

Bloody time revisited: New observations on time in a Papua New Guinea Village

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In a 1982 paper I argued that perceptions of time scarcity in Kragur Village, Papua New Guinea, in the mid-1970s were best understood as a reaction to new forms of authority characteristic of the growth of capitalism and calls for greater time order were grounded largely in its perceived ritual significance. More than forty years later, villagers are much more familiar with Western time, but less likely to perceive time as scarce. As in the 1970s, aspiring leaders still press for greater time order. Millenarian illusions informed advocacy of time order in the 1970s. Although today these illusions are, if not extinct, then dormant, unquestioned assumptions mirroring Western capitalist views of time inspire many of today's advocates. Yet, lacking the authority to impose new forms of time order, they have little effect on the rhythms of village life, and economic incentives to abandon comparative indifference to time remain weak.

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INTRODUCTION

I published a paper in *American Ethnologist* in 1982 called 'Bloody Time and Bloody Scarcity: Capitalism, Authority, and the Transformation of Temporal Experience in a Papua New Guinea Village' (which I'll hereafter call simply 'Bloody Time'). The term 'bloody time' is the English rendering of the phonetically nearly identical Tok Pisin *bladi taim*, a way of referring to time I heard often in Kragur Village, Papua New Guinea (PNG) during my first fieldwork there in 1975–76.¹ Like the British or Australian term bloody, the Tok Pisin *bladi* suggests mild to strong antipathy to whatever it modifies, except when used as a term of affection. I noticed early in my fieldwork that—somewhat to my surprise—villagers talked a lot about *wasting* bloody time; in Tok Pisin, *westim bladi taim*. In the 1982 paper I analysed Kragur talk of time scarcity as an aspect of the process of incorporation into a capitalist political economy. I argued that it had more to do with struggles over new forms of authority characteristic of the growth of capitalism than with changes in the relationship between uses for and the supply of time. In this paper, I revisit that analysis briefly and then compare what I observed in the mid-1970s with the time-related talk and behaviour I observed in Kragur almost forty years later.

In brief, Kragur villagers do not talk as much about time scarcity and greater time order as its antidote these days as they did in the 1970s. This is so even though villagers are now much better equipped conceptually to talk about time as an autonomous entity subject to economising calculation. Nevertheless, many occupants of, and aspirants to, non-traditional leadership positions still advocate for greater time order in village life, much as their predecessors did in the 1970s. But they have as little success. Indeed, most villagers seem less concerned about time issues than in the past. Time scarcity as an economic issue, in the capitalist sense, is still of little importance, because Kragur is still only marginally involved in the market economy. Perhaps more important, neither leaders nor rank-and-file villagers are now in the state of chronic anxiety stirred by the millennial hopes and apocalyptic fears that moved them in the 1970s. Many of the advocates of greater time order of decades ago were moved by illusions about the magico-religious significance of time order. I suspect that today's leading advocates of more Western-style time consciousness—many of them urban-rural migrants—are moved more by unquestioned assumptions about the significance of time order they have imbibed from immersion in PNG's Westernised enclaves.

TIME IN KRAGUR IN THE 1970S

When I first lived in Kragur, villagers moved through their days without any apparent hurry. The rhythm of daily life was largely that of a world in which time was virtually synonymous with concrete events, like the waxing and waning of the moon, the passage of the sun across the sky, and the kind and quantity of work to be done on a particular day.

Nonetheless, some villagers worried aloud that this way of living 'wasted' time and helped keep them shockingly poor in comparison with the foreign settlers in PNG, whom they usually called, in Tok Pisin, *ol Yuropian* (Europeans) or *ol waitman* (whites). Village men who had worked for Yuropian employers on cacao or coconut plantations, in gold mines, or as domestic servants, had seen how Yuropians worked and lived on strict schedules and measured and coordinated their activities by the clock. A few such men frequently harangued other villagers to rise early and start their daily work when the sun was still low in the sky, and to respond promptly when the village bell—an empty World War II propane cylinder—summoned them for collective work organised by the elected village leader (the councillor), or evening prayers led by Kragur's Catholic leaders.²

Many villagers found these harangues annoying, some grumbling quietly and a few even raising their voices in public protest. But, in private conversations, even villagers on whom the public harangues grated the most told me that, in contrast with the past, in this era time was scarce (in Tok Pisin, *taim i sot* or *taim i no inap*). Although they didn't like being yelled at and lectured, they too thought that the prevailing leisurely pace of life and indifference to promptness and coordination made this situation worse. Most villagers, however, were culturally poorly equipped to think

about time as something that could *be* scarce, and some villagers clearly didn't experience time as an autonomous, measurable entity.

Although villagers often spoke about time they had to use Tok Pisin to do so, because there is no word analogous to the English noun 'time' or the Tok Pisin *taim* in the indigenous Kairiru language. Some older villagers candidly admitted that they found these words puzzling. 'This "time,"' one old gentleman said to me, 'I don't understand it' (in Tok Pisin, 'Dispela "taim", mi no save longen'). What an English-speaker would call time-related vocabulary in the Kairiru language—the names of months and days, for example, or ways of indicating an approximate point or period during a day—did not lend itself easily to dealing with time as something subject to quantitative monitoring. For example, in the Kairiru language one indicates time of day by speaking of the position of the sun or the waxing and waning of darkness. One can speak of today, yesterday, tomorrow, the day before yesterday, and the day after tomorrow, but there are no labels for days that don't move through time, so to speak, with the position in time of the speaker.

Although Tok Pisin time vocabulary permits speaking of time as an independent and quantifiable dimension of experience, it was not unusual for villagers to describe variations in their experiences of duration as reflections of concrete events, rather than as varying perceptions of a stable underlying reality—that is, as the passage at an unvarying pace of time as an autonomous entity. As one woman said: 'If you're working and the sun goes rapidly, you don't finish much work If the sun goes slowly you can accomplish a lot I don't know why the sun goes rapidly Sometimes it goes rapidly, sometimes it goes slowly'. In the same vein, a village man told me of magic he and others had used when working on European plantations that slowed the speed of the sun's passage so that they could get their assigned work done by the end of the day.³ The generally low level of numeracy in Kragur in the 1970s, using either the Tok Pisin or the Kairiru language counting system (Smith 1978: 114–122 & 385–389), also suggested a poor conceptual foundation for a sense of time scarcity in anything but very concrete and situational terms, such as the need to finish a task before dark or to finish clearing and burning a new garden plot before the rainy season began.

I noted in 'Bloody Time' that some economists argued that a model of behaviour based on choices made under conditions of scarcity doesn't depend on the psychological reality of such cognitive inclinations or capacities. For an ethnographer, however, adopting this position would be giving up the point of one's work—that is, trying to understand a particular culture.⁴ Many economists also would have noted that even if Kragur villagers had highly developed conceptual tools for economising in time use, it would have been almost impossible in that era for them to waste time in a monetary sense, because they had so few ways of earning money and got such pitiful returns on the time they spent trying to do so.⁵ That is, it was almost impossible to incur monetary opportunity costs. But this perspective only made more curious Kragur villagers talk of time scarcity and their apparent belief in greater time order as its cure.

Time order and anxiety

Gradually, I came to understand the Kragur concern with time order in a way more grounded in local cultural reality. It became clear that Kragur people tended to see the time coordination of Yuropian life as primarily a spontaneous moral accomplishment. There *is* a moral dimension to time consciousness in Yuropian societies. But when villagers described the admirably coordinated and punctual behaviour of Yuropians they drew from their experience in settings—plantations, mines, Catholic mission stations—in which time order may be a virtue, but the need to submit to the dictates of employers or other authorities firmly supports the dictates of morality. Former wage labourers understood that Yuropian employers imposed time order on their Papua New Guinean employees, but many assumed that Yuropians themselves achieved such order spontaneously. Many also took an additional step and reasoned that this spontaneous time order was just one manifestation of a deeper, characteristically Yuropian form of social harmony. In the Kragur world of the 1970s, maintaining social harmony was both the foundation for and critical evidence of living right. I saw this most often in assemblies for curing illness or making gardens or fishing more productive.⁶ My fieldwork also fell during what I believe was period of especially great anxiety about Kragur people's *ability* to live right. I think the principal source of that anxiety was uncertainty about what national independence would bring. I arrived in Kragur just a few weeks after the celebration of PNG's independence in September, 1975. The country had formally passed into a new era, but many Kragur people, and villagers throughout the country, were still waiting to see what effects this would have.

In addition, there had been a lot of cargo cult activity in Kragur in the years just preceding my arrival. Although not all villagers were actively involved, it is hard not to surmise that these desperate attempts to obtain Yuropian-style wealth through magico-religious ritual weren't, at least in part, an effort to avoid the debacle that some villagers believed would follow independence.⁷ Villagers were clearly applying their indigenous understanding of the inseparability of moral and material issues to analysing and coping with the uncertainties of life in their newly independent country. For instance, cargo cults aside, they saw their ability to put to rest internal village strife, and thus ensure supernatural support for good health and subsistence success, as clear evidence of how prepared they were to thrive, or simply endure, in the new era of independence.⁸

Villagers had observed Yuropian time order while working for secular employers, and many had taken from Catholicism the notion that promptness and coordination in time were virtually as important to Yuropian religion as to Yuropian labour (to the extent that villagers distinguished ritual and technical work). Many scholars have drawn attention to the roots of Western time consciousness in Christian doctrine and ritual. The Christian concern with daily time order goes back at least as far as third century efforts to systematise daily devotions, and what some regard as the sixth century invention of the schedule by Benedictine monks as a means of turning all of daily life into a devotional and penitential act.⁹ This legacy influenced Kragur people, not only through the example and exhortation of Catholic missionaries, but also through

written precept. A young Kragur woman's copy of the 1968 Tok Pisin version of the *Prayerbook and Hymnal for Catholic Natives of New Guinea*, for instance, listed coming late to Mass among the sins one must consider when preparing for confession.

I concluded that Kragur striving for Yuropan-style time order was, to a significant degree, a ritual effort to demonstrate—to villagers themselves and to whatever higher powers might be attending, whether the ancestors, God, or the Virgin Mary—a new kind of social harmony and, hence, Kragur's eligibility for a higher order of social and material well-being, or at least exemption from post-independence chaos. Nevertheless, although many villagers thought greater time order would be a good thing, leaders and would-be leaders who tried to institute such order found themselves in a bitter struggle.

Time, authority, and resistance

No matter how attractive many villagers found greater time order in the abstract, the concrete behaviour required clashed with deeply ingrained attitudes and habits. Even some of those eager to institute greater time discipline shared the common distaste for activities that curtailed their autonomy. Almost all the villagers with whom I discussed the subject compared village work favourably with wage work because in the village, in contrast with wage work for an employer, you could choose what to do and when to do it and you could do it at your own pace. Similarly, when comparing with each other the most common kinds of village work—such as gardening, fishing, harvesting and processing sago, and house building—villagers tended to see tasks that by their nature required committing to longer periods of sustained effort, such as sago processing, as more difficult than those one could pick up and put down with more freedom, such a routine garden work.¹⁰

Villagers' reflex to resist efforts to impose greater time order also was consistent with the fact that their admiration of Yuropan time order as a moral achievement betrayed deep misunderstanding of the importance of power to Yuropan order in work, a kind of power absent in Kragur. Village leaders could rant and rail, but they didn't have the power of Yuropan bosses to deprive people of pay or the means of making a living. Traditional leaders (called *ramat wolap*, or bigmen, in the Kairiru language) had the magical power to destroy the fertility of crops or to disperse fish and game, and they sometimes harangued people to work harder and pay more attention to the village bell. But the most revered—and feared—*ramat wolap* of that day were largely indifferent to greater time order.

Such circumstances led me to argue in 'Bloody Time' that when villagers said things like *taim i sot* (time is short) or *taim i no inap* (time is insufficient) the experience they were describing probably was different from that of a Westerner experiencing 'the anxiety of the impecunious consumer' in the face of the 'inexorable pace and entropic flow of time as a reified and impersonal substance' (Smith 1982: 506–508). In Kragur, however, rank-and-file villagers behaved as though they were less concerned with having too little time than with leaders' repeated attempts to constrain the autonomy to which they were accustomed in their everyday lives. In fact, when

complaining of a plethora of new activities competing for their time with which their parents and grandparents did not have to contend, many villagers stressed the imposition of new kinds of authority over the pace and pattern of their activity as much or more than the number of activities calling for their attention.¹¹

Scenes I witnessed in 1976 on days of collective work under the authority of the village councillor illustrate how sharply some villagers felt the sting of attempts to impose such authority. Arriving back in the village with a heavy load of sago palm leaves, a middle-aged woman sighed with relief as she slipped the tumpline from her forehead and lowered the bundle to the ground. Sitting down wearily near a young man busy weaving the leaves into rectangular sections of thatch, she complained: '[The Councillor] rounds us up as though we were wild pigs or cows'. Although he was also doing the councillor's bidding, the young man replied: 'You may be a cow, but I'm a man. He can't *force* me to work'. On another occasion, the councillor's second in command (in Tok Pisin, the *komiti*) indulged himself in lecturing the assembled villagers for responding slowly to the bell calling them for council work that day and for not working hard enough on previous days. A young man standing near me muttered under his breath 'We're not bloody stupid!' And a bolder man protested in a voice that all could hear: 'We're not pigs! We're not dogs! We know how to work!' He then turned and stalked away.¹²

TIME IN KRAGUR IN THE 2000S

On subsequent visits to Kragur (in 1981, 1995, 1998, 2008, and 2011) I never again conducted the kind of detailed investigation of matters related to time that I did in the 1970s. In 2008 and 2011, I was preoccupied with trying to understand regional and local elections, Kragur bids for parliamentary seats, histories of Kragur clans and moieties relevant to modern political office seeking, the continuing diversification of Kragur religious practices, and local efforts to get a foothold in the adventure tourism market (Smith 2013).

I did, however, notice the following developments in matters pertaining to the issues I wrote about in 'Bloody Time':

- Villagers no longer find clock time as foreign as they used to;
- Clock time still isn't very important in ordering village life;
- Villagers are subject to new pressures to put more time order into their individual and collective lives;
- They feel these pressures only lightly;
- Villagers are still worried about the future, but the kind and level of anxiety are nothing like what I witnessed in the 1970s;
- There are still very few money-making opportunities in Kragur, and the returns on money-making efforts are small;
- Sponsoring new forms of time order is still connected with aspirations for leadership; and,
- People talk about time scarcity a lot less than they did in the 1970s.

Greater familiarity with clock time and greater numeracy

In the new millennium, Kragur villagers are much more aware of clock time than they were in the 1970s. By the 2000s, most of Kragur's people had grown up in a world in which not only they, but also their parents and even some of their grandparents, had been highly aware of clock time, contrary to the case in the mid-1970s. The average villager is also more numerate than in the 1970s. For example, I saw many villagers fluently calculating the results of different distributions of first, second, and third choice votes during a 2008 election, using the relatively new Limited Preferential Voting system (Smith 2013: 108–134). The village population also now includes many retirees from decades of work in such institutions as schools and the PNG Defence Force, in which clock time rules and at least basic numeracy is essential.

Continuing indifference to clock time in daily life

Despite today's villagers' greater capacity for using clock time, it doesn't look significantly more important to the general pattern of village life than it was decades before. People talk about clock time more, but work and public events still begin, proceed, and end with the same lack of hurry and coordination as in the past. Many villagers also clearly still work by task rather than time; that is, they don't perceive their activity as filling a container of time or see time as a container that needs filling. One day in 2008 my Kragur friend, Stephen Kilibop Umari, hung out with me in and around the Wewak airport for nearly twelve hours, waiting for my delayed flight to Port Moresby, the national capital and first stop on my journey back to the U.S. We passed some of the hours watching two Papua New Guinean maintenance men replacing broken sections of the roof overhang just outside the large windows looking out on the runway. I thought they were working at a reasonable pace and taking a reasonable number of breaks, given how hot it was outside, especially on the concrete of the airfield. Umari, however, said that they weren't working well. He judged their task a small one and said that way to do a small job like that was to '*holim wok inap i pinis*'—work steadily until the task is done—then '*malolo*', that is, rest. The airport workmen, of course, were probably accustomed to matching tasks to notions of their proper duration, and if they finished this task rapidly, another job, not a rest at their own discretion, was probably waiting for them.

New cheerleaders for greater time order

Even so, villagers are still subject to pressure to put more time order into their lives. One new ideology of time order and efficiency stands out, but many interpret it in ways compatible with the age-old pace of village life. The Entrepreneurial Development Training Centre Personal Viability Programme, most often known as the Personal Viability Programme or just PV, has taken off in PNG since its founding in the late 1990s. The national government has even sponsored PV training courses for civil servants. PV has also made a deep footprint on Kairiru Island. I first got to Kairiru in 1975 by hitching a ride on a boat going to St. John's Seminary, a small boarding school for young PNG men, located on the flatter landward coast of Kairiru. The

seminary has now been closed for many years, but the Catholic Church still owns the facility, and operates both a chicken farm and a small commercial conference centre there. The PV organisation has made the conference centre a favorite meeting place, and several Kragur men have taken advantage of its proximity to attend PV training courses.¹³

The PV website touts ‘A “New Science” which works with the invariability of physical science in the field of the human mind’, and ‘owning yourself and being yourself’. More concretely, it promotes business success through a kind of ‘self-reliance’ that entails learning to say no to the requests of relatives for financial aid and learning to ‘control’ your time. PV teaches that one way to do the latter is to limit ‘sitting idle around the village’ and visiting relatives.¹⁴ Such advice doesn’t take into account what village life is really like. ‘Sitting idle around the village’ doesn’t sound very useful, but people apparently sitting idly chatting are often deliberating such matters as organising agricultural work, conducting religious activities, governing the village, and other matters that in the Yuropian world we delegate to full-time specialists with narrowly defined responsibilities. In Kragur, they are still deeply embedded in multiplex social relationships. You could only eliminate much of what PV calls ‘sitting idle around the village’ by teasing these relationships apart. The result—quite improbable in today’s Kragur—would be a society that was more bureaucratic and more friendly to personal ambition, as well as given to more rigid time order.

The Tok Pisin PV manual is full of talk of doing things for *mi yet*, that is, for myself alone. But most Kragur villagers I’ve spoken with who have taken PV training don’t appear to have drunk very deep of this part of the message. In fact, the most vigorous advocate of PV in Kragur, a retiree from an urban career, takes from his training a quite different message. He’s fiercely in favor of people managing their money with long-term business goals in mind and keeping track of how they use their time. But he tells Kragur people that they have to do this together in what he calls (in English) a ‘communal’ spirit, and he doesn’t see this as contradicting his PV training. To the best of my knowledge, however, sustained ‘communal’ effort in Kragur arises more often from the deliberations of people ‘sitting idle around the village’ than from the decisions of local bureaucratic entities, which often have little force.

One of the several bureaucratic entities that have sprung up in Kragur since the 1970s is (in Tok Pisin) the *Komuniti Stia Tim*—in English, the Community Steering Team—which villagers usually call simply the KST. This body is formally the village-level arm of the Catholic parish lay organisation, but some of its leaders and numbers of other villagers regard it as central to governing all spheres of village life. For instance, although some villagers dispute its right to do so, the KST plays a role in regulating prices at the inter-village market held twice a week in Kragur.

The KST has also attempted to institute a schedule for village life, although by 2008 this effort had fallen flat.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the chair of the KST was happy to show me the hand-lettered matrix describing the schedule. The days of the week appear on the vertical axis of the matrix and times of day on the horizontal axis. The schedule does not parcel out weekday daylight hours in very great detail; from Monday through

Friday the hours from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM are allocated simply to 'work' or 'school'.¹⁶ (see Fig. 1.)

Compared to the schedule of a Benedictine monk, or even a functionary in a Yuropan bureaucracy or a worker in a Yuropan business, this is extremely lax. The schedule does, however, clutter the evenings with prayer meetings, bible study and hymn singing, as well as a variety of secular activities, and it fills most of the daylight hours on Saturdays and Sundays. In all its dimensions it is highly constraining compared to the kind of autonomy in organising their daily lives that villagers still enjoy in practice. It is no surprise that although the KST voted to adopt it, most KST members, I'm told, made almost no attempt to enforce it, and other villagers left it to die of neglect.

Less anxiety about the future

I held in 'Bloody Time' that villagers' complaints about time scarcity in the 1970s were as much or more about issues of authority, as about time scarcity in the Yuropan sense. But the anxiety that stirred concern with time order as an aspect of social harmony mixed hope for the millennium with fear of a disaster. In the 2000s, Kragur villagers still associate greater time order with progress, or what they call in Tok Pisin *divelopmen* (in English, development), and some leaders still shout angrily when people gather for meetings with stately indifference to time. But I haven't heard leaders couple their admonitions to hurry with warnings that villagers were putting at risk their fate in the era of independence or the patronage of the Virgin Mary. Acute anxiety about the chaos that might follow independence has long since given way to

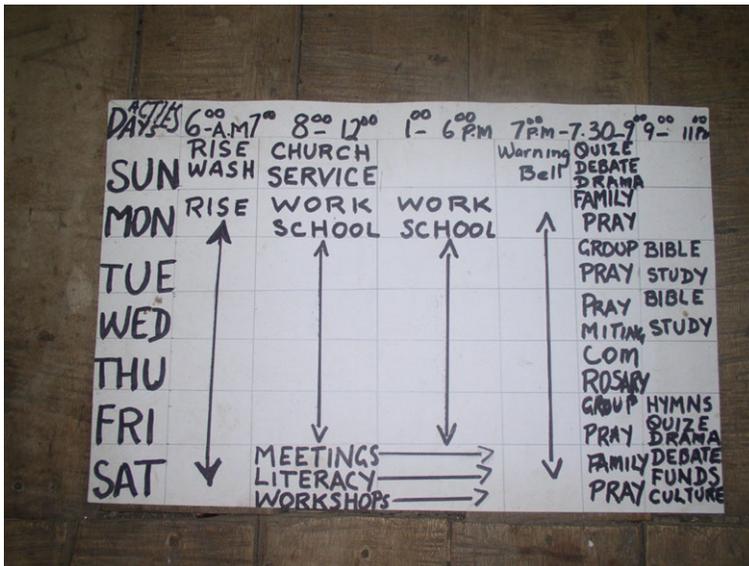


Figure 1 The Community Steering Team Village Activity Schedule.

chronic discontent with the competence and integrity of the national government, and the cult of Mary has become comparatively routinised. Catholicism is still prominent in village life, but there are many more ways for people to worship and take part in church activities now than there were in the 1970s, and much Catholic practice—especially charismatic worship—is more focused on individual than social transformation.¹⁷

It wouldn't surprise me if millenarian hopes still simmer in some quarters, but in 2008 and 2011 I saw or heard no trace of them. Middle-aged and younger villagers acknowledge that Kragur once entertained 'cargo cults', but they generally speak of them as Australians or Americans might speak of steam engines or celluloid collars. Many villagers still see *divelopmen* as a stable condition, attained once and for all, and some still take America as a prime example. But widespread news of America's economic problems has dealt this vision a blow. In 2008 and 2011, villagers sometimes asked me 'Is America OK?' I had to tell them that it was not OK; multitudes of people were losing their jobs—in Tok Pisin, their *wok mani*—and consequently, as happens in America but not rural PNG, their houses. While Americans generally find this appalling, many Kragur villagers find it almost incomprehensible.

Kragur and the market economy

I argued in 'Bloody Time' that the heightened interest in Yuropian time-related concepts I described, even though based on misperceptions, helped pave the way for internalising Yuropian time orientations more deeply as the influence of a capitalist political economy increased. It would be hard, of course, to distinguish the effect of such misperceptions from the influence of schooling, returning migrants, and changes in the larger PNG society and culture. In any case, concepts useful for detailed economising calculation in the use of time are now second nature to many Kragur villagers. But there is still little financial need to do so, because Kragur is connected to the rhythms of the market economy just as tenuously as in the past. It is still hard to 'waste' time in a monetary sense. Copra is dead as a cash crop, the vanilla boom came and went before all but a very few villagers could bring a crop to market, and lack of affordable transport to mainland markets is a heavy drag on the profitability of cacao production.

Mobile phones are now very common in Kragur, and some villagers would like to use them to coordinate daily activities better and to forge business links with Wewak, thus speeding the pace of life. But there is no mobile phone reception on Kragur's patch of the seaward side of Kairiru. You have to hike to the top of the island to get a signal or, if you are traveling to Wewak by sea and want to coordinate with parties there, you have to wait until your boat comes within sight of the mainland. For Kragur villagers, the acceleration of time-space compression that David Harvey identifies with the history of capitalism begins only when, if making the first leg of the trip to Wewak by land, they reach Utabap, at the top of the trail over the island. If they are making the entire trip by sea, it begins when they round the tip of the island at Point Urur.

Time order and leadership

Some of today's most vocal exponents of greater time order have lived most of their adult lives outside the village. For decades they have been immersed in highly time-conscious institutions (especially schools—as students, teachers, and administrators—and the PNG Defence Force). I doubt that they see Yuropian-style time order through the same mystical lenses that colored their fathers' and grandfathers' vision. But they do take it for granted as the right way to live.

Many of them also aspire to greater influence within the village, and they appear to see greater time order as necessary to village progress. And they appear to see their experience with Yuropian-style time order as part of what they offer as leaders. Hence, it is significant in their efforts to obtain established positions of leadership and perhaps to carve out new niches in the crowded village leadership space.¹⁸ As noted above, however, they still encounter rank-and-file resistance to efforts to impose on villagers' customary autonomy. At some level rank-and-file villagers also may perceive that such efforts throw a wrench in the works of what we would call their multiplex social relationships. Teasing apart kinds of time from the familiar, unforced flow of intertwined activities eventually would entail teasing apart the strands of their interactions with others, something almost impossible to do under current circumstances.

Decreasing concern with time scarcity

In 2008 and 2011, I heard neither leaders nor the rank and file talk much about having too little time. I've already noted that since the 1970s I haven't made any systematic inquiries into perceptions of time scarcity. But when I first went to Kragur I didn't plan to do so either. I started pursuing the topic only after hearing villagers talk about it at length in public and raise it spontaneously in many private conversations. I logged fewer than 4 months in the village in 2008 and 2011 combined, compared to just over a year in the mid-1970s. But I think I listened in public and mingled in private as attentively, and perhaps with greater acuity, than I did on my first trip to Kragur. The topic of time scarcity, however, simply didn't come up as much.

SO WHAT?

The things I saw and heard pertaining to time in Kragur in the 1970s were dramatic. What I've observed in this realm since then is not. Kragur's relationship to time, however, still interests me. My interest flows partly from my deep personal dislike for the versions of the Yuropian time world I've experienced in many American workplaces. A face of evil into which I've looked long and hard has 'Daily Time Sheet' inscribed on its brow and factory time cards sprouting from its scalp.¹⁹ Also, of course, its relationship to time is a critical dimension of any society or community.

If Kragur people find more efficient ways to earn money, they will undoubtedly shift more time to money-making activities, and they may adopt stricter time order in their lives to facilitate this. They also will be more likely than were villagers in the 1970s to construe these changes as economic decisions, in a Yuropian sense, and to be

less influenced by millenarian and apocalyptic anxiety and the attraction of time order as a ritual response to such anxiety.

Such a shift would disrupt village life drastically if it happened suddenly, but if it happens at all it is likely to be gradual. No central authority, however, is likely to impose such a change in Kragur's time world. Harry Braverman (1974: 139) speaks of Western workers' 'natural resistance' to capitalist forms of labour. I'm as reluctant as most anthropologists to label any way of living as more natural than another. Historically, however, such resistance has been the norm (Thompson 1966 [1963]; Braverman 1974). In Kragur, no one has much power to impose time discipline based on control over access to means of basic livelihood. The ramat wolap are an exception, but even younger generations of ramat wolap have little or no interest in wielding their power on behalf of greater time order. Participants in endeavours involving smaller, more cohesive groups than the entire village, however, might initiate small changes in Kragur's time world. In 2011, for example, one large clan had begun building a cacao fermentary in Kragur, with financial help from some of its urban members. A functioning fermentary could help local growers increase their profits and encourage people to allocate more of their time to growing and processing cacao.

But as clan members cleared ground and assembled materials for the fermentary, their style of work was very much like that of virtually every other form of collective work I've observed in Kragur, akin to what Umari recommended for the airport maintenance crew. Men joined the work group one by one until a body of men were working together at a furious pace; they sustained their numbers and pace for three or four hours; then, both their numbers and their pace declined until work stopped late in the afternoon.

But even if I had seen the fermentary crew work rigidly by the clock, I would still judge that such endeavors were unlikely to push Kragur toward adopting a more Yuropanian time world very far or very fast. Its location and the declining transportation infrastructure in PNG are likely to keep Kragur relatively isolated from major market opportunities for some time. Unless circumstances—such as gold mining on Kairiru²⁰—virtually wipe out indigenous means of subsistence, villagers aren't likely to give up the deeply familiar time world in which they still live their daily lives.

Following Braverman (1974: 171), if Kragur villagers failed to adopt a highly time-conscious way of life spontaneously, they would be very much like people virtually everywhere. 'The apparent acclimatization of the worker to the new modes of production', writes Braverman, 'grows out of the destruction of all other ways of making a living . . . the weaving of the net of capitalist life that finally makes all other modes of living impossible. But beneath this apparent habituation, the hostility to the degenerated forms of work which are forced upon them continues as a subterranean stream . . . It renews itself in new generations, expresses itself in the unbounded cynicism and revulsion which large numbers of workers feel about their work, and comes to the fore repeatedly as a social issue demanding solution'.

Today's strongest advocates of greater time order are keenly aware that poor access to markets and unstable commodity prices are primary obstacles to earning more

money in Kragur. But they also appear to assume that time order in itself confers advantages, even under circumstances that to an outside observer might make it look irrelevant or, at best, premature. In the 1970s, Kragur villagers' serious misconceptions of the nature of the Yuroopian time world fed millenarian illusions. If today's villagers were to accept the Yuroopian time world at face value—that is, as necessary in itself to the good life, absent supernatural involvement—they would merely be substituting for the illusions of the 1970s common unquestioned assumptions of Yuroopian life.

Succeeding in such institutions as schools, government service, or private business in an urban setting does require adapting to the Yuroopian time world, and long immersion in such institutions is likely to lead people to internalise the habits and the values of that time world. This alone could be enough to inspire veterans of such institutions to advocate greater time order in the village.²¹

It is worth, noting, however, that both the assumption of time order's technical necessity and its moral lustre in the Yuroopian world rest historically on illusions that developed in close association with the growth of capitalism. The principal illusion, as I also noted in 'Bloody Time', is that the dominant Yuroopian time world is a necessary companion to the increasing mechanisation of work and life. As Richard Edwards (1979: 112) argues: '... mechanization often brings with it technical control, as the worker loses control of the pace and sequence of tasks, but this consequence must nearly always be understood as the result of a particular (capitalist) design of technology and not an inherent characteristic of machinery in general'. Neither is the Yuroopian time world the result of the natural evolution of a better understanding of the most effective means of improving human welfare. It is more accurate to see it as the result of generations of class struggle, during much of which, as E.P. Thompson put it, working people were fighting against time, rather than about it (Thompson 1967: 85).

In Europe, as in 1970s Kragur, Christianity helped infuse characteristically capitalist time order with moral and religious significance. Some scholars argue that the Medieval Christian Church resisted the growing dominance of concepts of time focused on serving the needs of commerce, although to no avail (Rifkin 1987: 134–147). Other scholars, however, stress the contribution of Christian religious institutions to the growth of industrial capitalism through promulgating new values pertaining to time and work (Thompson 1967; Rodgers 1978) and the early role of Catholic monasticism in promulgating the values of 'the orderly punctual life', as Lewis Mumford puts it (1963 [1934]: 13–18), values that served the needs of an emerging world of work under capitalist discipline.

Max Weber (1958 [1920]), of course, argued that the rationalisation of work and time, characteristic of the growth of modern capitalism, rested not only on economic calculation but also on anxiety induced by religious belief. Historian William J. Bouwsma also finds efforts to reduce anxiety in changing attitudes toward work and time in the West, although he assigns religion a smaller role than does Weber. He describes the period in Europe beginning around 1300 as one of 'extraordinary anxiety' (Bouwsma 1980: 230). Although developments in the sphere of religion were very much involved, Bouwsma proposes that the broader cause of this anxiety was 'an

inevitable response to the growing inability of an inherited culture to invest experience with meaning' (1980: 230), and that a 'new quantifying mentality' was in part a response to such anxiety. The new mentality was applied to time and 'served not only the needs of business but the deeper psychic needs of men inhabiting a problematic universe' (1980: 236–237). It is not hard to see a parallel with the current era in Papua New Guinea here, although—as I argue above—all that is necessary to inspire returning migrants with zeal for greater time order is thorough socialisation into the habits and values of the institutions in which they made their careers.

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NOTES

- 1 Tok Pisin is the *lingua franca* of much of Papua New Guinea. Indigenous PNG languages provide Tok Pisin's grammar. PNG languages, other Western Pacific languages, and several European languages, chief among them English, provide the vocabulary.
- 2 Kragur joined the Local Government Council System, sponsored by the Australian colonial administration, in 1961. Catholic missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word were active in the Sepik region from the late nineteenth century, but Kragur's wholesale involvement with Catholicism did not begin until the 1930s.
- 3 See Smith (1982: 508) for more details on Kragur temporal orientations in the 1970s.
- 4 I cited a well-known essay by Milton Friedman (1953) as an example of the school of thought that regards the cultural reality of economizing calculation as irrelevant. I cited David Kaplan's famous 1968 article on the formal-substantive controversy in anthropology in refutation of Friedman's views.
- 5 See, for example, Fisk (1964). Villagers' work in the 1970s was mostly planting, tending, harvesting, or hunting food for their families, or tending small stands of coconut palms and making copra, their only cash crop of any significance.
- 6 I describe an illustrative case in detail in chapter 5 of Smith (1994). See also Smith (1984, 1990).
- 7 I address this in 'Bloody Time', but discussions of cargo cults, anxiety about independence, and the indigenous importance of social harmony occur throughout Smith (1994). Some of my thoughts on recent controversies regarding the reality of cargo cults can be found in Smith (2005).
- 8 Chapter 5 of Smith (1994) is highly relevant to this point.
- 9 On time order in third century Christianity see Landes (1983: 60). On the Benedictine role in the introduction of the schedule into European life see Rifkin (1987: 80).
- 10 See Smith (1984) for more details on Kragur villagers' perceptions of different kinds of 'work'.
- 11 See Smith (1982: 509–510) for an illustrative quotation and a note on the impossibility of judging whether or not the number and variety of ways in which villagers could employ 'time as a resource' actually had increased since pre-colonial times.
- 12 However, as I wrote in 'Bloody Time' (Smith 1982: 513): 'It would be an oversimplification . . . to see villagers neatly divided into two camps, for they also seem to be divided within . . . themselves . . . few, if any, are negotiating the changes that immerse them with complete equanimity or single-minded resolution'.
- 13 St. John's was also the sight of a major negotiation regarding the terms of gold mining on Lihir Island in which PV's founder, Samuel Tam, played a major role. The resulting agreement is often known as the Kairiru Accord (Bainton 2010: 165).

- 14 See the Personal Viability website <<http://www.edtc.ac.pg/PVPhilosophy.htm>> accessed 10 October 2010.
- 15 See Smith (1994: 219–220) for a description of this effort in the 1970s.
- 16 An hour, from 12:00 to 1:00, appears to be left for a midday break, although Kragur people typically rest whenever they feel like it and do not eat a regular midday meal.
- 17 This trend was well underway already in 1998. See chapter 10, in particular, in Smith (2002).
- 18 I describe the expanding and ever more complex Kragur leadership space, and the conflicts this engenders, in Smith (2002, 2013).
- 19 Time discipline in many American workplaces is becoming more rigid and coercive. See, for example, Kaplan (2015) and McClelland (2012).
- 20 See Smith (2012b) on possible effects of gold mining on life in Kragur.
- 21 I plan to explore the views and motives of these advocates in greater depth when I visit Kragur next. Perhaps because I identify more strongly with villagers who oppose forays into greater time discipline, I have explored their views more carefully than those of the advocates.

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