Introduction

The challenges of nation-building in Melanesia and Timor-Leste have often been neglected in the focus on state-building agendas. High levels of ethno-linguistic diversity, combined with an array of regional, historical and cultural divisions, continue to present obstacles to the creation of a cohesive sense of national political community. One of the most profound obstacles, most agree, is the disjuncture between Westminster (or other European-derived) government systems and traditional collective societies, in which localised obligations to extended family and traditional authority frequently supersede allegiances to the nation-state. Perceptions of poor or even declining state effectiveness in this region have been reinforced by political crises and civil conflicts in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, prompting discussion of 'fragile states' by formal agencies of regional powers such as Australia (e.g. AusAID 2006). But while there is a wealth of literature on the sources of state failure, comparatively little is written on the views of this region's citizens themselves: how they view the state, the nation and their own place within these entities.

This paper presents the findings of an 18-month research project on the attitudes of tertiary students in Melanesia and Timor-Leste to national identity and key issues of nation-building.[1] The research was conducted at tertiary campuses across four sites: Dili, Port Vila, Honiara and Port Moresby. The study examined the attitudes of the young educated elite likely to dominate the next generation of leaders and decision makers. Their views are pivotal to understanding the challenges to building a more cohesive sense of national identity and political community in Melanesia and Timor-Leste. Findings highlight the ongoing importance of family, religion and maintaining traditional customs in student conceptions of political community. Depending on the case study, they also illustrate the importance of geographical region of origin, language orientation, and gender in explaining differences in key attitudes towards national identity. This article presents a comparative analysis of those findings across the four target sites.

In general, it is argued that the Melanesian countries show a relatively high degree of similarity in responses, with key differences attributable to particular historical, regional or linguistic legacies of colonial rule. A strong pan-Melanesian pattern of group identification was identified, common to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The ongoing importance of traditional authority and custom in conceptions of political community and identity was evident in all four case study sites, but was in each case matched by indicators of respect for modern state authority. Most importantly, this study reveals high degrees of national pride, and faith in democratic principles and citizenship; conversely, however, it reveals low levels of pride in contemporary democratic performance and inter-group tolerance. While tertiary students demonstrate relatively strong attachments to the nation, and in-principle civic nationalist commitments to the state (including citizenship and respect for law and political institutions), concerns over the capacity of centralised authority to provide basic services appear to undermine positive perceptions of the state in practice. Counter-intuitively, pride in democracy and inter-group tolerance was higher in post-conflict societies (Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste) than in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Background: Nation- and State-Building

Though the term has a long and diverse history (see e.g. Rae 2002; Berger 2006)[2], nation-building is employed here to refer to the cultural processes of forming a cohesive political community to support the development of a functional state. While the international community is preoccupied with post-conflict state-building (focused on improving governance, institutional capacity, accountability, and the rule of law) the broader processes of nation-building (community development, identity formation, and national integration), and of creating the conditions for social cohesion and political stability have been relatively neglected. Most international assistance undertaken under the auspices of 'nation-building' has in fact been directed at state-building (Chandler 2006), and the two categories are regularly conflated in the literature. Yet the challenges facing fragile or emerging states in the south-west Pacific derive from both a lack of a functional state and the absence of a functional 'national' political community, based on a broadly legitimate and unifying sense of national identity.

For Borgerhoff (2006, 103), nation-building is the 'deliberate interest- and ideology-based formation of a national format which creates collective identity and affiliation of the population within the nation-state'. As Dinnen (2007, 3) argues, these conscious attempts to develop 'a shared sense of identity and community' among various populations within a state do not necessarily have to foster homogeneity, but must at least produce a sustainable consensus on shared civic goals, and tolerance of heterogeneity. In the context of weak economic development, however, latent social divisions may be compounded in the competition for scarce resources, producing forms of national politics characterised by inter-group contests for the capture of the state, to benefit regional or clan-based patronage networks. Strong regional divisions in south-west Pacific states, with attendant problems of political stability in the region, attest to the ongoing challenges of nation-building for postcolonial political elites.

There are also particular challenges of nation- and state-building in 'new subsistence states' (Nixon 2006) characterised by low levels of economic development, and subsistence agriculture as a predominant mode of economic activity outside cities. As Nixon argues, where a substantial proportion of the national population is reliant on subsistence farming, integration into 'modern' economic and political systems regulated by the nation-state may be minimal. Such environments are normally characterised by the ongoing presence of 'local administrative mechanisms capable of operating independently from the state in accordance with the principles of 'traditional authority' (Nixon 2006, 75), and the postcolonial 'imposition' of a modern state model, rather than its independent development in situ.

Effective nation formation is, therefore, not just about the lateral integration of different groups around 'deliberate' constructions of nation-building goals, interests and political values, but also about the way prevailing socioeconomic structures influence the formation or reproduction of political communities; how tensions between modern and traditional conceptions of authority influence popular conceptions of state legitimacy; how nation-building and state-building agendas interact; and how these processes combine, successfully or otherwise, to create 'national' constituencies in support of the state and its institutions. In particular, the sustainability of relationships between influential conceptions of traditional community and modern state institutions are central to the contemporary studies of nation-building (Dinnen 2007), along with the potential for 'hybrid' forms of political authority to promote stability (Brown 2007).

Nation-Building in Melanesia and Timor-Leste

Like most south-west Pacific societies, the four nations in this study (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste) can be characterised as predominantly rural societies, with subsistence agriculture the dominant form of economic production outside urban areas. While geographic and historical factors have produced more ethnic fragmentation and variety in some countries (especially Papua New Guinea), all four countries could be described as segmentary societies characterised by multiple ethno-linguistic groups —

with over 1,000 distinct languages between them. While there is a history of cyclical and permanent rural–urban migration in each of these societies, land, language and clan are tightly bound together and constitute the most essential markers of social and cultural identity. Systems of exchange relationships within these family networks (better known as *wantoks* in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) have primacy over obligations to more recent institutions such as the state.

The continued strength of traditional beliefs, languages and the primacy of family networks can be viewed in a positive light, demonstrating strong social capital (De Renzio 2000) within local groups. Nonetheless, these four nations face a range of contemporary problems, many of which stem from the imposition of a Westminster-style centralised state by outgoing colonial governments (or in the case of Timor-Leste, by Indonesia and then the UN) onto these highly heterogeneous and traditional polities, and consequent tensions between traditional and modern political systems.

Aside from tensions between traditional and modern forms of governance, historical, colonial and missionary influences have produced a range of contemporary social and political cleavages which, in the immediate post-independent period at least, have been reflected in regional voting patterns, party preferences and also lines of conflict. In Timor-Leste, for example, the 2006 conflict cleaved along east–west regional lines, driven by conflict within and between security forces, with the subsequent election resulting in strongly regionalised voting blocs, with the FRETILIN Party drawing its support predominantly from the east and the parties forming the new Parliamentary Majority Alliance government predominantly drawing their support from the western districts (Leach 2009). In Vanuatu, where the denomination of missionaries determined language of education, zones of Anglophone or Francophone missionary influence produced additional religious, geographic and political symmetries, for at least a decade after independence. While the symmetry between language of education and political party allegiances has become increasingly blurred in

Vanuatu, this linguistic cleavage has continued to prove a salient influence on national identity.

These same influences have also produced strong regional identities and often secessionist tendencies. In Papua New Guinea, the secessionist sentiment that emerged at independence resulted in a protracted and destabilising secessionist war in Bougainville and has endured in other regions such as in East New Britain (Hawksley 2006). Tensions have also mounted in West New Britain and Popondetta, Oro Province due to internal migration policies and conflict over land (Koczberski et al. 2004). In Solomon Islands, early missionary activity, combined with historical inter-island trading links, produced a strong Western Islands regional identity, and a movement which also threatened secession at independence (Bennett 2002).

The legacy of colonial languages (a dual legacy in the case of Timor-Leste and Vanuatu) has also created significant barriers to the development of national identity. The adoption of a single national indigenous language has had varying fortunes in each country, with Solomon Islands perhaps the last to accept Pijin as a lingua franca. Language policy has also been highly contested in these countries, most notably in Timor-Leste, where the adoption of Portuguese as an official language (alongside Tetun-Dili), in a country where the bulk of the population were educated in Indonesian, has been highly controversial.

Christianity figures prominently in the daily lives of the citizens of these countries, with churches of various denominations playing a central role in service provision, especially in health and education, but also in conflict resolution and social cohesion. As with political systems, Christianity has become 'indigenised' to some extent. In all four countries, Christianity coexists with traditional belief systems exemplified by *Kastom* (or *Adat* in Timor-Leste), with people able to maintain both belief systems in tandem, often with syncretic features. According to Douglas (2000), it has become a central motif in the rhetoric of Melanesian nation makers, who have sought to transcend diverse cultures and divisions by linking custom with Christianity as unifying, universal belief systems.

Rural–urban migration has also been a major feature of these four societies, and a considerable source of social tension. In colonial times, there

was tight control over in-migration to towns, which were largely reserved for the colonial and commercial elites (Koczberski et al. 2001, Ranck 1977). This pattern changed dramatically with independence. According to Haberkorn (1992), Melanesia's urban population tripled from a mere seven per cent of the region's total population in 1955 to 20 per cent by 1985, which he attributes to rural–urban migration. At current rates, he claims (2008) urban populations in Melanesia are set to double in the next 25 years. In Papua New Guinea, much of the recent urban migrant population has become concentrated in peri-urban fringe settlements, which have become a source of crime and sometimes social friction (Guthrie et al. 2005a, 2005b). In Timor-Leste, almost half of Dili's population is composed of internal migrants, and most of this inward migration is recent (Neupert and Lopes 2006). Competition over land, employment and other scarce resources between migrant groups and original inhabitants, and resentment towards 'newcomers' has produced conflict in all four nations, most notably in Timor-Leste during the 2006–07 conflict, and in the 1998–2003 Solomon Islands conflict between Guadalcanal islanders and Malaitan immigrants, resident in large numbers in Honiara since the 1950s. In Vanuatu, resentment of migrants from Tanna Island has also resulted in social tensions, which boiled over into conflict in 2007.

The societies of Melanesia and Timor-Leste are also characterised by a 'youth bulge',[3] with large proportions of the national populations under 25 years of age,[4] and high fertility rates (compared to the rest of the Pacific), combined with low levels of youth employment in formal sectors. Tertiary student therefore represent the most educated section of a highly significant demographic in these societies. These demographic features are associated with the increasing likelihood of civil conflict, and specifically in relation to large male youth population combined with high levels of unemployment, increased rates of crimes and gang activity.

Conflict has dogged the post-independence era for these countries, most recently in Timor-Leste between 2006–07, Solomon Islands from 1998–2003 and in 2006, and Vanuatu in 2007, but most enduringly in Papua New Guinea's decade-long Bougainville crisis. Ongoing but small-scale conflict still blights the Southern Highlands region of Papua New Guinea[5] (Capie 2011) and some recently resettled urban areas of Dili in Timor-Leste, contested by distinct family and language groups (Scambary 2011). While Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are currently enjoying a prolonged period of relative peace and stability, both have suffered recent violence and are still considered fragile states.

The impact of these divisions on governance in these four countries has been salutary. Each country has suffered numerous crises of governance, with declining economic performance, levels of service delivery and a consequent decline in popular legitimacy. This decline in legitimacy has sometimes been reflected in voter turnout (Morgan 2008). Apart from violent political crises, the post-independence polities of these four nations have been subject to a progressive fragmentation, as political systems have increasingly come to reflect the traditional clan-based nature of these societies. This has produced unstable coalition governments based around personalities or blocs with regional power bases, often with few discernible policies other than competition for access to state resources.

As Douglas (2000) argues, the state's ineffective service provision and failure to equitably distribute state resources such as employment and development opportunities across all sectors of society, particularly rural regions, has revitalised traditional networks such as families and clans as alternative means of access to resources (see also Ketan 2004). The inability of the state to provide services outside urban areas has contributed strongly to a widening gap between perceptions of the state and nation in Melanesia and Timor-Leste. The state's declining reach and influence in regional areas has sharpened regional divisions and identities, thereby reinvigorating dormant secessionist tendencies. For this reason, Scott (2005) contends that the weakness of the state is a cause, rather than an effect, of the comparative weakness of national identity. As this study's findings suggest, many of these historical and contemporary divisions remain key markers of

identity that give rise to often starkly contrasting attitudes to nation and national identity.

Methodology

This paper utilises a unique dataset based on tertiary student survey responses. Surveys were conducted from June 2009 to March 2010 on the campuses of University of the South Pacific (USP) Honiara, the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) in Port Moresby, at three campuses in Dili (National University of Timor Lorosa'e UNTL, The University of Peace and Dili Institute of Technology) and in Port Vila (USP Vanuatu, Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education) and the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*. The survey tool uses some questions from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) module on national identity (with permission), modified for use in local contexts, in combination with additional questions reflecting the local conditions, customs and geographies of these four nations. Surveys were conducted in the language of instruction of each campus: English at UPNG and USP Honiara; English and French in Vanuatu; and in Timor-Leste, in Bahasa Indonesia, the written language most easily understood. All respondents (n = 1,161) were tertiary students aged 18 years or older, and were surveyed anonymously.

Questions fell into three broad categories: those addressing the respondents' gender, age, province of origin and self-identified language proficiencies; the (modified) core questions from the ISSP examining attitudes towards the relative importance of particular indicators of national identity, strength of affiliations to different levels of political community, and national pride and group loyalty indicators; and third, a set of additional questions addressing preferences for agents of dispute resolution in differing circumstances. Among other things, these indicators allow the researcher to assess relative degrees of affiliation to traditional and modern political communities, and to local, sub-national or national communities. Survey responses were further analysed to examine any statistically significant associations with gender, region of origin or language proficiency.
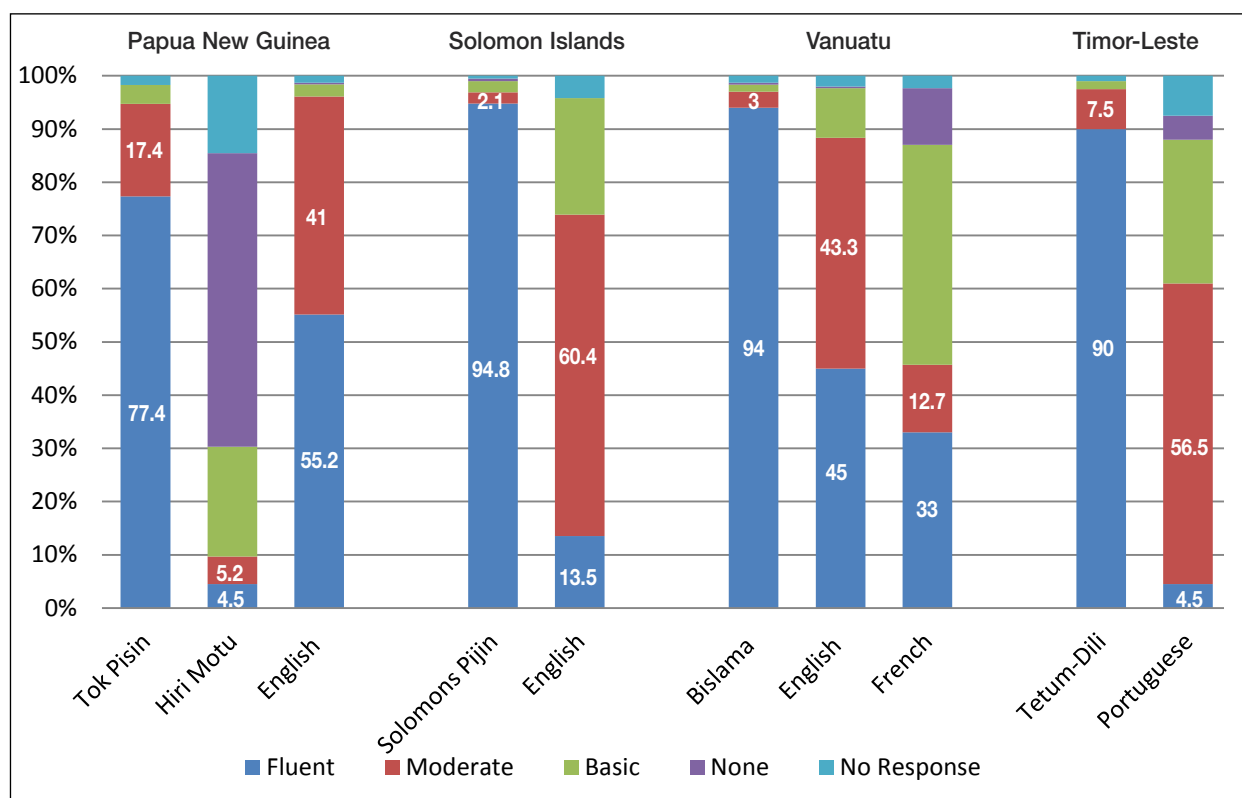
Before outlining findings, it must be emphasised that these survey groups cannot be considered representative of Melanesian and East Timorese 'youth' attitudes per se. Rather, this particular study is a deliberate sample of *tertiary students*, which seeks to gauge the attitudes of an educated stratum of youth, and one likely to figure strongly in future political, economic and technocratic elites. Nonetheless, as tertiary institutions tend to be centralised in the capital cities, and students travel from all over the country to study, the samples are broadly representative of regions and districts within the case study countries. Importantly, where national sentiment tends to be most prominent in these four states, it is generally considered to be strongest in urban enclaves, which are typically more ethnically heterogeneous, and further removed from traditional communities and authorities in the regions. For this reason, tertiary students living and studying in the national capitals represent an important test case: they are more likely than the general population to represent an 'advance guard' of these 'national' identities and, equally, to exhibit a higher degree of integration into the political, economic, (and formal educational-linguistic) life of the nation-state.

Survey Findings

Self-Identified Language Proficiencies

Figure 1 details the self-identified language proficiencies of the respondents in official or national languages. The survey responses unsurprisingly indicate stronger proficiency in the national lingua franca of the four countries (Tok Pisin, Solomons Pijin, Bislama and Tetum-Dili), compared with the European official languages (English, French and Portuguese). Notable among the findings were low levels of English language proficiency among Solomon Islander students, with rankings reflecting the interruption of schooling and of the education system during the crisis period, and the relative weakness of student proficiency in the recently reintroduced co-official language of Portuguese in Timor-Leste, where a key language of written literacy remains Indonesian. It is important to emphasise that these are *subjective* indicators, testing only respondents' *self-perceptions* of fluency.

Figure 1: Self-Identified Official Language Proficiencies: Tertiary Students

Papua New Guinea   **Solomon Islands**   **Vanuatu**   **Timor-Leste**

Legend: Fluent · Moderate · Basic · None · No Response

Responses to Political Community Questions

A series of questions were asked to assess the relative depth of respondents' affiliations to their various sub-national, national and supranational communities. Specific categories differed for each country to reflect distinct geographic and administrative communities such as settlements, villages, islands, districts, and also supranational regions such as Melanesia, the Pacific, or South-East Asia. The survey asked respondents to identify how close or 'emotionally attached' they feel to each.

Overall, each of the four samples indicated the relative strength of *village* and *national* affiliations for tertiary students, with considerably lower levels of affiliation reported for intervening sub-national categories (see Table 1). This finding reinforces the ongoing importance of kinship systems and interlinked land ownership in these societies as a primary marker of identity, and reflects the purely administrative value of intermediary entities, many of which, such as provinces and districts, are colonial inventions which resonate less profoundly with citizens. It also reflects the relative strength of national affiliations among tertiary students.

In focus group discussions, students put the view that they had developed a stronger sense of the nation after moving away from their own regions and customs, living in the capital city, and mixing with peers from other areas of the country. Urban living, and the pan-ethnic cultures it created were considered a key reinforcer of national culture and sentiment. For the participants, the sharing of customs amongst students promoted a greater sense of national identity, where mixing with peers from one's own village tended to strengthen local and sub-national affiliations. This presents a self-perception of tertiary students as a group with more opportunities to develop a greater level of 'national' sentiment, and, accordingly, more capable of transcending local bonds and affiliations. Notably, the two countries with the stronger histories of anti-colonial nationalism and consciousness raising, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, had the greater disparities between national and village affiliations, in favour of closeness to nation, while the strengths

Table 1: Level of Tertiary Students' Affiliation with Community
(percentage of respondents answering 'very close' or 'close')

Country	Village/ Neighbourhood	Sub-district/ Island	Province/ District	Nation	Melanesia	Pacific	South-East Asia
Papua New Guinea	**87.5**	77.5	81.5	**89.5**	68.5	55.5	n.a.
Solomon Islands	**81**	73	71	**82.5**	66.5	51.5	n.a.
Vanuatu	**84.5**	83.5	78	**91.5**	73.5	66.5	n.a.
Timor-Leste	**79.5**	63	62.5	**92.5**	20	n.a.	52

of these twin affiliations were closely parallel in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

Supranational affiliations among tertiary students were, unsurprisingly, uniformly lower again than sub-national affiliations, Nonetheless, the relative strength of pan-Melanesian identifi-cation among Papua New Guinean, Solomon Islander and Ni-Vanuatu students was evident, with feelings of closeness to Melanesia significantly exceeding feelings of closeness toward 'the Pacific' region in general. For its part, the Timor-Leste survey clearly demonstrates the relative strength of South-East Asian affiliation (52 per cent) among East Timorese tertiary students relative to any affinity they feel to the Melanesian societies further east (20 per cent). This is an instructive finding that casts light on tertiary student perceptions of the view, more frequently expressed before independence, that Timor-Leste may be seen as a 'crossroads' society, linking South-East Asia with the Pacific-Melanesian region (e.g. Ramos-Horta 1996).

Regional, Linguistic and Gender Differences

Notably, however, when these responses are exam-ined by region of origin, language of education, or gender, some distinct differences emerged. In Papua New Guinea, for example, region of origin was a strong predictor of reported levels of close-ness to Papua New Guinea. In Papua New Guinea, there are four distinct regions (Papua, Momase, Highlands and the Islands), differentiated by their colonial histories, natural resource endowments and ethnic groups. Where an average 92.5 per cent of respondents from the three regions of Papua, Momase and the Highlands reported feeling 'very

close' or 'close' to Papua New Guinea, this figure dropped substantially for respondents from the Islands region (80 per cent 'very close' or 'close').[6] As well as bearing out well known separatist trends in parts of the Islands region, this finding perhaps reaffirms Hawksley's (2006) claim that acceptance of the nation-state in Papua New Guinea is heavily influenced by length of exposure to European rule, with the most fractious regions such as the Islands having the longest exposure, and the Highlands having the least.

In the Solomon Islands survey, Malaitan students were significantly more likely to express feelings of closeness to Solomon Islands (88 per cent 'very close' or 'close') than were non-Malaitan students (75.5 per cent). These findings suggest that Malaitan students living in the capital are relatively more likely to adopt a nationally oriented identity and perspective, while other groups are relatively more disposed to sub-national identifications. For example, non-Malaitan students expressed higher degrees of closeness to their home island (76.5 per cent) than did Malaitan students (70 per cent). These differences were much starker in relation to feeling 'very close' to their home island (50.5 per cent v. 33 per cent). These findings are likely to reflect varying feelings of 'ownership' or belonging of the separate levels of political community.

In Vanuatu, Anglophone students reported feeling significantly closer to the Melanesian region (81 per cent) than did Francophone (59 per cent) students — a finding which likely reflects the dominance of English in Melanesian societies other than New Caledonia and, of course, the

historical origin of ideas of pan-Melanesian unity in the former British colonies (and Australian territories). It is likewise notable that where closeness to Melanesia exceeded closeness to the Pacific (71.5 per cent) among Anglophones, Francophone responses to the Pacific (55.5 per cent) were broadly similar, suggesting the relative weakness of any distinctive conception of pan-Melanesian identity among French speakers. Even so, Ni-Vanuatu students as a group still showed the highest levels of affiliation to the Melanesian region of any case study country, indicating that the notion of a pan-Melanesian identity (and solidarity, of which several of Vanuatu's post-independence leaders have been vocal champions, and hosts of the Melanesian Spearhead Group headquarters) has considerable resonance for Ni-Vanuatu students — and among Anglophones in particular.

In the case of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, gender was also a predictor of 'closeness to village', with 90 per cent of male respondents from Papua New Guinea feeling very close or close to their village, compared with 83 per cent for women. This disparity was somewhat starker again in Solomon Islands (men 84.5 per cent, women 72 per cent), and is likely to reflect young women's attitudes to male domination of traditional authority structures, and women's lack of voice in decision-making at village level[7] (Wallace 2000; Pollard 2000). One of the women in the Papua New Guinea focus group remarked that in her village women are forbidden to speak at public gatherings, which she felt was a situation experienced by women in many other parts of Papua New Guinea (Focus Group, Port Moresby 2009). These findings were further reinforced in gendered preferences for agents of dispute resolution, discussed further below.

Attitudes Toward National Identity

The survey then asked respondents about the importance of certain attributes to being a member of their respective national community. Respondents rated their responses to these questions as 'very important'/'fairly important'/ 'not very important'/'not at all important'. The national identity module consists of the following eight questions.

Some people say the following things are important for being truly [Papua New Guinean/ Solomon Islander/ Ni-Vanuatu/East Timorese]. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?

a. To have been born in _PNG/ SI/ VAN/TL

b. To have __ PNG/ SI/ VAN/ TL __ citizenship

c. To have lived in PNG/ SI/ VAN/ TL for most of one's life

d. To be able to speak [official language a]

e. To be able to speak [official language b]

f. To be a Christian

g. To respect tradition and custom/adat

h. To respect PNG/ SI/ VAN/ TL political institutions and laws

i. To feel Papua New Guinean/ Solomon Islander/ Ni-Vanuatu/East Timorese.

The findings illustrate considerable parallels across the four countries, and a high degree of support for several of the indicators as measures of national belonging. However, significantly lower values were reported for the importance of 'having lived in' the home country all one's life, and (with the notable exception of Tetum-Dili in Timor-Leste) for the perceived importance of being able to speak official and national languages (see Figure 2).

Three features of the data may be highlighted. In each of the four countries, findings revealed the comparable strength of importance of 'modern' indicators — such as 'respect for political institutions and law', and 'being a citizen' — and more 'traditional' notions of political community, such as respect for *kastom* or *adat*. With the exception of Papua New Guinea (where 'feeling Papua New Guinean' received the highest rating) these three markers received the highest scores from tertiary student respondents, with a close parity between the perceived importance of these modern and traditional indicators in all four respondent groups (see Table 2). This is an instructive finding, revealing the way tertiary

student understandings of political community combine high levels of respect for traditional conceptions of authority with very strong support for modern 'civic' understandings of national identity. This theme highlighting the balance between modernity and custom is reinforced by students' preferences for agents of dispute resolution, discussed below.

Secondly, the findings here confirm the importance of Christianity to national identity, variously reflecting the long history of missionary activity, the contribution of churches to fostering national sentiment,[8] and their important role in service delivery. In such vital areas as health and education, churches provide between 30 per cent to 50 per cent of services in the four countries surveyed.

Nonetheless, it is notable that with the exception of Solomon Islands, 'respect for custom' exceeded the importance of 'being Christian' as a 'very important' measure of national identity by small but significant margins in each country. As one focus group participant said, while Christianity is important, it is popularly taken to reinforce traditional belief systems, rather than necessarily supplant them, 'Christianity is like a string that is tying all that, you love your brother like you love

yourself, just like the *wantok* system'. (Focus Group, Port Moresby 2009). The continuing strength of traditional beliefs and the primacy of kinship networks can be viewed in a positive light, as an important source of 'resilience' in times of crisis (Brown 2007), reinforced by the ongoing dominance of subsistence economies with a high degree of autonomy in rural areas. On the other hand, where diverse local cultures are unable to be incorporated within a national framework, in both ideological and political/administrative realms, the ongoing strength of kin and traditional loyalties militates against the development of national cohesion and development outcomes (e.g. Reilly and Phillpot 2002).

Importance of Official Language Abilities

The third feature of this data set relates to the perceived importance of ability to speak official languages (Figure 2). It is notable firstly that tertiary students rated the ability to speak official languages as comparatively *less* important indicators of membership of these national communities (though Tetum-Dili in Timor-Leste is a clear exception). This finding is likely to reflect the linguistic diversity of these societies, the historical imposition of the European languages, and, perhaps, residual perceptions of the Pidgin lingua francas of Melanesia as relatively low status languages. For

Table 2: Importance of National Identity Indicators to Tertiary Students
(percentage answering 'very important')

| Country	To Be Born In	To Be A Citizen	To Have Lived In	To Be Christian	Respect Custom	Respect Law	To Feel …	To Speak Official Language (National)	To Speak Official language (European)
Papua New Guinea	73	78.5	57	75	80	78	84.5	56.5	70.5
Solomon Islands	84	88	62	86	89	91.5	84	64.5	71
Vanuatu	80.5	88.5	59	79.5	83.5	81	80	54.5	60.5(En) 48.5(Fr)
Melanesia average	*79*	*85*	*59.5*	*80*	*84*	*83.5*	*83*	*58.5*	*62.5*
Timor-Leste	94.5	95.5	60.5	78	93.5	92.5	88.5	88.5	52

example, respondents in the three Melanesian countries rated 'being able to speak English' as of greater importance to national identity than being able to speak Tok Pisin, Solomons Pijin or Bislama, despite all cohorts reporting greater proficiency in the latter. This finding indicates the position of English as the status language of formal tertiary education, and may be particular to the specific group (tertiary students) surveyed in this study.

By contrast, in Timor-Leste, ability in the co-official and national language of Tetum-Dili was considered be of very great importance to national identity, far outranking the perceived importance of Portuguese language ability. Even so, and despite the well-known controversy over Portuguese in Timor-Leste, and the evident disparity with Tetum-Dili, the perceived *importance* of speaking Portuguese in Timor-Leste, (and to a lesser extent French in Vanuatu, and even English in Solomon Islands) rated considerably higher than *actual* rates of fluency, indicating respect among non-fluent speakers for the recognition of the language in official

(constitutional) conceptions of national identity and, potentially, the importance of these languages in securing certain jobs in government administration.

With three official languages (including two European languages of education), Vanuatu presented a special case in this regard. While 54.5 per cent of Ni-Vanuatu students rated the ability to speak Bislama as 'very important' to being 'truly' Ni-Vanuatu, cross-tabulation by language of education revealed a considerable gap between Anglophone (60 per cent 'very important') and Francophone (42.3 per cent 'very important') assessments. Importantly, however, this did not reveal any particular Francophone indifference to Bislama. Rather, Francophones were less likely to regard *any* language orientation as an important feature of national identity, with quite consistent responses across all three official languages. This contrasted markedly with Anglophones, who broadly regarded official language ability as a more important feature of being Ni-Vanuatu. Indeed, this distinction was so pronounced that Anglophone

Figure 2: Importance of Official Language Ability to Being 'Truly ...'
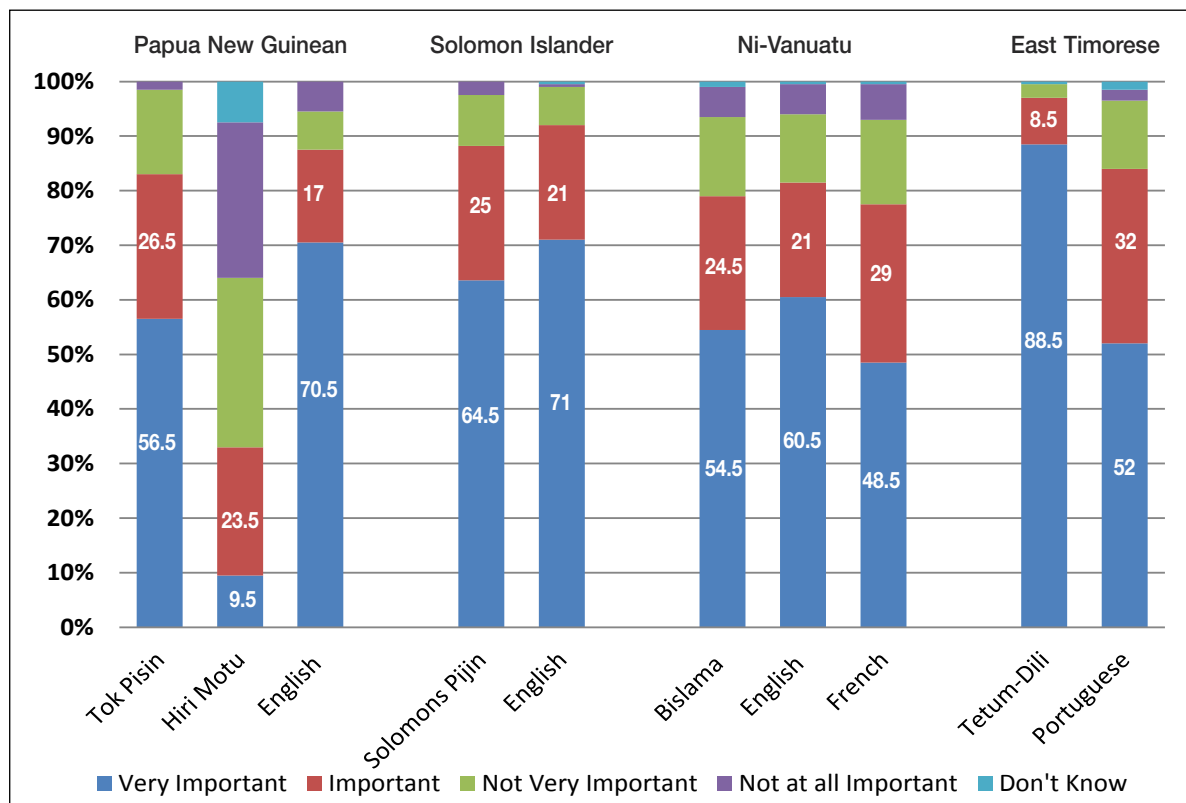
respondents rated 'speaking French' as slightly more important overall to 'being truly Ni-Vanuatu' than did Francophones themselves. This suggests that the politicisation of these issues has resulted in Francophones de-emphasising language issues generally in the vocabulary of national sentiment. By contrast, Anglophone respondents ranked capacity in each of the three languages more highly, with the greatest gap, unsurprisingly, in relation to the ability to speak English, which two-thirds of Anglophones ranked as being very important to being 'truly Ni-Vanuatu' — twenty per cent more than did Francophone respondents (45 per cent).

Group Identity

Respondents were asked to rank the top three groups they identified most strongly with. Table 3 rank orders the first preference responses, designated 'most important' by the respondents. It is notable that the rank order of all the responses to this question were exactly replicated in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, suggesting a strongly consistent pan-Melanesian pattern of identification. The table demonstrates the importance, in order, of family, religion and then occupation to tertiary students in each of these three countries. Timor-Leste showed a variant pattern, with occupation the key identity marker, followed by the family and then religion. Interestingly, 'ethnic/language group' ranked closely parallel to 'nationalist' in the four countries, while Timor-Leste received the only notable response for 'region of the country you live in': a finding likely to be a remnant of the politicisation of regional identity in the political-military crisis of 2006. In Vanuatu, significant differences were again evident between Anglophone and Francophone respondents, with the latter showing a distinct ranked preference of Family (36 per cent), Occupation (17 per cent), followed by Ethnic/language group (16 per cent). The relatively higher ranking of ethnic/language group among Francophones is an instructive finding, and one likely to reflect the greater consciousness of language group identity, characteristic of many national minorities. Interestingly, the category of 'nationalist' performed more strongly among Francophones (12.5 per cent), while religion was ranked much lower than for Anglophones, in fifth place (11.5 per cent).

Table 3: Importance to Tertiary Students of Identifying with Particular Groups
(ranked percentage of first preferences)

Group	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	Timor-Leste
Family	57.0	33.3	44.7	22.5
Religion	18.1	19.9	23.5	11.6
Occupation	11.6	14.0	13.7	36.7
Ethnic/language group	5.1	11.3	6.8	7.8
Nationalist	3.8	10.8	6.5	9.5
Gender	2.1	5.9	2.4	4.0
Region of the country you live in	1.0	3.2	1.4	6.4
Age	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.9
Preferred Political Party	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6

Actual survey question: 'We are all part of different groups, but some are more important than others to us. Which do you rate as the most important?'

National Pride Indicators

A further set of survey questions asked respondents about their level of national pride in relation to various aspects of each country's politics, history and culture. Responses are detailed in Table 4. In each case study country, the two categories which drew the more equivocal responses were pride in 'the way democracy works', and pride in 'the fair and equal treatment of all groups in society'. By contrast, pride in national history, and pride in the nation's distinctive culture featured very strongly across the four cohorts. This indicates that the key strengths of contemporary Melanesian and East Timorese nationalism lie less in the capacity of the state, and more in wider popular affiliations to society, culture, and independence. Certainly, the findings support the focus of Melanesian nation-builders on national culture as a unifying theme of post-independence nationalism, and help explain the emphasis of political elites on related concepts such as the 'Papua New Guinean way' or the 'Melanesian way'.

Nonetheless, while the findings at Table 2 above showed high levels of respect for political institutions and the law *in principle*, these figures demonstrate a relative lack of faith in contemporary democratic performance *in practice*, and in the formal state's capacity to ensure the equal treatment of all groups, in all four countries. This was most notable in Papua New Guinea. Strikingly, just half of the respondents were 'very proud' or 'proud' of 'the way democracy works', with even fewer reporting pride in Papua New Guinea's 'fair and equal treatment of all groups in society'. This stands in contrast to Timor-Leste (with 79.5 per cent 'very proud' or 'proud'), which experienced a major civil conflict and political crisis in 2006, and even Solomon Islands at 68 per cent, which also suffered a major civil conflict and — in Honiara at least — an almost complete breakdown of law and order from 1999–2003, and major urban riots in 2006. While it is tempting to speculate as to whether the international and regional state-building missions in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands have contributed to a relatively greater sense of pride in 'the way democracy works' in these two countries, previous studies in Timor-Leste (Leach 2003, 2008) suggest that this particular figure merely represents a recovery to the levels enjoyed shortly after

Table 4: Tertiary Students' Levels of National Pride (percentage of respondents)

	PNG		Solomon Islands		Vanuatu		Timor-Leste	
	Very proud	**Total Proud**	**Very proud**	**Total Proud**	**Very proud**	**Total Proud**	**Very proud**	**Total Proud**
The way democracy works	22.5	**51**	39	**68**	30.5	**63**	45.5	**79.5**
Its distinctive culture	82.0	**95.5**	70.5	**90.5**	63.5	**91.5**	67	**96**
Its history	61.5	**92.5**	73.5	**93.5**	69.0	**92.5**	80	**97.5**
Fair and equal treatment of all groups in society	21	**44**	43	**72.5**	40.5	**70.5**	48.5	**76.5**

Note: Actual survey question = 'How proud are you of PNG/ Solomon Islands/ Vanuatu/ Timor-Leste in each of the following?

Figure 3: Tertiary Students' Pride in the Way Democracy Works
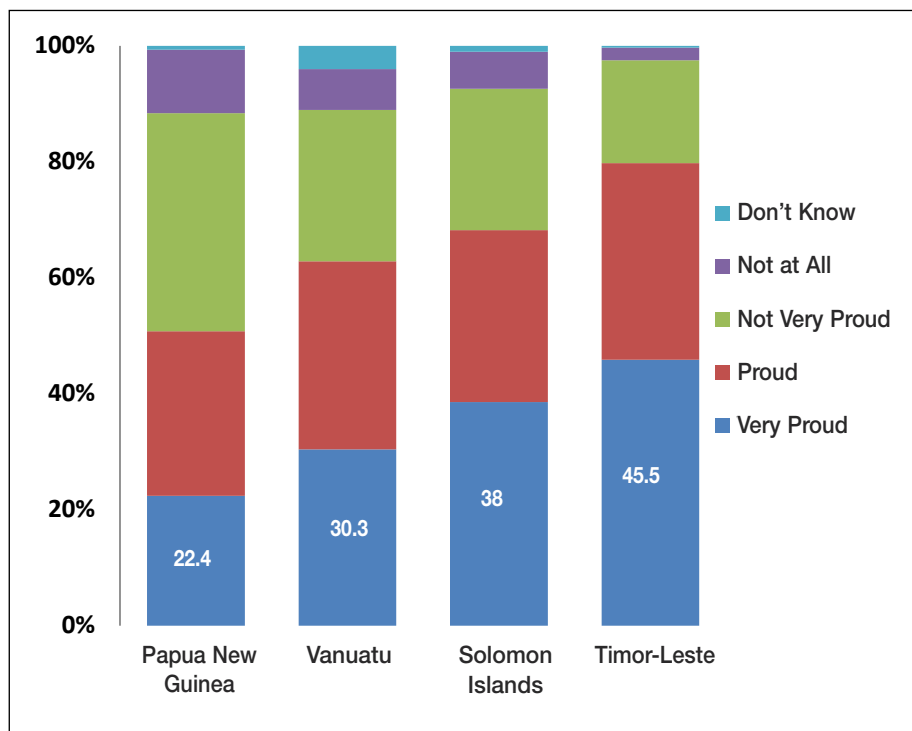
independence in 2002 ('very proud' 51 per cent, total 79 per cent), which had dropped significantly in his 2007 study ('very proud' 36 per cent, total 69 per cent) following the 2006 crisis.

Regional, linguistic and gender breakdowns produced some notable findings, indicative of the history of uneven resource distribution and service delivery in these four countries, along with ongoing ethno-linguistic schisms, and civil conflict. In Papua New Guinea, respondents from the Papua region were far less proud of 'the way democracy works' at 34 per cent, compared to an average of around 55 per cent for the other three regions. This interesting finding suggests that popular disaffection with modern democracy in Papua New Guinea is most evident in the region dominated by key institutions of the state, and capital city. This may itself be a reflection of the numerical domination of parliament by the more highly populated Highlands region.

In Vanuatu, Francophone respondents (60 per cent) reported significantly lower levels of pride in Vanuatu's 'fair and equal treatment of all groups in society' than did Anglophone students (76 per cent), perhaps indicating a degree of discontent over perceived advantages enjoyed by Anglophone

speakers in the education and employment sectors. As Van Trease (1987) notes, the relative lack of tertiary opportunities for Francophones within Vanuatu is in large part an institutional legacy of French colonial educational policies, rather than simply being a product of post-independence policy decisions. Nonetheless, it is likely at this point that Francophones feel some resentment at the lack of comparable tertiary education opportunities inside Vanuatu.

In Solomon Islands, some significant regional differences in the responses to national pride questions were evident. For example, students from Malaita were more likely to feel 'very proud' of democracy than the rest of the respondent group (45 per cent v. 31 per cent), and of the 'fair and equal treatment of all groups in society' (50 per cent v. 36 per cent),[9] findings that are likely to reflect perceptions that Malaitans enjoy a higher level of representation of in government and bureaucracy.

There was also a significant gender disparity in responses to national pride questions in some countries. In Papua New Guinea, for example, female students were significantly less proud of Papua New Guinea's 'fair and equal treatment of

Table 5: Tertiary Students' Views on Cultural Pluralism
(percentage of respondents)

View	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	Timor-Leste
It is better if groups maintain their distinct languages, customs and traditions	71.5	82.8	86.0	62.4
It is better if these groups adapt and blend into one society	28.5	17.2	14.0	37.6

Note: Actual survey question = Some people say that it is better for a nation if different ethnic groups maintain their distinct languages, customs and traditions. Others say it is better if these groups adapt and blend into one society. Which of these views is closest to your own?

all groups in society' (39 per cent), relative to male respondents (47 per cent). This is perhaps unsurprising, considering the subordinate role of women in Papua New Guinea society and politics, in both traditional and modern realms. Apart from alarmingly high levels of gender-based violence, women also face discrimination at nearly all levels of political and social life (AusAID 2008).[10]

Maintenance of Cultural Identities

Another aspect of understanding national identity lies in the profound and continuing importance of local cultures. As demonstrated in Table 5, while culture was found to be a key object of national pride in all four countries, the very idea of culture nonetheless remains firmly associated with local, rather than national communities, with a majority of respondents in each country (albeit with a significantly smaller one in Timor-Leste) agreeing with the statement that it is better if groups 'maintain their distinct languages, customs and traditions', rather than 'adapt and blend into one society'. Reflecting a view widely noted in the qualitative literature, particularly in relation to Papua New Guinea, the findings suggest the theme of culture is a popular one for leaders, but mixed in its impact, with a tendency to reinforce the integrity of local cultures rather than necessarily promote a nation-building agenda. While this pattern does not preclude a 'unity in diversity' model of cultural nationalism, the failure to incorporate highly resilient local political communities at the level of formal governance structures may lead to

other dysfunctions in nation-building. As Jacobsen argues (1997, 242), cultural 'pluralism without representation' may lead to communities becoming 'elusive, inward looking and disaffected', or to the creation of a range of informal 'institutional hybrids' which may undermine nation-building.

Rural–Urban Migration

Respondents were also asked two questions related to the key issue of rural–urban migration: whether 'people moving to the cities and towns causes social problems', and whether 'people should stay in the area of the country where they grew up'. As is evident in Table 6, these questions drew strong responses indicating a depth of feeling around the issue of rural/urban migration.

Papua New Guinea drew the strongest response to the first question, with a startling figure of 92 per cent of student respondents agreeing with the statement that 'people moving to cities and towns causes social problems'. The population of peri-urban settlements has progressively grown from some 25 per cent of the population of Port Moresby in 1979 to nearly half by 2001 (Koczberski et al. 2001), with a subsequent unofficial estimate placing the figure as high as two-thirds (Squires 2004). Migrant squatter settlements in the major towns are commonly seen as a major source of crime, although some authors (e.g. Goddard 2005) challenge the validity of this claim. Certainly, a number of these settlements in Port Moresby are regarded as 'no go' areas for the public and even the police. Accurately or otherwise, many locals

Table 6: Tertiary Students' Views on Rural–Urban Migration
(percentage answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree')

	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	Timor-Leste
People moving to the cities and towns causes social problems	92	88	88	71
People should stay in the area in which they grew up	56.5	68	51.5	50.5

blame the migrants from predominantly Highland areas for the growth in crime rates, especially the rise of *raskol* groups. Despite this finding, support for the statement that 'people should stay in the area in which they grew up', was far weaker among Papua New Guinea tertiary students (56.5 per cent), suggesting that while respondents may view these as serious problems, they regard freedom of movement as a prevailing liberty for citizens, particularly in their search for employment or education.

In Solomon Islands, reflecting the recent and prolonged history of conflict in Honiara, some 88 per cent of respondents 'strongly agreed' (48.5 per cent) or 'agreed' (39.5 per cent) that 'people moving to the cities causes social problems'; a finding which likely reflects perceptions within Honiara specifically of increased overcrowding, growing numbers of disenfranchised young people and increased unemployment and crime rates. Indeed, the disaggregated response rate for Guadalcanal students alone was 96 per cent, the highest of any province. By contrast, support for the statement, 'people should stay in the area in which they grew up' was again weaker at 68 per cent, again suggesting that fewer consider it acceptable to restrict freedom of movement for Solomon Islanders. This figure was nonetheless the highest of the four countries, highlighting the continuing potential for tensions within Honiara. Indeed, the disaggregated figure for students from Guadalcanal was again the highest, with 88 per cent agreeing that 'people should stay in the areas of Solomon Islands where they grew up', compared with 65 per cent for the rest of the respondent group.

Vanuatu has also had its share of tensions arising from rural migration to Port Vila, as uneven development and the lure of jobs has resulted in a steady stream of rural migrants to the capital city. According to one report (Chung and Hill 2002), Port Vila has trebled in size since the 1980s, growing an average four per cent per year, almost twice as fast as the rural population. The increase in the urban population living in informal housing or settlements has grown even faster. A conflict in one such settlement, known as 'Black Sands', between islanders from Tanna and Ambrym was the centre of the conflict that led to the declaration of a state of emergency in 2007. An attendant rise in crime levels has led to numerous calls for restrictions on movements to the capital and even deportation of criminals back to their islands (Wirrick 2008). Nonetheless, while tertiary students agreed that internal migration these were a significant problem (88 per cent, with 47 per cent 'strongly agree'), respondents were significantly less likely to agree with the second proposition (51 per cent).

While the overall level of support for these two statements was considerably lower in Timor-Leste, the issue of rural–urban migration has been no less contentious there. The population of Timor-Leste's capital Dili has more than doubled in the decade since independence, from 100,715 in 1999 (Neupert and Lopes 2006) to 241,331 in 2010 (RDTL Census 2010), with at least half of this population growth due to rural–urban migration. Much of this internal migration has been concentrated in already overcrowded areas of Dili containing former Indonesian civil service and military housing.

Competition over access to jobs and scarce resources such as water and land has led to growing tensions and resentment of post-1999 new arrivals. This was a key source of the 2006–07 conflict and remains so, with concentrated migrant populations in the west of the city currently experiencing low-level conflict.

Disaggregating the Timor-Leste results by region of origin casts light on the nature of these continuing tensions. In Timor-Leste, the 'east' is generally understood to comprise the three easternmost districts of Baucau, Viqueque and Lautem, and the 'west' the ten remaining districts, although these notions of east and west are highly contested and based more on historical than cultural or ethnic differences. After independence, conflicts between senior army officers from the eastern districts (where the former FALINTIL guerrilla resistance proved more sustainable) and more junior recruits from the western districts were further complicated by tensions between the army and the police force, which had a significant number of members who had previously served in the Indonesian police. When open fighting broke out within and between the security forces in April 2006, popular resentments associated with the urban politics of Dili were also catalysed. The Mambae, from the central western highlands, are the dominant ethno-linguistic group and regard Dili as historically part of their territory. Easterners, particularly the Makassae ethno-linguistic group, are often seen as interlopers in the capital, and are frequently referred to as outsiders or newcomers, even by newly arrived westerners. Throughout the political-military crisis of 2006, this viewpoint was used as a justification for the eviction of thousands of easterners from their homes. In 2010, some four years after the so called 'East–West' crisis, a region of origin breakdown of this question found that 35 per cent of students from western districts strongly agreed with the proposition that 'people moving to the cities cause social problems', compared with just 27 per cent of easterners. On the second question, the difference was comparable with 28.5 per cent of westerners strongly agreeing that 'people should stay in the

area where they grew up', compared with just 19 per cent of easterners. These findings suggest ongoing perceptions among some Dili residents from western districts that the national capital is located in the 'west', giving easterners less legitimate claims to ownership of potentially contested urban areas.

Preferences for Agents of Dispute Resolution

A further set of questions surveyed student preferences for agents of dispute resolution in differing scenarios. The ongoing importance of both traditional and modern understandings of political community was evident in student responses, which varied between traditional and modern domains, depending on the nature of the conflict. Reflecting the customary nature of land tenure in all four countries, responses to the question 'who should resolve disputes over land?' revealed that, with the exception of Timor-Leste, substantial majorities favoured traditional authorities and elders (Papua New Guinea 59 per cent, Solomon Islands 70 per cent, Vanuatu 71 per cent), with the alternative options (national government, local/district/province government, or the churches) receiving the balance of preferences. In Timor-Leste, the trend was reversed, with just 28 per cent expressing a preference for traditional authorities to settle land disputes, and 58 per cent expressing a preference for the national government. This finding reflects the complicated overlay of successive traditional, Portuguese and Indonesian land titles that have been an ongoing source of conflict since independence — particularly within Dili — and the intractability of a number of long running rural land disputes, resulting in part from mass dislocation during the Indonesian occupation, which traditional authorities have failed to resolve.

In the case of 'disputes between neighbours', student responses were distinct, with preferences for traditional authorities higher than the previous question in Timor-Leste (47 per cent), but notably lower in Melanesia (Papua New Guinea 40 per cent, Solomon Islands 45 per cent, Vanuatu 58 per cent), where a preference for national police also emerged as significant (Papua New Guinea 45 per cent, Solomon Islands 30 per cent, Vanuatu 28 per cent). In Timor-Leste, student preferences for national police to be the agents of resolving 'disputes between neigh-

bours' was a mere 11.5 per cent, demonstrating the continuing strength of traditional authority, outside the particularly contentious issue of land ownership. By contrast, the findings indicate that land-related disputes remain the key domain of customary law in Melanesia. Smaller minorities favoured the church as the preferred agent of resolving disputes between neighbours, with support highest in Solomon Islands (20 per cent), reflecting the positive mediation role played by the church there during the crisis period.

Two further questions sought responses to 'crimes against property' and 'crimes against the person', from the options of national police, traditional authorities, the church and (in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste only) international police. All four countries exhibited strong preferences for national police to deal with crimes, which clearly highlight student perceptions of the perceived boundaries between traditional and modern authority. Of most interest were responses relating to the two countries with international policing forces. Notably, while student preferences for international police were comparatively low, they were significantly stronger in relation to 'crimes against the person' (Solomon Islands 19 per cent, Timor-Leste 17 per cent) than for 'crimes against property' (Solomon Islands 5 per cent, Timor-Leste 10 per cent) — findings which may be useful in guiding the nature of international withdrawal from these missions. While UN police have now handed over control to the national police in Timor-Leste, this process has most recently occurred in Dili, which is seen as the most volatile area. There remain serious concerns over the national police force's ability to control violence in the capital city, and east–west divisions still provide a source of ongoing tension within the police force in Dili (Wilson 2008). Analogous concerns over the perceived dominance of police by Malaitans were evident in pre-RAMSI Solomon Islands. The 2007 'Peoples Survey' found that as many as 65 per cent of people thought that conflict would return if RAMSI left (ANU 2010). Overall, these findings clearly suggest the formal idea of 'crimes' against individuals is firmly associated with the modern state and legal system, where more traditional domains are considered the appropriate means of negotiating collective issues that affect and disrupt kinship groups.

Gender Breakdown: Preferences for Dispute Resolution

These findings also revealed significant gender differences in preferences for dispute resolution, particularly in relation to the role of traditional authorities and elders. For example, in Solomon Islands, where 73 per cent of male respondents indicated a preference for traditional authorities to address disputes over land, the equivalent figure for female respondents was appreciably lower at 62 per cent. Similarly, in Timor-Leste, female students also expressed significantly lower preferences for traditional authorities to resolve land disputes (33 per cent male, 21 per cent female), and 'disputes between neighbours' (52 per cent male, 41 per cent female). These findings highlight the way educated female students are more likely than male counterparts to question the male domination of traditional authority in the villages, and reflect the lack of adequate participation and representation in local and traditional decision-making processes (Wallace 2000).

Conclusion

Nation-building in Melanesia and Timor-Leste continues to pose considerable challenges for post-independence political elites. While this study reveals a number of unifying understandings of national identity with broad support among likely future elites, it also highlights key areas in which region of origin, gender, or language of education continue to inform divergent and competing visions of nation, identity and political community.

Given the particular educational and social profile of the respondent groups in this study, it is especially significant that survey responses confirmed the strong importance of respecting tradition and *kastom*, and of maintaining local identities and languages, in tertiary students' visions of national identity and political community. The ongoing importance of respecting traditional authority and custom was evident in all four case study sites, and in each case matched indicators of respect for modern state authority, and also slightly exceeded perceptions of the importance of Christianity to student understandings of national identity.

Alongside this finding, the high rates of responses for the importance of 'being a citizen' and of 'respecting political institutions and laws' were notable in their own right, suggesting that the modern state and associated civic understandings of national identity are *equally* significant for this particular respondent group: a finding which defies all-too-common perceptions of Melanesian (and increasingly, East Timorese) politics as being too focused on parochial clan, language or island group concerns. Most importantly, this study reveals high degrees of national pride, and faith in democratic principles; but conversely, low levels of pride in contemporary democratic performance and inter-group tolerance. Counter-intuitively, perhaps, pride in democracy and inter-group tolerance was higher in recent post-conflict societies (Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste) than in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Of particular significance was the importance of region of origin, island or language of education in determining some attitudes to national identity. In distinct ways, the four case studies demonstrate that the artificial boundaries and legacies created by colonial powers, both geographic and linguistic, still wield an important influence on contemporary attitudes to national identity in these four countries. While culture was found to be the key object of national pride among respondents, the idea of culture nonetheless remains firmly associated with local, rather than national, communities, though this association was less pronounced in Timor-Leste than in the Melanesian countries. Gender also emerged as an important factor throughout, with several findings suggesting strongly that women feel a higher level of disaffection with both the formal mechanisms of national state power, and traditional governance at local level.

The survey also revealed strong feelings around the issue of rural–urban migration. Combined with other survey responses such as the findings related to pride in 'the way democracy works' and the 'fair and equal treatment of all groups in society', such responses constitute both a symptom of uneven development, and a marker of regional or linguistic faultlines that still pose a challenge to the development of a durable sense of 'national' political community. Competition for scarce resources has the effect of sharpening these divisions, as has been evident in outbreaks of civil conflict, and ongoing tensions in these four countries in recent years.

This study also supports the view that low levels of government capacity are likely to strengthen these localised and sub-national identities, as people fall back on traditional kinship networks for access to resources such as employment, education and healthcare — highlighting an ongoing gulf between the ideological realm of cultural nationalism, and the political/administrative capacities of the state. A consequence of reliance on such networks is that it places groups in direct competition, enhancing the potential for future conflict. Tempering this conclusion in part, this study shows that strong levels of national identification and pride persist among likely future elites, even in the face of ongoing regional and linguistic divisions and weak state capacity. This suggests a stronger potential basis for the continuing processes of nation-building if wider challenges of democratic performance, service provision and regional development can be addressed over time.

Notes on Authors

Michael Leach is an Associate Professor in Politics and Public Policy at Swinburne University of Technology. He has written extensively on East Timorese politics and history, and is a founder of the Timor-Leste Studies Association.

James Scambary is a research consultant and PhD candidate at State, Society and Governance in Melanesia, the Australian National University. His main research interests include gangs, communal conflict and rural–urban migration in Timor-Leste.

Matthew Clarke is Professor and Head of School, School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University. His areas of research include development in the Pacific, and religion and development.

Simon Feeny is an Associate Professor in Development Economics at RMIT University, and has published widely on foreign aid and other international development issues with a focus on the Pacific.

Heather Wallace is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University, and has a background of working in aid and development projects and conducting research in the Pacific islands.

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Notes

2   Rae (2002), for example, identifies earlier incarnations of 'nation-building' agendas in forms of 'pathological homogenisation' aimed at creating a unified national population in postcolonial Africa and Asia in the 1960s and 1970s. As Berger (2006, 6) notes, the terms nation-building and state-building have been used, often interchangeably, in, in a diversity of situations including 'formal military occupation, counterinsurgency, peacekeeping, national reconstruction, foreign aid and the use of stabilisation forces under the auspices of the USA, Britain, France, NATO, the UN or another international or regional organization'.

3   In 2004, the percentage of the population under 14 years of age was estimated at 39 per cent in PNG, 42 per cent in Solomon Islands, 34 per cent in Vanuatu and 38 per cent in Timor-Leste (AusAID 2006).

4   Median age in the Pacific is 21 years, compared, for example, with 35.5 years in Australia (SPC 2006).

5   Hela and Jiwaka are two new provinces that will be created in Papua New Guinea in 2012 (from the existing Southern and Western Highlands provinces). A large liquified natural gas project is being constructed in Hela and is leading to conflict over land and royalty payments.

6   Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences's crosstab analysis, Pearson's chi-squared test established significance of the correlation at 0.02 (where 5 per cent is a statistically significant correlation). An average 70 per cent from the three other regions reported feeling 'very close' to Papua New Guinea, compared with 56.5 per cent from the Islands region. Chi-square tests indicate the significance of association between qualitative variables.

7   These disparities were even larger for reports of feeling 'very close' to one's village: Papua New Guinea 69 per cent men, 57 per cent women; Solomon Islands 64 per cent men, 51 per cent women.

8   In East Timor during the Indonesian occupation, the Catholic Church's decision to use Tetum rather than Indonesian in services reinforced the language's status as a lingua franca in parts of East Timor, facilitating its emergence as a distinctly "national" language and expression of national identity. At the same time, the role of the Church as a unifying forum for expressing the common suffering of various ethnic and language groups in East Timor greatly increased its popularity, and to some degree made Catholicism itself a salient expression of national identity during the occupation. At the same time, as Anderson (1993) notes, the Indonesian state requires citizens to affiliate to one of the five official religions. Thus, while mistrusting the spread of Catholicism in East Timor — particularly as the local Church remained staunchly independent of the Indonesian Catholic hierarchy — the logic of the state also demanded it. In 1975, it is estimated that little more than 30 per cent of East Timorese identified as Catholic — a figure which had almost trebled by 1999. Reflecting these nation-building roles, the Catholic Church receives a special mention in the new constitution, valorised by the State for its 'participation … in the process of national liberation of East Timor' (s11.2) (see Anderson 1993; Leach 2003).

9   Total levels of pride showed a narrower difference in relation to pride in democracy (70 per cent v. 65 per cent), but remained stark in relation to pride in the fair treatment of all groups (79 per cent v. 69 per cent)

10   One female focus group respondent (Port Moresby, 2009) noted, 'Although there are some regional variations, in my culture, women can't speak at public functions and gatherings'. As the 2006 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) report on Papua New Guinea states, 'Women in PNG do not enjoy equality in relation to the ownership, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property since land tenure is based on custom, leaving men in control of many aspects of land and property' (Jivan and Forster 2007, 282).

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