

## EXOGENOUS CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE GENERATIONAL CHANGE: THE CASE FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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An analysis of cultural change and generation gaps in the local community of the Nungon ethnic group in the state of Papua New Guinea will be the subject of the study. This ethnic group came into contact with Europeans for the first time in the mid-1930s. The pace of cultural changes within the community has been gradually increasing. For example, the local animistic cult has been replaced with Christianity, school attendance has been introduced in the villages of Nungon, travel opportunities have become more accessible, and as the mobile signal has recently been introduced, Nungon residents can now connect to the internet and access information about the globalised world. Those who remember the colonial period still live in the community and many of them are still illiterate, with only limited knowledge of Pidgin English, the lingua franca of Papua New Guinea. On the other hand, the youngest generation can study in cities or experiment with social media and share information there. The aim of the paper is not only to show intergenerational differences, but also to document the local history and its ties to particular generations and show the role the generational memory played in illiterate societies with unwritten history. The only existing written and photographic documents were created by colonial officers. The study will show the transformation of the Nungon community from the time of photographs kept in boxes to the youngest generation, which keeps photographs in mobile phones and shares them on social media.

*Keywords:* generation gap, Papua New Guinea, cultural change, colonialism, christianity, education

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## INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The study is based on long-term research in the Nungon community, which began in 2009 and continues with regular visits of the Uruwa Valley. We combine research tools and methods of cultural anthropology and geography, i.e. fieldwork including participant observation, ethnographic interview and also geographical mapping and analysis of available maps in order to understand geographical distribution of cultural phenomenon (see Fig. 2 and 3). Beside these research tools we use genealogical method as a research tool. Genealogical method (see Chagnon, 1974; Parkin, 1997) is a standard method of anthropology since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. We use it for both understanding the structure of the Nungon community and distinction of generation. There is also analysis of archive documents about the past of the community. The Nungon were contacted by Australians for the first time in 1930s. The oldest written reports on the people of Uruwa were intentionally destroyed by the Japanese during Second World War. There are archived patrol reports and village registers dated since the mid-1940s until the independence of Papua New Guinea in 1975. The findings presented in the article are based on both analysis of archive documents and ethnographic interviews with members of particular generations. We also profit from long-term observation of the dynamic of the community covering ten years.

The Nungon ethnic group inhabits the Saruwaged Range in Morobe Province (Papua New Guinea). Its members speak their own language, Nungon (Sarvasy, 2017). Previously considered to be a dialect of Yau (Wegmann, 1990), Nungon is in fact an Austronesian language. The Nungon people, like other groups inhabiting New Guinea, rely mostly on crops for subsistence, followed by livestock breeding (particularly pigs and poultry), harvesting (e.g. pandanus), and hunting (various marsupial and bird species). Historical records show that the population first encountered non-New Guineapeople in 1932, when the German missionary Karl Saueracker (Wegmann, 1990) visited the Uruwa Valley for the first time. A mere two years later he was followed by Leigh Vial, an employee of the Australian Colonial Administration. Vial returned to patrol the same area again in 1936. His patrol reports have not survived as a whole, apparently being destroyed by the Japanese during the Second World War when the Japanese army was in charge of New Guinea. Fortunately, published excerpts from Vial's patrol reports (Vial, 1938) give some indication about the intact Nungon culture. The ethnic group has been undergoing cultural change since the first contact; its pace is accelerating.

Papua New Guinea societies are, in some respects, natural "laboratories" ideal for the study of cultural changes and societal changes. What took dozens or hundreds of years in Western culture only needed a few years in Papua New Guinea. The island of New Guinea was one of the last little-explored inhabited places on this planet. There were populations living in the interior of the island after the Second World War who were unaware that they had become part of a colony, that there had been a world war. With the arrival of colonial authorities and missionaries the communities began to change rapidly. The airplanes that people used to run and hide from in the bush they now pilot. Cultural changes were often fast. This includes the development of generation changes and gaps.

The study investigates the causes of the generation gaps. The results of our field research show that the main causes include exogenous cultural changes, introduced into the community as an impulse. The first exogenous cultural change arrived in the

community with the colonial authorities and missionaries. In the next stage, some of the members left the geographically defined community for a period of time. Upon return, a handful of individuals brought change in the form of information and mastery of new technologies. This was gradually adopted by other community members, which led to progressive endogenization of the progress and changes. The study discusses the factors that triggered generation gaps due to diffusion of innovations.

## THE CULTURAL SPECIFICS OF GENERATIONAL CHANGE

The generational concept stems from the Western civilization experience, as is the case with the majority of social concepts. In his renowned essay *Das Problem der Generationen* (The Problem of Generations) written in the 1920s, Karl Mannheim says the key factor for the development of a generation is the speed of social changes in the young age of individuals, at the time of their socialization. A mere chronological table is not enough to produce a common generational consciousness, and so the pace of social and cultural changes plays a vital part (Mannheim, 1952). Mannheim points here to the principles of the “traditional” Western society. Efforts to divide history into stages based on generations have attracted many sociologists. The efforts culminated with the Strauss-Howe generational theory (Strauss, Howe, 1997) describing a generation cycle in the history of the USA. Although this theory has been tested in other countries, other authors question its validity even for the United States, mainly due to the lack of empirical evidence and the averaging of a population across generations. Such an approach is rather limited. Generalization and averaging creates the impression that the average describes a typical example of the phenomenon under study. Numerous studies show that in fact nobody is average (Rose, 2015). Also, when studying cultural change, it is wrong to assume that a selected generation adopts or creates cultural changes. That would be simple generation generalization, but within it people are able to accept and promote cultural changes. This is the presumption on which Everett Rogers developed his theory of cultural change as diffusion of innovations (2003). Rogers held that cultural change is first promoted by innovators, who he estimated to be not more than 2.5% of the population, followed by early adopters (13.5%), early majority (34%), late adopters (34%), and laggards (16%). Diffusion of innovations experienced in the Nungon community was also the work of individuals-innovators.

The nature of cultural change has a significant impact on the character of the system of how generations, generational changes and gaps develop. This is why it is difficult to apply the Western concept of generations X, Y, and Z to other cultures. While Filipinos agree with this concept, much of Southeast Asia refers to the generation of people born after 1981 as “Strawberry generation”. This generation is then associated with negative characteristics – such as spoiled, arrogant, slower at work. Members of this generation often succumb to social pressure and fail to work as hard as their parents (Atencio, Tan, Ho, Ching, 2015). The “Stolen Generations” is the name given to the children of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders descent who were forcibly removed from their families during colonialism and church missions between 1870 and 1970 (Probyn-Rapsey, 2013).

Generations also differ in length, which is to a large extent related to the average life expectancy and the age of the first-time mothers in the given culture, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of basic parameters to estimate the length of one generation

Region / country	Europe	Africa	Papua New Guinea
life expectancy	more than 80	less than 50	65
average primipara age	approximately 29	less than 20	more than 20

Source: World Bank 2019, authors' estimate

While recognizing that the study of generations is affected by a number of (not only) demographic characteristics of the populations of different geographic and cultural regions, this paper aims to highlight the specifics of cultural and intergenerational changes in Papua New Guinea using the example of the local community of the Nungon ethnic group. Of course, it is possible to define generation in terms of demography. Genealogical data constructed show that the length of one generation is about 20 years. However, consciousness of generation is formed not by similar age but by shared experience or experiences. It is nothing uncommon in illiterate societies that time is measured by important events in the community life. For example, the Nuer stated when a particular event took place referencing to an age-set system (see Evans-Pritchard, 1940: 105). There was an initiation system amongst the Nungon in the pre-colonial period (Wegmann, 1990). It was the main factor contributing to the formation of an age cohort via the shared experience of the process of initiation. This system vanished as a result of Christianisation. Formation of an age-cohort based on initiation was replaced by coping with exogenous cultural changes induced by colonialism, Christianity, schooling, and modern technologies. We argue that these changes resulted in generational gaps which, we assume, did not arise in the pre-colonial period. We elaborate these generational gaps and cultural changes in the following sections.

## IMPACTS OF COLONIALISM

The European colonial expansion brought together human populations which would probably never have met, given the then conditions. If they did, the encounter would have most likely ended in a conflict. It was very unlikely that people, for example, from the present-day province of Chimbu would ever meet with the Hanuabada people settled near the capital of Port Moresby. Before the island was colonized, many human populations living in the interior of the island had been geographically limited to a single valley, foothills of a mountain, a small part of the tropical forest, and so on. This was also true of the Nungons, of whom there were a few dozen in late 1950s. These developments naturally had an impact on the concept of ethnic identity. According to available information, their identity was limited to localized communities of exogenously linked clans inhabiting separate settlements. Colonialism led to a segmented ethnic identity, namely the local, regional, provincial, and state identity (Soukup, 2018). Prior to the military enforcement of new borders between the groups, it was unthinkable for the Uruwa Valley inhabitants to refer to themselves as “we, the people of Uruwa”, as is common nowadays. The archival material suggests that the inhabitants of different settlements and villages were at war with one another. Colonialism literally broadened

the horizon of the inhabitants of the Uruwa Valley, as it enabled them to travel safely to remote areas, stay in provincial cities, and receive education at missionary schools. Until then, the Uruwa Valley communities had been “cold”, self-reproducing societies (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). As far as the Nungon ethnic group is concerned, our 2018 field research has confirmed a strong geographical identity, which is no longer attached to settlements, but to the whole Nungon-speaking region. In some cases, the identity is even influenced by the predominant Christian denominations, which are clearly associated with the arrival of non-New Guinea people (see below).

Colonialism introduced a new type of capital, commodities, materials, and domesticated animal and plant species that began to spread to local communities, changing their social and economic environment. These investments were made with the hope that such investment would start paying sooner or later, at least in the former territory of German New Guinea. This colony had been founded for profit and was run by Neuguinea Kompagnie until Australia took charge after the First World War. The German administration never managed to contact or subjugate the Nungon people. The trend of developing local communities economically and socially, however, continued after the colony was taken over by Australia. The Uruwa Valley patrol reports of the 1940s and 1950s often portray local communities as underdeveloped; with small prospects for making progress under the current conditions (see e.g. White, 1952). Colonialism changed the character of local communities once and for all and created conditions for generation gaps. It allowed for unprecedented differences between people, and generated a different distribution of knowledge related to power, which propelled selected individuals or groups to an advantageous position.

## COLONIAL GENERATION GAP

Intercultural contacts are more beneficial to those who practise them more often. Who practices intercultural contacts more often is able to generalize the experience in comparison to those having just one experience. It is especially applicable to the communities of New Guinea. They were infrequently visited by representatives of the colonial power but these representatives visited many different Papuan communities (see Schieffelin, 1991: 4). From this point of view, colonial powers had a considerable advantage as they visited many communities. From the perspective of the communities, this was a one-off experience which the societies could only barely generalize. It would indeed be extremely difficult to make generalizations based on a one- or two-day-long visit of a colonial clerk and company every two years. This does not mean, however, that colonial contact did not trigger major changes in the communities, changing the local life.

As indicated above, the Australian Colonial Administration first contacted the inhabitants of the Uruwa Valley in 1934 and subsequently in 1936. Vial's reports suggest that the natives kept a distance. For example, the inhabitants of the village of Koteth (Gotet) fled for the bush to hide from the patrol. On the other hand, he found two young volunteers in the village of Boksawin, willing to join the expedition and set out to the town. One of them later changed his mind. The other persevered and took up Pidgin English in an unspecified town (Vial, 1938). This is probably the very first mention of the legendary assistant Dungyong, whose son Mr. Esse still lives in the village of Worin and keeps archival materials in memory of his father. His services were

used by district officials as well as, for example, soldier Peter Ryan, who was in the area during the Japanese occupation (Ryan, 2015).

The archival documents and interviews with the locals show that people benefited from cooperating with representatives of colonial authorities. Those who assisted the patrol officer had easier access to new technologies and raw materials such as salt which was used as a new “currency” in the area. The steel axe replaced the stone one, knives and machetes started to be used in the area. People also started to travel to towns for jobs. They there mastered Tok Pisin which is the lingua franca of Papua New Guinea. Some of the men were also officially promoted to tultuls or luluais.<sup>1</sup> It was a prestigious duty which boosted their social status in the community. In summary, new technologies and incorporation of the Uruwa to the colonial public administration generated the first generational gap amongst the Nungon. It was caused by experience which young people gained coping with new technologies and way of life in towns which the older generation lacked.

## RELIGIOUS GENERATION GAP

As mentioned earlier, the Nungons were exposed to Christian missionaries in the early 1930s, who introduced Lutheranism to the area. Lutheran missionaries not only converted local people to Christianity, but also tried to push changes in the local economic pattern by supporting the growing of coffee. The plant had a negligible role in improving the living conditions of the local population, though, because it was difficult to transport coffee to the town of Laeand because it was of low quality. They also opened a missionary school in Worin. The institution served to influence the worldview and values of the young generation. The topic is discussed in greater detail later in the text as it is linked to another generation gap. Lutheran missionaries managed to turn Nungons into practicing Christians within a few decades. According to Urs Wegmann (1990), in the eighties only very old people still knew some details about their local religious cult associated with growing and the veneration of the dead.

Denominations had an unwritten agreement to operate in different regions; at least it was so in the beginning of Christianity in today’s Papua New Guinea. Current statistics show denominations to be dominant in those provinces where their missionaries began to operate first. For example, Catholicism is the strongest in the province of Chimbu, while Lutheranism in Morobe. The unwritten rule was broken for the Nungon region in 1976, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) arrived here, upon the invitation from a few young men who worked in the town of Kabwum. The arrival of SDA missionaries sparked a conflict within the Nungon community but also among the Uruwa Valley communities. The village of Sapmanga, which was the only one in the Uruwa Valley to have a functional airstrip, hindered the arrival of SDA missionaries by requiring a substantial sum of money for each aircraft landing on their airstrip.

Still alive, the men who had invited SDA missionaries explained that at that time, there was lack of Christian service in their community since the Lutheran missionary had had to leave after a dispute with the community, whom he had prohibited from holding the “singsing” celebration and forced to work on his gardens. There is, however,

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1 It was part of the system of public administration on the local level. Luluais and tultuls were responsible for fulfillment of tasks and doing basic administration.

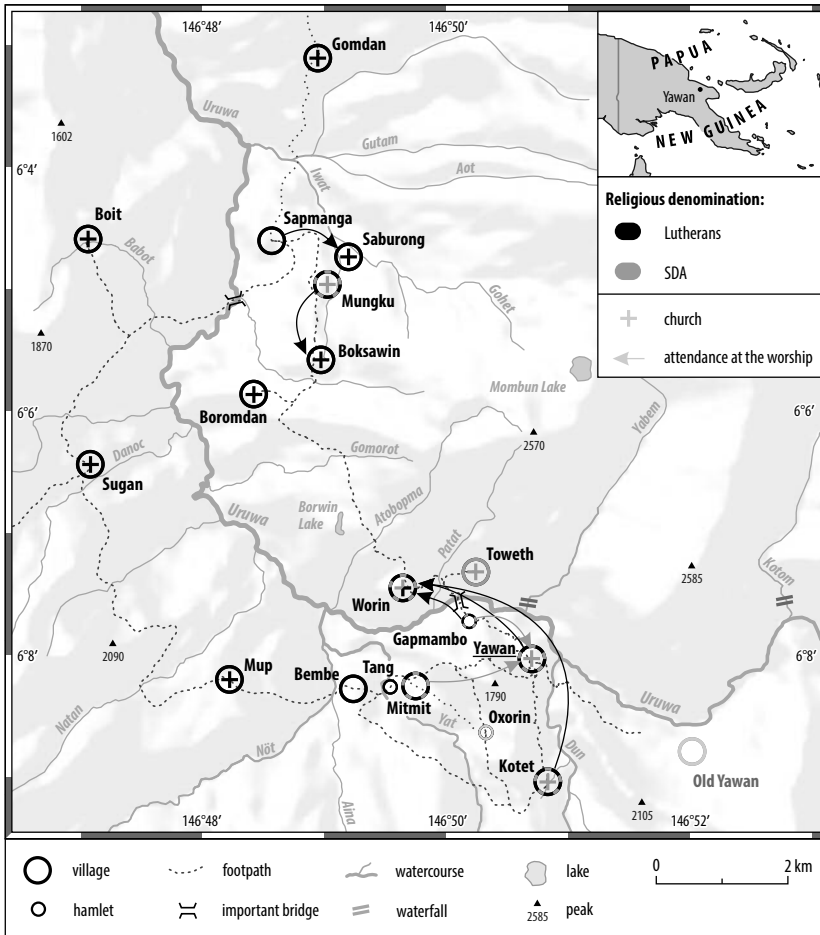


*Fig. 1: The reconciliation ceremony of the two Nungon denominations. Photo: Martin Soukup, 2018*

another version of the story how the Adventists had been invited to the Uruwa Valley. While the Lutherans did teach the Nungons to grow coffee, they did not teach them to process it. The Nungons therefore decided to send a few tribesmen to town to find the necessary know-how and also buy a coffee grinder. Instead of a shop the men entered an SDA centre, which is how the SDA missionaries received an invitation. It is now impossible to trace what exactly had happened. In any case the Adventists arrived due to five young men, who had gained work and study experience in the town.

A clash arose in the community between the Lutherans and the young people who had adopted the Adventist faith. Eventually, Adventism was embraced by the entire community. It also transformed the economic pattern of the community. As Sapmanga refused to take part in transporting the Adventist supplies and travellers, people in Yawan built their own airstrip under the supervision of SDA missionaries. The villages in the upper reaches of the Uruwa River were now independent from the Sapmanga airstrip. The arrival of the Adventists divided the community in faith and deteriorated the social climate. Our reconstruction of genealogical data implies that the religious rift in the community does not concern individuals or families, but clans in which the new denomination spread.

The villagers repeatedly tried to overcome the religious schism in the community. The latest, most serious attempt was made ten years ago when both the denominations attempted to reconcile (see Figure 1). The dignitaries of the denominations were supported by the chiefs of the clans. The schism, however, remains latent in the community, escalating sometimes, for example when the Lutheran church in Koteth was destroyed in 2012; a mere three years after the Nungons laid its foundations at a reconciliation ceremony. The invitation of SDA by the young men caused a new



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Fig. 2: Distribution of denominations in the Uruwa Valley by churches. Source: field survey of the authors

generational gap, the religious conflict affected the community life and its course formed a common experience of the generation whose members are leaders of the community nowadays.

The geographic distribution of the two Christian denominations in the Uruwa Valley is demonstrated by the presence of churches in the villages (Figure 2).

## LITERACY AND THE GENERATION GAP

Lutheran missionaries were in charge of educating the inhabitants of the Uruwa Valley since the late 1940s, upon their return to this part of New Guinea after the Second World War. Patrol reports (see for example Rylands, 1945; White, 1952) indicate that the community leaders had repeatedly called for the establishment of a public elementary school providing education free of the missionaries' influence. Lutherans, nonetheless,





The literacy factor created conditions for another generation gap. We found, based on a genealogical construction, about two-thirds of the village's inhabitants to be literate. The majority of people in the oldest generation are illiterate, while the youngest generation enjoys a significant increase in literacy. Illiteracy manifests itself as ignorance of basic mathematical operations,<sup>3</sup> writing, and reading. In addition, the illiterate do not speak the official languages, namely English and Tok Pisin (Pidgin English). The people are also limited, among other things, in the economic sphere, where they need to rely on others – for example, when the coffee they have grown is weighed and the number of kilograms delivered recorded. Literacy likewise affects their community life as Christianity plays a vital part in the Nungon life nowadays. Christian services (masses, funerals, weddings, etc.) are conducted in Tok Pisin, which limits the illiterate in participating actively in Christian life, which is currently the central point of the local worldview.

Successful students who finish primary school can apply to continue their studies at secondary school. This is conditioned by passing an aptitude test. If admitted to secondary school, the students need to move to the town because there are no secondary schools in the Uruwa Valley itself (see Fig. 3). The closest option for the valley inhabitants is studying in the town of Lae. Families, however, have to bear the considerable financial costs of the student's accommodation in the city and the school fees, which, given the low income of the villagers, are very high.

Secondary education (ISCED 3) further deepens the generation gap, as secondary school graduates gain new skills which can help them find jobs in cities. If they return to their village, they have information, knowledge, and skills which give them a considerable advantage over others. It should be noted that the vast majority of the community have never left, and probably will never leave the Uruwa Valley, will never visit a city or see the urban way of life. People with higher than elementary education gain a prominent position in the community thanks to the acquired competence. They become teachers at local elementary schools or work for local self-government or the Tree-Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP). As the TKCP project is coordinated from the United States, the sole language of communication is English. The generation gap is expected to narrow in the future as literacy in the community continues to grow at least in terms of elementary education.

## CYBERNETIC GENERATION GAP

The Nungon community lives in a remote area of the country, which is accessible by air or on foot; the hike runs through a difficult mountainous terrain and takes several days. This, however, does not mean that the locals are completely isolated, nor were they in the pre-colonial times. The Nungon people were part of the exchange relations with communities living on the coast and adjacent islands. The geographical environment, however, is the main limiting factor in contacts with people living outside the Uruwa Valley. The geographic constraints have recently begun to be significantly reduced by the mobile phone reception, installed in the valley in 2015 (Soukup, Bláha, 2019).

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3 The Nungon language can only count to twenty.

The introduction of mobile phone reception became a factor creating yet another generation gap as in other communities in the world (see e.g. Stammler, 2009). The mobile signal has enabled the community to immediately reach people living outside the Uruwa Valley by phone, specifically those living in Lae, the town where young people study and the TKCP branch is. We did not find that people would use a mobile phone to communicate with people from the village or between villages. When they need to relay information to people in another village, they still send a messenger to communicate the message. However, we expect the situation to change as mobile phones gain in popularity in the community. The few mobile phones in the village are mostly used for listening to music and for digital games. It is worth noting that the owners of the devices have no fixed phone number; the phones are often replaced with new ones.

The mobile phone has become another factor generating the generation gap, even if only at the individual level for now. At the moment, the ownership of a mobile phone largely copies the social structure of the community. Only those whose position allows them to earn enough to purchase and operate a mobile phone have one. Nungon owners of mobile phones include teachers in the elementary and primary school, people participating in the TKCP, and the chiefs of clans and families. The only other few people having a mobile phone are those who lived in cities and have returned more or less permanently to the Uruwa Valley. The same people profit from the coffee trade and run small local shops, offering a modest selection of non-perishables and toiletries. This business is one of the few forms of entrepreneurial activity, which only deepens the differences in the local community.

The mobile phone has become a status symbol, indicating the social status of an individual in the community. It also, for example, makes it possible to streamline business activities through a quick exchange of information with people in the town. In the years to come, what has been an advantage, namely ownership of information and know-how, is expected to be recycled in the society and be available to anyone. Information will become instant. Mobile phone reception not only allows for effective communication, but also offers access to the Internet, which the Nungon people have so far taken only a limited advantage of, specifically in the form of Facebook. Expected future trends include the “democratization” of mobile phone ownership and increased use of the Internet as a source of information. We can assume that the people who are studying in the city and will return to the community will contribute to this.

## FACTORS OF GENERATION GAPS

As suggested above, all the generation gaps described have been caused by factors associated with an *exogenous cultural change*. The initially illiterate society living in the Uruwa Valley has been exposed to the Australian colonial administration and to Christianity, thanks to missionaries. There are a whole set of factors which produce and directly influence the generation gaps or which can be identified within the gaps. While some of the factors are universal (access to new information or know-how, above all), others have a specific impact only on some of the above generation gaps (access to new technologies, written communication, etc.). Some of these factors operate independently, others influence one another (for example, limited access to new technologies leads to limited information and know-how, while limited information

Table 2: Factors of generation gaps in the Papua community under study

Factor	Oldest generation (1950–1970)	Middle generation (1970–1990)	Young generation (1990–)
role of generation memory	essential, long-term, preservation through oral tradition	medium-term	short-term, preservation through modern means of communication
writing and use of books	low writing literacy, a very limited use of books	average writing literacy, use of books limited to Christian practices (the Bible etc.)	high writing literacy, frequent use of books both within Christian practices and education (textbooks, establishment of a library in the school)
visual material and expression	photograph: none, with minor exceptions; stored in a box drawing: use of traditional material – tapa, decorated with patterns (orip) associated with the former cult of growing and cult of ancestors	photograph: a part of the population has visual material drawing: mixed type, recording medium: paper	photograph: on Facebook drawing: Western type, recording medium: still paper but expectations of an increase in digital art
language skills	mother tongue, low skills: a part of the population speaks Tok Pisin, almost none to	average, the majority of the population speaks Tok Pisin, a part of the population basic English	high, virtually all speak Tok Pisin in addition to mother tongue, the majority of population speaks
	very little English		basic English
access to information access to know-how	very limited	average	open
access to new technology	negligible, only a few individuals	average	becoming widespread
reach of generation footprint	mostly local	regional	supra-regional to global

Source: field survey of the authors

leads to negligible access to new technologies, which sends the specific influence of the development of generation gaps into direct relationship with universal influence).

The society was illiterate until the colonial expansion, with the *generation memory* based on oral tradition. Any extraordinary events the community experienced were preserved in collective memory. In contrast, the generation memory of the young generation is short;

information is preserved through modern information technology. Although the young generation has an extraordinary supply of information, the information is instant, as mentioned above. Due to the character of the geographical environment (a very rugged mountain environment), the phenomenon of spatial orientation limitation, as studied in the Inuit (see e.g. Aporta, 2013), is not yet present. However, Google Maps also support instant information, because an individual does not need to acquire the spatial orientation skills, but simply replaces it with a brief look at the map in a mobile phone.

Intergenerational differences are easy to demonstrate on changes concerning *visual expression*. The oldest generation used traditional materials and patterns, namely tapa cloth (tik). It was used for clothing decorated with growing-themed patterns (orip). The middle generation uses paper as a recording media, and in some cases also photographs. If they have a photo archive, it is not organized; photos are neither captioned nor dated. They are stored in boxes or bags. The young generation begins to work with digital photos using a mobile phone. However, they do not yet have the technological means to archive and organize their photos in any other way than in the mobile phone itself. Those who have created a Facebook account share them with others and store them online, some perhaps unwittingly. It is interesting to see that each generation leaves a generation footprint of varied reach. When a young generation shares something on the Internet, their footprint leaves the site (“it globalizes”), unlike the old generation, whose footprint is strongly tied to the Uruwa Valley. It has only a local reach.

As in previous cases, access to new information remains an important factor creating a generation gap in the community. For example, cooperation with the Australian Colonial Administration provided access to know-how, which proved to be generally advantageous as the contacts with markets in towns and the urban environment continued to grow. New technologies included steel axes, which gradually replaced those made of stone. Now this applies to digital technologies. (Table 2)

## CONCLUSION

Generation gaps in the Nungon community manifest causality, where the colonial generation gap generated a religious generation gap, which led to a generation gap in literacy, and the literacy gap led to a generation gap in entrepreneurship and a cyber generation gap.

As shown by the example of the local Nungon community, a temporary departure of people from the community has played a crucial role in the development of generation gaps. By leaving peripheral areas for the city, individuals have acquired new competencies and information. Access to new technology is very often gained in the context of accessing information, which is one of the key factors which have led to generation gaps in the community. For example Dungyong left for the town, where he worked for Vial, learned Tok Pisin, and discovered a different way of life; students left for missionary schools where they were much more influenced by Christian ideas; young men working in the town were exposed to the SDA influence; secondary school students are being influenced by modern information technology and are adopting the urban way of life. The people who return to the community come back with new competences but also with a completely different habitus because of coping with, for example, the urban way of life. Habitus is not fixed for the lifetime; the outlook is dynamic and may change in the lifetime. The geographical and social environment has an impact on

changing the habitus (Lee, Kramer, 2013). This is the main cause of generation gaps in the Nungon community. Given the dynamics of generations and their shorter lengths, similar communities serve as the laboratory for the study of generation gaps.

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