, and 1997 (Fischer 1997). In 1999/2000, 2003/04 and 2009 Beer conducted an ethnographic census in Gabsongkeg that includes standardized basic data on all households, each member in residence at the time of the visit (*de facto* population), and those who are attached but absent (*de jure* population). Basic data includes sex, age, civil status, education, residence, group affiliation (ethnic group, descent-group), kin relations between members, and location of the household, but includes less standardized information on migration, education or any topic of specific interest to the ethnographer (see Schulze, Fischer, Lang 1997). All persons living in Gabsongkeg, as defined by the official village boundaries, including all household members judged to be only temporarily absent were listed and described. Beer also conducted many biographical interviews with one or both partners to interethnic marriages in 2003/04, and again in 2009, and had many open, unstructured conversations with couples and their kin, neighbours, and friends.

In total, we have information on 958 marriages, including marriages ended by separation or death (n=366) in addition to still-existing (n=592)

⁵ A 'marriage' is marked by the woman's moving into her partner's household: the term itself refers to the cohabitation of the partners regardless of whether or not they underwent a church ritual, which – if it happens at all – often occurs much later, or their union is legally registered (a very rare event). The definition implies a certain amount of imprecision, as partners might move in together and then separate again, for various reasons and for indeterminate lengths of time. The exact status of a relationship might be contested after a partner leaves to stay with parents after a conflict, with some people but not others construing it as a divorce.

marriages. The total comprises interethnic (n=538) and intraethnic (n=420) marriages involving at least one partner from Gabsongkeg village; the earliest documented couples were married in the 1890s, the latest in 2009. The Gabsongkeg data is not representative for the Wampar area as a whole: villages differ in distance to the highway and the town of Lae, in the sharing of boundaries with other ethnic groups and in employment possibilities.

We are confident that Beer's long-term ethnographic fieldwork has yielded good, reliable qualitative data (Beer 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2010). However, the ethnographic census data poses some challenges for the quantitative analysis. As the data was not collected in a fully standardized manner, some variables suffer from a great number of missing values. Investigations in societies without official calendars and institutionalized registration procedures must rely on estimates and indirect inferences to yield dates and related data. Accordingly, more fine-grained multivariate analyses cannot be conducted. But the descriptive results already allow insights into the marriage patterns of the Wampar that can guide and enrich the qualitative data analysis.

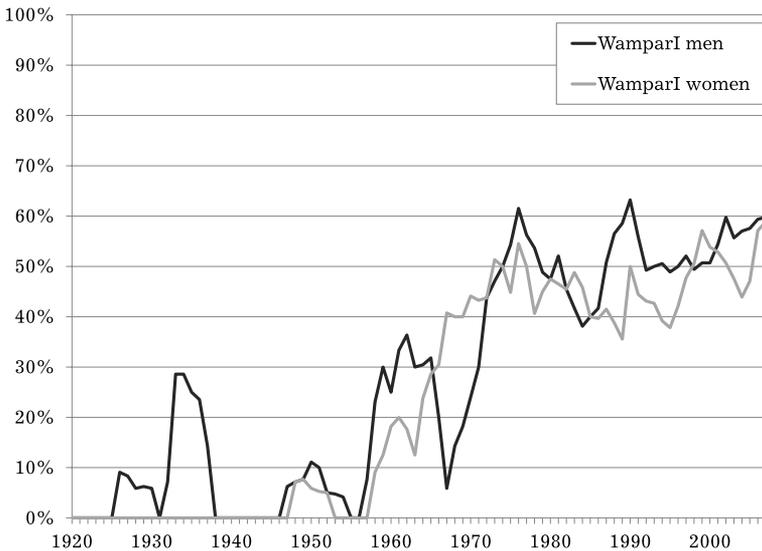
4. Ethnic Origin of Partners, Socioeconomic Status and Gender

Figure 2 presents the trends of intermarriages between Wampar and non-Wampar (*yaner*) over the marriage cohorts from 1920 to 2007 (presented by a five-year moving average) differentiated by sex.

Figure 2 includes all marriages of individuals ("WamparI") generally accepted as being Gabsongkeg residents of Wampar origin, which means that we have included those with one Wampar parent, and who, accordingly, are also the offspring of intermarriages.⁶ Moreover, we follow Wampar practice in including persons who became Wampar by adoption.

The graphs show an increase over the whole time period for Wampar men and women alike. However, intermarriages between Wampar men and non-Wampar women (*afi yaner*) began earlier – mainly in the 1930s, when missionary powers were at their height – than between Wampar women and non-Wampar men (*ngaeng yaner*), which first occurred after the Second World War. Overall, the difference between the

⁶ We refer to these individuals as "WamparI" (for inclusive), which embraces mixed Wampar ("WamparM") and Wampar only "WamparO" with both parents being of Wampar origin. In section 3 and 5 we differentiate WamparM with a *yaner* father from those with a *yaner* mother.



Source: Ethnographic census data 1954 to 2009, n=670 (men); n=620 (women).

Note: A marriage between a Wampar and a Wampar/Adzera is not counted as intermarriage but as intraethnic marriage.

Figure 2: Trends of Intermarriages of WamparI Men and Women over Marriage Cohorts (Five-year Moving Average), in Percentages

genders is not stable over the marriage cohorts, but Wampar men are slightly more likely to marry someone outside their ethnic group than Wampar women; in the most recent marriage cohorts this tendency is more marked. By 2009, some 60–70% of all Wampar marriages had been to a *yaner*.

The increase of the Wampar population in the 1980s and 1990s was caused mainly by migration from the Watut River, the Highlands, the Sepik Provinces, and the neighbouring Erap and Adzera areas to the Markham Valley and Lae. Desire for access to schools, hospitals, jobs, cash and the “modern world” induced people to leave their hinterland villages and come to coastal towns. Wampar became more mobile too. Increasing migration and mobility resulted in more marriages with *yaner* which increased the opportunities for others to visit Wampar settlements to stay with inmarried relatives and the chances of further marriages. This section analyses Wampar-*yaner* marriages in terms of gender, affiliation to ethnic groups and their economic status, which reveals aspects of exchange relations between kin-based networks and ethnic groups.

As described above, in the calculation of the trends of intermarriages we did not count descendants of interethnic couples resident on Wampar territory as *yaner* because, by default, Wampar designate them as “Wampar”. Children of *yaner* fathers are more often excluded on the basis of patrilineal considerations, but practice is not consistent (Bacalzo 2012). By counting the offspring of intermarriages as Wampar, the percentage of Wampar-Wampar marriages looks higher than it otherwise might, but doing so reflects how Wampar categorize people in the majority of cases. This also explains much of the overall growth of the Wampar population. We will include offspring of interethnic couples also in the statistics on personal characteristics of the marriage partners (next section) but will analyse their partner-choice separately when it comes to kinship networks, intermarriages and the future of Wampar social boundaries.

It is not possible to get information on the ethnic origin or language group of migrants on Wampar territory from the official PNG National Census of 2000 and 2010 (National Statistical Office 2001, 2013). Hence, collecting data on the ethnic origin of in-marrying partners has been an important task in the ethnographic census although it is demanding: Wampar – even close relatives of an in-married person – give names for whole areas (*hailans* ‘from the mountains’ or *nambis* ‘from the coast’), PNG provinces, well known ethnonyms (*Tolai*), or towns located in the area from which a person comes (*Kerema*). Several of these categories can overlap. Bettina Beer talked to some of the migrants themselves and then listed the larger category, the most usual ethnonym, and smaller units down to the specific village/place name. The result was about 50 labels for the origin of *yaner* which we reduced for our analysis to categories according to spatial distance and socio-economic hierarchies: ‘Direct neighbours’ and ‘Fringe peoples’ (further away from town and economically disadvantaged compared to Wampar), ‘Highlands’ (a large category of individuals characterized by the following features: further away, in the mountains of the central cordillera of New Guinea, negatively stereotyped among Wampar, very mixed economic background), ‘Distant socioeconomic equal’ and ‘Distant poorer’ groups, which include many coastal and islands populations. The last category ‘Outside PNG’, with only four marriages, can be ignored.

Table 1 and table 2 report the origin of the partners of Wampar men and women respectively. Furthermore, we differentiate between WamparI, WamparO and WamparM, descendants of mixed marriages between Wampar and other ethnic groups (cf. footnote 5). The majority of the marriages of Wampar men and women are homogamous in ethnic terms, i.e. to Wampar spouses. Direct neighbours (Adzera, Erap, Watut,

and Yalu) who share a boundary with the Wampar are also important marriage partners, especially for Wampar men. Among them, the Adzera, who are the next neighbours up the Highlands Highway, are clearly the most important source of *yaner* married by Wampar, with 103 (71 Adzera women and 32 Adzera men) out of the total of 538 inter-ethnic marriages. The Adzera occupy an economically less advantageous area than the Wampar and intermarriage has a long history. Such marriages clearly tend to a pattern of virilocal residence and involve the exchange of bridewealth (a pig, bananas and money) shortly after marriage, whereas intra-Wampar affines exchange bridewealth much later.

Table 1
**Origin of Female Partners (Afi Yaner)
of WamparO and WamparM Men, Percent in Columns**

Origin of woman	Origin of man		Total WamparI	<i>n</i>
	WamparO	WamparM		
Other	0.8%	6.5%	1.3%	9
WamparM	4.0%	8.1%	4.3%	31
WamparO	56.1%	37.1%	54.5%	389
Direct Neighbours	13.8%	11.3%	13.6%	97
Fringe peoples	4.1%	8.1%	4.5%	32
Highlands	4.1%	3.2%	4.1%	29
Distant socioeconomic equal groups	14.0%	24.2%	14.8%	106
Distant poorer groups	2.9%	1.6%	2.8%	20
Outside PNG	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>714</i>

Source: Ethnographic census data 1954 to 2009, n=652 (WamparO); n=62 (WamparM).

Table 2
**Origin of Male Partners (Ngaeng Yaner)
of WamparO and WamparM Women, Percent in Columns**

Origin of man	Origin of woman		Total WamparI	<i>n</i>
	WamparO	WamparM		
WamparM	4.0%	5.9%	4.0%	23
WamparO	63.3%	30.6%	63.3%	392
Direct Neighbours	6.2%	15.3%	6.2%	49
Fringe peoples	0.7%	2.4%	0.7%	6
Highlands	1.7%	8.2%	1.7%	17

Continued next page

Table 2 (continued)

Origin of man	Origin of woman		Total WamparI	<i>n</i>
	WamparO	WamparM		
Distant socioeconomic equal groups	18.0 %	32.9 %	18.0 %	132
Distant poorer groups	5.7 %	3.5 %	5.7 %	36
Outside PNG	0.3 %	1.2 %	0.3 %	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0 %</i>	<i>100.0 %</i>	<i>100.0 %</i>	<i>663</i>

Source: Ethnographic census data 1954 to 2009, n=578 (WamparO); n=85 (WamparM).

The figures shown in the tables reflect the advantages discussed in the foregoing paragraph that their economically superior position gives Wampar men in search of an often younger (see section 5) spouse: 13.6 % of all Wampar men marry a spouse from their direct neighbours while only 6.2 % of Wampar women do so. The long-standing nature of affinal links between Wampar and the Adzera is also reflected in the place of residence of the couples: many Wampar-Adzera couples live in the principal Wampar settlements, whereas later in-marrying *yaner* are more likely to live in isolation along the Highlands Highway (see table 5). In-marrying Adzera men sometimes maintain two households (an uxori-local and a viri-local one) or live exclusively in their place of origin in order not to lose their patrilineally inherited rights to land. Sharing a territorial boundary, frequent possibilities of contact and interaction (e.g. visits, exchange of bride wealth) as well as already existing kinship networks facilitate further intermarriages. However, these factors cannot explain the gender difference in the proportions of intermarriage (nor can any demographic factor like an uneven gender ratio among the Adzera, National Statistical Office 2013: 25): these are more readily explained in terms of the attractiveness of proximity to urban opportunities that residence on Wampar territory provides (for more on the influence of siblings on marital and post-marital residence choices see Beer in press).

Afi Wampar seem to be more inclined to marry *ngaeng yaner* from distant socioeconomically similar groups (18.0 %). Indeed, 32.9 % of *afi Wampar* of mixed parentage (WamparM) marry into these groups. Very few Wampar women (0.7 %) marry men from the remoter, poorer areas between the Markham Valley and the highlands. These patterns indicate a tendency for Wampar women to avoid marriages to men from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Case studies and interviews show that in long-standing marriages, *yaner* husbands are usually better educated than their Wampar wives, or that these men have at least a comparable economic and educational background.

The tradition of *ngaeng Wampar* taking an *afi yaner* as a second or third wife is consistent with the general pattern of female hypergamy in interethnic marriages. Polygynous marriages show marked status differences between the groups of origin of the spouses. Such marriages are recorded in the early accounts by missionaries (Fischer [ed.] 1978: 96 ff.): Wampar men took women captive during fighting with neighbouring groups or other Wampar villages and brought them home as wives. Bridewealth was exchanged only for the first wife, who enjoyed a superior position within the household. Despite all efforts of the missionaries, polygyny has never been given up completely after pacification, Wampar men still took women from other ethnic groups as second or third wives. In our sample there are no polygynous marriages among *ngaeng yaner* or their male offspring.

Today, social relations are more complex, with the result that the classification of unions is more difficult: there are still straightforwardly polygynous marriages, but with changes of values, patterns of partner choice, ambiguities in cohabitation and the fragility of marriages, it is not always clear if a marriage is 'polygynous', in the earlier sense of a permanent living arrangement and a clear hierarchy within the household. Today different relationships with Wampar and/or *yaner* women can overlap for variable, often indeterminate periods. Thus, a first marriage might have ended in a divorce while a second relationship remain ambiguous, as between a new marriage and a short-term love affair or both relationships might co-exist for a period during which nobody is completely clear about the future. Accordingly, the number of unclear cases in our sample is quite high (1.8%). Nonetheless, 2.4% (n=23) marriages of Wampar men are unequivocally polygynous marriages, in none of which is a Wampar woman the second or third wife. Increase in intermarriage and contemporary patterns of polygyny both suggest a regional pattern of hypergamy, with a net movement of women as spouses into the socio-economically privileged Wampar community.

Interactions (peaceful and warlike) between Wampar and their neighbours have existed for a long time, offering structural opportunities to meet marriage partners. Later, the increasing wealth of some coastal groups, urban New Guineans or other well-off ethnic groups led to their greater participation in education, increasing social and spatial mobility, individual affluence and opportunities to travel. Greater numbers of men have been coming to Lae and travelling through the settlement area of the Wampar, which offers opportunities for Wampar women to meet attractive future marriage partners. So, the specific pattern of social mobility and hypergamy in the Markham valley occurs in the context of PNG wide patterns of increased mobil-

ity, and social relations in schools, workplaces and towns. We will analyse the places where couples meet and the ways they get in contact in section 6 after giving some further information on the traits of the interethnic partners (section 5).

5. Characteristics of and Exchanges Between Interethnic Partners

First, we focus on the age at marriage of Wampar men and women, which might shed light on the patterns of intermarriage (cf. table 3).⁷ Second, we describe the age differences between partners in inter- and intraethnic marriages. In this section, statistics are again presented for all Wampar individuals (WamparI), as there are no noteworthy differences between the offspring of intermarriages and those with two Wampar parents.

Table 3
Age at Marriage for Male and Female WamparI
in Intra- and Interethnic Marriages, in Years

Age at marriage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
WamparI men				
Intraethnic	15	59	24.5*	23
Interethnic	15	62	27.2*	26
<i>Combined</i>	15	62	25.6	24
WamparI women				
Intraethnic	14	49	22.2	21
Interethnic	14	55	22.3	21
<i>Combined</i>	14	55	22.2	21

Source: Ethnographic census data 1954 to 2009, n=697 (men); n=592 (women), * p<0.001 (between marriage type within each sex).

The age at marriage of the partners in intermarriages and in Wampar-Wampar marriages only differs for Wampar men. They are on average 24.5 years old when they marry a Wampar wife (i.e. when the couple moves in together). If they marry an *afi yaner*, Wampar men are significantly older; on average these marriages are entered at the age of

⁷ Older individuals might be more likely to intermarry as they should have fewer opportunities to find a non-married Wampar spouse.

27.2 years. For Wampar women we do not find statistical significant differences in respect to the age at marriage. Whether they have an interethnic or an intraethnic marriage, Wampar women are most likely to marry at the age of 22 years.

The higher age at marriage of Wampar men over women can partly be explained by the fact that it is often not their first marriage: some of them marry an *afi yaner* as a second wife to an already existing relationship as described above, or after a first marriage ended by separation or death of their first wife.⁸ Death in connection with pregnancy and childbirth still happens often and is a general problem in Papua New Guinea.⁹ Nonetheless, the age difference between partners – although smaller – still remains significant if polygynous marriages are excluded.

Now we turn to the age difference between partners within inter- versus intraethnic marriages: many Wampar men marry much younger *yaner* wives. Table 4 shows the age difference in intra- and interethnic marriages, which on average is 2.1 years for Wampar-Wampar marriages. This is consistent with the findings of Walter Schulze's earlier analysis of Fischer's 1971, 1976 and 1988 ethnographic census. Schulze excluded all interethnic marriages and showed that the data for 61 marriages was in an amazing accordance of reality with the Wampar ideal, that partners should be nearly of the same age at marriage, the man being only slightly older than his wife. In most cases the age difference was 2 to 3 years (Schulze 1997: 97).

Wampar men married to an *afi yaner* are on average 7.1 years older than their wives, whereas the average age difference between Wampar women and their *ngaeng yaner* husbands is on average 1.8 years and thereby not significantly different from that of Wampar women in intraethnic marriages. Wampar men marry much younger partners from non-Wampar ethnic groups, which suggests that they are interested in younger women, who are seen as physically attractive and stronger than older women. *Afi yaner* from remote areas who meet a future Wampar partner might also prefer partners of the same age but could be willing to marry – in some cases – much older men in the absence of

⁸ Actually, almost 26% of the Wampar men in interethnic marriages have been married before compared to only 11% of those in intraethnic marriages; for women the respective percentages are 11% versus 8%. Accordingly, we ran further analyses in which we only included first marriages. Although the differences between the types of marriages slightly reduced in part, the overall results (e.g. regarding significant differences) remained the same.

⁹ In 2009 a maternal mortality rate (MMR) of 733 deaths in every 100,000 live births was reported for 2006 by the Department of Health (National Statistics Office 2009: 109–11).

Table 4
**Age Difference Between Partners
 in Intra- and Interethnic Marriages, in Years**

Age difference between partners (age of men – age of women)	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
WamparI men				
Intraethnic	-20	26	2.1*	2
Interethnic	-3	40	7.1*	5
<i>Combined</i>	<i>-20</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>2</i>
WamparI women				
Intraethnic	-20	26	2.1	2
Interethnic	-6	10	1.8	2
<i>Combined</i>	<i>-20</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>2</i>

Source: Ethnographic census data 1954 to 2009, n=450 (men); n=417 (women), * p<0.001 (between marriage type within each sex).

(younger) alternatives. Living with an older man on Wampar territory offers them advantages that even compensate for problems associated with the decision (having no support from kin being far from home, having to care for an aging husband, being low in the social hierarchy): proximity to town and booming markets, fertile land for gardening, availability of education and good health services.¹⁰ This pattern can be interpreted as an exchange of youth and physical attractiveness against economic benefits and/or status, which heightens the utility of the match for each individual. Several studies present empirical evidence on the exchange between status or economic resources of males and the attractiveness of females in partner selection (e.g. Schoen and Woolbridge 1989, Franzen and Hartmann 2001). It is consistent with the findings of Buss and his colleagues that men place more emphasis on the physical attractiveness of potential partners whereas women emphasize the socioeconomic resources of potential partners (Buss 1989,

¹⁰ Among Wampar physical and sexual attractiveness are discussed for both sexes referring to health and age. Physical attractiveness is here used in a wider sense including ability to work in a garden and reproductive success not restricted to aesthetic beauty ideals. Nevertheless we appreciate that the pattern we are describing would appeal to evolutionary psychologists committed to the view that the sexes have different strategies in order to maximize reproductive success. These involve the exchange of youth and physical attractiveness against economic standing and/or social status which are especially relevant for men (Buunk et al. 2001, Grøntvedt and Kennair 2011, Schwarz and Hassebrauck 2012). However a proper consideration of these perspectives is beyond the purview of this paper so we merely note this convergence.

Buss and Angleitner 1989, Feingold 1990). This pattern has been found in various cultures (Buss 1989), although the difference between the genders seems to have lessened in more recent years (Buss et al. 2001).

Yaner women are also said, by Wampar men, to be less self-confident and demanding, and harder working, than Wampar women. In the same line of argument, many Wampar emphasised that the hierarchy in such marital relationships is more clear-cut: whereas Wampar women often talk back, make their own decisions and choices and have their brothers and family to support them, *yaner* women are without their male kin and in a more vulnerable position and tend to be mindful of that fact. By the same token, they are also more likely to accept co-wives in polygynous marriages. Some *yaner* women are more likely to accept these vulnerable positions as some of them want to escape expectations and pressure in the place they come from for a better economic future as described above.

Negative stereotypes about other ethnic groups are common among the Wampar (Beer 2006a). In daily interactions and in the evaluation of partners, however, individual qualities and potential are more important and outweigh these negative images. Ideas about having a good future life often depend in the younger generations not so much on physical attributes of the partner but more on chances to participate in an imagined modern lifestyle, or chances to be able to develop autonomous economic strategies and become more independent of the family of origin. Today Wampar women, for example, who marry non-Wampar partners see the *yaner* in various respects as better potential husbands-to-be than Wampar men: *Ngaeng yaner* could facilitate migration to socio-economically interesting parts of the country (towns or certain provinces), where they can live permanently or temporarily or in two households, or if the non-Wampar partner stays on Wampar territory the couple depends on her, her family and mainly her brothers. This often gives the Wampar woman in an interethnic marriage more power over her life as well as the future of the children in terms of education and possible livelihoods. This outweighs the problem that sometimes occurs of children of *ngaeng yaner* not being sure to be provided with land on Wampar territory (see Bacalzo 2012, Bacalzo, Beer and Schwörer 2014).

6. Interethnic Marriages Across Space and Time

Over the course of the 1990s, the Highlands Highway became increasingly important to the economic life of the Wampar, who now offer for sale to travellers everything from fruits, prepared food and beer

to kerosene and diesel. Prostitution has also become a source of income, which has implications for the risk of HIV/AIDS infections.¹¹ The Highlands Highway is the main link between the interior of the country and the coast and the most important of the few roads in Papua New Guinea. It has always been used to transport people and goods from the highlands provinces to the coast, but since airfares have increased it has also been used by large numbers of passengers travelling by public motor vehicles. Bryant Allen estimates based on the official 2000 population census that the Highlands Highway between Goroka (Eastern Highlands) and Lae probably has ten times more village generated traffic than any other road in Papua New Guinea, and that does not take into account the trucks (Allen, pers. comm.). Although hold-ups are frequent along the highway, they do not deter many people from travelling.

Settlement patterns are closely connected to economic opportunities and recent changes in Wampar residential preferences have had implications for the frequency with which *yaner* and Wampar meet as potential partners. In turn, the residential preferences of parties to interethnic marriages facilitate encounters between members of different ethnic groups. Here the temporal and spatial positioning of actors acts to (re-)structure Wampar social life in the process of reproducing it (Giddens 2007), a process we describe in more detail in the following sections.

6.1 Changing Settlement Patterns and Residence of Interethnic Couples

With the advent of colonialism, the Wampar were concentrated into the main villages that still exist today. However, census data show that over the last twenty years more and more families have moved out of villages to live either in hamlets near gardens (to protect garden products against theft) or near the highway. The most important economic activities for families take place outside the village, in distant gardens, on chicken farms (which are built outside the village), around the airport or at markets along the highway.

The diversification in contemporary religious affiliation has contributed to the redistribution of the Wampar population and development

¹¹ This has implications for interethnic marriages, as *yaner* women (more rarely men) are blamed for having brought the disease into the Wampar area and spread it by sexual relations (no matter if short-term, as co-wives, or unmarried women) with *ngaeng* Wampar. On Wampar territory, the Highlands Highway combines many conditions relevant to a consideration of the risk of HIV transmission (Beer 2008).

of a division between the Highlands Highway settlements and the still Lutheran dominated villages. The congregations of the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), the Assembly of God (AOG), the Lutheran Renewal and PNG Revival churches are located along the highway on Wampar territory. The SDA church several years ago 'bought' land near the highway, from a Wampar businessman who claimed to have the right to sell it and it has proved a constant source of conflict between SDA adherents and Lutherans.¹² Some of the non-Lutheran congregations are run by *yaner* pastors who try to attract Wampar people as members. Today all polygynously married Wampar men (including many of the described unclear cases) settle along the Highlands Highway or in towns outside Wampar territory, for church elders exclude them from the Lutheran community and the general understanding is that they should not live within the village. Some of them (or their wives) are members of some of the new churches, which are less strident concerning these forms of marriage.

Life near the highway offers commercial opportunities and gives easier access to town. On the other hand it has also some risks: traffic hazards, social conflicts and the rates of criminality are much higher close to the markets and the highway. For Wampar-Wampar couples the costs often – but not always – outweigh the benefits, particularly if they have fertile gardens in the bush they want to protect. For interethnic couples the situation is different. Many of them work in town and settle near the highway especially because *ngaeng yaner* do not own land and have limited access to gardens from their in-laws. Thus the highway offers them opportunities for small business not based on gardening such as retailing of garden produce, cooked food, or goods bought in town. This might explain the high percentage of 24.0% of marriages involving *ngaeng yaner* settling at the highway (cf. table 5). Yet, the rate of intermarriages of Wampar men with *afi yaner* who set up households near the Highlands Highway is even higher: it amounts to 34.8%. The context of market settlements along the highway – one is called *mix market* for all the intermarried couples living there – and the new congregations not only attract interethnic couples, but they also increase the likelihood of further meetings with *yaner*, either as they travel along the Highlands Highway or they come to visit relatives already married to Wampar and living there.

¹² Some members of congregations who are allowed to work on Sunday (unlike Lutherans) set up 'Sunday markets' along the highway. This has created conflicts with Wampar who themselves follow the rules of the Lutheran church according to which the main market is closed on Sundays and after a death.

Table 5
**Residence of Inter- and Intraethnic Couples
of Gabsongkek Wampar in 2009, Percent in Columns**

Place of residence 2009	Type of marriage		Total	<i>n</i>
	Intraethnic (both WamparI)	Interethnic		
<i>Marriages of WamparI men</i>				
Village, Gabsongkek proper and divisions within	36.0%	18.2%	28.0%	116
Hamlets on Gabsongkek territory	35.1%	32.1%	33.7%	140
Along the Highlands Highway	20.6%	34.8%	27.0%	112
Other Wampar villages	2.2%	0.0%	1.2%	5
Lae (next town)	1.3%	3.7%	2.4%	10
Other parts of PNG	1.8%	6.4%	3.9%	16
Two places of residence	3.1%	4.8%	3.9%	16
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	415
<i>Marriages of WamparI women</i>				
Village, Gabsongkek proper and divisions within	36.0%	10.3%	24.8%	100
Hamlets on Gabsongkek territory	35.1%	19.4%	28.3%	114
Along the Highlands Highway	20.6%	24.0%	22.1%	89
Other Wampar villages	2.2%	1.7%	2.0%	8
Lae (next town)	1.3%	6.9%	3.7%	15
Other parts of PNG	1.8%	32.0%	14.9%	60
Two places of residence	3.1%	5.7%	4.2%	17
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	403

Source: Ethnographic census data 1954 to 2009, men n=228 (intramarriage), n=187 (intermarriage); women n=228 (intramarriage), n=175 (intermarriage).

Over the last five years some Wampar groups have begun to lease or sell plots of land to non-Wampar most of which tend, for obvious reasons, to be near the highway. Although this practice is highly controversial it has led to an increase in the number of *yaner* living on Wampar land, including families who are not related in any way to Wampar.¹³ This, like any increase in the number of co-resident *yaner*, provides further opportunities for interethnic relations to develop, but it also tends to blur social and territorial boundaries, which acts to dis-

¹³ A young Wampar founded a land-awareness theatre group, which travels to different places to stage plays about the dangers of selling Wampar land to businessmen.

solve the connection between ‘Wamparness’ and place. For many Wampar being Wampar was strongly related to their shared history in gaining and holding the Markham Valley (Fischer 2013) and to their exclusive right to those lands (Fischer 1975). For ordinary Wampar this has guaranteed a productive subsistence base for themselves and their descendants and for migrants it has meant the perpetual possibility of a return to security. Most Wampar still absolutely refuse the idea that land can be ‘owned’ in such a way that it can be sold. Indeed, some land that had been ‘sold’ has already been claimed back by relatives of the seller.¹⁴

Many *afi* Wampar married to *yaner* men live with their spouses in towns in other parts of PNG (32.0 %, cf. lower part of table 5).¹⁵ This corresponds with the norm that women should move to the place of origin/residence of their husbands, as they may pass on land rights to their children. It also reflects the relatively high ethnic/social status of their *yaner* husbands, and their own qualifications as nurses, teachers, or secretaries.

6.2 Opportunities to Meet Future Partners

The most important locations where future couples meet are on Gab-songkeg territory (often along the highway), in the nearby town of Lae and for the younger generation at boarding schools in different provinces of PNG. The occasions and contexts of crucial importance are markets, school, work and shopping in town. Meetings in more remote areas – in the mountains or distant islands – are rarer and happen usually on the occasion of visiting relatives of intermarried Wampar, or on journeys to other parts of PNG for church or sports activities (cf. partner-choice in PNG towns, Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993).

Future configurations of Wampar social identity will be strongly affected by the growing number of ‘mixed children’ (*miks pikinini*), offspring of the increasing number of intermarried couples, negotiating ethnic affiliation (Bacalzo 2011, 2012) and their partner choices. As we showed many offspring of interethnic marriages (n=88; 54 females and 34 males) marry *yaner* as well (cf. figure 2). Wampar tend to differentiate according to the gender of the in-marrying parent. If the father is *yaner*, not only are they often ethnonymically tagged, but their clan affiliation is sometimes contested:

¹⁴ The conditions under which an individual can get legal title over communal land are immensely complicated and non-transparent to most Wampar.

¹⁵ The percentage is probably higher because it is likely that women married in distant towns have not been included in the census.

In such cases a common form of differentiation involves the way children of the marriage are referred to: *miks pikinini* (mixed child), *miks manki* (mixed boy), *miks meri* (mixed girl), or *pikinini bilong ngaeng yaner* (child of a non-Wampar man); but ethnonymic identifiers are also stressed, as for instance, *meri Tolai* (a Tolai girl/woman) or *man Sepik* (a boy/man from the Sepik). While children of non-Wampar fathers acknowledge these terms they also put emphasis on their connections through their Wampar mothers, and want to be recognized as children of Wampar women. (Bacalzo 2012: 335)

For *miks pikinini* (especially girls) with a contested status who want to stay on Wampar territory it would seem to be better – in terms of securing their future close to their family of orientation – to marry a Wampar, but this is often not the case as the high percentage of out-marriages among *miks pikini* shows.

We analysed the place of origin of partners and parents of 88 intermarried *miks pikini* (54 women and 34 men). 62 are married to a partner who is not from the province of their *yaner* parent and 26 to a partner who is from the *yaner* parent's province. That means roughly 30 % of all intermarriages might have been facilitated by relatives of the non-Wampar parent, which possibility is also apparent from the frequency of visiting of those linked by the marriage. The rest of the interethnic marriages of *miks pikinini* might also be explained by the fact that they grew up outside Wampar territory or near the Highlands Highway, because (as described above) interethnic couples are more likely to settle there, and the highway is an important area where interactions with non-Wampar take place. Out of the 54 intermarried *miks meri* 18 *miks meri* married a partner from the same region of their *yaner* parent (10 fathers and 8 mothers), among the 34 *miks manki* 8 married an *afi yaner* from their *yaner* parent's place of origin (5 fathers and 3 mothers).

More complex transformations of Wampar identity and social relations appear to be underway in the recently developed context of the likelihood of mining and possibly other large-scale projects. Social processes concerned with negotiating inclusion in those groups entitled to royalties and preferential employment have begun in earnest (Bacalzo, Beer, and Schwörer 2014). As elsewhere in PNG (e.g. Bainton 2009, Gilberthorpe 2013, Guddemi 1997), the adaptation of 'traditional' groupings (to meet perceived legal requirements and conserve within group benefits) involves less permeable social boundaries. In general, it seems, these processes of inclusion and exclusion have a tendency to introduce inequality and marginalization along lines of age, gender, place, and group identity (Ballard and Banks 2003).

These observations link up with discussions of the formation and ongoing maintenance of boundaries between ethnic groups within an-

thropology. Ethnicity has not disappeared in a globalized world but has 'survived' and is sometimes even strengthened as a function of inter-group relations. Its nature is changing with the different contexts of mobilization such as transnational negotiations of indigeneity or like among the Wampar as a resource by parts of the population, in their strategies for internal control within their own class-stratified ethnic group (cf. Jenkins 2008: 93 ff.). In this context (inter)marriage is of central interest not only as a social practice in conflict with rules and values but also as a result of intentions and agency by men and women.

7. Conclusion: Growth and/or Dissolution of an Ethnic Group?

Consider the ancestral Wampar population, in 1900, for example: practically an endogamous population, but with the primary groups/social identities (clans) interlinked by the dense ties produced by exogamous unions and the bilateral kinship these produce; the transgenerational reproduction of the means of life, which principally relied on land and human labour, was also directly implicated in relations within and between clans but in ways that were also contingent upon the individual's kindred; economic practice, cultural forms, individual life-trajectories and the quality of social networks tended towards broad, normatively coherent patterns that sometimes evoke images of the "crystalline" in the anthropologist (Lévi-Strauss 1976: 30). Being Wampar, for most of the population, hardly ever posed a problem, although relations between the primary sub-groups that comprise that population were the heart of political life.

Our analysis, we hope, shows clearly that the patterns upon which social reproduction depended were sensitive to configurations of affinity that post-colonial social life made possible. Gradually, through the accretion of the effects of marriage choices on the constitution of Wampar as a group, 'Wampariness' as an identity became a question. Now, with 60–70% of the population marrying out, the ethnicity of the Wampar is felt to be at stake. Wampar children and *miks pikinini* identify with one or both parents, with their friends in the village, later with schoolmates, and they find their future partners ever more often outside their own "ethnic group". Still, most of them stay connected with their relatives in Gabsongkeg, who, for example, help with school fees and bride-wealth, tend garden land for their future gardens and help maintain a sense that home remains secure. Such a sense of security does not only reflect a form of nostalgia or contemporary financial imperatives, for claims to land that may turn out to be an immensely valuable source

of income depend upon those intra-Wampar identities. Accordingly, everyone seeks to maintain or cement the Wampar identities they can claim, no matter where they find themselves: visits are frequent, non-residents are ready to contribute (if only with time) to communal projects, to attend celebrations and offer political support. Nevertheless, descending generations build up new identifications, as residents of the city of Lae, or Nadzab as products of a specific school, college or university and as members of the friendship networks such institutions produce.

Wampar articulate their default understanding of 'Wampariness' and the rights associated with it in the idioms of patriliney and virilocalty, even though such norms are frequently honoured through exceptions. Accordingly, how, in the face of contemporary marriage patterns, 'Wampariness' can be maintained presents itself as a frequently discussed and important question, for it is connected to land rights and the allocation of other limited resources. So, who counts as a Wampar person is a difficult and delicate issue. It is, however, a question that only poses itself case by case for each kingroup and is sensitive to the particular configuration of loyalties within it. Therefore there can be no general answer to this question. Increasing infertility combined with high numbers of immigrants gives a new basis to older anxieties about how contact with "outsiders" would weaken the strong Wampar – not just individual bodies, but the whole population. The selling of land further weakens the aspect of territorial belonging, and identification. The temporal and spatial processes involved show that Wampar manage even under today's historically grown constraints to maintain a distinct social identity which is based on a joint history, territorial claims and social networks (cf. Beer 2012) which can be rather in- or exclusive based on the specific situation and the current conditions.

Some of the other Wampar villages along the highway have developed a "joint policy" that prohibits the sale or lease of land. Time will tell how that "policy" works. More generally, responses to the questions posed by contemporary life are highly sensitive to the circumstance of each politically autonomous unit. Within Gabsongkeg, different lineages have different strategies: some have a clear agreement not to sell any land, some do it, and some are deeply divided. There is especially high demand among businessmen for land on Gabsongkeg territory because of easy access to the airport and its proximity to town. Gabsongkeg also has a particularly long history of settlement of unrelated non-Wampar from the Watut and the Erap, ethnic groups from slightly more remote and poorer areas, on their territory. However, these settlers depended on the goodwill of the Gabsongkeg patron. With new, well-off white collar workers from town buying or leasing land, the

situation is different. This also impacts on intermarriages. A wampar woman married to a *yaner* can settle on Wampar land bought from lineages other than their own, if her brothers – against the older rules – are not willing to give her land to use with her partner.

Our argument that ethnic identity in PNG can greatly constrain mobility, and impact on almost all aspects of the individual's life chances, as well as the reproduction of rules and resources has wider theoretical implications: the institution of marriage and ethnic endogamy – important for the maintenance of ethnic identities – as well as actual partner choice based on intentions and agency are central for understanding local and regional patterns of social reproduction and stratification not only in PNG. The above mentioned discussions in anthropology about ethnicity and the maintenance or dissolution of ethnic boundaries should focus more on (inter)marriage to study internal differentiation within socially and ethnically more and more stratified groups.

Ethnic boundaries, marital unions and kinship networks are rarely sharp demarcations between social entities but rather gradual zones of interaction. Giddens' emphasis on the interconnectedness of the temporal and spatial positioning of actors and the reproduction and transformation of social relations and identities is helpful in analysing processes of boundary making/dissolution. As ethnicity is gradual and ethnic identities are defined by many day-to-day practices, values, rules and resources, the developments among Wampar are difficult to predict although aspects of the process of negotiating these identities have become clearer through the analyses of interethnic marriages.

Whether future inequalities have very much to do with being Wampar remains an open question that depends upon how *yaner* are defined and treated. Potentially, proposed capital investments can generate vast intraethnic *and* interethnic differentials in individual, household and group income. Currently, everyone, from landless immigrants who depend on the patronage or goodwill of others to successful business men and women who lease out land to *yaner* and have a permanent income depends upon local relations inflected by residential and kinship contingencies. These, in turn, are dimensions of the outcomes of prior marriage strategies and the politics of land (which is still normatively lineage-based). How current strategies and policies might be affected by the advent of proposed large-scale capital projects remains to be seen; certainly, local fields of social relations will be impacted and the constitution of 'the Wampar' as a social, political, administrative and cultural group will remain a complex question.

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