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PACIFIC STUDIES

WOMEN, AGE, AND POWER

THE POLITICS OF AGE DIFFERENCE AMONG WOMEN IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND AUSTRALIA

Guest Editor
JEANETTE DICKERSON-PUTMAN

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Jeanette Dickerson-Putman, ***Guest Editor***

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SPECIAL ISSUE
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Vol. 19, No. 4 December 1996

INTRODUCTION

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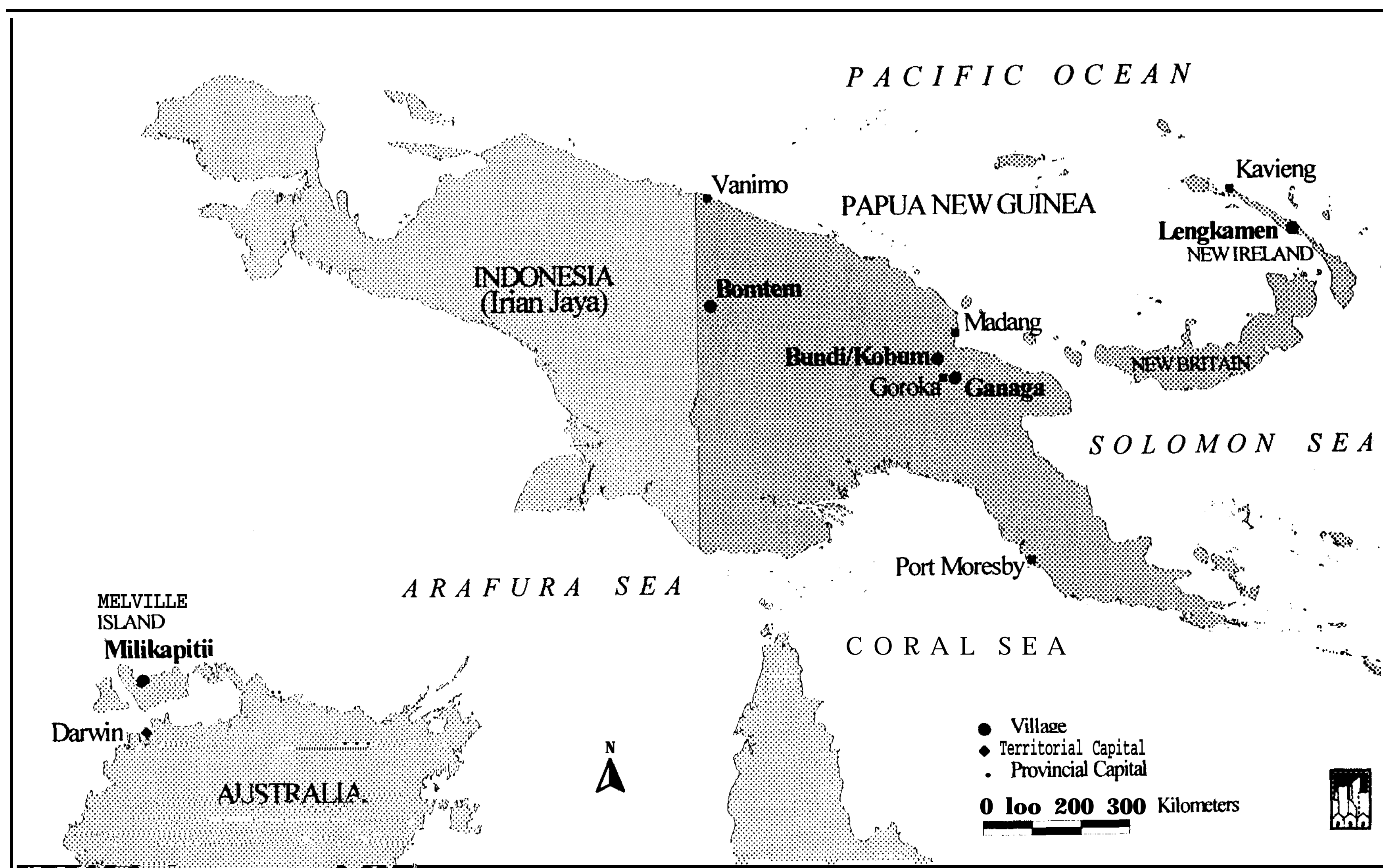
To DATE only a handful of authors have focused ethnographic attention on intergenerational relations among women (Abernethy 1978; Bujra 1979; Dickerson-Putman and Brown 1994; Hawkes et al. 1989; Levine 1965; Sacks 1992). The authors in this volume seek to correct the relative neglect of this important topic by exploring the complexity of relationships that exist among women of different ages in both precolonial and postcolonial contexts. These articles, which draw upon richly detailed ethnographic studies from Australia and Melanesia, share a unified focus on how women's opportunities and access to influence, power, and authority change as they travel through their culturally constructed life course and how these changes affect their relationships with other women and men. The myriad ways in which culture contact, economic development, and culture change have affected the opportunity structures, power bases, and interrelationships of women are also of major concern to most authors.

The five societies represented in this work are the Tiwi of northern Australia, the Mandak of New Ireland, the Atbalmin of the West Sepik Province, the Gende of Madang Province, and the Bena Bena of the Eastem Highlands Province. Although the ethnographic contributions only touch on a limited segment of the Pacific, the four Papua New Guinean articles do offer good coverage of the different regions and adaptations in this political unit. These locations offer intriguing variation in the impact of culture change and development and local experiences and understandings of these pro-



MAP 1. **Island of New Guinea and a portion of northern Australia, locating communities discussed in this volume.**
(Courtesy The Polis Center)

cesses. This volume also richly benefits from the insights that can be drawn from Jane Goodale's long-term and continuing research among the Tiwi.

These collected works both draw inspiration from and speak to a wide variety of important and timely theoretical discussions within the discipline of anthropology. First, these articles contribute to the growing literature on the cultural construction of gender and gender roles. Recent scholarship on gender has had a significant influence on the present volume (Atkinson and Errington 1990; Morgen 1989; Sanday and Goodenough 1990; Strathern 1987, 1988), particularly the notion that concepts of gender and ideologies of gender are flexible, multifaceted, negotiated, achieved, and situational. Sanday, for example, states that a number of often competing gender ideologies can coexist in a particular society and can be used to implement economic and political goals (1990:6-7).

Contemporary feminist anthropologists have also vividly demonstrated that male-female relationships are but one of the patterns condensed in a society's gender ideas (Jolly and Macintyre 1989; Ortner 1974). Lutkehaus, for example, in her analysis of female initiation in Melanesia, suggested: "Gender as a metaphor contains the notion that relations between the sexes and notions of gender difference are images that express ideas about other aspects of culture, about lifeforces and general values, relationships between power and authority between individuals and groups, or the creation of racial and/or national boundaries and identities" (1995: 10).

All of the ethnographic contributions to this volume also speak to the relationships among gender, age, and power. The relationship between gender and power has been explored by many anthropologists (Collier 1974; Errington 1990; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). In their introduction to ***Women and Power in Native North America,*** Klein and Ackerman assert that power is a process rather than a status and is "an active reality that is being created and redefined through individual life stages and through societal history" (199512). Although individual authors in the present volume have defined power within specific cultural contexts, all would agree, following Foucault (1980), that power exists in human action, is not a structure that is owned by one social group and denied another, and can be exercised and deployed through a variety of strategies, networks, and mechanisms.

Particularly germane to the current volume is the recommendation of various feminist scholars that gender studies must move beyond a model that focuses on the relations of men and women to one that also considers relations ***among*** women (di Leonardo 1991; Ginsburg and Tsing 1992). One significant example of this approach can be found in the work of March and Taqqu (1986). These scholars explore how informal networks and associations can provide mutual self-help and can bind women together beyond the

boundaries of their immediate households. Women's economic associations provide networks through which women can learn their work, find jobs, exchange labor, accomplish tasks, and protect their resources and interests. Informal women's networks can also mobilize for the preparation and execution of cultural and religious activities such as initiation and other life-cycle events. Often these networks and associations are particularly important for in-marrying women, because they help them define a place for themselves in their new communities.

Morgen, in her analysis of the use of gender in anthropology, notes some of the social patterns and principles that could affect the character of interrelationships among women:

> Some of the important new thinking has come from the various efforts of scholars to deconstruct the meaning of woman/womanhood and to examine women's multiple roles, statuses and positions within the power structures of societies particularly as those are shaped by age, kinship, marital status, race, ethnicity and class. One of the most important influences on the redirection of feminist theory in general and feminist anthropology in particular is the exploration of differences among women. (1989:9)

Through their analysis of Pacific societies, Faithorn (1976), Strathern (1987, 1988), and contributors to this volume' concur on the need to explore how age may affect relations among women.

This interest in how age and generation affect women's relationships also relates to the work of scholars interested in the anthropology of aging women who explore how women's lives change as they become older and enter the later stages of the life course. Cross-cultural evidence indicates that increased age brings role discontinuity to woman and allows them to become more dominant and powerful. The volume ***Aging and Its Transformations,*** edited by Dorothy and David Counts (1985), should be viewed as a base upon which the present volume is built. Contributors to the Counts volume described the relationships between gender, age, and death in a variety of Pacific societies and documented the greater freedom experienced by women as they aged and approached death.

There are numerous ways in which role discontinuity brings improvement to women's lives (Brown and Kerns 1985; Kerns and Brown 1992). First, older women experience fewer restrictions on their behavior and mobility. For example, menopause and the cessation of menstrual tabus expand the opportunities of women in some cultures. Second, increased age affords women greater ability to allocate the labor of younger women in

both their households and their domestic groups. Finally, in some cultures, older women have the opportunity to participate in extradomestic roles. For example, some older women may take on roles as midwives or have important roles to play in initiation and other specialized rituals. These changes in the lives of older women can form the basis for age stratification among women.

Foner has noted that age stratification exists when "individuals in a society, on the basis of their location in a particular age stratum, have unequal access to valued social roles and rewards" (1984a:xiii). This stratification develops between younger and older women as older women "acquire considerable domestic authority, gain prestige in their family and community and become more active in the public sphere" (Foner 1984a: 241). This privileged position of older women, in some societies, may allow them to exert some control over the lives and opportunities of younger women.

Most of the ethnographically rich articles in this volume also contribute to our understanding of how native concepts of gender and age and the existence of various types of relationships among women can shape the outcome of the development process. Much of the gender and development literature concludes that development has either bypassed or negatively affected the lives of women, primarily because, until recently, planners and policy makers did not give adequate consideration to native activities of women in devising their plans for development (Boserup 1970; Charlton 1984; Rogers 1980). Some scholars in Melanesia have also examined how native patterns of gender differentiation have shaped the participation of men and women in economic development and culture change (Brown 1988; Hughes 1985; Preston and Wormald 1987; Stratigos and Hughes 1987).

March and Taqqu (1986) have examined how existing and "active" informal networks of women can serve as bases and vehicles for women's development. Planners and policy makers could use knowledge about the informal organizations of women to establish new associations that could increase women's control of resources during the development process. For example, March and Taqqu attribute the success of the ***wok meri*** investment and savings groups in Melanesia documented by Sexton (1982, 1986) to the fact that these new groups were based on existing and "active" associational ties among women.

Native concepts of age and intergenerational relations among women, however, have rarely been seen to influence the choices and opportunities of women as they negotiate development. Two notable exceptions are the work of Boserup (1990) and Foner (1984b). Boserup found that development can improve the position of certain age groups of women and cause deterioration in status for other age groups (1990:23). Boserup also noted

that in the early stages of economic development, older women tend to retain their privileged status in the household, but in the later stages (industrialization), the authority of older women declines as younger women leave their households to compete in the labor market. Recent studies of the impact of the international division of labor and the introduction of factories to developing countries have shown that some technologies tend to favor the skills of younger, more docile workers (Elson and Pearson 1980; Ong 1990; Wolf 1991).

Culture change and development can also interact with and affect native systems of age stratification. As Foner notes,

> What is clear, then, is that contact with industrial nations does not have a uniform or predictable effect on age relations in nonindustrial societies. In trying to understand how contact affected the old as well as other age strata in these societies a variety of factors must be considered. These include the particular external forces of change, such as the nature of colonial rule and subsequent political and economic developments in national centers since independence, the peculiar social, economic and political conditions as well as cultural beliefs and values in each local setting. (1984b:212)

In short, the way individual women respond to change may depend on their location in a system of age inequality.

While drawing inspiration from the scholarly work reviewed above, this collection both expands our understanding of this body of work and raises a number of theoretically interesting questions.

How Are Women Viewed, and by Whom?

As the authors in this volume so clearly demonstrate, there are as many images of women as there are kinds of women, varieties of female behavior, and social perspectives from which women may be seen. Indeed, as Bercovitch demonstrates, the view that the people of a society have of their women (and of their men, for that matter) may be paradoxical. As Meigs (1990) has argued and as Bercovitch and Dickerson-Putman illustrate in their articles here, on one occasion a man may describe the women of his society (with the possible exception of his mother) as weak, foolish, silly, irresponsible, capable only of weak or flaccid thought, dirty, contaminating, and so forth. Another time the same man may admit that women have exclusive sources of sacred power or potency without which society could not repro-

duce itself. On yet another occasion, he may acknowledge the complementary roles and responsibilities of men and women that are essential for social survival.

Both of these authors also reveal that the allegiance and interests of older women as well can be contextual and situational. At times older women may align themselves with older men as a way to protect their privileged positions. In other situations older women may view themselves as united with younger women and in opposition to both older and younger men.

One source of anthropological confusion with regard to the image of Pacific women derives from the misunderstanding of the symbolism and importance of female reproduction. Female fertility, reproduction, and reproductive fluids are important components of women's identity in many societies. The essence of female reproductivity may be a source of power for women. It may make women vulnerable to danger at certain times (in their lives, during the month, or during the reproductive process). It may sometimes render women dangerous to others and even to themselves. It is a mistake to term this essence "pollution," as the essays in ***Blood Magic*** (Buckley and Gotlieb 1988) and in this collection demonstrate. Of particular importance in this regard is Bercovitch's discussion of the paradox in the Atbalmin male's reaction to female reproductive nature. Atbalmin men most value those aspects--both physical and essential--that they also most fear. Indeed, the Atbalmin menstrual house is a sacred structure where women perform secret female rituals essential to the continuation of Atbalmin society. It is equivalent in importance to the men's house. Bercovitch's recognition of the religious significance of the menstrual house is an important contribution. When anthropologists translate the local term for this structure as "hut" rather than "house," they close their minds to its potential importance. Bercovitch has appreciated its possibilities. And Dickerson-Putman's revelation that Bena Bena women view their time in the menstrual house as a vacation and a valued opportunity to spend time with friends provides a new perspective on the meaning of behavioral tabus.

What Is the Source of Women's Power and Influence?

In their discussions of female power and influence, most of the authors in this collection focus on

- autonomy--the ability to make one's own choices;
- control--especially over the choices that other people make; and
- differential access to resources, both material and nonmaterial, including knowledge.

Most of them argue that there are different sources of power and influence at different stages in a woman's life. These include

- fertility and reproduction;
- advanced age, during which a woman embodies the intangible energy or principle of knowledge and the actions that flow from such knowledge (the chapters by Dickerson-Putman and Bercovitch discuss the implications of this source of influence, and Sykes reveals that older Mandak women are aware that possession of the secret knowledge and rituals of the ***linnendaven*** creates the responsibility for passing that knowledge on to a new generation of women); and
- personal qualities, including those that lead to success in political-economic activities such as raising tuskers, managing a large aggregate household, manipulating the exchange system, and investing in others.

Most articles deal at least briefly with the nature of female power and influence and discuss whether and how they are different from power and influence in males. There is great variety in the way in which female influence is expressed. Dickerson-Putman and Sykes explore how female power is expressed in the context of life-course rituals. Among the Gende it is the consequence of paying social debts and is enhanced by investing in the obligations of others. Young Bena Bena and Atbalmin women try to exercise power by controlling their own production and reproduction. Their efforts may provoke violence against them.

A number of the contributors examine the relationship between power and responsibility. Among the Tiwi, older women must balance their power to direct the productive activities of younger members of their households with the Aboriginal responsibility of caring for these dependents. Young Mandak women undergo initiation rites in secondary school that create the Ladaven, a new generation of women who--as Papua New Guinea-style feminists--understand the nature of social power. They learn that this power carries with it the responsibility to create new clan members and the obligation to reciprocate school sponsors for their support.

What Principles Govern Relationships between Women?

In some contexts, cooperation and mutual support characterize relations among women. Among the Bena Bena, for example, women worked together to organize life-course rituals and to prepare food for clanwide feasts. The chapters by Goodale, Dickerson-Putman, Zimmer-Tamakoshi, and Bercovitch address the sources of tension or stratification in the relationship between younger and older women. Older women may have considerable influence in marriage negotiations on behalf of their children and in training

daughters-in-law. They may also have the freedom to achieve influence and wealth by participating in exchange cycles.

A particular source of tension between younger and older women is arranged marriage. As Bercovitch points out, older women may align with men to influence or force young women to accept an arranged marriage. It is in the interest of young women eventually to marry. It is in the interest of senior women and their sons, on whom they will depend for support in old age, to keep young women in the community as potential wives. Bercovitch also creatively connects the marital choices of young women to a social theory of place that he terms "movement and emplacement." The key idea here is that a woman's marriage decisions can lead to her movement and her creation of a new place that through time becomes peopled with her descendants.

How Have Intergenerational Relationships Influenced the Course of Various Types of Social Change?

As Dickerson-Putman, Sykes, and Zimmer-Tamakoshi discuss in their articles, inherent tensions between generations of women may be exacerbated by development projects, the money economy, or new ideas and forms introduced to young women by the schools. Most of the articles discuss how contact with Western institutions and imposed change have affected the relationships between women, the sources of female power, and the way that women experience aging. New institutions, ideas, and development projects may provide new opportunities for women. Or they may, as Zimmer-Tamakoshi demonstrates, add to women's burdens while only minimally improving the lives of the local people. The withdrawal of Gende women from a company that was a burden rather than a realized promise is a female critique of male- and youth-focused development projects.

Dickerson-Putman's and Zimmer-Tamakoshi's articles also provide an interesting contrast in how age stratification systems can influence which age group participates in a newly introduced activity. The administrators of the Kobum Spice Company specifically chose docile, nimble-fingered, younger Gende women for the most lucrative employment, temporarily reversing the pattern of age stratification of the past, while investment organizations introduced to Bena Bena women favored the participation of older women, who had greater access and ability to acquire cash, and thus reinforced the existing pattern of age hierarchy. Both authors stress the need for policy makers and project planners to be more sensitive to local power relationships based on age and gender.

In certain cases new opportunities for some women have created in-

creased hardships for others. New, Westernized institutions have given some women new ways of contesting the established power structure, including the power held by other women. In other situations, new institutions--for example, those in secondary schools--have combined old rituals with new structures to create a form of feminism expressed by meeting obligations. In this case, discussed by Sykes, change has led to the creation of new forms and sources of social power for women, forms that are appropriate to and rooted in traditional New Guinea societies. The article by Sykes as well as others in the collection offer valuable lessons about how customs and beliefs can serve as native idioms and contexts for change and development.

As Goodale points out, the consequences for older women of new political, social, and economic forms are unclear. For example, Tiwi women may continue to play a powerful role in the traditional aggregate household where skillful management creates a balance and diversity of resource foragers and consumers. Goodale points out that the continued value of bush foods among the Tiwi has in part sustained the position of older women. Their future influence in other aspects of Tiwi society is less clear. If they are to be influential, they must cope with the conflict between the values of cooperation and shared responsibility that are characteristic of gender relations in traditional Aboriginal society and the gender inequality inherent in white Australian society.

The articles in this collection should be viewed as a first step toward understanding the meaning and impact of intergenerational relations among women in the Pacific. It is hoped that this beginning will stimulate other Pacific scholars to pursue similar research questions in the communities in which they work, providing the ethnographic breadth to help us better comprehend how intergenerational relationships among women affect their everyday lives and their experiences with development and change.

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THE WOMAN WHO RAN AWAY: GENDER, POWER, AND PLACE AMONG THE ATBALMIN OF THE WEST SEPIK, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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The story of a young woman's elopement frames an analysis of differential social power of women among the Atbalmin people of West Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, during the early to middle 1980s. The elopement highlights- several dimensions of social difference not reducible to men's domination of women. The first is inequality among men, which had much to do with men's emphasis on male dominance over women. The second dimension is inequality among women, which informed countervailing assertions of female primacy. I focus here on the second dimension. I argue that differences in power and prestige among women have played a crucial role in Atbalmin social life, affecting how communities have been established as well as how they have thrived or declined. Though oriented toward the case of a particular society during a particular period, this article arguably holds implications for other times and places.

ON 3 JANUARY 1985, while I was in the midst of my research among the Atbalmin people of New Guinea, Ankon ran away.[1] Ankon was eighteen years old, a tall and slender woman who was still unmarried. She lived in a settlement only fifteen minutes' walk from the one where I was staying. Dutip, her female cousin, told me that Ankon had been attracted to a man named Bokban whom she had met at a drumdance several days before. Ankon and Bokban had apparently decided to marry, although he was from an area a full two days' walk away and he already had a wife (monogamous marriages were preferred by most women). Knowing that her family would object to the marriage, Ankon had covertly fol-

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lowed Bokban just after he had left for his area. But her father had soon discovered her absence. Guessing what had happened, he caught up with her along the trail the same day. After striking her several times, he brought her home.

Actions like Ankon's were not uncommon among the Atbalmin. As I learned, they even had a special term for what she had done: ***namal unemin,*** which roughly translates as "going for reason of desire." Such actions, however, tended to be opposed deeply by the woman's own community. People told me it was better for a woman to follow the advice of her family and relatives and to marry close to home. Local marriage was, in fact, a much more common practice, and it was what people had expected for Ankon. Arrangements for such a marriage had been taking shape for Ankon for almost a year, led by her father, mother, elder brother, as well as several relatives. So when she was brought back from her failed attempt at elopement, people made a concerted effort to prevent her from leaving again. They also took the event to indicate a need to dissuade other unmarried women from eloping. Ankon and the other women were subjected to repeated lectures by their families. In addition, they were made to attend several meetings where local leaders told them they should marry locally, taking heed of wise advice from their family and elders.

These efforts did not appear to convince Ankon. Dropping by at my house on January 13, she gave me her own account of the events, ending with a description of the recent meetings. The other young women, she said, had tearfully promised they would marry locally. "But," she added pointedly, "I said nothing." I later learned that Ankon had expressed herself more openly that day to her female cousin Dutip. "There are no men in this area I want," she had said. "I only want Bokban." The next day Ankon ran away for a second time. This time she foiled attempts to stop her from reaching Bokban's settlement.

Ankon's elopement caused problems for many people across a surprisingly wide area. Within her own settlement, Ankon's mother cried and her other family members seemed genuinely sad. Her loss was also felt by several young men in neighboring settlements who had been hoping to marry her. To help their cause they had been giving gifts to her relatives. My main assistant, for example, had given Ankon's father a pig. Within a few days of the elopement, various explanations began to circulate. According to one account, Ankon had found Bokban so irresistibly attractive she had simply "lost her mind" ***(finang denim)*** over him. A more critical assessment was that she had been selfish and foolish, a condition that some felt was true of all young women. Two other explanations, involving spells, were circulated more confidentially. Ankon's flight was said to have been caused by a spell made

by a young man who was a spumed suitor or by a different spell spoken by an older, married man.

Within a few days of Ankon's departure, efforts were under way to retrieve her or at least to gain some compensation for her loss. The failure of these efforts led to anger, mutual insults, fears of sorcery, and threats of violence between the people in Ankon's area and those living in the area where she had gone to stay. In addition, Ankon's elopement led to conflicts at the local level. The young men who had hoped to marry her demanded that their gifts be returned or compensated for. Young unmarried women were pressured to conform to the wishes of their families and marry locally, and their actions were watched closely.

Ankon's actions also caused a great deal of unhappiness to herself. This became clear when she returned five months later, in May 1985. Her official reason was that Bokban's first wife had prevented the marriage from taking place. But confidentially people said that Ankon had been badly mistreated. Given these allegations, I was surprised when Ankon's family ended up paying compensation to Bokban as well as to several men in her own area. These payments did not end the problems caused by her elopement.[2]

The Problem

Ankon's story is notable for its apparent contradictory implications. On the one hand, it suggests that young women had a very subordinate position in Atbalmin society. Ankon tried to escape efforts by her family to determine her life only to find herself in a position of even greater subordination to a group of unrelated people. On the other hand, Ankon's case suggests that a young woman's choices could have a great impact on others. Ankon's elopement influenced hundreds of people over many months.

In this article, I will try to explain how and why a young woman could be both weak and powerful. In the process, I will deal with several related contradictions in Atbalmin society. The first is that, in a society seemingly dominated by men, women could claim social power and exercise it. The second is that, despite a pattern of increasing influence with age for both sexes, young women could play an influential role in social processes, shaping ties between communities and even, I will argue, determining the creation and survival of communities.

Hence, though my aim is to account for the social meaning of a young woman's actions, I can do so only in the context of a broader social analysis that involves both men and women (Weiner 1976). My argument leads toward a recognition of the central importance of two forms of inequality in Atbalmin life. The first was primarily among men, but was often expressed

in terms of an opposition between men and women. The second was among women, but was sometimes expressed in terms of an opposition between women and men. Both hierarchies were built on issues of age and marriage, but in different ways. The two hierarchies were linked together through several kinds of contestations: among men, between men and women, and among women. Indeed, I will suggest that these dimensions of contestation were fundamental to Atbalmin social processes. These two hierarchies and their associated contestation led, in turn, to alternative ways in which people constructed their "social landscape" (Rodman 1992), one of which emphasized the contribution of men and the other the contribution of women. I will argue that attention to the female-centered social landscape of the Atbalmin offers insights into an issue that has been relatively neglected in anthropological writings: the process by which a human place can initially be created. To better understand this process, I will suggest the usefulness of a concept--well illustrated in Ankon's story--that I call "movement and emplacement."

Atbalmin Society in the Early to Middle 1980s

The people discussed in this essay live in the Star Mountains, a range of high mountains that lies at the border area of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya. Most of them live in Papua New Guinea, where they are known by the government administration as the Atbalmin. This is a name they have increasingly adopted for themselves, though they traditionally called themselves the Nalumin.[3] The Atbalmin speak a language of the Mountain Ok family and share much in common with other Mountain Ok groups, such as the Telefolmin and the Baktaman. They are one of the more populous of the Mountain Ok groups, with a population in the 1980s of about three thousand, spread across an area of more than fifteen hundred square kilometers. Their settlements average only three houses and thirty people each, and are often separated by hours or even days of walking.

My understanding of the Atbalmin is based primarily on fieldwork that I carried out among them for three and a half years between 1981 and 1985. For this reason I use the past tense in this essay, even though much of what I have to say may continue to hold true for the Atbalmin in the "present" (1996). At the time of my research, the Atbalmin depended for their subsistence on hunting and gardening. Their main crops were sweet potatoes and taro, and their main game were marsupials, birds, and wild pigs. There was a significant sexual division of labor. Gardening and house building, for example, required many separate kinds of labor that were divided between men and women. Hunting, fighting, and certain kinds of trade were carried out

almost exclusively by men, while women did most of the work of gathering, child care, and the raising of domestic pigs. Men often spoke as if their social contributions were more far important. However, as will become evident in this article, men's claims were contradicted by women and sometimes by the same men in different contexts.

In terms of social organization, ties of cognatic descent played an especially crucial role. Almost all the settlements were organized around small and shallow cognatic descent groups. The core members of settlements were often a set of brothers, along with their surviving parents, wives, and children. This situation reflected a pattern in which most men (70 percent) remained in their settlements after marriage, while most women (73 percent) moved elsewhere--a fact that will play a significant role later on in this article. By tradition, the largest recognized social group was the ***tenum miit,*** a term used through much of the Mountain Ok area that translates as "human origin group." Members of a ***tenum miit*** traced their descent back to a common cognatic ancestor. There were about twenty such groups with an average of 150 members among the Atbalmin, each claiming a sizable territory. Generally, each group had a main settlement and a number of smaller ones. Bomtem, the largest settlement of the Umfokmin ***tenum miit,*** with ten settlements and 290 people, was the base of my research.

The Atbalmin had a significant history of relations with outside groups. They had long been involved in social relations with other Mountain Ok peoples, especially the Urapmin, the Tifalmin, the Telefolmin, the Mianmin, and a people in Irian Jaya they called the Kofelmin (referred to as the Ngalumin by some anthropologists and linguists). They emphasized that their ancestors and traditions had mostly originated from several of these outside areas (especially from among the Urapmin, the Telefolmin, and the Kofelmin). More recently, the Atbalmin had encountered a new group they called the ***tabala:*** people of European origin, who had come to play an increasing role in their lives. Though German parties passed close to their area in 1908, 1911, and 1914, it was not until 1950 that ***tabala*** actually entered the main part of the Atbalmin area. This "first contact" was made by an Australian government patrol that had to walk in for several weeks from the newly opened outpost called Telefomin. During the 1950s there were only two further government patrols. These patrols confirmed the administration's initial impression that the Atbalmin area was sparsely populated, difficult to reach, and unsuitable for economic development. Not surprisingly, the colonial government limited its activities mainly to census patrols every two years, For a few years in the late 1960s an effort was also made to maintain a police post near the Indonesian border, staffed intermittently by several armed Papuan constables brought in and supplied by helicopter.

The period following Papua New Guinean independence in 1975 brought several changes to the Atbalmin area. In 1976 a small airstrip was cleared at Tumolbil in the western Atbalmin area, allowing the opening of an aid post and a primary school. In the late 1970s most of the Atbalmin were converted to Christianity by Papua New Guinean "pastors" from a Baptist mission that had a headquarters at Telefomin. In the same period, a small number of men (fewer than twenty) left the area to work at a coffee plantation in the Mount Hagen area, returning with dramatic accounts of their experiences at the "Company." In 1981 the opening of a multibillion-dollar gold mine at Ok Tedi brought a much larger company near the Atbalmin. Many young men made the weeklong walk to visit the mine, though few stayed to work. Finally, in the early 1980s, refugees from Irian Jaya established communities just across the border, and the Atbalmin began to have increasing ties with these people whom they called 'West Papua."

These developments had significantly broadened Atbalmin perspectives by the time I began fieldwork. The Atbalmin I came to know viewed themselves in terms of the emerging horizons of the nation (and some international locations), capitalism, Christianity, and the West Papuans. However, it would be a mistake to overestimate the impact of these emerging influences on the Atbalmin during the early to middle 1980s. Though they saw themselves as Christians, they continued to maintain strong ties to their indigenous religious beliefs. Though they placed a high value on the airstrip and followed the news of every landing, most lived too far away to use the aid post or send their children to the school. Even those who lived near the airstrip found the airplane too expensive for their own travel or for marketing their crops. Throughout the Atbalmin area, people continued to rely on their own means of subsistence, exchange, social organization, and dispute mediation (except for large-scale fighting, banned by the government).

One of the ways in which the Atbalmin of the early to middle 1980s continued to live much as their ancestors had done involved the social position of young unmarried women such as Ankon. These young women continued to be near the bottom of two social hierarchies, one dominated by older men and the other by older women. In running away to join Bokban, Ankon violated both of these forms of hierarchy.

Men's Power and the Making of a Social Landscape

For a long time I was aware only of the hierarchy among men. Within a few weeks of beginning fieldwork, I had recognized a group of male leaders, one for each settlement. Every Atbalmin settlement had a man called a ***nolmolin,*** coming from the term meaning "to go first." One or two of these, in turn,

were generally recognized as especially important within a local region. All these leaders were married men, usually above the age of forty. Gradually, I came to see further gradations in the hierarchy of men. Below leaders there was a second tier made up of married men of unusual achievements and strong character. The next level was made up of other mature men who were married and had full capabilities. Most men found themselves at this level. The lowest level was made up of unmarried men, who were seen as lacking in essential capacities either because of physical or mental defects or because of youth.

The hierarchy among men was not static but allowed gradual movement with age and influence. Though being a member of the core cognatic group provided some advantage, a man's chances of becoming a leader depended mostly on his own efforts and achievements. The men who were leaders had worked hard to gain their current position. Wealth--achieved primarily through gardening, pig raising, and trade--was an important aspect of leadership. I found that leaders on average had five times as many valuables and pigs as the average man. This wealth was of value primarily because it could be used, along with surplus food from gardening and hunting, to build social relations through delayed exchange. Exchange was crucial in this respect, determining the quality of people's ties even to their siblings, parents, and children (Bercovitch 1994). Male skills in warfare, oratory, and ritual were also understood in exchange terms, as important ways of providing support to others. A man's efforts at creating relations through exchange also demonstrated his fairness and concern for others, qualities seen as essential for his own social ties as well for the common good of the community.

Though men's aspirations to leadership were aimed mostly at building relationships with other men, they also shaped men's relations with women. Given the sexual division of labor, men could not hope to produce abundant food or to raise pigs without the help of women, whether as mothers, sisters, wives, or (to an extent determined by age and marital status) daughters. Men were particularly dependent on their wives, though other categories of women also were important. This dependence made marriage an especially essential condition for men's advancement. Atbalmin men said that the surest way of rising to wealth and leadership was to marry several wives, a position supported by my own findings.

Viewed from the perspective of men's ambitions, women were essential, but they were also a source of problems. Women could, and often did, choose to act in ways contrary to men's wishes. It is not surprising, then, to find a deep ambivalence in the views men expressed about women. I heard men praise women for being strong and fertile, but more often they condemned them for being physically weak. Men also said that women were

mentally weak, suffering from "bad thought" ***(finang mafok)*** and "flaccid thought" ***(finang yimyum)*** that kept them from thinking to the bottom of things, remembering well, or controlling their passions. Women were selfish, considering only the interests of themselves and their immediate families.

Men further told me that women's bodies, especially their menstrual blood and vaginal mucus, would harm them, making them weak and even sick, and rendering them unable to hunt successfully. Men worried about coming into contact with menstruating women, even though the danger was minimized by the practice of women's seclusion in menstrual houses. They also warned women who were not menstruating to avoid stepping over them or their bows. Given these views of women's minds and bodies, it was a serious insult to accuse a man of being "like a woman."

Nonetheless, women were perhaps the most crucial basis of male influence. Unmarried men were, almost by definition, poorer. Though a man's most crucial step was to get married, he found that this required him to subordinate himself even further to others. Besides finding a young woman willing to marry him, he had to get the permission of the woman's family. To do so, he had to rely on the support of many others to plead his case. He also needed help to pay his bridewealth ***(wanang tabi).***

The obstacles to marriage were a constant source of frustration to young men. I often heard them grumble about the unwillingness of people to help them. Among themselves, unmarried men spoke of married men, especially men with several wives, as a privileged group who benefited from their position; and they saw other unmarried men as competitors. During my fieldwork, unmarried men were involved in several cases of real or suspected adultery and many cases of rivalry over unmarried women. Older men and women spoke of the "sharpness" ***(atul)*** and "anger" ***(ol ken)*** of young men as something that needed to be controlled. Religion was seen as a major resource in controlling young men.

Indigenous Religion and Men's Power

At the time of my research, the indigenous Atbalmin religion remained important even though it was being increasingly challenged by Christian missionization. It was a complex system of rituals, myths, sacred objects, and special temples from which women were largely barred and to which men could gain access only through a series of initiation rituals that occurred in sequence and took many years to complete. Almost all adult Atbalmin men had been through the initiation system, and they continued to understand themselves and women in terms of it.

Initiation rituals (and sacred knowledge and practices more generally)

were understood to bring desirable results for everyone, but in a manner that carried particular benefits for men. Without them, I was told (by initiated men as well as by women who knew none of the details of the ceremonies), the gardens and pigs would not grow well, hunting would be unsuccessful, and people would lose their flesh and strength. Also, the rituals worked to transform men into superior beings, who were physically larger and stronger, intellectually superior, and capable of heightened perceptions compared to uninitiated men or to women (Herdt 1981, 1982, 1990). Men gained access to a vast body of special knowledge that they could use for practical ends. The deepest and most powerful knowledge, known only to the oldest and most fully initiated men, concerned an ultimate source, referred to as the ***tenum-wanang miit,*** the "men-women source" (cf. Biersack 1984). The men most empowered were a small group of old men, most of whom were or had once been settlement leaders. As the most fully experienced and knowledgeable in sacred matters, these men embodied the sacred.

The indigenous Atbalmin religion linked differences among men to differences between men and women. Even in the 1980s after Christian missionization had led to the suspension of major initiations, uninitiated boys were still often compared to women, making clear how the transformation of boys into men was also a process that emphasized and heightened the differentiation of men from women (Herdt 1981). This linkage served to legitimize the greater wealth, influence, and authority of older, married men. It made differences among men acceptable by subsuming them in terms of difference between men and women (Rubin 1975; Collier and Rosaldo 1981; Josephides 1985; Godolier 1986). In this sense it built upon but also transformed aspects of everyday life. It provided a spiritual basis for men's claims that they played a more important role than women in social life.

The men's house was a key context where male-centered views were expressed. Every evening that I visited the men's house in Bomtem, I heard stories about dramatic events in which men took the lead: quarrels and battles, rituals, feasts and dances, and the pioneering of new territories. In their conversations in the men's house as well as in other contexts free of women, men told stories that cast women as desirable sexual prey. These stories contrasted deeply with men's actual relationship to women, whose willing cooperation they had to seek in almost every aspect of daily life (cf. Tuzin 1981; Schlegal 1990).

Sometimes, if it was still light, men would go out on the veranda and point out the location of places or persons they were speaking of. Looking outward, I saw the landscape as a record of the actions, ambitions, and desires of men, and particularly of a limited number of male leaders. Women seemed

a kind of resource, over which men had fought and through which men sustained the human world. It was a landscape in which men moved around freely while women were kept in their place.

This male-dominated view of the landscape was further developed in the system of temples. Geographical areas were defined by spheres of influence of various temples, and historical eras were bounded by decisions (always by men) to relocate temples or in some cases to create new ones or abandon old ones. Initiated men had an explanation of how they had come to control the temples. All members of Atbalmin society learn about Fukunkon, the central figure of Atbalmin religion. As even a child was able to tell me, Fukunkon had walked across the land, creating various landmarks, establishing the human groups, building the first temples for them, and giving them most social customs, secular as well as religious.[4] Initiated men, however, also knew that Fukunkon had turned her religious knowledge and powers over to men. Fukunkon, they explained to me, had found that the pigs and the children did not do well when she was in charge of the religion. So she had asked her younger brother to take her place in the temple and to carry out the rituals while she remained in the ordinary house. The results were much better, and since then women had been excluded from much of the indigenous religion. Both men and women said grave consequences, including famine, would occur if women somehow learned about or, far worse, came into physical contact with sacred things. In this way, the religion was a focus of men's anxieties about female pollution, even though men said they received the religion from a female.

Women's Power, Women's Landscape

One of the earliest hints of the limitations to men's exclusive claims to social power was given to me on my first visit to Bomtem. In answering my questions about who were the most important men of the area, the leader not only named several men, but he also mentioned several women. Unfortunately, the odd quality of this reply did not strike me at the time. On the contrary, I turned in the months that followed increasingly toward a view of male dominance, supported by the great emphasis on that view in men's accounts.

Eventually, though, the significance of that early hint became clear. People saw some women as having greater importance than others in society, possessing more valued things, and having more influence and authority. At the top of this hierarchy of women were a number of older women, generally in their fifties and sixties. They were somewhat fewer than the male leaders, since they were not found in every settlement. The leading women were

praised for their many grown children, their success in raising pigs, and their productivity in gardening. They were often referred to as the "mothers" or, if they were very old, "grandmothers" of their community or even of an entire area. Although they had more wealth than most women, wealth seemed less a part of their reputation and authority than it was for men.

Next in prestige and influence among women were a number of individuals in their thirties and forties who were married and had growing children. These women were known to be "strong" ***(yung),*** as indicated by their very successful gardening and the many pigs they owned jointly with their husbands. Indeed, some of these women had more pigs than the oldest, most prestigious women. They also were known for their ability in making netbags, objects of value that were used by everyone but made mostly by women. Below these "strong" women, in turn, were married women with fewer abilities and pigs, and women who had no children because they were newly married or infertile. At the lowest level were some mature women, mostly married, who were lacking strength of body or mind ***(wanang mafok,*** "bad women"). Young women who had not yet married ***(wanang kasel imok),*** like Ankon, were also placed at the lowest level, with the important difference that they were expected to rise upon marriage, the birth of children, and increasing importance in networks of exchange and cooperation.

Differences among women were constructed, in this way, by some of the same factors mentioned for men (cf. Lepowsky 1993). Women, like men, agreed that age and marriage were essential to their social position. Like men, women grew wealthy by being more industrious than others--by raising more crops and pigs and weaving more netbags. Like men, women used food, pigs, and valued objects for building relations through exchange. In addition, much as men gained influence through women, men acknowledged that women could gain influence through men, by persuading a spouse or other male relative to do something or by threatening to refuse to help them. Men tried to limit the extent to which women exercised power through them. A man who let himself be used this way was seen as weak, lacking in manliness. Yet women could turn these insecurities to their advantage. I heard of many cases where a woman incited a husband or son to action by saying, "I'm only a woman; I can't do it," or, more pointedly, "Aren't you a man?"

While all these factors could contribute to a woman's wealth and influence, there were important limitations. Women were at a disadvantage in using exchange to build social ties, because they tended to have less say in the distribution of pork from the pigs they helped to raise and they could not handle the most valuable kinds of objects (dog's teeth and most kinds of shells). Women could not gain the full advantage of other kinds of exchange,

because the long journeys required for developing trade partnerships were considered much more dangerous for women than for men to make (a fact that made Ankon's story all the more notable). The influence women gained through men was equally limiting, for women who used it were dependent on capacities in others that they could never have themselves.

There was, however, another basis for women's power that provided greater possibilities of influence and authority. This female basis of social power made women's differences irreducible to male terms; in contrast to what men may have said in certain contexts, women were not simply at the bottom of the same hierarchy occupied by men. The female basis of social power was alluded to in what men said about the women they respected most: outstanding older women. These women, they told me, made them, fed them, and raised them. The role of the older women had to do with a sense of their being a basis and support of social life. They were seen to be a fundamental source of people, of wealth, and of food. These were the roles people referred to in calling them the "mothers" or "grandmothers" of a community or an area. These views were confirmed by descriptions of the past. Earlier periods were understood in terms not only of who had been the male leaders of the time, but also of who had been the outstanding older women. These women were portrayed as the center of the communities and the reference point of social relations.

Reproduction and Women's Power

This female focus was also evident in genealogies. In contrast to the common emphasis on men's actions and decisions, the Atbalmin usually traced their descent back to a female ancestor. She was, literally, the "mother" of the group. My recognition of the place of women in genealogies of origin led me to explore a more general link between women's social power and their capacity for reproduction. The Atbalmin generally explained reproduction (to me and to each other) in terms of a cooperation between the sexes, such that a man and a woman contribute equally to the formation of a fetus through intercourse.[5] But, in another sense, women were represented as primary. The fetus, I was told, grows within the woman's body and the child is born from it. People went on to explain how, even after birth, women are better than men at helping children to grow larger and survive infancy. In their role of providing a continuing supply of new healthy bodies in the face of death and decay, women ensured the survival of their community. Women were thus understood to be essential to society in a way men were not. Reproduction constituted an area of female dominance that men themselves recognized.

In accounting for women's greater role in reproduction, both men and women emphasized the unique qualities of the female body. They pointed out that women have internal cavities, organs, and fluids linked to reproduction and motherhood. But they understood these physical correlates of women's reproductive achievements as the expression of an internal nonmaterial principle known as ***man fakaman miit,*** "the source of making babies." People used it to account not only for specific aspects of physical bodies, but also for what they saw as women's greater patience and warmth, which made them more successful in raising children and also in raising young domestic animals. Men, by contrast, were seen to lack these nurturing qualities. Indeed, women often criticized men's failings generally along these lines. They said that men were irresponsible, forgetful of others, bad tempered, selfish, and greedy for wealth. Women's greater reliability led them, in their own eyes, to take a greater role in sustaining their community on a daily basis. It is important to recognize how these criticisms of men worked to sustain a notion of female power that could also be used to interpret and legitimize differences among women. The achievement of prominence by some women was seen as proof of their greater possession of this nonmaterial source of power.

Though ultimately nonmaterial in its source, women's power was associated with two specific sites. The first comprised the reproductive organs and fluids of the female body. The second was the small house called the ***sayam*** that was found in every settlement and used by women when they were menstruating or giving birth. On a number of occasions, men told me that this house was women's sacred house ***(wanang imi yawol)*** and that inside it women did their sacred ritual ***(wanang imi awem).*** They drew an explicit parallel between the restriction on women entering the men's sacred houses and on men entering the menstrual house. Men believed that in the women's house, hidden from observation, very powerful forces were unleashed that led to transformative results. Moreover, they linked the menstrual house with a body of knowledge. A number of men told me that women had to know things men did not in order to do what men could not. They were unsure, however, exactly what form such knowledge took or how it was passed on. But, like men's own sacred knowledge, women's ***awem*** was seen as a link with an ultimate source. Moreover, the same term --"men-women source" ***(tenum-wanang miit)*** --was used for this as was used for the source of men's sacred knowledge. This positive power that men attributed to women clashed with the generally negative views of women they expressed elsewhere. Even more curiously, it meant that men most valued in women many of the aspects (bodily substances, organs, and processes; special houses) they feared as most negatively polluting (cf. Wedgwood 1930).

On their part, women tended, like men, to explain their unique reproductive and nurturing capacities as a product of a nonmaterial principle. They drew the same analogy men did between the cult house and the house where they menstruated and gave birth. Older women told me about some myths and rituals they practiced, concerned with menstruation and the care of pigs. But they said they did not conceal these from men. Like men, women thus represented their powers as being based on a kind of knowledge. They linked what they did ***(kukup kemin)*** with what they thought ***(finang sanin)*** and knew ***(kalti kemin).*** This knowing/thinking/doing encompassed and connected internal physical processes (menstruation, childbirth, providing breast milk), technical skills (raising animals, weaving netbags), certain kinds of sacred knowledge, and qualities of behavior (being patient, responsible, concerned). Women, like men, contributed to their social world through the mediation of a fundamentally immaterial and nonnatural principle, internalized as a knowledge that enabled action and that transformed those who knew and used it.

Older women were presumed to be the most knowledgeable. In fact, I found they did have a high degree of expertise in matters of childbirth and the ailments of menstruation. They also had particularly large collections of the objects used in rituals to promote the growth of pigs. Like certain old' men, the knowledge of these women was not simply possessed by them but embodied, meaning that much would be lost no matter how much old women sought to pass it on to other women. And, also as in the case of men, a partial remedy for this inevitable loss was seen in keeping bones of certain women. These bones were looked after by a woman rather than by a man. Only she could also weave the special netbags in which the female relics were kept. This individual was called a "sacred woman" ***(wanang awem),*** and the house she lived in was called the "mother house" ***(am awok).***[6] Traditionally, every settlement that had a temple ***(am yawol)*** also had such a mother house. In the area where I lived, the sacred woman was Nukenip, Ankon's aunt and Dutip's mother. The next in succession, on the event of Nukenip's death, was Ankon's mother.

Women were thought to gain sacred knowledge only gradually through their lives, reinforcing the importance of age already noted in terms of women's life stages. A woman, I was told, gained as much from experiencing reproduction and growing things as from learning various rituals and bits of knowledge meant to help these processes. This embodiment of knowledge was similar to but also different from what occurred with men. I have noted how male knowledge was linked to its effects (Strathern 1988). The process of learning the sacred changed men into different beings, and only these beings could know sacred matters. For women, who had very few rituals,

menstruation, reproduction, and growing things were the main transformative processes. Women who did these things would be transformed; they would become embodiments of female powers. These processes shaped the manner in which people viewed differences among women. Women who were successful in raising children, in gardening, and in raising pigs were understood to be more knowledgeable. They were expected to have unusual skills in midwifery and ritual dimensions of raising pigs, including the use of a special set of objects they kept in their houses.

Marriage, Women's Power, and Place

This approach to reproductive knowledge and practice informed the way in which people viewed young women like Ankon or Dutip. The position of an unmarried woman reflected her potential value to create for herself and others, a value whose magnitude would depend not only on herself but 'also on her marriage. Marriage was a necessary part of the process through which women achieved their particular form of social power (cf. Weiner 1976; Boddy 1989). Through marriage, a woman acquired a relation to a man that encompassed reproduction as well as production. She also acquired a relation that strengthened her claim to the products of her productive and reproductive work. But when a woman married away from her home area, she took with her all her potential creative powers, This accounted for the importance to the group of women's choice in marriage. The social necessity of a woman's creative power was also used to explain the traditional obligation of a group that received a bride not only to pay bridewealth, but also to provide (eventually if not sooner) a woman in marriage to the other group. This was the only way to make up for the loss of a woman's reproductive powers.

To appreciate the gravity of these issues, it is important to keep in mind that the average Atbalmin settlement consisted of only thirty people and lasted only five to ten years. Under such fragile social conditions, a young woman's loss could make a major difference. Indeed, after Ankon's departure people spoke at length about how if other young women left, their settlement and eventually their whole region would be threatened. They remembered all the other women who had ever run away and thought about who else might follow. Their fears indicated their keen sense of the essential social value of reproduction in social life as the key to the origin and survival of settlements, descent groups, and regions.

Alongside their view of the social landscape as a product of men's actions, then, Atbalmin men and women also recognized an alternate view of the social landscape as the product of women's powers. In this view, women

were primarily responsible for the peopling of the world, a process by which a tract of forest was turned into a human ***place,*** that is, an area of settlement ***(abip).*** Here women were cast in the role of moving and men in the role of being "put in place." People also recognized how settlements and regions were connected through their female sources. Most people could claim affiliation to several different groups or areas through their relation to women who had originally come from those areas. Such affiliations played an important role in shaping regional relations between men; indeed, men often retraced the paths of their female ancestors in their long-distance trading. People saw Ankon's elopement, in this way, not just as aberrant behavior on the part of an individual woman, but as an expression of the way in which the social world had been created, the way in which communities had prospered or suffered, and the way in which they would be subject to further change in the times ahead.

The recognition of women's power by both sexes did not obviate men's claims to social dominance, nor did it prevent women from suffering at the hands of men in many ways. But the alternative view of women did contribute to the influence and authority of women, especially older women who were seen to be a social basis of their settlements and regions. More subtly it contributed to the respect and autonomy that was, in fact, granted to women in Atbalmin society. Based on my discussions with women, it seemed clear to me that the recognition of women's positive social power deeply informed women's sense of themselves and of their relations to others. It helped them to see their actions, even when they chose to run away to marry, as positive in significance rather than merely a form of compliance or resistance.[7]

The Social Force of Young Women

When Ankon ran away, it was not only men whom she disappointed, but women too. Most married women in her area, including her mother and sisters, were critical of her action. After Ankon ran away the first and unsuccessful time, they warned her that she had made the wrong choice. They saw their warnings validated in what happened to her when she ran away again. She should have known that a woman who married far away would not have the same support from relatives as if she had stayed at home. She should also have known that as a woman from another area, she was more likely to be mistreated by her in-laws. A woman who eloped would get less help from relatives in the form of piglets to raise or food (to be reciprocated later). Finally, she would not have the same opportunities to learn the knowledge of older women, especially her mother. Since Ankon's mother

was one of the outstanding older women of her area, she had much to gain in this respect.

But older, married women had their own reasons to urge Ankon to stay. To the extent that women's claims to social powers were linked to their role in creating and sustaining a community, they benefited from young women marrying locally. From the position of a mother, a daughter's children are additional embodiments of her own powers. Indeed, some older woman had twenty or more descendants, forming a high proportion of the members of their settlements and a significant part of the population of their area. Married women also worried that their sons would have trouble finding a wife if young women routinely left. This was a serious concern, given that older women depended on their sons and their sons' position depended on marriage.

As I noted before, Ankon's main response to being told she must marry locally was to remain silent. This is not surprising, given that the men leading the meeting would have verbally, if not physically, attacked her for expressing any views contrary to their own. Other people had reason to suspect from this silence that she still hoped to marry Bokban, but they had no real proof. Ankon was far more direct about her intentions with her cousin Dutip, an unmarried young woman whom she could trust. Her caution indicates the categories of people with whom she was most in conflict: men and older women.

Additional implications can be drawn from Ankon's silences. Ankon expressed no doubts that she would be accepted by her intended husband or his family. This confidence probably reflected a sense of her social value as a young woman. She was desirable; but more important, she was a potential source of productive and reproductive powers that would benefit others, her husband and his family most of all.

Further information about the kinds of discussions and thoughts that were occurring before Ankon's elopement is provided by another case, which involved her cousin Dutip. Six months before Ankon's elopement, people in Dutip's settlement of Bomtem conceived a plan to marry her to a young man in the same settlement. Not only would this be a local marriage, but it would ensure a second local marriage, since the man had an unmarried sister whom Dutip's brother could marry. When Dutip did not agree with the plan, several people tried to persuade her. I had separate discussions with each of the people involved about their views of the plan, which they allowed me to record on audio tape.

Dutip, though obviously unhappy with the situation, had only a little to say. "My mother and brother and brother-in-law told me about that [the

plan for her to marry the man]. But as I see it, it is no good to get married at all. So I ignored them. I said: I do not like a man. You are only tiring out your throats telling me this." Dutip's brother-in-law then made a strong case for Dutip to marry, based on a number of social obligations. "I suffered for her sake," he said tensely. "I hunted wild pigs and cassowaries and brought them back to help her grow up. Now that she is grown into a young woman, I would have her marry in her own settlement. Because her mother is old, I would put her in her own settlement, where she could help her mothers garden and her house."

Dutip's brother spoke last and longest. He began calmly by pointing out the general benefits of women marrying locally. "It is bad," he said, "for one woman to go to a settlement here, a second to go to a settlement there, a third to go to yet a different settlement." If that were to happen with Dutip, "the fire in our house would die, for mother is old [and unable to take care of it herself]." It is better, he continued, to arrange a marriage within the settlement, so that Dutip would be exchanged for another woman who would marry Dutip's brother. In that way, he said, "they will give us a woman to come to the house and come inside and light the fire, and we will give a woman in return." He then addressed Dutip's claim that she did not want to marry. "A woman who says she does not like to have intercourse will have no food from her man. She will have nothing and grow old." He concluded with an angry warning that he was losing patience. If his sister continued to resist much longer, he would give up trying to talk and beat her instead.

As the debate over Dutip's marriage indicates, a marriageable young woman was the center of concern of people and groups who sought, in her presence as well as behind her back, to arrange her marriage for her. If, as often happened, the woman was not pleased with these plans, she found it hard and painful to resist. Those making the plans were willing to invoke all her obligations to persuade her. They also could threaten her, less often through violence than through diminishing or severing their ties. It is easy to understand why young women might insist that they had no desire to marry at all. In doing so they sought not so much to remain single for life as to avoid the particular match in question, with the hope of finding a better possibility in the future. This was certainly Dutip's intention, and it worked at least for a while. At the time I left the field, she was still single but had every expectation of eventually marrying.

There was a paradoxical dimension to the situation faced by such a young woman. On the one hand, she found herself being forced by others to act against her own will. Among those acting on her were people upon whom she had always depended and to whom she was deeply obligated. In this situation, she was likely to feel powerless, denied her own choice. On the

other hand, the depth of people's concerns made clear the importance of her actions and choice. Indeed, her choices mattered more than they had ever before and might ever again.

Imagine the alternatives for a young woman. First, she could agree with her family to marry a local man they had chosen. If she did so, she would satisfy her obligations to many people and also gain the personal benefits of their support in times ahead. Such advantages were ultimately identified with collective interests and were embodied in the figure of her mother; the young woman had a chance someday to embody them herself, especially if she stayed in the area and became an influential woman. Second, a young woman could resist marriage plans and insist on staying unmarried. This would be likely to anger her relatives. It also posed the risk, made clear by those same relatives, that she might never marry and might end up living a bleak and impoverished life. The final alternative of a young woman was to elope with a man of her own choice. In doing so, she betrayed her obligations even more profoundly, but had an opportunity to make a positive and immediate choice of her own. A woman who eloped had reason to hope that the harm of her actions would be healed by later events, such as an exchange of women and bridewealth. Even if that failed, she had a chance of building another set of social relations in a new community.

Information I gathered suggested that most women accepted the marriage that was arranged for them, either on the initial occasion or after first rejecting several other arrangements. The relatively few women who had chosen to elope had caused great consequences. As Ankon's case shows, such actions affected the lives of many people over a long period. It led people to take significant actions that altered social relations within their area as well as between different areas. People readily told me about other women who had eloped out of or into their area. These women came to represent, in many ways, the will and desire of young women more generally. They were a recurrent theme of popular stories and songs.

A number of the tensions in Atbalmin society are revealed in elopements. Elopements have been an arena for the struggle between men and women. They have also been an arena for struggles between men, who have enhanced their reputation and wealth through inciting or controlling the movements of women. Finally, elopements have been a context in which the generally hidden tensions between young women and older women have become visible. There is no question that young women who have eloped have generally acted against the interests of their mothers and other married women, and to some extent against their own interests as women who would some day become old themselves.

This tension between young and old women can be traced, arguably, to

the social basis of women's power. A first clue can be found within the image of the mother sitting alone in a house without a fire. This image was used regularly among the Atbalmin as a potent symbol of the bitter and pitiful reality of failed communities. As its use by Dutip's brother shows, it represents above all the outcome when too many young women leave an area. In the process of expressing the importance of the loss of young women, the image also makes clear the helpless immobility of old women. This immobility seems to stand for an essential quality of the community as a whole, which like an old woman has nowhere to go and depends on the movement of young women.

Movement and Emplacement

I found further clues to the significance of tensions between young and old women in Atbalmin genealogies. As I noted before, groups tended to trace themselves back to a female ancestor. Significantly, the place of birth and the descent group ***(tenum miit)*** of the woman or women who founded the group were usually not local. She had married in, usually in her teens or twenties. She had left her original area and group because she was attracted-to a man or because of some disaster at home. Such a view makes the movements of women a positive source for the peopling of an area, the process by which an area becomes a human place.

This is, in part, simply the logic of the system of descent: the person who starts a group must first break with past connections; before there is an origin, there has to be a discontinuity. But this logical truism points to a more interesting social process that helps to account for the seeming contradiction between Atbalmin views of women's movement as both destructive and creative. There was a necessary interrelation between the way women moved and the way they stopped moving to make a place and a human group.

This process, which I term "movement and emplacement," was arguably at the heart of female claims to social power among the Atbalmin. The duality of movement and emplacement was expressed in many areas of Atbalmin thought and action. Men and women drew on it to explain their history. It provided them with a basic form of explanation for how communities originated and how they were related, for why some communities prospered and others did not. It was also crucial to the way people interpreted current events and anticipated their consequences. Each marriage was a struggle over a young woman's movement, involving many people and groups. These included young men who hoped to marry her, old men who benefited from mediating such marriages, older women who gained additional "children,"

and the unmarried woman herself. There were attempts to control women's movements through a variety of means, including the use of rituals and spells. The purpose of all these plans was to set a woman into the position of making a place, in which she would stay to raise many pigs and gardens, to have many children, and so to increase the numbers and wealth of her community.

There is an interesting parallel between the social process of movement and emplacement of Atbalmin women and the character of the chief figure in their religion. I have noted that Fukunkon was described to me as the "mother" or "grandmother" of everyone. But there was actually considerable ambiguity about her age and marital status. In one of the narratives known best by both men and women, Fukunkon traveled alone and was approached by an "old man" who was attracted to her and wanted to have sex. This seems less the predicament of an old woman than of one who is young and unmarried. That Fukunkon is not an old woman is also suggested by narratives, known to initiated men as well as to many older women, about how Fukunkon had traveled through the land, leaving traces of her menstrual blood. The myths known only to initiated men provide much more detail but do not resolve the ambiguity. Most of them seem to be describing a woman who was young enough to bear children but was unmarried, in the sense that she did not live with or work for any man. Yet some other narratives describe an obviously very old woman, who presided over a sacred place and eventually died there, leaving her ritual knowledge and bones to men. In talking to people, I got the sense that they did not resolve these different perspectives in terms of different times in Fukunkon's "life," but took them to indicate something about her inherent qualities. Indeed, I was told by older men that until the 1950s it was common among the Atbalmin to suspect that Fukunkon might still be living in the temple at the main settlement of the Telefolmin people. This had made the Atbalmin afraid that if they visited the Telefolmin they might encounter Fukunkon, a paradoxically young-old, unmarried mother with immense and dangerous power.

Along with the mixed messages about Fukunkon's age and marital status, there was an ambiguity about her movements. Though Telefomin was said to have been her main home, she did not come originally from there, nor was it certain that she stayed there. The narratives that concern her were mainly set during her journeys. Yet one of the main effects of her actions along these journeys was to make places by building certain temples ***(am yawol)*** that became the heart of various human groups and their communities. According to some very "deep" narratives known only to initiated men, Fukunkon also fixed into place the very bounds of the world, so that the

ground would stay firm. In these ways, just as Fukunkon embodied different ages and marital states, she also embodied both sides of the female-centered process of movement and emplacement.

Conclusion: The Place of Differences among Women

Anthropologists have long recognized how men's relationships to women are linked to men's relationships with each other. It is now widely accepted that indigenous theories of male superiority, systems of marriage, and ritual initiations work to support and legitimate hierarchy among men. Differences among men can be said to be fundamental, in the sense that they generate continual tensions that incite and support much else. Yet relatively little has been written about how differences and contestations among women might be linked to female claims to social power. Atbalmin women, much like men, drew on differences between themselves and men to deal with' differences among themselves. Among women, as among men, the main divide was between those who were young, unmarried, and poorer versus those who are older, married, and wealthier. The idea of a female principle tied to reproduction was used to account for such differences and to legitimize them.

The Atbalmin seemed to understand differences among women in terms of social reproduction, that is, of creating and supporting others, men and women alike. Claims to women's power were built, in this way, on a seemingly disinterested basis. Rarely if ever did people acknowledge that processes of social reproduction could empower certain women. In the face of this lack of attention to differences among women, it proved helpful to look at the situation of young women in marriage. As the case of Ankon indicates, young women and old women often had different stakes in the outcome of a marriage. These stakes reflected broader differences in the situation of women who were younger versus older and married versus unmarried. Significantly, even in the context of marriage negotiations, the tensions among women were not disclosed in a straightforward, open way. Rather, very different views were expressed depending on who was speaking to whom and in what social context. Women spoke differently in the presence of men, and young and unmarried women spoke differently in the presence of older and married women. The variations were not just a reflection of tensions but a medium through which the tensions existed.

Not only were marriage negotiations a kind of social space where tensions among women were revealed, but these differences were productive of another kind of social space. I have already suggested that there were two kinds of social landscape, one linked to men and the other to women. These

provided alternative ways in which people understood their place, an indigenous example of "multilocality" and "multivocality" (Rodman 1992).

The female-centered landscape of the Atbalmin holds some broader implication for social theories of place. In general, anthropologists have tended to approach places as fixed locations or as a grid of relations between a number of such places. They have tended to focus largely on how existing places are tied together or divided. They have found the actions of men, often determined by competition and inequality, to be especially critical for these processes. By contrast, anthropologists have tended to neglect the problem of how human places came to be: the interrelated processes of creating places and persons. Not coincidentally, these processes are often linked to the actions of women in indigenous social theories.

In recent years, however, there has been a new interest in viewing the process of the production of places and space (e.g., Munn 1986; Meyers 1991; Rodman 1992; Rosaldo 1981; Weiner 1991). It is worth considering the implications the Atbalmin case may offer to these developments. I have noted that the Atbalmin saw women's choices of staying or leaving in marriage in terms of a larger process that I called "movement and emplacement." People represented and understood the nature and origins of their society in terms of this process. It seems to me that these ways of understanding among the Atbalmin reflected something basic about the way the creation of places is linked to social reproduction. Women at times explicitly pointed to their role in the creation of place in making claims to social power. It may be useful to compare Atbalmin views of women and place with those found among other societies.

A neglect of this productive aspect of place has been encouraged, arguably, by a lack of attention to the kinds of actions and views associated with women and with the differences among women. My analysis provides further evidence that there is reason to take differences among women more seriously, not merely as a reflection of other factors, but as playing a constitutive role in social life.

NOTES

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1. Ankon is not the actual name of the woman. To protect confidentiality, I use pseudonyms (typical Atbalmin names used as substitutes) for individual persons and specific communities.

2. Some have questioned my use of the term *elopement* for Ankon's second departure, given that she ran off alone and was later rejected. However, Ankon expected that Bokban wanted her to run away to him, completing something they had first attempted together.

3. The indigenous term *Nalumin* is based on the word people use for their common language, *nalum* (known to linguists as a dialect of Tifal), plus a suffix, *min,* that stands for a group. I have used the local term, Nalumin, in some previous writings.

4. Fukunkon is not the only deity in Atbalmin religion, but she is unquestionably the chief character. Atbalmin narratives about Fukunkon fall within a larger pattern of sacred narratives among the Mountain Ok centered on an "Old Woman," often called Afek.

5. While both men and women acknowledged this joint contribution, men found the subject particularly unpleasant and rarely spoke about it, never in front of women. The disjunction of male and female discourse on this subject is apparently more developed in some other Mountain Ok societies. Jorgensen has found significant differences between men's and women's accounts of conception (1983). His analysis of these alternative models was an inspiration for this essay.

6. The position of "sacred woman" exists in other Mountain Ok groups including the Telefolmin (Jorgensen 1981) and the Bimin-Kuskusmin (Poole 1981).

7. Along with the positive side of women's power, the Atbalmin recognized a negative side that was articulated in ideas of sorcery *(biis).* In a reversal of their role in providing daily food from the gardens, some women were said to use food as a way to kill others (by taking a bit of food and then treating it in a special way). Such women also were believed to kill people by invisible assault. In a reversal of motherhood, people said that one of the chief targets of women sorcerers were the newborn children of others. It is important to keep in mind that men were suspected of committing sorcery roughly as often as women.

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FROM POLLUTION TO EMPOWERMENT: WOMEN, AGE, AND POWER AMONG THE BENA BENA OF THE EASTERN HIGHLANDS

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This article explores how various cultural patterns of age and gender in both precolonial and postcolonial times created differences in the lives of older and younger women. Among the Bena Bena of Ganaga village in Papua New Guinea's Eastern Highlands Province, three sets of gender ideas were used to evaluate women's activities and capabilities as they moved through the life course in precolonial times. Women could use these ideas as sources of power and influence in their relations with men and women. The achievement of social adulthood and menopause offered women a greater range of opportunities, expanded their power bases, and formed the basis for age stratification among women. Sixty years of culture change and economic development have transformed the Bena Bena into coffee-producing peasants. Although women's work loads have increased, their power bases and many of the activities through which they earned prestige have remained intact. The final part of the article explores how a wide variety of changes associated with the development process affect the contemporary ideas of age and gender that inform women's behavior and the relationships that they form with other women and men.

HOYAPELLO WAS MARRIED to a man of Ganaga village in 1948, before her first menstruation. Marriage before first menstruation was not common among the Bena Bena in precolonial times. Hoyapello's guardian and clan pushed for the marriage because the alliance would be beneficial and because Hoyapello and Bari (her husband) had developed a strong attraction for each other during courting. Through the years, Hoyapello earned a reputation for being an excellent gardener, a woman who gave generously to

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guests, and a strong woman who gave birth to many children (eight born, six living).

In the 1970s Hoyapello began to participate in producer-seller markets. Later she also branched out into the sale of commercial yarns, which were in great demand for the making of women's carrying bags ***(bilums).*** At this point she had two hard-working, unmarried daughters at home who could work in the gardens, feed the family, and gather wood and water. As time passed, it became clear that one of her sons had the talent for university. Although the family had been involved in coffee production before, they now expanded their plantings and increased their time in picking and processing coffee so that they could acquire the money needed for their son's expenses. In 1976, after a whirlwind courtship of five days, one of Hoyapello's older daughters married a man from Bougainville and left with him when he returned to his job at the copper mine. Although Hoyapello's other older daughter also wanted to get married, she was held back to help with subsistence production and household maintenance.

Hoyapello and two other Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) women were instrumental in the establishment of an SDA Women's Welfare group or Dorcas Society in Ganaga in the early 1970s. The main goal of the Dorcas Society was to help the old and other needy people in the surrounding communities. Society members earned money to support their welfare activities by picking other people's coffee and clearing garden land for a fee. The activities of the Ganaga Dorcas Society ended in the late 1970s, when the community no longer had a resident pastor.

Hoyapello and other women eagerly became members of the Ganaga Women's Association Fund Club in 1977. This club was established by a Filipino woman who had married a man of the same clan as Hoyapello's husband. Hoyapello told me: "The Mrs. [the woman who founded the club] told us that it was no good to sit down and do nothing. She told us to start some small work now. She said that if we worked hard now that later we could join hands, work in business, and make money." Women like Hoyapello used the money they earned from cherry coffee and market sales to pay the membership fee. Hoyapello was chosen as one of the three committee women who would represent the opinions of other club members. When the Fund Club was transformed into the Bena Bena Women's Development Corporation in 1982, Hoyapello was elected as one of the seven members of the board of directors. Like other older women, Hoyapello was able to purchase shares in the corporation as a result of her income-earning skills. She was also able to play an active role in these activities and. in the corporation because she had a supportive husband and a strong, unmarried older daughter who did much of the gardening and provisioned the household. Hoyapello's achieve-

ments in market sales and her role in the Bena Bena Women's Development Corporation as well as her expertise and knowledge of childbirth and midwifery have brought her community recognition and prestige. The life and experiences of my "mother" Hoyapello are an example of the successes that some contemporary older women in Ganaga can achieve.

Between February 1983 and May 1984, I resided in the Upper Bena Bena village of Ganaga, located in the Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. One of the things that I observed during my fifteen-month stay in this community was a major difference in the lives and opportunities of younger and older women. Older women, like Hoyapello, were involved in a greater variety of activities than younger women and also played a prominent role in newly introduced organizations. In the following I strive to explore (1) how various gender ideas affect the perception of women's characteristics and activities in different contexts and at different stages of the life course, (2) how women's opportunities, choices, and access to power and authority in the past and in contemporary contexts change as they age, and (3) how precolonial patterns of relations among women continue to affect women's lives in the postcolonial period.

Background

Throughout this article I will explore how native concepts of age and gender affect the lives and relationships of Bena Bena women. From my perspective, concepts and ideologies of gender are not monolithic and immutable but flexible, situational, multifaceted, negotiated, and achieved. In fact, gender ideas are not just about male-female relationships, but they also convey important messages about values, social identities, and relations and access to power and authority (MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Ortner 1974; Strathern 1987).

A woman's age also influences her relations with other women. As noted in the introduction to this volume, many scholars have explored how women's opportunities and access to power improve and change as they become older and enter the later stages of the life course (Brown 1982; Counts 1984). This transformation in the lives of older women can form the basis for age inequality or stratification among women (Foner 1984). This relational principle plays a role in shaping women's opportunities and aspirations as well as their perceptions of themselves and others.

The mutability of gender concepts and the transformation in the lives of older women suggest that women's access to power and their power bases evolve as they move through the life course. My understanding and use of the concept of power subsumes two key points. First, power allows individ-

uals to have influence over their own autonomy and control over the choices and autonomy of others. Second, power allows individuals to have differential access to material and nonmaterial resources and knowledge. Authority is the social recognition, sanction, and legitimation of an individuals use of power. Unlike Lamphere (1974), who sees power as vested in particular offices, I follow Foucault's (1980) perspective that power exists in human action, is not a structure that is owned by one social group and denied to another, and can be exercised and deployed through a variety of strategies, networks, and mechanisms.

Native patterns of gender and age and the existence of various types of relationships among women can influence the outcome of the development process (Boserup 1990; Foner 1984). The way of life of the Bena Bena of the Eastern Highlands has been transformed in the span of sixty years. In order to understand how change and development have affected the choices and opportunities of the women I came to know in contemporary Ganaga, we must first explore how concepts of age and gender affected Bena Bena women in precolonial times.

Gender and Age in Highland Societies

Much of the literature on the nature of precolonial social relations in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea has focused on the stratified or unequal gender relations between men and women (Allen 1967; Brown and Buchbinder 1976; Feil 1978; Hays and Hays 1982; Josephides 1985; Keesing 1982; Lederman 1986, 1990; Meggitt 1964). In most instances the lives of men as a group have been contrasted hierarchically to the lives of women as a group. Only rarely has age been seen as a source of inequality in Highlands social relations, and in these few cases analysis has focused on how men as a stratified group are opposed to women as a homogeneous group (Gelber 1986; Godelier 1982; Modjeska 1982; Strathern 1982a). E. Faithorn (1976) and, more recently, M. Strathern (1987, 1988) suggest that the preoccupation of Highland ethnographers with gender inequality has masked the presence of other sources of inequality such as age, kinship, and personality.

As a result of her work among the Hua, Meigs feels that Eastern Highlands ethnographers have overemphasized the existence of male dominance in gender ideologies (1984, 1990). Among the Hua, male dominance is only one of three gender ideologies that affect the actions of men and women in different contexts and at different stages of the life course (Meigs 1990: 105). The male-dominant or what Meigs calls the, "male chauvinist" ideology portrayed women as physically and morally dirty, stupid, and of shifting loyalties, and was used to promote male bonding for warfare. A "female-

superior" ideology, used in male cult rituals, both acknowledged women's reproductive power and imitated this power through bloodletting. Finally, an ideology of "complementarity" that emphasized the dependency of men and women was invoked as a model for successful marital relationships. Meigs also found that menopause changed women's lives dramatically (1976, 1984). Not only did they have access to a greater range of opportunities, but they also could cross over and perform the activities of men. Meigs's ideas are also significant for other Eastern Highlands cultures.

Precolonial Ganaga

My understanding and partial reconstruction of life in Ganaga prior to Australian contact is based on discussions with contemporary men and women and comparative insights drawn from other anthropological research on the Bena Bena (Keil 1974; Keil and Johannes 1974; Langness 1963, 1964a, 1964b, 1967, 1969, 1971, 1974, 1987, 1993).

The Bena Bena refer to the time period prior to Australian contact as the "fighting time." During this period the Bena Bena participated in sweet potato horticulture, pig and cassowary husbandry, regional partner-to-partner fixed equivalent trade, and life-course exchanges. Endemic warfare based on the bow and arrow and organized through big-man leadership was also a key feature of the past. Members of each of the three patrilineal clans resided together in separated fortified hamlets that were strategically located for defensive purposes.

In the precolonial period women's roles in the division of labor were focused on the activities of horticulture, animal husbandry of pigs and cassowaries, household maintenance, and the raising of children. After menopause women could also participate in extradomestic activities such as curing and male initiation. Men performed certain activities in horticultural production and animal husbandry, but their primary activities were based in warfare, exchange, and leadership. Various gender ideas formed a rationale for this division of labor. Over and over again the stories that contemporary residents told me about the "fighting time" highlighted the existence of all three ideologies stressed by Meigs (1990).

Older men told me that women were characterized as weak, wild, inconsistent, and threatening and men as intelligent, strong, and single-minded, primarily in the context of men's cult ***(nama)*** activities. During cult initiation younger men were taught to view men's activities as superior to women's because it was through these activities that men could achieve big-man leadership.

These male-dominant ideas devalued women's characteristics at the same

time that they recognized women's fertility and reproductive power. A critical component of this perspective was that men feared and were threatened by the possibility that women could pollute or contaminate them with menstrual and childbirth fluids. Contemporary men and women agreed that women had a responsibility to protect both men and society from these powerful substances through the observance of behavioral tabus.

Bloodletting was an important component of male initiation and male cult activity among the Bena Bena, as among the Hua and other Highland groups. Older men and women told me that bloodletting hastened the growth of young boys and girls. Later, adult men performed bloodletting to maintain their strength. Bloodletting has been interpreted as a simulation of menstruation and an effort to control the reproductive process (Langness 1974; Lindenbaum 1976). Following Meigs (1990), this second set of Bena Bena ideas reflected the positive nature and power of female fluids and fertility and the superior role and control that women play in the reproduction of society.

Many of the ideas that contemporary Ganaga men and women expressed to me about the precolonial relationship of men and women in marriage reflect a "complementary" gender ideology (Faithorn 1976; Meigs 1990). Marriage was the most important life-course event for men and women, and a married couple was expected to strive to be an interdependent team. For example, when her husband needed garden produce, pigs, or cassowaries for feasts and exchanges, a woman should cooperate with him if he performed his obligations in horticultural production and animal husbandry. Some older women also told me that they played an important complementary role in ritual (see also Hays and Hays 1982).

Bena Bena ideas of the perfect marriage were reflected in their concepts of an ideal man and woman. An ideal man upheld male concerns, performed male cult rituals, fought bravely in battle, killed many men, cooperated with his wife, and gave generously in life-course events. A Bena Bena big-man or ***gipina*** exemplified this ideal. An ideal woman, exemplified by the big-woman or ***gipinae,*** was a wife and mother who controlled her reproductive power and the fluids associated with it, worked hard in the gardens, produced many pigs, cooked and gave away a lot of food, produced many children, listened to and obeyed men, and supported her husband.

Both men and women had power. For men power was grounded in skill in warfare and active participation in life-course exchanges. A woman's power in the early stages of her life was grounded in her fertility and potential for reproduction. Although I did not explore this in the course of fieldwork, it is possible that some of the ideas of both Andersen (1972) and S. Errington (1990) concerning island Southeast Asian cultures may be use-

ful to an understanding of women's power among the Bena Bena. Both of these scholars suggest that a person's power may be related to the amount of intangible, mysterious energy or potency that is embodied in that person. It is possible that women's capability for reproduction was viewed as a highly potent, creative energy. This potency may have been threatening and fearful to others if they were uncertain about how a woman would use it. A married woman's power base expanded when her abilities in childbearing and subsistence production demonstrated her social responsibility and commitment to her husband and his community. After menopause, when a woman's reproductive potency was finished, a woman's achievements and authority provided a new power base for her.

When individuals controlled their own impulses, worked to emulate ideal behavior, and cooperated with their spouses in marriage, they demonstrated their commitment and responsibility to society. Clan members recognized this critically important achievement by calling them social adults. Adulthood was not a one-time event but part of a cultural process that continued throughout an individual's life course (Barlow 1995; Lutkehaus 1995). Adults who strived to be the best that they could be within the boundaries set for their gender were said to have a name. Having a name meant that one had social esteem, prestige, and authority. For both men and women this name was the first step in the achievement of the position of big-man or big-woman.

The Female Life Course in the Past

During the "fighting time," a woman's life course was divided into six stages. In the following I will explore how the gender ideas and expectations highlighted above and the gendered life course offered younger and older women different experiences, opportunities, and relationships with women and men.

Younger Women

When a woman became pregnant, a male from her husbands clan would step forward and volunteer to be the woman's guardian. As Hoyapello told me, "A woman's guardian and his wife were supposed to be like a brother and sister to the woman." A woman was assisted in birth and cared for after birth by her female guardian and other older women. If the child was a girl ***(panae),*** her mother's guardians became ***her*** guardians. New guardians would step forward for a woman's next pregnancy..

The guardian and his wife had the responsibility of performing a series of life-course rituals and feasts during which knowledge, magic, and ritual

were used to cultivate a girl's sexual and reproductive power/potency and prepare her for marriage. Older men and women in contemporary Ganaga also told me that these events made girls happy, strong, and beautiful. Some of these rituals were performed by the guardians alone, and some involved the participation of a wider set of clan relations. As ***panae,*** young girls assisted their mothers with various activities and took care of younger children.

A young woman became a ***yafanae*** when her breasts began to develop and with the onset of menstruation. The first menstruation ritual for young girls was performed by the female guardian and other older women. This was a highly celebrated event because it brought physical evidence of a woman's potency, fertility, and reproductive power. On the day following first menstruation rites, the young woman's guardians held a public feast to acknowledge and celebrate the young woman's readiness for marriage. During the course of the feast, the ***yafanae*** sat on a banana-leaf bed and was given prime sections of pork as well as previously tabued red-colored food ***(marita,*** pandanus fruit, and red ***pitpit,*** wild asparagus).

After first menstruation rites, negotiations could begin for a young woman's marriage. While a ***yafanae's*** guardian, big-man, and other older men found a husband for her, she was expected to attend formal courting parties and live a life of freedom. A group of young men from a clan would invite a group of young women from another clan to sing and "court" with them on a banana-leaf bed inside the men's house.

A young woman became a ***yafaye*** after she was delivered to her husbands community. Before her relatives left her, they helped the ***yafaye*** prepare a sweet potato garden. The bride distributed the first harvest to those people in her husband's community who had contributed to her bridewealth. New brides could not reside or have sexual relations with their husbands until after this first harvest and until wives had been found for all of a man's age-mates. During this period, which could range from two months to three years, a ***yafaye*** resided with her mother-in-law and assisted her in horticultural and animal husbandry tasks.

A woman was viewed as an ***ae*** when she began to cohabit and have sexual relations with her husband. The early years of marriage were very difficult for a young couple. The man and wife were virtual strangers, and the activities of warfare, courting, and male cults gave the couple few opportunities to get to know one another. During the "fighting time" women could not easily return to their natal villages, and so they were forced to make the best of their marriages.

A woman's transition into married life was also affected by ideas of male superiority. From the perspective of a husband and his community, the motives of in-marrying women were highly suspect. In fact, many contem-

porary men in Ganaga told me that these women were sexually wild and highly threatening during their early years of marriage. I would suggest that women at this stage of their life course were characterized in this way because during the "fighting time" it was common for former enemy groups to exchange sisters in marriage. When these new wives entered the communities, their loyalties and commitment were unknown and thus they were more capable (from the community's point of view) of using their sexual and reproductive power/potency in a harmful or negative way.

In the early years of marriage, an ***ae*** could use her power in the reproductive domain to try and gain better treatment from her husband. She could, for example, threaten pollution or the prevention of conception. Men of all ages thought that regular wife beating was required to tame these wild and threatening women and transform them into wives and mothers.

Although older women did not portray the characteristics and power of in-marrying women in a negative way, they told me that a bride's mother-in-law and other older women were constantly evaluating a bride's gardening and pig husbandry abilities and her personal qualities to ensure that she was worthy of the bridewealth given for her.

When a young couple finally settled down in their marriage, a woman could begin-to expand her power base through her achievements in subsistence production and motherhood. Each day women from the clan would go together to the adjacent gardens to cultivate and harvest crops for their own households under the watchful eyes of an armed guard. As Hoyapello told me, "During the fighting time we did our garden work quickly because we were afraid of being attacked." As Faithorn found among Kafe women (1976: 89), Bena Bena women received prestige and increased their social reputation through the cultivation of well-tended and extensive gardens, through the tending of a large and healthy pig herd, and by providing their families with food.

A woman's commitment and reputation also increased as she generously provided crops and pigs to support her husband's political and economic ambitions. It was clear that men were dependent on the subsistence production of their wives and that their cooperation was essential to a man's acquisition of a name. When a woman supplied her husband with resources, her productive power was viewed positively and could be described in terms of the complementarity of husbands and wives. However, when wives were unhappy with their husbands, they could use their power in a negative way by withholding crops and pigs, and thus undermine their husbands' activities.

Throughout a marriage a particular bone of contention for women was the practice or threatened practice of polygyny. Vicious physical fighting and sorcery use between co-wives was both common and expected. A common

action of a jealous wife was to set the house of the new wife on fire when the husband and new wife first slept together. In time, most co-wives grew to help and cooperate with one another.

Except for the occasional communal work party, women performed their horticultural and husbandry tasks separately. There were other contexts in which women worked and acted as a group. Women of a clan performed and participated in rituals for life-course events, and they worked together to prepare food for clanwide feasts. Seclusion in the women's house during childbirth and menstruation offered women an important context for the exchange of information and gossip. Hoyapello told me that women sometimes lied about having their periods so that they could spend time with friends. All of these activities formed the basis for the development of informal ties and networks among women (March and Taqqu 1986). These networks provided mutual self-help for both everyday problems and crises. Women also supported each other by caring for children and provisioning the household during times of birth and menstruation (Schneider 1993:151-152).

A woman's transition from wife to mother relieved some of the pressure exerted on her and allowed her to begin to create a place for herself in her husbands community. As Meigs found among the Hua, "a new woman's alienation from her husbands community diminishes once she has borne a' child and continues to diminish with each subsequent birth" (1984:20). Motherhood brought physical evidence of the positive and superior side of female power/potency. Male children were desired, especially as firstborns, and women sometimes practiced female infanticide, using paid female curers to achieve the goal. Contemporary older women expressed ambivalence about childbirth. They knew that contraception could lead to polygyny, but at the same time they feared the pain and possible death associated with motherhood (see also Faithorn 1976:91).

Older Women

As the years passed, a woman would continue to increase her reputation through her activities in subsistence production and reproduction. Older wives were rarely the victims of domestic violence because their achievements in these areas demonstrated their social commitment. According to Hoyapello and other older women, at some point after menopause all women achieved social adulthood and were called ***aloopae.*** The onset of menopause alone did not make one a social adult. Both the lack of pollutive ability associated with menopause as well as a woman's reputation were considered in this life-course shift. Achievement of this 'social position was viewed as

recognition of a woman's accomplishments as a wife and mother and her commitment to the complementary model of marriage.

Although menopause meant the loss of a power base for women, adulthood brought them the authority to influence the choices and opportunities of others. Within her own household an ***aloopae*** controlled the labor of her unmarried daughters. Mothers-in-law had only limited control over daughters-in-law once a couple began to work as a team. With sexual segregation adult women headed their own households and directed, organized, and controlled the labor of younger women, including co-wives.

Adult women also had more authority and control over decisions concerning the allocation of the fruits of their labor. Husbands often consulted older wives about the timing of particular feasts and exchanges. Husbands and wives also mutually decided to act as a woman's guardian. Adult women were significantly involved as well in marriage and bridewealth negotiations. The authority of older women afforded them new experiences and opportunities outside the household. Adult women played important roles in male initiation and controlled various rituals to celebrate the maturity and change in status of females in their clans.

During the third stage of male initiation, female guardians and other women of the clan, under the leadership of adult women and their big-woman, educated and initiated young girls. First, the older women took the young girls down to the river and performed bloodletting on them. Contemporary older women told me that this was thought to enhance the growth, strength, and beauty of the girls and their ability to work hard in the garden and carry many children. This association between blood and growth may have been a reflection of a belief in the potency and efficaciousness of women's reproductive power. It is possible that female bloodletting reported elsewhere in the Eastern Highlands may also have had this meaning (Hays and Hays 1982; Lindenbaum 1976; Newman and Boyd 1982). Older women also transferred important knowledge about gardening and pig husbandry and the systems of magic associated with these activities.

Adult women in the clan and a girl's guardian organized and controlled rituals to celebrate a girl's first menstruation. Bena Bena first menstruation rituals are similar to those reported elsewhere in the Highlands (Ross 1965; Sexton 1995; Warry 1986; Whiteman 1965). When a girl first noticed the appearance of menstrual blood, a small house of wood and banana leaves and a banana-leaf bed were built for her in the comer of her mother's house. The young girl would remain inside this house for one to two months, depending on the wishes of her parents and guardian. During this time, women from her clan would bring her gifts of food. According to Hoyapello,

older women would often sit with the girl and cry because soon she would marry and leave the community. Older women also sang songs to educate younger women about their roles as wives and mothers and to magically enhance their strength and beauty.

Contemporary older women told me that adult and other older women had the responsibility of teaching younger women about how to both use and control their power/potency in socially responsible ways. Hoyapello told me that "men's work was not enough. We [women] worked with men to protect everyone from the power of blood."

Because female fluids could be contaminating and polluting to others, ***yafanae*** learned about the tabus that would affect their behavior during menstruation and after childbirth--and at all times simply because they were capable of these processes. Though these tabus affected a woman in her home community, they were most rigid when a woman married and moved to her husbands community. For example, women could never walk directly through the center of their husbands' community because they might walk over something and contaminate it.

During menstruation and childbirth, women were exempt from domestic duties and had to reside in the communal women's house. According to Hoyapello, most women viewed their confinement during menstruation and childbirth as a vacation from work and responsibility.

The potency of female fluids necessitated sexual segregation. Residence in the men's house protected men from possible pollution and preserved the strength of warriors. Older women played a complementary role in perpetuating male-dominant gender ideas by cooperating with men in male initiation and by educating young women about the polluting quality of female fluids (see also Hays and Hays 1982). It is possible that older women joined with older men in supporting, maintaining, and reproducing an ideological system that included customs and ideas such as pollution and tabus in an effort to protect their privileged position and keep younger women in their place.

While younger women learned how to protect society from their power/potency, they also learned how to manipulate this power to their own ends. A woman could use this power against men through the manipulation of tabus, the withholding of subsistence production and sexual access, and the use of magic and plants in abortion and contraception.

After a ***yafanae's*** confinement was finished, her guardian, her big-woman, and other adult and older women carried her down to the river, where she cleansed herself. The girl and, the other women present performed bloodletting to cleanse her of menstrual fluids and encourage her growth and beauty. This event provided another context for adult and older

women to stress the positive and superior qualities of female fluids and power.

After the cleansing, the ***yafanae*** returned to her mother's house, where she was ritually prepared for public presentation. While magical songs were sung to enhance the girl's strength and beauty, her skin was rubbed with the juice of banana stalks and other leaves and her nose was painted red. Although the first menstruation ritual was but one of the events that prepared a girl for marriage, it was one of the most important events in which older women could control and supervise the transformation of ***yafanae.***

Adult women also had the opportunity to achieve positions outside the household. Some became active as midwives and curers, monopolizing knowledge about the use of plants and spells for conception, abortion, and contraception. The expertise of midwives concerning difficult births was widely respected. Both curers and midwives were paid by patients for their services.

Although most adult women had a greater range of activities and more authority than younger women, not all adult women had a name. Adult women who assiduously sought to be like the ideal woman were said to have a name and received additional social esteem and prestige. Certain activities of older women appeared to be limited to women with a name. The most prominent, role an adult woman with a name could achieve outside the household was that of big-woman ***(gipinae).*** All of the women in a clan designated one woman they trusted to represent their interests and perspectives within the community and in clan meetings that were attended by men. A big-woman also helped to organize and orchestrate female clan rituals and clan feasts, and generally acted as an advisor to women.

In summary, a cursory comparison of the lives and opportunities of men and women during the "fighting time" indicates that men and women were not equal. Bena Bena men were the major players in activities (such as exchange, warfare, and leadership) that affected the dynamics within and between groups. As I have noted elsewhere, age stratification affected the relations among men so that older men played a more prominent role in these activities than younger men (Dickerson-Putman 1996).

Women, however, were not a homogeneous group that could summarily be compared and opposed to men as a group. Although women were never equal to men, some women were more unequal than others. Older, adult women, for example, played a complementary role with men through the performance of rituals that not only socialized females but also protected their own interests and advantages.

First menstruation brought physical evidence of a ***yafanae's*** fertility and reproductive power/potency. While adult women, using both female-superior and male-dominant ideas, transmitted knowledge about these

powers and ritually prepared a young girl for marriage, the important men in her life orchestrated the marriage itself. The motives and abilities of a ***yafaye*** were suspect, and thus men in her husbands clan feared the new bride would use her reproductive power against them. As an ***ae,*** a young wife could begin to prove her worth and win the esteem of others through her success in horticulture and pig husbandry. When she controlled her potency and used her resources to support the goals of her husband, she demonstrated her commitment to the complementary model of Bena Bena marriage. However, if a husband thwarted his wife's efforts to win esteem, she could manipulate her potency by withholding sexual access and resources and threatening pollution.

Motherhood critically changed a woman's life because it increased her prestige and broadened her power base. Reproduction and continued expertise in subsistence production brought women greater influence with their husbands and within their households.

Menopause and demonstrated commitment led clan members to refer to the woman as an adult. The achievement of adulthood expanded a woman's activities and opportunities for esteem and brought her authority both within and outside her household. Although younger women played a greater role in subsistence production and held a greater sexual attraction for men, an adult woman's technical and ritual knowledge of production, her successful rearing of children, and her experience in provisioning a household made her continuously valuable to her husband and crucial to his success.

Some adult woman also had the chance to acquire a name and become eligible for new roles such as that of ***gipinae.*** Older women's greater opportunities for acquiring prestige, visibility, and authority in community affairs and their impact on the lives and knowledge of younger women formed the basis for age stratification among women.

Inequality, however, was not the only relationship that existed among women. As women established themselves in their husbands' communities, they made friends, established networks, and cooperated in the performance of life-course events. I now turn to consider how the patterns that affected women's lives and opportunities in the past influenced. the ways in which women were affected by the development process.

The Development Process

In a period of sixty years the Bena Bena have been transformed into coffee-producing peasants. A detailed analysis of Australia's development policies for the Papua New Guinea Highlands has been provided elsewhere (Brookfield 1972; Dexter 1961; Dickerson-Putman 1986; Downs 1980; Munster

1979). These policies were grounded on a Western model of gender and were particularly concerned to change men's roles. The cash-cropping of coffee, conversion to Western religions, and new forms of leadership were explicitly introduced to men to replace their roles in warfare, big-man leadership, and ritual. The then-current model of maternal deprivation and the belief that women could be treated as a homogeneous group affected Australian development plans for Highland women. Income-earning activities, such as the cash-cropping of coffee, were not considered appropriate for women because they would negatively affect their ability to serve their families and communities. Instead, women's clubs were introduced by missionary wives and nursing sisters to improve the homemaking skills of Highland women. Although it was recognized that the unpaid labor of women in subsistence production was crucial to family life, nothing was done to improve or support these activities.

The Australian colonial administration, believing that colonies should pay for themselves, focused their development on the extraction of resources from core areas. The arrival of explorers and missionaries into the Highlands marked the beginning of the first phase of Australian development. Between 1932 and 1934 both German Lutheran and Seventh-day Adventist missionaries contacted the Ganaga area. The Leahy brothers and Mike Dwyer first contacted the Bena Bena in 1930 and probably passed by Ganaga in 1932 in their search for gold (Leahy 1991; Munster 1979). After the establishment of a patrol post in the Bena Bena area in 1934, officials ***(kiaps)*** could begin the long process of abolishing warfare and introducing a Western form of justice. During this period male cults were broken up, pacification was established, and a dispersed form of clan settlement was introduced.

Beginning in 1953, Australia introduced small-holder coffee production (Amarshi, Good, and Mortimer 1979; Dickerson-Putman 1986; Donaldson and Good 1981; Howlett 1962, 1973). Highland horticulturalists became peasants as the cash-cropping of coffee linked local communities into the world market system (Meggitt 1971; Strathern 1982b). Because a Western model of gender continued to inform Australian policy, the cash-cropping of coffee was envisioned as a new role only for men. A status-raising welfare approach still emphasized the transformation of Highland women into Western-style homemakers (Barnes 1981; Gardner 1976). Bena Bena like other Highland women did, however, become involved in newly introduced producer-seller markets. During this period a medical post, community school, and formal fenced market area were established on the edge of the Ganaga community.

Since 1975 the Highlands have been influenced by the most recent phase

of development--that associated with independence. One particular focus of the Papua New Guinean government is to increase the role of women in the development of their country. This focus is also a requirement if the country wants to attract development investments from such institutions as the World Bank. The government hopes to achieve this goal by creating special women's groups and projects that foster the skills necessary for increased women's participation (Goodman, Lepani, and Morawetz 1985; Hughes 1985; Stratigos and Hughes 1987). The colonial belief that women can be treated as a homogeneous group persists.

Age and Gender in Contemporary Ganaga

Change and development have created a new world for Ganaga residents. The contemporary community of Ganaga consists of eighty-seven households (347 people) dispersed over seventeen named hamlets. Sixteen (18.3 percent) of these households are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As peasants, Ganaga residents must achieve a delicate balance between subsistence and income-earning activities (Dickerson-Putman 1986; Healey 1989; Howlett 1973). Income-earning activities are considered ***bisnis*** and are afforded high cultural value and renown by both men and women. A small number of Ganaga households are also involved in investment-based activities such as trade stores, coffee buying and processing, and development corporations.

The cessation of warfare, the introduction of steel technology, and the dispersal of new kinds of crops have allowed Ganaga women to expand beyond the limits of precolonial horticulture. Women's subsistence production continues to emphasize the planting of sweet potatoes in intercropped gardens and the animal husbandry of pigs (goats if you are Seventh-day Adventist) and cassowaries. Women raise fewer pigs than in the past because of the increased importance of money in life-course exchanges. Steel technology facilitates the clearing of land, thus allowing women to plant more gardens (the average is three) with a wider variety of crops. Production of new cultigens such as European vegetables provides women with the resources that are necessary for participation in producer-seller markets (Dickerson-Putman 1988). The increased work load of women is further exacerbated when men become so preoccupied with income-earning and leisure activities that they fail to perform their essential roles in horticultural production.

Most households in Ganaga earn cash through participation in the picking and selling of coffee. In fact, coffee sales (especially parchment) are the highest source of annual incomes for Ganaga households. The introduction

of coffee has also increased the work load of women because women are expected to devote time to their husbands' coffee gardens.

Ganaga women are usually able to keep and allocate the money they earn from the sale of cherry coffee, but men almost always claim the money earned through the more profitable sale of parchment coffee (see also Sexton 1988). Women do control the money that they earn in marketing. Men show little interest in or concern about women's market earnings, probably because these earnings seem inconsequential when compared to the amount of money that can be earned through the sale of parchment coffee (see also Warry 1986).

Like other Eastern Highlands women (Dickerson-P&man 1992, 1994b; Sexton 1982a, 1982b, 1986), the women of Ganaga responded enthusiastically to the introduction of both government-sponsored and non-government-sponsored women's groups. Ganaga was the home of a non-government-sponsored group called the Bena Bena Women's Development Corporation. Women used the money they earned through producer-seller markets and cherry coffee sales to purchase shares that were first invested in various village-based activities and later in a restaurant and in real estate.

Various changes associated with the development process have also affected the formation of ties between women. Dispersed settlement means that a woman has. fewer opportunities to interact with other women in her husband's clan. Although ties do develop among women in the same hamlet, the decline in clanwide interaction means women have fewer networks for mutual support. The elimination of the communal women's hut and a decrease in the clan participation of women in life-course rituals also means that women have fewer contexts for the exchange of knowledge and gossip.

Breakup of the male cult, cessation of male and female initiation, pacification, and the fact that most husbands and wives now reside together have brought great changes to the lives of Ganaga residents. Despite these changes, various sets of gender ideas and the ideological boundaries and division of labor they supported in the past continue to affect relations between men and women and between younger and older women. Although male cult initiation and activity have not been a part of Ganaga life since the 1950s, men still recognize the potency of female fertility and reproductive power. Men's continued belief in the possibility of female pollution reflects the persistence of male-dominant beliefs and means that women still have the responsibility for following various behavioral tabus. As in the past, menopause offers older women more freedom and a greater range of choices and opportunities. Individual menstrual huts located at the edge of hamlets have replaced the communal house of the past. Women's

activities and characteristics are also still viewed as inferior to men's activities and qualities.

Only older men and women who were initiated in the past perform bloodletting and other purificatory rituals. The decline in the widespread performance of bloodletting indicates a loss of context for female-superior gender ideas. The positive and superior qualities and power of female fertility and reproduction are still celebrated in first menstruation rituals that are performed for ***yafanae*** (including Seventh-day Adventist girls).

Although the roles and activities for men and women have changed dramatically since precolonial times, gender ideas that encouraged complementarity still flavor contemporary perspectives on marriage.

Past notions of the ideal woman are still used as a role model for contemporary women. Subsistence production, childbearing and rearing, and household maintenance are still considered the primary activities through which women can achieve the esteem of others. Women's identity as social adults is still grounded in menopause and the demonstration of achievement. One change is that income-earning activities such as marketing and coffee production are now viewed as appropriate activities for women. In fact, some residents claim that an additional characteristic of the ideal woman is the ability to earn money.

The Female Life Course in the Present

Younger Women

In contemporary Ganaga a woman's life course is divided into five stages. Although Western-style education has been available to all young people in Ganaga since the early 1960s, parents believe that education is a better investment for boys than for girls. Those young girls ***(panae)*** who do attend community school are eventually expected to settle into village life and marry. First menstruation rituals still celebrate the fertility and reproductive power/potency of ***yafanae,*** although the participants and content have changed. As in the past, these rituals are viewed as the last of a series of life-course events that are organized by a girl's guardian and signal her readiness for marriage.

For various reasons, older men and women have, lost much of the control that they used to exert in the arrangement of marriages. Although young women do not choose their husbands, contemporary young people are usually not forced to marry against their will. In contemporary Ganaga young men and women have more freedom and opportunities for courtship. As I

have explored elsewhere (Dickerson-Putman 1995), younger women would like to have more say in the choice of their spouse. Many younger women believe that they can improve their lives if they marry an educated young man who might have a future in ***bisnis*** or village politics. This belief has led to a proactive strategy in which young women aggressively fight off female rivals.

Some parents insist that a potential wife come to the husbands village and work for a few months before a marital arrangement is settled so that they can assess her ability to make a garden and thus avoid future problems. Sometimes young men and women do not follow the wishes of their parents. Increased opportunities for courtship and inflation in bridewealths have led to a contemporary situation in which couples move in together and enjoy sexual relations before the transfer of the bridewealth. This strategy is used when parents and children do not agree on the choice of spouse or when a young man's family simply does not have the resources for the bridewealth. This situation has a negative impact on women, because the transfer legitimizes a marriage and is required in the event that a woman wants to take legal action against her husband.

After a young woman is married, she spends the first month of her stay in her husbands village living with her mother-in-law. In contemporary Ganaga a couple begins to reside together after the wife's initial month of transition. The ***yafaye*** life-course category is no longer necessary because cessation of male cult activities means that men no longer marry as a group. These early years of marriage, however, continue to be difficult. The motives of in-marrying women are still suspect, and so husbands still believe that new wives must be tamed and domesticated through beating. The yet unproven commitment of new brides also means that community members fear that they could negatively use their potent reproductive power. Again, these ideas reflect the persistence of male-dominant gender ideas.

The ideology of complementarity continues to be used as a model for contemporary marriage. Younger women still use their power in the reproductive sphere to try and gain some control in the early years of marriage. As marriages stabilize and women display their capabilities in production and reproduction, their power base expands, they receive esteem and prestige from others, and they are able to negotiate with husbands and exert power in household decisions and resource allocation.

A number of men and women in Ganaga told me that domestic violence in the later stages of marriage is much more common today than in the past. They believe that this is so because men and women spend more time together and thus have more opportunities to fight over the allocation of

time and resources. These arguments reflect the fact that, as peasants, Ganaga men and women are trying to balance their involvement in subsistence and income-earning activities.

As in the past, young women in contemporary Ganaga devote most of their time and resources to subsistence production and reproduction. Motherhood still means that women gain prestige for their commitment to their husbands, to their husbands' community, and to the complementary model of Bena Bena marriage. In the early stages of their reproductive careers, younger women do not have older children to free them from domestic production. The constraints on younger women are even greater than they were in the past. First, their work load has increased because of their obligations in coffee production. The new dispersed form of settlement also provides fewer opportunities for women to form supportive networks that could relieve some of their burden.

Many younger women resent the fact that time constraints have prevented them from taking advantage of new opportunities to become involved in income-earning activities such as marketing. Younger women are also less able to convince their husbands to share the profits from coffee production with them. Both of these difficulties mean that these women do not have the resources to participate in local and regional women's clubs and investment corporations. In sum, the life-course position and time constraints experienced by younger women prevent them from taking full advantage of new and contemporary opportunities.

Older Women

Contemporary older women continue to increase their reputations over time through their complementary participation in subsistence production, reproduction, and new income-earning activities. Like younger women, they have also experienced an increase in their work loads. This is not as great a handicap for older women because most can delegate this extra work to younger female dependents in their households.

Continued belief in the potency of female fluids and associated male-dominant and female-superior gender ideas means that older women still lose a power base but also realize more freedom and greater authority at menopause. This life-course shift and demonstration of loyalty, responsibility, and capability are still prerequisites for social adulthood and greater access to extradomestic activities. Outstanding lifelong achievements continue to be rewarded when community members refer to a woman as someone who has a name.

The types of 'activities and roles available to contemporary older and

adult women, however, have been greatly transformed by the development process. The role of big-woman is no longer available to older adult women. Older women still perform the important roles of curers and midwives, and some continue to gain renown in this way.

These changes have affected precolonial relationships among women. The contemporary use of individual menstrual huts has eliminated one context for female interaction. As mentioned earlier, the new settlement pattern has also lessened women's opportunities to form friendships and networks.

Contemporary life in Ganaga has also lessened the degree to which older women as a group control the transmission of knowledge and the ritual transformation of younger women. As a group, the women of a clan no longer initiate and teach young girls about how to make gardens and provide for their families. Now young girls learn these lessons from their mothers and other women in their hamlets. First menstruation ceremonies are also no longer performed by the older women of a clan. Hoyapello told me that the only real change in the content of the ceremonies is that bloodletting is no longer performed on the ***yafanae*** as part of her cleansing. Today first menstruation ceremonies and associated rituals and magic are undertaken primarily by the female guardian and a few close female relatives of the young woman, for example, her father's sister. Important information concerning pollution tabus, the cultural evaluation of female fluids, and strategies for manipulating her potent, reproductive power are still passed on to the ***yafanae*** on this occasion. Much of this cultural information reflects the persistence of both male-dominant and female-superior gender ideas.

The nature of the age stratification system among women has also been transformed. In contemporary Ganaga many of the precolonial bases for this system have been replaced by older women's greater ability to acquire and control cash and the opportunities this access gives them to investment-based activities.

Older women have greater success in controlling cash than younger women, because their committed behavior affords them the ability to negotiate with husbands and convince them to share coffee earnings (especially from parchment). These negotiations over the allocation of both time and resources, however, have led to an increase in domestic violence among older couples.

Participation in producer-seller markets is also more possible for older women. In an earlier study a statistically significant difference was found in the annual market earnings of younger and older women (Dickerson-Putman 1988). Older women are able to earn much more money in this way because they have the time and the domestic authority to allocate their duties to others. In fact older women may have an expanded impact on household

decision making because their market earnings are the second highest source of annual income for most households and the highest source of household income during the rainy season.

Some older women in Ganaga have used a part of their earnings to become involved in investment-based activities. The greater participation of older women is reflected in the fact that the mean number of shares held in the Bena Bena Women's Development Corporation is forty-three for older women and sixteen for younger women ($p = .01$). Older women also play a major leadership role in the corporation. For example, the seven-member board of directors is composed entirely of women over the age of fifty. Many women in Ganaga told me that Hoyapello, one of the board members, would have been a ***gipinae*** in the past.

Today some older women earn renown (name) for their ability to earn money from newly introduced activities. Younger women become frustrated because they lack the time, freedom, support, and money that affords older women the opportunity to participate in marketing and women's clubs.

Summary

Careful examination of women's lives in both precolonial and postcolonial Ganaga reveals that their opportunities, the way they are perceived, their power bases, and their relationships with other women and men changed as they progressed through the life course.

During the "fighting time" a woman's first power base was her fertility and capacity for reproduction. Depending on the context, the potency of this power could be perceived as threatening (male-dominant gender ideas) or as a positive creative force (female-superior gender ideas). Motherhood and capability in subsistence activities expanded her power, and her achievements were then viewed through a lens of complementarity. Demonstrated commitment and expertise in production and reproduction also brought younger women the esteem of others.

Menopause and continued success in subsistence production were the means for reaching social adulthood and prerequisites for acquiring a "name." Complementarity was most often used to characterize the activities of older, postmenopausal women. At this life-course stage, authority both within and outside the household became a woman's primary power base.

Relationships of both cooperation and stratification existed among women in the past. As time passed, in-marrying women developed ties of mutual support. These ties were especially crucial for younger women who lacked dependents to ease their work loads.

Various gender ideas, pollution beliefs, and behavioral tabus were some

of the key elements that created differences in the lives of younger and older women. Menopause and social adulthood expanded older women's activities, brought them greater authority both within and outside their households, and allowed them contexts in which their control of knowledge and ritual both shaped the lives and opportunities of younger women and supported their role in a system of age stratification.

The development process transformed Ganaga residents into peasants and introduced new income-earning and investment-based activities to the community. Culture change increased women's work loads, but their power bases and many of the activities through which they earned prestige remained intact.

Although change and development have eliminated many cultural institutions of the past, such as male cults, some elements of the three gender ideologies discussed above not only continue to persist apart from their original context but still inform women's behavior. Prior to menopause, women's fertility and reproductive power are situationally perceived in either a positive (female-superior) or a negative (male-dominant) way. Complementarity, in contemporary Ganaga, continues as the model for evaluating success in marriage.

Relationships among women have also been affected by the development process. Various factors including dispersed settlement, individual menstrual huts, and a transition from group- to family-based rituals have lessened the opportunities for women of all ages to develop ties of mutual support and cooperation.

During the time of my fieldwork, older women still experienced a shift from a life constrained by pollution beliefs to one that offers potential for empowerment. Celebration of first menstruation, observance of tabus, and greater freedom at menopause still support the inequality of older and younger women. However, the nature of this contemporary stratification differs from its counterpart in precolonial times. In the past, older women as a group had greater ritual and ideological control over younger women. In the Ganaga of today older women have less ideological control over younger women but greater ability in their own lives to control access to new economic activities. The brief life story of my mother Hoyapello well illustrates some of the reasons why contemporary older women can take greater advantage of the new culturally valued income-earning and investment activities available to them in their community. The differential access of older and younger women to these opportunities is now the basis for a new system of age stratification in which older women occupy the top rung.

The data reviewed here have implications for the development of gender and development policy. As I have observed elsewhere, policy makers in

Papua New Guinea and other developing countries must be sensitive to the ways in which native concepts of gender and age can affect women's ability to take advantage of projects and organizations that are designed to improve their participation in the development process. In communities like Ganaga, where pollution beliefs and other gender-related ideas continue to influence women's lives, there will always be some differences in the lives of older and younger women. A recognition of age stratification as an important, enduring cultural principle and a new emphasis on the creation of cooperative and nonhierarchial ties among women of different ages could eventually create a situation in which younger and older women work together for development. When women become empowered and united, they can begin to develop bonds of communication, cooperation, and integration with men. It is only when women and men work as equal partners that the true development of Ganaga and Papua New Guinea will begin.

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THE WOMEN AT KOBUM SPICE COMPANY: TENSIONS IN A LOCAL AGE STRATIFICATION SYSTEM AND THE UNDERMINING OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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Many models of women and development focus more on external constraints than on women's own judgments and concerns, and on women's "unusual" successes rather than their failures or their rejection of development projects. This article seeks to reverse that imbalance, presenting a case of rejected development that occurred in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea, and explicating Gende women's critique of that particular development as well as development in general. In detailing the Gende's complex social reality and age stratification system, the way various developments have interfered with or threatened to change that system, and the Gende's evaluations of and responses to those changes and threats, I argue for more age- and gender-balanced development that supports community values and intergenerational cooperation.

EXPANDING ON Boserup's model of development (1970), studies on women and development have focused on how development hurts women by increasing their dependence on men, and on constraints preventing women from effective participation in development. Men's educational and economic advantages along with conservative attitudes regarding women's involvement in new enterprises are blamed for keeping women out of the workplace or in the poorest sectors of the workforce (see Chaney and Schmink 1980; Leacock and Safa 1986; Beneria and Feldman 1992). Models of male-centered development and female dependency have, however, to contend with evidence of women's success in modern business ventures. Boserup recognized women's potential but emphasized "traditional" women's occupations', such as the sale of agricultural produce in the urban marketplace, and prostitution

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(1970). Subsequent studies of African market women significantly broadened this view to include high finance and high-flying "business mamas" along with less spectacular examples of successful women, including widows and older women who used their market savings to put children through school or to start up businesses that yielded more profits than most men made in factory or office work (Potash 1989).

In Papua New Guinea, numerous studies deplore women's underrepresentation in formal and informal economic sectors and their virtual absence in politics and economic-policy-making positions (Hughes 1985; King, Lee, and Warakai 1985; Stratigos and Hughes 1987). Blame is laid on women's lesser participation in education; male dominance and control of household monies and decision making; conservatism and many families' desires to restrict younger women to their traditional roles of subsistence farmers and pig herders; the rising threat of rape and violence that makes working in urban areas in Papua New Guinea a harrowing experience for women; and nationalist and class politics that encourage the scapegoating of educated and economically elite women who might otherwise be important role models and leaders in women's economic development (Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993; Toft 1985a, 1986; Wormald and Crossley 1988; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1992, 1993b, 1997b). As elsewhere in the world, however, there are exceptions, and they are notable for demonstrating Papua New Guinean women's eagerness to participate in development and their considerable organizing skills and incentives for doing so. Women's business and investment cooperatives have, for example, been reported throughout the Highlands (Dickerson-Putman 1992; Sexton 1986; Warry 1986) and among Sepik (Aarnink and Aydorp 1986) and Tolai women (Brown 1987). In Sexton's analysis of the widespread ***wok meri*** (1986), she notes that one motive for women's involvement in the movement is their desire to teach men, by example, the benefits of what the women perceive to be more rational saving and investment of the proceeds from cash-cropping and other money-making enterprises. The theme of women working to improve their families' material well-being through careful investment of their own or their husbands' income is repeated in the few individual success stories that have been reported on (see Brown 1988; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1996b), and in the largely undocumented efforts of lower-income urban homemakers to create forms of domesticity that center on their children's education and the protection of their husbands' meager incomes (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997a). Far from having domesticity thrust on them, these women choose to leave their villages to join their husbands in town, in order that their children can get the best public education available and that they can encourage their husbands to spend their wages wisely (for example, by maintaining rural land options through remittances

to village exchange partners and by forgoing the temptations of alcohol and prostitutes). Their situation is in some ways similar to that of European women in the later years of the Industrial Revolution (see Minge 1986), when childhood emerged as a time when children must attend school in order to have a chance at a good job and husbands were more likely than their wives to find paid employment. Many urban Papua New Guinean women have found it expedient to become full-time homemakers and child tenders and are thereby contributing to the development of their country.

In reviewing the women and development literature, it is striking how often the success stories involve groupings of women working together to promote their economic, social, and political interests. It is also noteworthy that many of these groupings are extensions of traditional women's organizations (or relations), often stratified by age with older women taking the lead in developing what they deem to be worthy enterprises for women to engage in. How women, and older women in particular, contribute to their societies and what the nature of their relationships are with men has long been an interest in the anthropology of gender (see Brown and Buchbinder 1976; Brown, Kerns, et al. 1985). In ***Tiwi Wives*** (1971), Goodale shows older Tiwi women in league with older Tiwi men in the manipulation of marriages for political ends. In her book on Trobriand exchange (1976), Weiner shows Trobriand women, particularly older women with more time to make banana-leaf bundles, redeeming matrilineage land for themselves and their brothers in the exchange of bundles of banana leaves at the death of lineage members. And, based on her research in Kaliai, West New Britain, Counts (1985) shows how Lusi women achieve greater domestic, political, and economic authority in their middle and later years if, like leading males, they take on more responsibility for the maintenance of Lusi society. That women play important, often political roles in their societies and that their lives and work are inextricably intertwined with men's are now sufficiently documented and theorized (see O'Brien and Tiffany 1984; Strathern 1987, 1988, 1993). What remains of interest and in need of further documentation and theorizing is how women relate to, empower, and--just as important--restrain other women in their efforts to achieve mutual or individually desired ends. Thus, it is of interest that the small urban community of low-income Gende homemakers I studied had been hand-picked over a period of thirty years by one leading homemaker (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997a). Women and their families were allowed to stay at Okiufa (a settlement on the outskirts of Goroka) only as long as the women continued to support the other wives and to assert themselves in "controlling" their husbands' wages and the upbringing and education of their children. Women who failed to act out these shared values were expelled from or never invited into the security of Okiufa. Recent writ-

ings on female initiation in Papua New Guinea (Lutkehaus and Roscoe 1995; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1996a) emphasize how these traditional institutions are designed to produce enterprising and socially powerful women who are more than men's pawns and are responsible, along with and to other women, for promoting both their own and group interests (see Barlow 1995; Lutkehaus 1995; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1996a). In a further explication of the ***wok meri*** movement, Sexton demonstrates how new groups of women are incorporated into the savings association through initiation rituals modeled on marriage, with more seasoned members and big-women mentoring and closely monitoring the new "initiates" or daughters who receive the "bride" (a bag of money and a doll) in return for a "brideprice" (money for investment), which must eventually be returned with interest (1995:210).

That women's interests are intertwined not only with men's but with other women's, and that women will resist developments that harm their joint and separate interests, is the subject of this article. The focus is on Gende villagers in southern Madang Province. Like other New Guinea Highlanders, most Gende reside patrilocally and obtain brides by giving brideprice to women's families. Polygyny is now rare, but the division of labor is much the same, with men clearing bush for their wives to plant sweet potato gardens and women tending herds of pigs for exchange. Although Gende men tend to consider themselves superior to women in intelligence, strength, trustworthiness, and political acumen, they recognize women's strengths in working hard, caring for their families, and women's sorcery. Furthermore, by means of exchange and an age stratification system involving both men and women, Gende women may achieve great influence, even power over other men and women. The Gende base their age stratification system on achievement. As persons mature, they take on greater responsibility for the well-being of younger and older (or deceased) persons. As men and women approach middle age, they measure their contributions to others in the brideprices they contribute to, in participation in group-sponsored pig feasts, and in exchanges made on behalf of deceased kin. Persons who fail to make significant contributions are judged to be "rubbish" persons or "like children," who rely on others to help them. A crucial obligation for women is to repay in-laws for the brideprice paid for them. Thereby redeeming themselves, women cast off their outsider status in their husbands' clans and are more in charge of their own production and exchange. Past middle age, men and women are eager to help younger persons so that they will be cared for in old age, mourned in death, and given proper burial and postfuneral rites and sacrifices. Generosity is the basis for the power and influence achieved by individuals as they move through the life cycle. Persons judged to be "most generous" achieve leadership roles and

the honorifics "big-man," "big-woman," "good woman," "our father," and "our mother."

This article looks at how changing circumstances threaten to disrupt the Gende's age stratification system and how young women's involvement as the highest-paid workers at Kobum Spice Company endangered a system that was designed to empower Gende women and to give them a measure of security in a society otherwise dominated by men. Whereas in the past, it was older men and women who supported and encouraged the physical and social maturation and political successes of younger men and women, today's younger generation has more access to cash and is able to challenge the existing power structure and system of relationships (see Foner 1984 for a discussion of the relationship between development and the breakdown or reversal of age stratification systems in Africa). Increasingly, older Gende require the economic help of younger Gende and enjoy less respect and authority than in the past. The resulting tensions are associated with intergenerational conflicts and violence (see Zimmer 1987b and 1990a). There are also intragenerational tensions, as couples struggle to offset the effects of economic inequality on their exchange activities (often through an increase in the woman's workload) and as men's and women's complementary and separate interests collide in a context increasingly favorable to some men and only a very few women. At the new cardamom plantation at Kobum, young women assumed a precocious independence as a result of their higher wages while their mothers worked day and night, at Kobum and in their gardens, to amass the higher brideprices their sons needed to marry these young women or to pay off their own marriage debts. In the end, older women were the first to leave the company and to hasten its demise, a form of resistance echoing other women's actions in resisting development and colonial policies that threatened to upset the balance of power in favor of men and to make women's lives more onerous and less rewarding (see Van Allen 1976; Etienne and Leacock 1980). After describing the system of exchange and rituals that empowers Gende men and women, this article looks at how uneven development has introduced inequalities that threaten that development and how women have responded to the threat. The article ends with a discussion of Gende women's critique of development and argues for a more age- and gender-balanced development that supports community values and intergenerational cooperation.

Exchange, Age, and Female Power among the Gende

Both the shape of Gende society and the meaning and power invested in individual lives are the result of exchanges made during successive stages in

the life cycle and social development of Gende individuals. As conceived by the Gende, this process of exchange and ritual takes the individual from a state of potential being through states of "becoming human" ***(wana tizhi),*** "being human" ***(wana minanua),*** "becoming an ancestor" ***(poroi tizhi),*** and "being an ancestral spirit" ***(poroi minanua).*** Throughout life, but particularly in the becoming human and becoming an ancestor stages, an individual needs others to invest wealth in him or her. When an individual reaches physical maturity and full social power, however, he or she is expected to reciprocate the assistance of parents and others who helped him or her through the earlier stages of childhood and marriage by in turn being human ***(wana minanua)*** and using his or her powers and wealth to help older persons make the transition from living persons to benevolent ancestors ***(poroi minanua).*** Being human also requires that men and women help younger persons to become as fully human--married, healthy, productive, empowered--as themselves. As in many of the cases in Lutkehaus and Roscoe (1995) and with the Kafe (Faithorn 1976), Gende life-cycle rituals and exchanges involve the cooperation of both males and females, although the nature of the cooperation and ritual acts usually varies by age, sex, kinship, and achieved power differences. It is also the case that males and females move through similar stages--which are gendered more in the reproductive years than at any other time--and that both males and females may, thereby, achieve great powers, many of a similar nature.

Becoming Human (Wana Tizhi)

When a baby ***(poroma)*** first responds to those around it, it is said that he or she is "becoming human" (see Zimmer 1985 for a detailed description of Gende life-cycle stages). Long before a child is conceived, however, others prepare the way for it to be born and to prosper by looking after its future mother's welfare, ensuring that her puberty and initiation rites are carried out properly so that she will become a healthy adult, and instructing her in the duties and privileges of a proper wife, mother, and daughter. On the child's father's side, relatives give brideprice to the mother's relatives in recognition of the care they bestowed on her behalf and to ensure that the mothers clan ancestors do not harm the children born of the union. Like the mother, the child's father also receives instructions on being a caring husband, father, and son, counseled by his kin to use his powers well and to add to the strength and glory of his (their) clan.

Soon after a baby is born, its parents give a small feast ***(kwie)*** to celebrate the child's delivery and to show their appreciation of the birth attendants and the men and women who paid the mother's brideprice and helped bring

the event to pass. The meal always includes bananas and a leafy, iron-rich green vegetable called ***abica.*** These foods were tabu for the child's parents throughout the pregnancy. After the child's birth, its father and other men in the father's clan give bananas and sugarcane--both tended and harvested solely by men and believed to possess "strong" qualities-- to the child's mother to make her milk (and the child) strong. A year or so later, a much bigger feast (also called ***kwie)*** is held at which pigs and other gifts are given to the mothers kin in further recognition of their contribution to the child's birth. Just as failure to pay a woman's brideprice brings into question the clan affiliation of children she bears her husband, so too does failure to pay childwealth ***(wana yamindikai inime,*** "pay for the child's bones") raise doubts about a clan's rights over a child. While childwealth is expected for each child, it is particularly important that it be paid for a couple's first child, whether male or female, because it is in the early years that marriages are likely to break up and that others are assessing the couple's ability and interest in fulfilling the obligations of adults ***(wana minanua).*** It is around this time that a child is named, most often for a contributor to its mother's brideprice or the child's childwealth payment. It is also a time when the mother's kin show their benign interest in the health of mother and child by also contributing pigs to the feast. By giving pork to a sister, a brother strengthens her and her child, making her milk "strong" and causing the baby to grow quickly. He also cements relations between his own and his sister's child's clan and encourages a reciprocal flow of wealth and power over the years to come. A woman's mother or other female relatives may do the same, strengthening the new mother and child and extending their own networks of power and obligation.

As soon as they are able, children ***(moveri)*** learn the tasks assigned to their sex. When they are six or seven years old, girls ***(erekevi)*** begin looking after younger siblings when their mothers are at work in the gardens. When they are older, girls help their mothers in the gardens and may also look after gardens their fathers and brothers have prepared for them alone, tending pigs for brothers' brideprices or to take into their own marriages. Little boys ***(mekevi)*** are free to roam the village and surrounding forest, playing war games, swimming in the river, or hunting, but they too must help their parents, fetching water for older women, helping their fathers mend fences, and, eventually, clearing gardens for their mothers and sisters. Both boys and girls attend the village primary school, and those who show an aptitude for education, whether male or female, are encouraged and given time off from some of their household tasks. Generally, it is only when children go away to boarding school to finish their higher education that a difference emerges in the numbers of boys and girls attending, with most girls being

kept back in the safety of the village to attend to the important tasks of gardening and raising pigs.

Among the Gende, both boys and girls are initiated into their fathers' clans and put through rituals meant to strengthen and empower them. Today's male initiation rituals are altered, sometimes dispensed with, however, as boys expect to further their education in town or to seek urban employment, and many former practices are thought to be irrelevant or ineffective in today's context. Whether condensed or in full form, male initiation begins when a boy is around eight or ten years old and begins spending more time with his father and father's brothers. Young boys are initiated into the secrets and traditions of their father's clan, including the playing of special flutes to invoke the spirits of dead ancestors ***(poroi)*** to bless clan enterprises such as large pig feasts ***(poi nomu).*** After they are shown the sacred flutes, the boys are taken into a house where they are told stories and lectured about the proper behavior of men. Made to sit close to a large fire and forbidden to drink water, they are kept awake throughout the night. Near dawn, large bowls of cooked pork and vegetables, prepared by the men of their clan and contributed by their mothers and their father's sisters, are placed beside each boy (with the exception of those who go through a special male initiation called ***kangi),*** and the boys eat as much as they like before sharing the remains with their fathers and other men present. The boys are then taken to a secluded spot near a river, where they learn to purify themselves of women's powerful and dangerous menstrual fluids and mother's blood. After having their noses bled, the boys are beaten with sticks for "being slow to help" their parents and given further injunctions on bodily care and adult male behavior. As adolescent males ***(movo),*** boys spend more time away from the village (and women), clearing gardens or away at school. In the past, they would spend several years of seclusion in the forest along with other initiates. One object of their years in the forest was for initiates to hunt and to amass bird-of-paradise feathers, animal skins, and packets of smoked meat to be given at intervals and at the conclusion of their initiation to future brideprice donors. Today's young men are more likely to give cash earned selling coffee or from wage labor, but the recipients are the same: a young man's parents and members of his father's clan, and anyone else who has an interest in investing in his future marriage and adult life. During the final ceremony, back in the village, the prospective brideprice donors come into the house where the initiates are sequestered, lecture them on working hard and being considerate to their elders, and decorate them for their "coming out" ceremony as marriageable men. As the boys get up to go outside to parade before the assembled villagers and guests, men throw bundles of sugarcane into their arms, symbolizing male

strength. As many as twelve men, one after the other, do this. If a young man drops the growing pile of sugarcane, men tell him: “You are weak and lazy. I don’t think you will do much work.” After the testing and empowerment, the boy is free to court young women and to marry.

Girls, too, are initiated into their father’s clan, but in their case initiation begins around the time of first menstruation, involves only one or a few girls at any time, and consists of one or more relatively short periods of seclusion outside the village, usually (but not always) coinciding with a girl’s period. Today, parents are more likely to insist on their daughter’s initiation than their son’s. This is in part because a girl’s brideprice is determined during this time, but also because women’s lives (like men’s) have become more complicated and stressful and older women want to prepare their daughters for what is in store for them as well as cement bonds of mutual concern and help with the young women, who may migrate far from home for purposes of marriage, work, or education. Around the onset of her first menstrual period, a girl moves into a small house outside the village. If she is living in town, seclusion may be difficult to arrange, but every effort is made by the organizers to carry out other aspects of Gende puberty and female initiation rites, including food tabus and ‘other restrictions, and teaching the initiate love magic, how to be a successful wife and mother, and her obligations to her clan. Women compare this time in their lives to male initiation, saying that just as males are shown the secret flutes and learn of the flutes’ powers, so too are young women given various forms of magic by their fathers and fathers’ sisters and taught to use these and other female powers for the benefit of themselves and their clans.

On the final day of a girl’s seclusion, she is made to sit close to a large fire while being lectured by male and female relatives. Paralleling male initiation rituals, the girl’s strength is both tested and enhanced when men and women from her clan throw bundles of sugarcane into her arms that she then throws into the fire to be cooked and eaten by herself and the assembled men and women. The culminating event of female initiation is the killing of pigs. Many of the people mobilized for a girls brother’s initiation also participate in the rituals and feast held at the end of her seclusion. These people include her parents, close kin in her mother’s and father’s clans, and possibly members of her father’s sisters’ husbands’ clans. Just as the potential wife-buyers for a young man pay close attention to his potential for being a strong and generous man, so too will the number of participants at a girls puberty ceremony depend on her performance as a gardener (or student), her willingness to help others, and her acquisition of the necessary skills of a mature woman. The number of pigs sacrificed during the ceremony reflects donors’ estimation of her value as a woman, and a large num-

ber will help her attract a good husband. Also included in the feast are cooked eel, wild pigs, cassowaries, and other animals of the forest that were hunted and trapped by the young woman's father and other male relatives.

After the completion of initiation and puberty rites, parents encourage newly initiated sons and daughters to seek suitable marriage partners. When fathers perform at feasts in other settlements, they include unmarried children in the dance group, decorating the young men and women in feathers and animal furs to make them attractive to the opposite sex. Several singsings are staged for the sole purpose of courtship. At a ***koanandi,*** forty or more girls from different Gende settlements will gather in a special long house where young men will join them to sing courtship songs ***(kango).*** More commonly, young men, fortified with love magic and evidence of a girl's interest, will visit them singly or in twos and threes, to sing in some designated house under the watchful eyes of older men and women. Parents indulge courting couples--as long as they approve of their child's choice and courtship does not drag on--by relieving them of tasks and allowing them to sleep throughout the day.

Being Human (Wana Minanua)

With marriage there is a shift in an individuals life from being primarily a recipient to becoming a donor and "being human." In the early years of marriage, a husbands and wife's primary obligation is to work together to repay the investments other persons have made in them. This obligation falls heaviest on the woman, who has come from another group and has been paid for with many pigs and with other wealth. To help her get started, a young woman's mother, father's sisters, and often her mother's sisters give her pigs as a kind of dowry on the day she leaves home for her husbands place. Added to these pigs may be others the young wife has raised on her own behalf. The most important obligation a wife has is to repay her in-laws for their contributions to her brideprice. This repayment is a formal part of the Gende exchange system and is called ***tupoi,*** literally "to give back the pigs." By fulfilling ***tupoi,*** a woman redeems herself from indebtedness to others and becomes a more independent actor in Gende affairs. Evidence for this redemption is found in Gende divorce "laws" whereby a woman who has repaid her brideprice to her husband's people takes most or all of her pigs with her when she leaves her husband. More important, a woman's in-laws treat her with greater respect once she fulfills ***tupoi,*** and both she and her husband are sought out for their opinions on matters concerning the husbands group. In former times, a young bride expected to spend most of her time with her mother-in-law and to make ***tupoi*** before beginning a sex-

ual relationship with her husband. Delaying childbirth and its attendant exchange obligations, a young woman gained an equal footing with her young husband and more right (than he) to choose to whom her pigs went to in exchange. ***Tupoi*** ceremonies are generally carried out during competitive pig feasts known as ***poi nomu*** and are one of the highlights of these events, as the proud women parade their ***tupoi*** pigs before the assembled masses.

After the brideprice is repaid, a couple is expected to sponsor exchanges that will further advance or safeguard the group's interests. One of these interests is the birth of children and their affiliation with the husbands clan. A child's clan affiliation is made more certain by giving childwealth to the mother's people. In the past it was expected that a child's parents would pay all or most of the childwealth payment. Today, however, many couples have children before they have completed ***tupoi,*** a fact associated with larger brideprices (which take longer to repay) and the unwillingness of most couples to wait to begin sexual relations until after they have made ***tupoi.*** Often, other clan members must step in and pay the childwealth debts of young couples. Contributing to the childwealth payments of other people's children is, however, an investment opportunity. Investing pigs in children's rites of passage--birth, puberty, and marriage--men and women, either as a couple or as individuals, accumulate a fund of obligations that the children will have to repay when they are grown. Among the Gende, the highest acclaim attaches to individuals (male or female) who contribute the most pigs to group-sponsored pig feasts and other ceremonial events. Most often this recognition is achieved by becoming the "mother" or "father" of many individuals, who reciprocate past support and investments when the donors are ready to collect the debts. When leading men and women are praised for their contributions to group affairs, they are praised in terms such as "she is our mother" or "he is our father." That the older generation and both mothers and fathers are important to younger generations of Gende is supported linguistically in the use of such matched terms as ***wana mogeri*** (good man) and ***ana mogeri*** (good woman) and ***tomowo*** (our father) and ***tiyowo*** (our mother).

Becoming an Ancestor (Poroi Tizhi)

In addition to clan prestige and strength, a compelling reason for investing in children is to assure one will be taken care of in old age and mourned in death. Being responsible adults and investing their wealth and energies unstintingly in others, their life forces drained in the process, older men and women come to a point in their lives where they need others to help them make the transition between being human and "becoming ancestors." An-

other reason is that when persons are nearing death or have recently died, it is expected that their remaining exchange debts will be honored by themselves or their children and any other persons who are indebted to them or who wish to invest in them as future ancestors. By investing wealth in persons who are soon to be or are already dead, individuals hope to secure the goodwill of ancestral spirits. They may also hope to lay claims on lands the deceased had rights over during his or her lifetime. When a woman dies, for example, it is normally her sons (and sons' wives) who give the bulk of death payments to her brothers. This is so that any rights to land the woman may have earned in her husbands clan territory, through her own hard work or the investments of her clan in her exchange activities, will remain in the hands of her sons and her husband's people and not accrue to her brothers or their sons. By giving large death payments for their mother, sons may also inherit their mother's right to land in her clan territory--a situation that can be reversed by her brothers and brothers' sons making significant death payments of their own in order to redeem the land for their clan.

Empowered and Empowering Women

The above description of the Gende's exchange system illustrates that 'it affords women opportunities to empower both themselves and others. Some women make more of the opportunities than do others, and the more successful women are those who cooperate with both men and women to empower themselves, their sons and daughters, and other family members. At a girls puberty ceremony, older women are in the forefront in judging a girl's capabilities and deciding on the number of pigs that will be sacrificed for her. They also invest time and energy into educating a girl on being a successful wife, daughter-in-law, and future mother. Older men are also present in the proceedings, however, and their male viewpoints are sought on how to keep young husbands attentive and hard-working. For their part, young women must earn the respect of older women as well as impress older men that they are capable of hard work and generosity in addition to keeping their husbands from straying.

Similarly, in redeeming her brideprice in ***tupoi*** payments, a woman earns the right to control her own production and how it is used. She also, however, has more than herself to thank, beginning with those women who started her off in married life with a dowry herd. How hard a woman chooses to work and for whom is crucial to both men's and women's interests. Thus, not only will her husband clear gardens for her, but others may also help her: unmarried youths by clearing additional gardens for her in return for future brideprice support, young women by sharing in the plant-

ing of those gardens in return for various kinds of support, and older men and women by looking after some of the women's pigs in their own small gardens in return for future care and funerary payments.

Investing her pigs and labor in getting others through the various stages and challenges of life, a woman accrues prestige and influence. As the center of a network of helping hands--the unmarried youths, young women, older persons, and others--she may even accumulate enough indebtedness to her to become a major player in a large pig feast. On the occasion of the first pig feast I witnessed in Yandera village, for example, women shared the stage with men--directing the feeding and housing of guests and exchange partners; dressing in their best traditional finery to lead their pig herds to the slaughter; and critically observing, commenting on, and influencing their husbands' distribution of cooked pork. On their part, men praised the efforts and support of their wives, mothers, and sisters-in-law in oratory and song. They also gave away most of the pork and live pigs to their wives', mothers', and sisters-in-law's kin.

Finally, if a woman has been active throughout her middle and later years, others will attend to her and revere her in old age and death. Even daughters-in-law--who may not be kindly disposed toward their mothers-in-law in view of their sometimes competing interests--will respect them as "mothers" and future "ancestors" of their children's and husbands' group. And although it is common for older women to spend considerable time visiting their brothers' places, their sons and grandchildren are usually anxious for them to return home where they can be looked after and the situation can be avoided in which a mother or grandmother dies while she is away and thus feels resentment toward her children after death Older women use the possibility of ancestral curses and other such fears to manage their children's dutiful behavior. But unless an older woman has exhibited powerful behavior through years of hard work and sacrifice, such threats are powerless.

Contemporary Inequality and Women's Loss of Power

In 1932 the Gende met the outside world in the persons of two German missionaries who had trekked inland from the Divine Word Mission on the Madang coast to the northern flanks of the Central Highlands to convert any peoples they found and to use the location as a stepping-stone into other pats of the Highlands (Mennis 1982). Over the next several years, the missionaries paid cowry shells and steel axes to those Gende who helped them build a mission station and airstrip at Bundi. In doing so, the missionaries unsettled the local political economy, as many of their young helpers used

their wages to sidestep dependence on their elders and, on their own, to buy brides from neighboring Chimbu peoples who had yet to be visited by or to benefit from the outsiders (Zimmer 1985: chap. 5). Both the missionaries and the Australian patrol officers who came after them used intimidation (using shotguns to kill pigs and shatter wooden war-shields) to demonstrate their power over the Gende. Close on the heels of the patrol officers, labor recruiters arrived seeking young male recruits for coastal plantation labor and as carriers on government patrols in uncontacted areas.

In such manner did foreign church, state, and economic interests descend on the Gende, forcing them to make changes in their lives and raising questions on how best to exploit the new opportunities. Some of the Gende's choices have proven to be highly detrimental to themselves. When the first migrant workers returned home with Western goods and cash, other villagers were eager to share in the bonanza and so migrated in turn or sought to obtain the new wealth in more immediate ways. One way was to request it as part of brideprice payments. In the past, most brideprices consisted of a few pigs, a stone axe or two, and some shells and bird-of-paradise feathers. Today, the number of pigs and the amount of cash requested for a usual brideprice have risen to include several thousand kina (Papua New Guinea currency) and ten or more pigs. As a result, unemployed bachelors and their families find it difficult to attract brideprice supporters. While some village women work long hours raising extra pigs for their sons' marriages, thereby gaining in respect and social importance, and making up for their sons' inadequacies as wage earners and possibly their husbands' lack of cash income (from the sale of coffee or remittances from working kin), all too often women's hard-won gains are offset by increases in other exchange obligations, such as ***tupoi*** requirements and funeral- and land-related debts (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993a).

With cash a regular component of exchange payments and fewer women than men having access to cash or an education, young women are more dependent on men than were their mothers before them. Jobs, for example, are scarce in town and even scarcer for women. Today, young women are faced with the possibility that even if they succeed in marrying prosperous migrants who can afford to pay their brideprices, their young husbands may resent them for their inability--in an urban context--to contribute much to family finances and may well cheat on them or physically abuse them on the ground that they (the men) own what they have paid for (see Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993 and the articles on marriage and domestic violence in rural and urban contexts in contemporary Papua New Guinea in Toft 1985a, 1985b, and 1986). This situation is more likely, however, in the case

of elite or middle-income couples where the husbands income (if not his physical attributes) attracts the interest and advances of other women.

In the villages, income-earning activities are irregular and few (Zimmer 1990b). In the sixties, men planted thousands of coffee bushes, but getting coffee to distant markets (something generally done by women as a way of earning a little income) was difficult in the absence of a road out. Also in the sixties, the first of many overseas mining operations began exploring for copper and gold in the mountains adjacent to Yandera village. Although the mining companies provided work for some Gende (mostly men), it was erratic and generated more problems than it solved, as many workers over-committed themselves in extended networks of new exchange relationships that they could not maintain when they were out of work. More regular, but only for some Gende, are the advantages of an education. Opening an English-speaking boarding school for boys and girls in 1958, the missionaries at Bundi hoped to pull the Gende out of their traditional way of life. What they did, however, was help to create gross inequality in the village and between urban Gende, as only some parents sent their children to the new school and only some children succeeded in going on to high school or college and securing high-paying positions in Papua New Guinea's towns and cities. Few of those who did were female. And this inequality has made a world of difference for women, as young women are encouraged by their parents to chase after prosperous men as potential husbands and older women have little to offer their urban-based daughters in the way of support except to raise pigs for them in their absence and to save a place for them back in village society should things get too bad in town. Young women repay their mothers' generosity with small amounts of cash they earn on their own or save from their husbands' wages. The latter can be a source of friction among young couples or a source of women's domestic power in the case of low-income husbands who respect their wives' thrift and management of household affairs.

The greater proportion of villagers' cash income comes from remittances from urban migrants. Since only some migrants are gainfully employed and few earn enough money to send home regular or substantial amounts of cash, there is a wide range of incomes in the village, with some households having several thousand kina or more to spend in a year and many others having less than fifty. The implications of this inequality include the loss of land rights among some of the poorer village households, a dramatic increase in the proportion of bachelors over twenty-five years of age, and strained relations between families who are able to pay back their exchange debts easily and other families who must mobilize even their oldest mem-

bers in gardening and raising pigs to keep up with rising exchange costs (Zimmer 1987b, 1990a).

One way in which the Gende have dealt with the impact of inequality on their social relations has been the development of an elaborate gambling system in which poorer individuals have a chance to increase their incomes and to demonstrate their efficacy in a context in which all the usual restraints --sex, age, income, and personal animosity--are suspended in favor of fluid gambling partnerships and the momentary and relative needs of the participants (Zimmer 1986, 1987a). Nonetheless, because they generally have greater access to cash, men are more likely than women to be major players in the big-money card games. Although a few women have used gambling earnings to fund the beginnings of profitable tradestore businesses or to buy pigs from other women (to increase their own pig herd or to give away), for most women gambling is little more than "small change" and a sociable way of easing the tensions and inequality that mar their lives.

The Women at Kobum Spice Company

In 1986 investors from India in cooperation with local landowners opened a cardamom plantation near Bundi, the site of the local Catholic mission and Bundi Subdistrict Headquarters. Named after the mountain on which it is located, Kobum Spice Company promised to be a major employment opportunity for hundreds of Gende, both male and female. During its second year of operation, there were over six hundred workers at Kobum, representing about one-tenth of the rural Gende population and almost equally divided between males and females. Rather ambitiously, the company's managers expected that the workforce would soon rise to thirty-five hundred persons, drawing in labor from more distant Gende villages and even beyond the Gende's territory. Unresolved conflicts between the landowners and management, however, as well as widespread disillusion over the benefits of working at Kobum, resulted in a rapid downturn. In 1988 there were only three hundred workers at Kobum, and in 1989--the last time I visited Kobum--the numbers were down to 140 total, of whom only sixty were women and girls. By 1995, according to Gende living in the Kurumbukare mining prospect area (northwest of Kobum), only one family was then living at Kobum, caretakers of the abandoned plantation and airstrip. The remainder of this article looks at Kobum's impact on Gende women and their participation in the local exchange system during the short period Kobum was in operation and answers the question of why women turned against this particular development in favor of--at the time--no development at all.

Working at Kobum Spice Company

During its peak year of operation in 1987, Kobum Spice Company paid earnings to over six hundred workers. Headed by a general manager from India (male), an estate clerk (male), and several field supervisors (male), the workforce consisted primarily of general laborers (male), cardamom pickers (mostly female with a few young boys), and cardamom graders (female). Other workers included a carpenter (male), a bulldozer operator (a man from another part of Papua New Guinea), an aid post orderly (male), and the general managers personal staff of two domestic workers (both female) and three male guards. With the exception of the general manager's salary, the highest wages were paid to the bulldozer operator (K 16.00 per day), the estate clerk (K7.38 per day), and the supervisors (K5.38 per day). General laborers were paid K3.38 per day regardless of whether they actually did a full day's work. The work that the general laborers did varied in intensity, sometimes involving the heavy labor of clearing virgin rain forest, at other times involving the less arduous task of trashing (cutting down and burning) the old fields of cardamom. The carpenter received a token more than the general laborers (K3.88 per day): Female workers (with the exception of the two female domestics) were paid by the kilo of cardamom picked or sorted and graded. The price per kilo was 25 toea (K .25).

Although they were paid differently than the general laborers, female workers could, if they worked steadily, earn between K3 and K4 a day, in some cases as much as K5 or K6. This sexual division of labor was even further divided, however, in a way that had striking consequences for the Gende's age stratification system. When work first started at Kobum, older women vied for the opportunity of sorting cardamom into different grades. Sitting inside a wooden building with six or eight other women and sorting the cardamom brought to them in buckets is a relatively easy task, and women who can keep it up the entire day at a fairly rapid pace can earn the highest income of the unskilled laborers at Kobum, as much as K50 or K60 a fortnight. Very shortly, however, the company's managers discovered that young, unmarried girls were the best cardamom sorters in that they had few distractions such as babies to suckle or substantial pig herds and sweet potato gardens to look after. More important was the fact that young girls were docile workers who, like many young workers in other parts of the globe (see Leacock and Safa 1986), and unlike older women, saw their work at Kobum as temporary and never complained to company managers about pay or working conditions. Company policy soon dictated that only young girls could work in the sorting room, with the result that some of the highest wages at Kobum were going to young,

unattached females, a situation fraught with tensions between older and younger women.

Equal Opportunities for Some (But Not All)

While it was at first believed that every Gende family would benefit equally from Kobum, this quickly turned out not to be the case. A few male elders and young business managers from the landowning clans received most of the compensation payments when Kobum was leased to the Indian company. Although some of this windfall was distributed to other clan members, much was spent on personal consumption (one of the young managers built a Western-style house near the company airstrip) and displays of bravado and "there's more where that came from!" For example, a number of older men flew to Madang (the provincial capital) on shopping sprees, chartering light airplanes to transport their purchases back to Kobum and the. amazement and glee of their fellow clansmen. Often, the purchases cost less than chartering the airplanes, and many purchases were of a frivolous nature (alcohol, unusual hats, radios, and cases of frozen meats that had to be eaten right away). Other demonstrations of prosperity, more harmful in the ripple effects they set off in the Gende's exchange system, included Kobum beneficiaries paying higher brideprices for brides from distant villages. While satisfying the inflated demands of cash-hungry bride-givers, higher brideprices made it more difficult for the young brides to eventually redeem themselves through ***tupoi*** and essential that bachelors find work to assist parents and others in putting together competitive brideprices.

Although many families contemplated going to work at Kobum, it was simply too far away to be practical for most villagers. Even villages a few hours' walk from Kobum were too distant to make it profitable to work there on a regular basis, as adult women would then not be able to tend their gardens and pig herds, and married men would have to pay other men to clear gardens for their wives and daughters. Only the poorest households with little or no land of their own and a few that were wealthy enough to hire part-time laborers in their absence sent men and children down to Kobum to work. With production levels not as high as expected, however, few such "outsiders" from outlying villages were hired. More profitable were gambling raids on fortnightly paydays, when men and women from as far away as the Ramu River area or Simbu Province would descend on the Kobum workers to divest them of some of their earnings. Less predatory were plans--most of which never eventuated--to attract foreign aid and business interests to the Upper Bundi villages to help villagers there build bridges and roads so that more coffee could be marketed and new sources of

income brought in to help them offset the threat that Kobum constituted to the local balance of exchange payments.

Tensions among Older and Younger Women

Nearer to Kobum, the inequality that was causing the most mischief was the opportunity for some young women to earn more money than either their parents or their brothers were earning. This was a problem for a number of reasons. First, before she is married a girl's family expects her to help with chores, child minding, and gardening. Always before, a prime incentive for a daughter to do so was to attract clan support in funding her puberty rites and to prove her worthiness to command a comparably high brideprice from prospective in-laws. By earning independent and relatively lucrative incomes, however, the young women who worked at Kobum could (and many did) forgo working in their mothers' gardens, choosing instead to develop non-traditional support networks by investing earnings more in certain kinds of exchange relationships than in others. Young women, for example, were giving cash instead of pigs to older clan brothers' brideprice payments, thereby sidestepping the need to depend on (and owe) their parents for the use of land on which to raise gardens and pigs, and receiving (or being promised) direct support for their future exchange needs by members of their own generation. They were also loaning money to whomever they pleased--whether in their clan or not--and buying food and clothing from the local store to be shared with girlfriends and younger brothers and sisters. Many parents had hoped to use their daughters' earnings for their own purposes, but few girls were willing to share a significant portion of their income in this way. Girls who felt their parents were "too greedy" or harassing simply ran away to town to live with married friends and siblings or moved in with other village families who were willing to accept whatever benefits the girls bestowed upon them, leaving parents to grumble over the lack of gratitude of today's youth.

Adding to young women's increased freedom of association (and an added source of conflict between older and younger women) was the bride-price inflation that accompanied the unequal influx of cash into the Gende exchange system. The object of young men's desire for their financial and personal attributes, the young female workers at Kobum attracted more than their share of marriage proposals. A common sight around the plantation was a young man hanging around the sorting shed waiting to walk a young woman home after she finished work or young men sitting with their girlfriends in the shade of the cardamom groves, the young women picking cardamom, the young men entertaining them with love songs and talk. Girls'

fathers capitalized on this interest by raising daughters' brideprices. Other fathers, from more remote villages, responded by asking equally high brideprices from the families of young men who worked at Kobum (or whose sisters worked at Kobum). This process compounded a similar one that had begun years earlier as a result of the Gende's relative poverty when compared with other Highland groups, a process that has resulted in increasing numbers of Gende women marrying non-Gende husbands who can afford higher brideprices than are being paid in the Gende area but lower than what, for example, a Chimbu bride attracts (see Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993a). Associated with this trend has been the increasing bachelorization of Gende society and the decreased importance of puberty ceremonies in determining the ultimate value of a woman's brideprice. The outcome of all this for older women workers at Kobum was disastrous. Without their daughters' help in the gardens and with higher brideprices to put together for their sons, many mature women were running themselves ragged trying to break even Working a regular work week at Kobum, they spent much of their evenings and weekends working in their gardens to raise pigs and food for their families, During my last visit to Kobum in 1989, women were outspoken and bitter about their predicament. One woman put the matter succinctly, saying, "Before I had the help and respect of my sons and daughters, now I work from before dawn until midnight and I have the help and respect of no one."

From the point of view of their mothers, the most galling aspect of the young women's newfound independence was the lack of respect many young women showed their parents and others. At an age when they were already self-confident because of the attention they received from suitors and prospective in-laws, young women who were being judged to be worth brideprices that were four or five times larger than ones given only a few years earlier were--in the eyes of their mothers--insufferable in their preening and air of superiority. Seemingly little concerned with their mothers' hard work or their mothers' worries that their children would not feel obliged to look after them when they (the mothers) became old, young women behaved as if there was little connection between their lives and their mothers' and as if a new day really had dawned. Some parents in fact were delaying their daughters' puberty and initiation ceremonies in order to afford their sons' brideprice needs at the same time they were asking high brideprices for their daughters, brideprices that would take many years for their daughters to redeem. As important, many girls felt that puberty and initiation rituals are unnecessary in today's context, believing that parents have little that is relevant to teach the young about life in town or at local developments like Kobum.

The withdrawal of older women from the workforce at Kobum and the

failure of Kobum Spice Company to flourish meant that young women's independence was shortlived. Even if it had gone on, disillusion and reality would have set in. For, as their mothers and married sisters know, brideprices have to be repaid and new ones raised for the next generation. Inflationary pressures would have continued to eat up the profits from working at Kobum and to have caused tensions among spouses and family members. A case in point occurred in 1988, when a young wife working at Kobum ran away from her unemployed husband after she became fed up with his drinking and with her in-laws always badgering her for her income. In another instance, a young woman married to one of the higher-paid employees at Kobum and the object of the highest brideprice ever paid for a Gende wife was embroiled in constant and physically violent quarrels with her husband and his relatives over her inability to satisfy their demands for repayment of her brideprice. Working at Kobum, tending pigs and gardens, and pregnant, the young woman left her husband on numerous occasions but always returned, having no support for her cause from relatives, who had already spent her brideprice on a bride for her brother.

Conclusion

In the end, both older and younger women had reason to sigh with relief when Kobum folded. Not only had the "development" backfired by increasing women's work and yielding few significant or lasting benefits to Gende society, it had also shaken women's confidence in their ability to help one another successfully navigate the stages of the Gende's exchange system and life cycle by exposing intergenerational differences and conflicts of interest as well as many disturbing instances of apparent greed and gain at the expense of others. In the fifty-odd years since the Gende began participating in "development," both men and women had been disappointed in its slow and unpredictable progress. Unequal opportunities, biased toward the younger generation, eroded older men and women's authority and too often put them in the service of a young elite (mostly urban) who had the economic, social, and educational resources to take the lead in village affairs, when and if they so desired and often to the detriment of established age and gender hierarchies (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1994, 1996a). Responses to inequality included inflated exchange demands, out-migration of young men seeking paid employment and young women seeking prosperous husbands, and efforts to bring development home to the villages. Often disappointed in their search for economic and social advance (or stability) and unable fully to appreciate the constraints and demands in each generation's situation, young and old vented their frustrations on one another, growing farther

apart as the years went by (Zimmer 1987b, 1990a). When Kobum plantation opened, promising regular employment for all ages and both male and female workers, women were dubious from past experience but anxious--because of their desire for cash--to sign on. When they subsequently rejected the development, leaving the project to collapse in a few short years, their abandonment was a powerful critique of both the Kobum project and the more general patterns of youth- and male-centered development that are characteristic of development in Papua New Guinea.

The policy implications of the Kobum case are clear, demanding not only a greater focus on women and gender issues in any planned development (see Warren and Bourque 1991), but also requiring sensitivity to local power relationships, including relations differentiated in both age and gender. As both the Gende case and other cases in this volume (see the contribution by Dickerson-Putman) and elsewhere show, women control important aspects of the social and economic lives of their families, and this control is greatest among middle-aged and older women (Counts 1985; Etienne and Leacock 1980; Goodale 1971; Brown, Kern, et al. 1985; Strathern 1987; Van Allen 1976; Weiner 1976). To introduce developments based in part or wholly on youthful labor is to seriously distort the balance of power between the generations. This finding has been documented in the case of young male migrants and their disturbance of local male power structures. It is also well understood that a male bias in development hurts women's interests. This article documents the full complexity and interdependence of men's and women's situations, along with the variable of age stratification, providing the backdrop for an understanding of how even sexually balanced development--especially if biased toward younger as opposed to older females--can result in disturbances in local sociopolitical systems.

The women who left Kobum indirectly suggested ways a more balanced gender- and age-specific development could be achieved. In the late afternoons, as I followed individual women home from the cardamom fields to their sweet potato gardens, they often complained of how men were paid by the fortnight whether they worked a full day or not while women were paid by the kilo of seeds picked or sorted. As women's work planting and harvesting sweet potatoes and taking care of pigs and children requires daily input, and only unmarried or much older women (whose children are grown) could afford to spend all day, every work day at the plantation, most women earned far less than men. While at the beginning of the annual planting season men took off several weeks from working at Kobum to clear gardens for their wives, their loss of income was insignificant when compared with women's overall lower earnings. The opinion, of many women was that men were often paid for doing nothing of importance for days or weeks at a time while women were given no extras or rewards simply for showing up to

work. This inequity was compounded by the loss of help women used to expect from older women and girls when it came to raising pigs and sweet potatoes for household consumption and exchange. Given married women's social and economic responsibilities, it seems reasonable to suggest a redistribution tax on the incomes of workers, to be given to women whose husbands, children, and parents work at developments like Kobum, to compensate for those women's added burdens and inability also to work full-time for wages. Such a tax would recognize the interdependence of family members and provide a kind of social security for the individuals who seem most heavily burdened by Papua New Guinea's current style of development. Arguments over who should or should not receive the benefits of taxation could be carried out in subdistrict and district courts, where women's (and men's) critiques of development and their suggestions for more society-sensitive development could be heard and debated.

The inequality described above, however, was not the only inequality women were critiquing when they left Kobum. Indeed, their greater despair seemed to be in the inability of any development to bring real improvement to a majority of Gende lives. Their eyes and minds sharpened by discrimination and overwork, Gende women seemed aware of the unfairness of development at a more global level. Noting how poor and far behind the Gende were in comparison with other Highlanders, and making the same contrasts between Highlanders and the rest of Papua New Guinea, and Papua New Guinea and my country (the United States), they expressed the opinion that most Gende had little or nothing to show for all the work they engaged in in pursuit of "development." In the past, similar sentiments sparked the "Bundi Strike," a militant demonstration of Gende men and women aimed at getting the Madang and national governments to put more money into road building and support of local development (see Zimmer 1985). In quickly bringing the Kobum project to a close, Gende women showed the kind of critical and self awareness evident among poor women factory and home workers described in the essays in the volume by Rowbotham and Mitter (1993), who are organizing in both the Third and First Worlds to combat not only sexual inequities but a global economy that disregards the needs of families and, in many cases, formerly well-balanced local structures of age stratification and intergenerational support.

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MAKING THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN WOMAN: THE EXTENSION OF WOMEN'S INITIATION PRACTICES TO SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CENTRAL NEW IRELAND

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This article describes the emergence of the Papua New Guinean woman, socialized by experiences in formal education at the provincial high school and created through ritual exchanges in her home village. These experiences, however, are not disjunctive. Instead, the Mandak of central New Ireland extend their exchange obligations for the *linnendaven* rites from the village's mortuary cycles to provincial high school education. My analysis of these acts elaborates Foster's argument (1995) that alternative practices of mortuary exchange provide the means of social reproduction. Whereas Foster shows trepidation for the Tangan's future as he analyzes those practices that ensure the creation of *malaggan* funerary arts even as they open Tangan society to the dangers of the market economy, I suggest a different future for the Mandak. Among the Mandak, cross-moiety and cross-generational exchanges "create" the female initiates as if they were yet another kind of mortuary art. As the Mandak discharge *linnendaven* ritual obligations to the elder generation of the opposite moiety by making gifts in support of the school fee and the education of the younger generation of that matrilineal moiety, they relinquish the power of tradition in the present and assert new interests in the sociality of the future.

IN AUGUST 1993, Margaret Taylor, the newly appointed Papua New Guinean ambassador to the United States (at that time the country's most senior serving female bureaucrat) issued a public challenge to the leaders of Papua New Guinea. Speaking at the Twenty-third Waigani Seminar at the University of Papua New Guinea, a biannual gathering of bureaucrats and intellectuals that in this year focused on Community Development and the Environment, Taylor drew attention to the utter failure of the male elite to

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collaborate with women in the social development of the nation. She explained first that she spoke not as a politician but as a mother. Then, pointing to the burden of political responsibility carried by women as mothers and as agents of community development, public health, and environmental conservation, she called male leaders to task. 'We need the fathers of this country as well as the mothers if we are to develop as equals. Papua New Guinea, like our national bird, the ***kumul,*** needs two wings to fly." Comparing the present body politic to a one-winged bird--a dramatic image of the mutilation of the bird-of-paradise, ubiquitous national symbol of Papua New Guinea--she posited a national political culture in which male and female Papua New Guineans might complement each other and the bird take flight. Taylor's decision to eschew diplomatic rank and to speak as a mother who hopes for a gendered political role for future citizens of Papua New Guinea is highly significant. It speaks to a dynamic process already at work in the country by which older women encourage younger women to take up social responsibilities. That process is the subject of this article.

Taylor's speech seemingly demonstrates the emergence of a new authoritative voice for Papua New Guinea women. Moreover, Taylor appears to represent a new PNG bureaucratic and intellectual elite that would exalt the emergent individuality of PNG women. However, as we shall see, Taylor's demand for the political recognition of women's contributions stems from deeper Melanesian roots of the exchanges of gender politics rather than a new graft of feminist consciousness. This attention to putatively anachronistic Melanesian habits of woman's socialization provides a window on the nature and dynamics of political participation in national development that can add another perspective to the articles in this volume as they address the changes in women's lives that have occurred in the space of a generation. The question I seek to answer is: what are the political implications of knowledge transmission across two generations of women, especially two generations who have had radically different educational opportunities such as those in the new state of Papua New Guinea? In order to answer this question, let us first consider a brief history of decolonization in Papua New Guinea, especially the New Ireland experience.

Decolonization through Education in Central New Ireland

Papua New Guinea came to independence in 1975 after a sustained effort by Australia to decolonize the protectorate territories of Papua and New Guinea through the development of formal educational institutions.[1] Following the request of the 1963 United Nations Visiting Mission to bring this largest Pacific Island territory (with nearly two million inhabitants) to inde-

pendence, Australian administrators first educated an indigenous bureaucratic service. Among other Australian development efforts, Papuans and Melanesians formed a national community teachers' service. Later, by independence, the young nation boasted a secondary education system served by the newly established Goroka Teachers' College. Under the tutelage of this new Papua New Guinean intellectual elite, the annual increase in secondary enrollments continued through the next decade, with hopes for universal secondary education by the twenty-first century (Weeks 1990; Ahai 1992). The University of Papua New Guinea and Lae University of Technology, both instituted in 1968, provided leadership for the achievement of these broader goals and enrolled more than two thousand students by 1990. These are the successes of decolonization.[2]

In the postindependence era, education has been the primary focus of criticisms of modernization. Early critics and policy analysts were quick to point to the formation of a new bureaucratic elite and of an educated, unemployed generation of youth as the darker side of national development (Bray 1985a, 1985b; Bacchus 1985; Weeks 1978; Johnston 1975). Beyond these warnings of the formation, of a new underclass, Lyons-Johnston (1993) and Wormald and Crossley (1992) argued that formal education created a new gender hierarchy in the emerging state that privileged men over women for positions as political leaders and for employment as bureaucrats. In their assessment of the circumstances that made such new social relations possible, the National Department of Education, Women's Education Group, has attacked any claim, state or local, that women are unworthy of advanced education. While numbers of women students reached nearly 50 percent of New Ireland provincial high school enrollments in 1992, the problem appears more serious at the postsecondary level, where women's attendance remains at 25 percent of total advanced secondary school enrollments (Department of New Ireland 1992). However, the anthropological problem has not been simply understanding women's subordination per se, but addressing how women understand the state ideology of national development. This article will consider instead the relations between older and younger women in New Ireland as they plan high school attendance.

Critical accounts of education in colonial or postcolonial societies have described the processes by which students and their families assimilate their cultural concerns to the educational demands of the new nation. While it is tempting to believe that powerful institutions of international education might force the homogenization of local particularities in schooling, this assumes that the innovations made by students and their families to make education for youth possible are a willing surrender of traditional cultural knowledge to that of the formal state education system. This perspective

creates two fallacies in representing social development in Papua New Guinea. It not only divides village from nation as if the well-documented reticulation of youth between town and village did not exist (Carrier and Carrier 1989; Gewertz and Errington 1992; Conroy 1972), but also misrepresents the relations between the generations as if elders placed the interests of youth ahead of their own--which they do not. Indeed, Gewertz and Errington have described the fatal tension between the generations over arranged marriage (1992:126-146).

On the Lelet Plateau in central New Ireland, the Mandak speakers extended their customary exchanges for the women's initiation ceremony to the new context of formal schooling in the late twentieth century. The decision marked a new relationship between a younger generation who matured in an independent Papua New Guinea and an older generation who attended mission schools or none at all. Although missionaries built many academic and vocational schools in New Ireland, few survived more than a year or two. Some villages, Lelet villages included, erected permanent schoolhouses as recently as 1970. Before independence, haphazard educational planning marked the colonial period in New Ireland despite the most carefully set policies (Threllfall 1975; Downs 1975). The District of New Ireland Reports on Education from 1952 forward demonstrate little new growth in central New Ireland notwithstanding the establishment of Methodist Mission schools in Kimidan and Mesi.[3] As centers for academic study, the schools fed pastoral education programs in more distant Rabaul, New Britain, toward the ultimate end of Christian education. By comparison Catholic missions in the region, at Karu and Lamasong, worked to send youth to vocational schools at mission centers Namatanai, Lemekot, and Kavieng. As an administrative region and mission field, central New Ireland includes the Mandak-speaking peoples, with whom this research was conducted, as well as their immediate northern neighbors, the Noatsi, and those to the south, the Barok. The region includes the offshore islands of Tabar, Lihir, and Tanga.

The Lelet Plateau is distinguished from the rest of New Ireland by its elevated remove from the long history of trade and business contact with Europeans, who landed in the few small harbors that spot the coastline of this long, thin island. The earliest visitors sought to contract labor for Samoan and Queensland plantations and found central New Irelanders only a little less eager than their northern coresidents to travel to distant places for work. Later, after a short period of difficulty in establishing settlements (Brown 1908; Hahl-1937; Firth 1983), Europeans finally planted the shores of the long island with coconut palms.[4] The devastation wrought by development and trade in the region found its deepest tragedy in the depopulation of the island. From 1902 to the decade following the Second World War,

rural villages declined. However, Lelet residents described their experiences as more moderate than those of their coastal relatives. Their genealogies and oral histories confirm the claims.

Unlike coastal New Irelanders, who first contracted as laborers abroad (Foster 1995) and later made business cooperatives as copra marketers (Clay 1986), the Lelet residents first met those missionaries and teachers who came to the hilltop villages to share their Christian theology and Western education. The Mandak of Lelet conducted most meetings with Germans and later with Australians through the formal channels of religious and secular education instead of as business. Hence, with the arrival of such new forms of esoteric knowledge as Christian theology, numeracy, and literacy, the politics of knowledge transmission looms large in the history of the Lelet region.

History, Social Reproduction, and Gender

The politics of knowledge transmission between older and younger Melanesian women conjoins the theoretical problems of two countervailing trends in Melanesian research. While, charting a historical anthropology, one ethnographer of New Ireland has clarified a counterpoint between the new Melanesian ethnography and the new Melanesian history on an axis measuring the comparative similarity and difference between Western and Melanesian social structure (Foster 1995). As Foster points out, most researchers would agree with the aim of Melanesian ethnography to expose the mistaken assumption of a commodity logic of individual agency when assessing the nature of customary exchanges and gender politics. At the same time, other anthropologists would agree that to produce ethnographic descriptions of Melanesian people without acknowledging the engagement of these people with colonialism, Christian missionization, and capitalist markets is "politically and intellectually irresponsible" (Foster 1995: 13). Foster ingeniously resolves these diverging approaches to Melanesian political life in a comparative historical anthropology of disparate concepts of exchange as social reproduction. Such an understanding is vital because exchange reproduces sociality throughout the colonial history of Tanga Island, New Ireland. Foster believes Melanesians may yet be authors of their own futures, because they approach the world from alternative practices of social reproduction, one of which he calls "transformative exchange" since it has permitted Tangans to manage the incremental changes in their wealth (1995: 194). Through transformative exchange Melanesians make their own historical contingency. Foster argues that the product of ceremonial exchanges is not social structure per se but, ironically, human agency. This agency is recognizable as the collective individual, a form with which Foster identifies the matrilineal clan.

> It is an instance of deliberate collective action through which agents define relations of similarity amongst themselves-bound themselves as a group--by differentiating themselves from other persons likewise grouped as similar to each other. . . . These groups are matrilineages ***(matambia)*** paired through intermarriage, which exchange nurture between them and so effectively father each other's children. (Foster 1995:12-13)

Accordingly, he argues that the basic constitutive process of such a sociality is "replacement" and that the basic constitutive unit of such relations is "identical exchange," for it is in the exchange of like goods for like goods, in this case paternal nurture for paternal nurture, that the social group discovers its coherent similarity (Foster 1990b).

Other anthropologists of New Ireland have focused on the redefinition of social reproduction in vernacular terms appropriate to the central processes of New Ireland ceremonial exchange in mortuary ceremonies. Ethnographies of the last decade focused on the rethinking of "work," "paternal nurture," "reproduction," and "social power" in order to discuss more effectively the Melanesian politics of these rituals (see Albert 1987; Clay 1986; Foster 1995; Wagner 1986a). In similar critical spirit, my description of ceremonial exchanges in the ***linnendaven*** ritual accounts for social reproduction in terms of New Irelanders' apprehension of generational relations and historical contingency in the ***linnendaven*** ritual. Moreover, I will describe the process by which central New Irelanders enter into exchange relations in the ***linnendaven*** ceremony in order to make the prestigious Ladaven of the next generation anew, even as they honor debts to the generation of the past.[5]

In attending to these cross-generational relations among the Mandak, effected to make women socially powerful, we can complicate Foster's claim that social reproduction in Tanga provides the appropriate focus for a "New Melanesian Anthropology" (1995:248) by attending to social reproduction in gendered relations across the generations. Whereas Foster described the exchanges leading to the making of shell disks for ***malaggan*** ceremonies, I describe the exchange relations leading to the making of the Ladaven. Moreover, whereas Foster described the ***malaggan*** exchanges in the context of wage labor, I analyze the socialization of the Ladaven in the context of postindependence education.

Although the ceremony of ***linnendaven,*** like other ***malaggan*** ceremonies described by Foster (1995), does articulate the existence of the collective agency of the composite of persons known as the matrilineage in relation to changing global politics, my concern here is with the processes by which

New Irelanders create the power of the Ladaven to effect social changes. In the following, I shall argue that those ritual exchanges necessary to the completion of the combined rites of schooling and ***linnendaven*** create the Ladaven's social power. While an analysis following Foster would describe how these exchanges were first expressed as the obligations of the father's to the mother's matrilineage, I argue that they also evince the person of the prestigious Ladaven herself.

My argument also attempts to address several related traditional indigenous claims about the Ladaven: first, that the clan of the Ladaven's father ensures that the child will become a powerful woman in the future by providing for the ceremony of the Ladaven; and second, that the ***linnendaven*** ceremony evinces the Ladaven as the ultimate image of womanliness. Moreover, because the Mandak imagine the Ladaven to be potentially full of these characteristics, they observe the ***linnendaven*** rites so that women might act out the best of Ladaven habits. The Ladaven is a woman of strength ***(lanatlolos),*** of industry ***(lanatgungu),*** or of Christian compassion ***(lanatmarimari,*** a hybrid word of Tok Pisin and Mandak). If the contemporary ***linnendaven*** rites for formal education evince the social ethos of the ancient Ladaven in the schoolgirl, then the current practice of initiation requires closer analysis. In the following I will discuss the exchange relations that made the ***linnendaven*** ceremony possible.

The Ladaven Goes to School

The Lelet Mandak practiced aspects of the traditional ***linnendaven*** at the time of a young girl's departure for secondary school. When the student left the alpine valleys of the Lelet Plateau for coastal boarding schools, she distinguished herself from other girls of the four small villages by pursuing an educational opportunity that they did not have. The typical Lelet girl would leave grade six to return to her mother's house and gardens. Among the renowned taro horticulturists and market gardeners of New Ireland, the girls who remained in the village pursued a daily routine of garden work. Market gardening, rather than contractual plantation labor, sustained the flow of cash into the village during the early 1990s. As the backbone of the village market economy, women and young girls ensured a steady but uneven income from vegetable and taro sales and redistributed it among the six hundred people in the region. As in other regions, men still labored to cut, prepare, and plant gardens while woman planted, tended, and harvested them. However, in central New Ireland the women of Lelet marketed the vegetables up and down the coastal roads and in the markets of the towns of Kavieng and Namatanai, thereby gaining the reputation of

being industrious, strong businesswomen with a bounty of fine vegetables in their woven market baskets.

Educated women exercised a certain amount of choice in joining the village market business. Without wage-paying employment, an educated woman might return to the village to grow fine vegetables such as lettuce and capsicum. Once she had found employment in the shops or offices, she would make financial contributions to the projects of her siblings so they could buy seeds, fertilizers, and herbicides. The educated woman thereby maintained a prestigious role as a benefactor in village social and political relationships. In enacting such a role with goodwill, she demonstrated that her personal ethos had earned her the name of "Ladaven."

The tale of the Gifts of Nirut demonstrates the proper enactment of the ethos of the Ladaven. The Lelet villagers told a story of the coming of a stem, industrious, and generous woman named Nirut with bountiful gifts of taro, banana, sugarcane, and other food to the first Mandak to live on the plateau.[6] Nirut got up from the ground and entered the village as a mature woman with a wealth of garden produce on her back. The elderly men and women insisted that the garden itself became Nirut and that the ground became a body and walked among the humans of Lelet. After she had given food to the children on several different occasions, the confused parents' ambushed Nirut. After suffering their attempt to tear the food from her back, Nirut finally stopped the parents with her cries. She recognized the need to share her food with these humans who had no knowledge of horticulture. Hence, she taught the adult Mandak not to take but to give and how to reciprocate the gift. Nirut modeled this ethos that the Ladaven is responsible for enacting.

Lelet kin challenge young women as they leave the village to keep up such an ethos. Now, when leaving for one of five provincial boarding schools at the secondary level to take up a place won by those scoring in the top 50 percent of the sixth-year examination, some children are jokingly referred to by the name used for all female initiates, "Ladaven." Moreover, the farewell party that honors a girl departing for high school mimics the ***linnendaven*** ritual of a generation past. Small gifts to the departing girl to help her with her new undertaking in the boarding school--a dictionary, a skirt, some powder--recall the bits of special food pressed into the hands of the Ladaven who was about to go into seclusion. The girl's mother welcomes these well-wishers into her house with a small feast of chicken, fish, and wild pig with roasted taro just before the girl's departure. The girl's mother thereby honors these guests who had contributed to the school fee and who overtly support her attendance at boarding school at the same time she cele-

brates the girl's departure. Those members of her own matrilineal clan who help to prepare food for the guests speak of the girl's departure with pride yet with much sadness. Because secondary school, like the ***linnendaven*** ritual, separates the girl from the everyday transactions of the village, the relatives weep as they speak of how deeply they will miss seeing her face around their hearth. Thus, instead of capitulating to the official culture of the new nation, the New Ireland residents have extended the tradition of women's initiation to high school.

This is only the first point of comparison between the initiation ritual and secondary education. Lelet guests at the graduation ceremonies in the provincial high school explicitly liken the procession of young women into the school auditorium to the customary parade of Ladaven from the house of seclusion. Indeed they greet the postgraduation procession with the same vigorous joking that was part of the customary rites. In the midst of the joking about the young women's future, New Ireland parents often announce that they have paid money to the professional educators at the school. This payment of school fees to specialists in allegedly esoteric Western knowledge parallels the customary gift of shell wealth to the ritual specialist who made the magic for the ritual. At the school, however, villagers give money in exchange for the diverse knowledge their children learn in four years of formal education.

Both events, the graduation and the parade of Ladaven, were a time for teasing and frivolity, even sexually explicit joking. In the graduation ceremonies the boy and girl graduates don "modem" PNG dress. Boys wear shoes and long trousers, while the girls dress in long ***laplaps*** and ***meri***-blouses or in dresses bought from used Australian clothing shops. Schoolgirls joked about Target Clothing, a popular chain of used clothing stores across Papua New Guinea. At the same time, they praised it as a good source of well-made and stylish frocks. Alternatively, they called it "Tanget Clothing," a lexical joke that uses a word from the New Ireland dialect of Tok Pisin. ***Tanget*** names the broadleaf grass that grew around the men's house enclosure and that men and women dancers used for decorative dress at mortuary rites. Hence, the joke equates traditional ceremonial dress with graduation attire. The dress of the girls receives much attention from the participants. They choose to distinguish themselves by dress from the "village girls" they would have been if they had not attended school. Girls do not wear certain kinds of "European" attire--stylish dresses and skirts or sleeveless blouses--because they fear rebuke as "Australian women." Elders say that such "Australian women" abandon local values in favor of the Australian ethos of "freedom," by which they mean freedom from traditional obligations to kin. The dress

of the graduation ceremony is an expression of both governmental and clan interests in the body of the graduates, since both provided for the students throughout their residency in the boarding school.

The new significance of the women's initiation ritual in the village eludes explicit indigenous criticism. Residents do not see that the extension of the Ladaven to high school graduation presents a problem. By 1990 the Mandak speakers of the Lelet Plateau no longer practiced the customary initiation rites of ***linnendaven*** as a part of the mortuary ritual sequence. Instead, they distinguished the "Ladaven party" as a separate rite of education. The elderly men and women made little of this shift in performance, denying that there had been any significance in the coproduction of mortuary and initiation rites. Whatever significance once lay in conjoining the rites of sexual maturity with the rites of death, it was no longer central to contemporary Mandak interests in sponsoring Ladaven parties. Had the Mandak women willingly rendered their customary rituals meaningless? I shall argue here that they have not and that more important indigenous historical processes are already under way in the practice of exchange.

In describing the contemporary women's rites for making the Ladaven through secondary education in 1992, it seems clear that the extensions of the village political interests in initiating the youth to a national education system are more than simple relabeling of formal schooling with local terms. In discussing the exchange relations that make Ladaven or students, I will show that these exchanges sustain Mandak visions of the future. Debts and obligations across the generational divide of the moieties establish Mandak futures. Moreover, the Mandak admit the possibilities of creative innovation within those relations because they consciously undertook these ritual exchanges, even at the simple level of face-to-face relations across the generations. For example, an elder woman anticipated the time when she might as an old woman rely on the younger Ladaven to provide her with the money and store goods that are accessible to those educated few with regular incomes from wage-paying jobs. In the domain of national culture in contemporary New Ireland, the rites of initiation both enhance the political potential of the young initiate's clan and encompass the education rituals of the modem nation.

The School Fee as Ceremonial Exchange in the *Linnendaven* Ritual

Before discussing the exchanges for the creation of the Ladaven rites, let us make the ethnographic context explicit. In the traditional central New Ireland experience, for example in Mandak villages, ceremonial gift exchange became salient in the complex of mortuary ceremonies sponsored by matri-

lineal moieties bearing the totemic name of Malam or Tarangau (referring to the greater and lesser birds, the eagle and the sea hawk). In the past, the feasters marked the completion of each sequence of mortuary rites with the creation and display of a singular art form, the ***malaggan.*** After commemorating the dead person with the revelation of the ***malaggan,*** the Mandak burned, destroyed, or left it to rot in the men's house enclosure where the remains of the dead rest. Across central New Ireland, the initiation rites known as the ***pinnewu*** and the ***linnendaven*** followed the redistribution of the ceremonial shell wealth of the deceased and preceded final acts of restitution of normal social relations (Clay 1986). As such, the initiation rites also marked the successive stages of the passing of the dead person from collective memory. Among the Mandak, the ***linnendaven*** parade fell in between the rites of redistributing the ***mis*** or shell wealth (Mandak ***lakmittoran,*** the manifestation of the spirit) and the rites for the resolution of all disputes and social obligations (Mandak ***lengkobus,*** knotted-rope ***malaggan*** used for ***laxabis)*** when the specialists displayed the ***malaggan*** art.

In traditional lore, the revelation of the ***malaggan*** art marked the end of the initiation sequence for both boys and girls. Among the Mandak, the male ***pinnewu*** and the female ***linnendaven*** initiates emerged from the houses of seclusion transformed. The new ***pinnewu*** males made ceremonial orations and the females made a ritualistic parade (Clay 1986). Some of the elderly Mandak listed the ***linnendaven*** of old as but one of the many kinds of ***malaggan,*** thereby equating the transition rites for death and the regeneration of sociality to the transition rites for making the adult out of the child. Most important, the ceremonial gift from the members of one moiety was always reciprocated by the other moiety in the later generation. Thus filial obligations to the elder generation were discharged to the younger generation by the performance of ***linnendaven*** rites.

The successive layers of indebtedness involving education demonstrate this social fact. For example, at the insistence of her senior female relatives, the student Mary entered high school. The older women felt that high school attendance would enable the girl to assist in the prosperity of the clan in the future; they made secondary education available to her to further the future of their own clan. Mary's attendance at secondary school ended when it became clear that she would be unsuccessful as a student there. However, female relatives argued for her to continue her studies in the vocational school. Her mother's sisters, all of whom had been successful in postsecondary education, had adamantly supported the younger woman's continued education. When Mary had failed to maintain her position in high school, these elder clanswomen were clear about the importance of continuing her education. When the headmaster of the high school predicted that she

would not be able to hold her place in the classroom and advised her father that he not "waste the school fee" on her education, the women of Mary's clan complained angrily that her father would consider not sending her to school. Indeed, they were adamant that the girl from the Kanesides clan must continue her education beyond the village and proposed that she attend a vocational school for girls.

Eventually, Mary did go to school, but not with the financial support of her mother's sisters. Even though each sister held a job and received a regular wage, they did not forward any support for the payment of school fees to Mary's father. Instead, her father amassed the school fee from among his own clan members to appease his wife's sisters. Mary's father and his clansmen took up the full responsibility for the education of the young woman because they believed they were accountable to the demands of the young woman's senior clanswomen. Primarily, the payment of the school fees was considered to be a father's concern. Second, the young woman was deserving of an opportunity to go to school because her clan had supported the women of her father's clan as they prepared for the formal initiations of ***linnendaven.***

Classificatory fathers and their clansmen support such young students out of respect for the history of transactions between their own clan and that of their daughters. If traced, the gifts of money and shell wealth between the clans through three generations would appear as a long, twisting string of gifts from the past into the future. The twists alternate across two generations from Kanesides to Bungaring and again across two generations from Bungaring to Kanesides. Sometimes, these obligations to reciprocate the gift of one clan to the initiation of a woman can be carried by her daughters, passing back and forth across four and five generations. In the above example, the effort by Kanesides for the ***linnendaven*** of Minas of Bungaring was retuned by Bungaring for the ***linnendaven*** of Rachel of Kanesides. Then, the effort of Bungaring was again returned by Kanesides for the ***linnendaven*** of Suunan of Bungaring, after which the effort of Kanesides was returned by Bungaring, who finally supported the education of Mary. Whereas the father of the child once secured her participation in the Ladaven rite of the colonial period, he now secured her place in high school at the encouragement of her female clan members. Both the Ladaven rite and high school strengthened the future of the clans of the participants--providing public respect for the woman's own clan as well as for her father's clan, because he supported her participation with gifts of shell wealth and food. Moreover, the other kin and village residents were obliged to honor the exchange obligations to her clan and her father's clan in the future.

Hence, the decision to send a child to secondary school, like the decision

to support her in a ***linnendaven*** ritual, is an act of paternal care giving. This is no small matter in New Ireland, where the exchange of paternal nurture between clans underlies the history of kinship politics. On the one hand, clans generally approve and insist on the attendance of older children at secondary school, when it is possible after the selective examination. The student's eventual success furthers the success of the clan by expanding their future sources for loans of money--either through the graduate's own employment or possibly by marriage to a wage earner. Generally, a knowledge of European ways acquired at secondary school is useful in informal clan negotiations. In this way secondary education enables a girl to become a better mother in her clan, a claim that has powerful implications for clan politics.

On the other hand, a father must make careful decisions about the child's education that are respectful of her matrilineal clan. I recount the case of Anna as an example. At the completion of the sixth grade, Anna received an offer of a place in the secondary school. Although older siblings were willing to support her with the payment of school fees, her father insisted that she remain in the hamlet to care for her parents, who were now elderly. She turned to her eldest brother, who was the oldest reasonable male in her immediate clan, as her mother's brother was very elderly and senile. He protested that their father was stifling Anna's future and that of her clan. In consideration of his son's protests as senior spokesman of his daughter's matrilineal clan, the father relented, and Anna went to the high school with the goodwill of both her father and her own clan. In making school attendance possible by arranging for the payment of the school fee, both clans met their divergent interests.

The goal of the extension of the ***linnendaven*** rites to secondary education has been to make women powerful in their own matrilineal clans. However, fathers and their clansmen also hoped that they would gain power through the marriage of the graduate. A successful marriage would help them create new exchange alliances with other powerful men from her husbands clan at a regional, provincial, or national level. However, a father might also encourage his secondary school--educated daughters to marry into his own clan (Tok Pisin ***mari bek).*** In some cases, the child attended school in order to make her a partner worthy of a man already residing in the village. Just as the Ladaven was betrothed before attending ***linnendaven*** rites in the past, a girl was betrothed on the condition that the young man and she both attend secondary school.[7] I witnessed a conversation between two men in which they discussed the happiness that they might enjoy in their old age--each as the father-in-law of the other's child. They concurred that secondary education would evenly match the two children and make them ideal adult mar-

riage partners. At the time of their conversation, the children were but five years old and they played together within the view of their scheming parents. Each father spoke of his intention to support his own child through secondary school, thereby assuring the other that he saw it as a part of their mutual commitment to the future of their joined families.

Marriages made after graduation or after initiation reknit the long history of social transactions that made the girl's education possible. An elderly male relative who once gave support with gifts of food, spending money, or school fee contributions receives repayment from the wealth given to the young woman's clan from the man's Central New Ireland women marry without feasting or public ceremony when the woman's mother accepts the suitor's gift of traditional shell wealth and redistributes it to her matrilineal clansmen. A woman's clan is generally enthusiastic that she marry soon after graduation so that she can begin to live purposefully. Women say they "work for nothing" before marriage and that after marriage they can work and make gifts of wealth and food all to the greater social good. More particularly, after marriage a woman can reciprocate the generosity extended to her throughout her period of schooling or initiation. Sometimes relatives insist on the girl's marriage at the end of secondary school if they are to remain friendly to her.

Hence, rather than providing the means to transform village girls into sophisticated individuals who finally sever their village ties, schooling is an opportunity for a woman to broaden and intensify the net of relationships with village relatives. I have mentioned that transactions that enabled the girl's education expose the extended relations of exchange because relatives came forward to amass the school fee. In more particular and restricted ways, they provided the girl with small gifts of spending money, school supplies, and food. Upon graduation, the employed girl recognizes those relationships by sharing her income with those relatives who supported her. Then, when she marries, the resources of her household are at the disposal of those relatives who had supported her at school. Contrary to the expectation that these obligations constitute a burden, girls say they feel ashamed of failing to reciprocate their relatives' support. In explaining their situation, graduates insist that they have honored the efforts of those kin who made gifts to them in order to avoid criticism for arrogance or selfishness. One school-leaver said, "I don't want to be criticized for European women's behavior."

In the preceding pages I have argued that secondary education replaces the ***linnendaven*** rites by continuing the network of social obligations and responsibilities that began with this initiation ceremony several generations ago. I also have described the ways in which kin in 1992 supported girls at

school with gifts of money and food during their absence from everyday village life in the same way kin in the early years had supported them in the house of seclusion in the weeks preceding the feasts at which the Ladaven finally reappeared. I have also described the process by which the student's father's moiety assembles the school fee and pays it to the school as an analogue of the way in which they gave ceremonial wealth to the ritual specialists and the feast organizers. These practices of preparing a young woman for school create future social obligations for her to meet. Moreover, in meeting these obligations to her kin, the graduate exercises her duties as a New Ireland woman by reknitting her relationship to the village. However, the question arises as to how the new Ladaven makes her educational experience salient for what it is; that is, what is the social knowledge acquired in secondary school?

Social Power in the Rites of Ladaven and Secondary Education

The New Ireland capacity to endure one of the most powerful European institutions of social transformation and yet remain Melanesian derives from an alternative critical ontology that posits that the power of contingency lies in human hands (see Wagner 1986a, 1991 on Barok history; Foster 1995 on Tangan reproduction; Clay 1992 on Mandak agency). Contemporary and past debates over the symbolic aspects of ritual itself elaborate a concern for the contingencies negotiated in the ***linnendaven.*** In New Ireland the negotiations over the rites of socialization of the Ladaven concern the correct adornment and deportment of the young woman's body. In secondary school concern is shown for girls' adherence to Papua New Guinean customs of womanly dress and deportment. These debates raised the concern that replacing the Ladaven with the student might have an unintended result. Do the rites of schooling create the new Papua New Guinean woman?

In order to estimate the depth of change resulting from the shift of preparations for initiation to education, it is useful to look at the concern with authenticity in New Ireland terms. Much of my discussion of the implications of creating new Ladaven in new contexts mirrors Foster's discussion of the dangers of the creation of replicas ***(tintol)*** of ceremonial wealth ***(warantang).***

> This undercurrent of retention, this pervasive keeping while giving, characterizes replication as a specific form of social reproduction., Both keeping and keeping while giving work as strategies to control the social identities and relationships iconically signified by ***warantang*** and ***tintol,*** respectively . . . Keeping ***warantang*** out of circula-

> tion involves a kind of hoarding, a strategy by which the continuity between MB and ZS that defines lineage replacement is safeguarded. (Foster 1988:375-376)

The student in 1992 merely replicated the earlier Ladaven. Indeed, women insisted that these students were not powerful in the same way that an earher generation of Ladaven might have been. The Ladaven ritual, in contrast to education rites, required that the lineage act to reproduce itself with the service of the other matrimoiety and to protect the continuity between mothers and daughters. The student, once distinguished from the Ladaven, still carried the burden of ceremonial exchange, just as the copy ***(tintol)*** did, once distinguished from the ceremonial shell disk ***(warantang).*** The decorative work missing from the ***tintol*** rendered it powerless, however, in comparison with the original ***(waratang).*** Indeed, the importance of the decoration lay in its magical power to transform social relations and to prove the disks authentic.

By comparison, it would seem that authenticity of the Ladaven's dress was very much a matter of her decorum, which entailed her circumstances. While her dress was not magical, we will see that it did engage the magical properties of the female body that all women possessed and some women used expertly. Indeed, the debate over girls' decorum raged throughout the secondary school as if their dress and behavior alone presented stumbling blocks to the mutual advancement of national and clan politics.

The attention given to the management of girls' sexuality in Mongop High School never produced a written code of behavior. Instead, teachers discussed "women's behavior" in ad hoc meetings. The debates about the nature of sexual antagonism were pedagogical. They insisted on the need for adolescent girls to learn about the social power of desire, that is, to manage body movements and dress so as to communicate effectively the message that they were or were not sexually mature "women." Group assemblies of all of the female students discussed the specifics of action.[8] Concerns of the PNG women's movement enhanced the conversation.[9] Teachers told students that they "stood at the doorway to a new Papua New Guinea" ready to begin "the work of being a Papua New Guinean woman" in the new nation. The women teachers and their students struggled to define a new "Papua New Guinean woman" unlike both the "village woman" and the "European woman." Notably, they emphasized the bodies of girls as containers for potent substances. Claiming women's bodies to have power over men mirrors the emphasis in the ***linnendaven*** ritual on the potency of the Ladaven's body in the transformation of social relationships. Moreover, the attention to the control of the body's movement and its dress, like the atten-

tion to the confinement and the skin of the Ladaven, created the image of the girl as a responsible New Ireland woman.

With explicitness equal to that of the teachers, the elderly women from Lelet discussed the emergent understanding of sexuality in both the contemporary rituals of education and the old rites of initiation. They commonly spoke of a young woman's sexual power with reference to the Mandak ***lamas.***[10] The semantic domain of ***lamas*** included body fat, fecundity, and feminine sexual desire. Indeed, it was common to speak of body fat as evidence of both fecundity and sexual desire, or to speak of fecundity as evidence of feminine sexual desire and body fat (or ***gris,*** as it is described in Tok Pisin). Elderly women recognized the rites of education and ***linnendaven*** as equally important to the development of the social and sexual power of the student and the Ladaven. As we shall see, during the rites the young women came to understand their own sexuality as a power acquired through feeding and painting the body to make it desirable. The Ladaven and the student thereby authentically embodied imminent sexual power. However, the Ladaven established her authenticity by more complex means.

In the past, hosts of the ***linnendaven*** ceremony asked a specialist to perform the ritual. Gifts of shell wealth assured the authenticity of the specialist's work by creating a moral obligation to ensure the accuracy of every detail of the performance. These details included the secret names for each Ladaven, the techniques of preparation of paints for the Ladaven's body, the construction secrets of the house of seclusion, and the forms of presentation for the parade of Ladaven. The Ladaven hid this information as specialized secrets that they might reveal should they need to initiate a new generation of Ladaven. Complicit with this rule of authenticity, Rachel, a Ladaven for some fifty years, insisted that the older generation of Ladaven and their ritual experts knew the truth about the ritual.

This referral of authority to the elder generation reflects a New Ireland habit of giving respect to the benefactors of knowledge and rite. By the same token, New Ireland women claim they can never be authorities in ritual knowledge until they pass it on. Indeed, they see an irony in the fact. Herein lies a New Ireland trick, a dissembling act: the authentic rite exists in the imagination of the elderly community, while the contemporary enactment of the ritual is but an image of it. The elderly women say that the new Ladaven is but a manifestation of the real memory of Ladaven. Such a logic makes it necessary to consider the young girl in school nothing but the image of the Ladaven. Further, it causes the elder generation to carry the burden of responsibility for the accuracy of the contemporary ritual form, making it necessary for them to discuss its authenticity.

These dissembling acts of custom make a distinctly New Ireland social

transformation possible. Elderly Ladaven discussed the symbolic value of the basic organization of the ritual as evidence of its transformative power. They explained the details as follows. The ritual hosts collected young women together and housed them in the dark house for Ladaven ***(lonuladaven)*** for several months. The ritual expert (Mandak ***lunkak),*** an elder man employed by the feast organizers, oversaw the construction of this small house and managed the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of becoming a Ladaven as he supervised the seclusion of the young girls "away from the light of the sun" ***(lexunkingkimo).***

The feast organizers and the ***lunkak*** built the ***linnendaven*** house and prepared special foods for the Ladaven. The ritual house was small and built within a larger house for the purpose of the ***malaggan*** display. This display occurred only after the completion of the Ladaven rites. Within the house the girls sat upon an elaborately carved bench, finely emblazoned along its posts in one ***linnendaven*** ritual with spear and leaf motif, marking hunting and gathering as two technologies of food production in wilderness areas.[11] These were painted in red, yellow ochre, white, and black. During the seclusion, the girls ate wild meats such as marsupial and pig, as well as domestic pigs provided by the feast organizers with the help of the girls' families.[12] Such food eaten in daily meals made them grow fat with beautiful shining skin. During the seclusion they were prohibited from exposing the skin to the sun, which blackened it. Mandak women say red skin is more attractive than black. The shining red corpulent body, created by the seclusion and feeding, symbolized self-indulgence and epitomized feminine sexuality. Here, the power of the ***lunkak*** to manage the girls' ritual process established the power of human action in establishing the alterability and contingency of human affairs.

The feasters joked aggressively as the ***lunkak*** led the young women from the ritual house ***(lonuladaven)*** into the main feasting area. The girls' painted bodies caught the sunlight and reflected it into the eyes of the crowd. The ***lunkak*** had used magic to paint the girls so that they would stir the desire of the feasters. While it was the work of elder Ladaven women to feed and paint the younger Ladaven, the magic of Ladaven paint was men's property. During the parade, the feasters often made salacious remarks to the young women and joked about sexual fecundity. Much of the play took the form of erotic teasing. During their dash from the Ladaven house to the benches that surrounded the speakers platform in the feasting ground, women feasters often grabbed the initiates and pressed them into mock sexual poses to tease them about upcoming marriages. It was said that the bodies of the Ladaven were red, full, and desirable, hence betrothals or marriages followed the rites. For example, one woman said she had entered into the rites of Lada-

ven at the request of her future husbands family in order to make a marriage.

As with the ***malaggan*** images at the mortuary rites that discharged power to the assembled feasters, the participants at the female initiation ritual assumed that similar power was awaiting release from the Ladaven's body itself. Toward this end, each initiate learned the techniques of painting and decoration for the construction of the female body in the Ladaven ceremony and claimed to keep them inside her mind. By describing his actions as he completed each one, the specialist enhanced the power of the Ladaven by sharing his knowledge with her. For example, the specialist repeated, "I'm washing the skin of the Ladaven" ***(lanasusu lamas atne Ladaven),*** while he painted the body of the girl ochre red, as if to clarify that this was an act of washing and exposing, not painting and covering.

The redoubling of the action, by this I mean describing the act while completing it, enhanced the verisimilitude of both the acts and the words. By washing the skin of the Ladaven, the Lelet Mandak revealed the woman's red beauty by ridding the skin of all of the matter that had darkened its light. Red matter was a euphemism for the history of shame felt at moral infractions. It was also a symbol for the social conventions of respect that dictate gendered behavior in everyday village life. The act of washing made the Ladaven women without shame, capable of acting beyond the conventions of social behavior. In sum, the fabrication of the body as the natural ground of self-evident knowledge raised women's consciousness.

In discussing how to interpret the meaning of the ritual, my elderly informants insisted that Ladaven no more participated in a symbolic rite of rebirth than they would literally be born again in a Christian conversion. As Tom Maschio has argued for the Rauto in New Britain (1995), interpreting the symbolic aspects of the Ladaven ritual is tricky. He describes how Rauto divulge the history of social relations leading up to the ritual. Gifts welcomed the Ladaven's arrival as a concrete demonstration of the previous social transactions that had made her.

In New Ireland, the same conceptual apparatus, the same concrete symbology usefully illuminates an analysis of the arts of the men's house. Thought of in its most material dimensions, the men's house is a container for other cultural forms. One such form from the men's house at the turn of the century, described by Marianne George as a wooden wall mural depicting the Ladaven with exposed heavy wombs (1987), privileged a view of the unborn child. We might well say that the men's house enclosed the mural, which enclosed the picture of the body of the woman that, in turn, enclosed the picture of the future children of the clan. From the observer's perspective, George writes: "Dawan are girls who have matured into women; ready to

realize their innately creative feminine capacity for production of new clan members and wealth, they are regarded as self-sufficient symbols of this capacity" (1987:93). Perhaps, by contemplating the body of the Ladaven on the mural, the chain of meanings became apparent to men. The screen displayed inside the men's house confirmed that the Ladaven had the power to transform the clan from one set of social relations into another. The power of the Ladaven, like the power of the newborn, existed in her ability to make other social relations apparent.

The ***linnendaven*** rituals celebrate human creativity in social relations, reminding participants that women, with men, have made the world in an image of their mutual choice. On the basis of conventional arguments that assume the capacity of symbols to represent other experiences, one might interpret the initiation ritual as symbolic rebirth, the initiate emerging as a powerful woman made by her social relations into a prestigious person. Yet Mandak women themselves had denied any suggestion that the ritual was a rebirth. Instead, the symbology of the Ladaven rite reflected concerns with pregnancy and parturition as feminine acts that altered conventional social relations. Such a critical commentary presses the claim that meaning in island Melanesia eludes easy comprehension. Indeed, we must comprehend the materiality with which Melanesians express the significance of relationships (Maschio 1995; Wagner 1986a; Strathern 1988).

As participants in the ***linnendaven*** ritual, women contemplated their power to change social relations through concretely symbolic acts. The symbolism of the ritual confirms that women who distinguished themselves from the matrilineage also became socially powerful. The elderly Ladaven I knew compared their separation from the rest of their clan to parturition. The hosts separated each Ladaven from the group as if she were a newborn red-skinned child parted from its mother. The analogy elaborated several idiomatic expressions used by women to discuss their genitalia: the ritual house for the Ladaven referred to the womb, and the doorway through which the initiates appeared referred to the birth canal. Such a concrete demonstration of social power, whether in giving birth or parading decorated bodies in the crowd, iterated the previously latent capacity of the Ladaven to demand the fabrication of new social relations. In what appears to be a new agreement with George's analysis, Roy Wagner has argued that a singularly New Ireland logic of materiality understood the mature New Ireland body to be inscribed as itself (1987). Wagner's claim for the significance of the Ladaven ceremony focuses on creative and generative powers. In his study of Barok mortuary rights, he argues that New Ireland residents establish tutelary relationships in ritual not to reproduce the ritual, but to teach themselves about the means by which the world becomes significant. The

semiotics of the Ladaven were revealed in the acts of reduplication-the washing and rewashing of the protected skin to make it glow red brown, the fattening of the potentially fertile body. He argues that these practices inscribed on the body that which was readily recognized: its red color and its fecundity. In underlining as cultural those facets of the body we deem natural, New Irelanders learned that the significant world has a kind of density of meaning that the Mandak respectfully described as strength (Mandak ***lolos).***[13]

The vernacular concept of strength ***(lolos)*** has its contemporary translation in Tok Pisin as weight ***(hevi)*** and power ***(pawa),*** but I will discuss only the semantic domain of ***hevi*** in New Ireland Tok Pisin. The contemporary postindependence student and Ladaven of the colonial era described their social power as strong or weighty ***(hevi).*** As with the vernacular concept of strength, central New Irelanders understood weight to refer to the significance contained in things. The ceremonial gift of shell wealth, a ***mis,*** was ***hevi*** because in receiving it the recipient recalled all of the many men and women who had transacted some political relationship by the giving of that strand of ***mis.*** In another example, women described a favorite church hymn as ***hevi*** because its words referred ambiguously to distant places and events, thereby conflating details of Mandak and biblical history with spiritual experiences.

Most important, they described the Ladaven as ***hevi.*** New Ireland men and women remembered each Ladaven of the distant past by recounting her offspring. The case history of the orchestration of a Ladaven ceremony by a tiny and diminished matriline exemplified the claim. Lelet women said that the body of Teptep, the sole female member of the clan Lengko, was ***hevi*** with the future of the clan after she became a Ladaven. As she bore its future members, her latent power finally became apparent. Her living daughters and granddaughters point emphatically to the expansion of the clan to its contemporary fullness by naming the women members of each generation of her descendants. In such recitations of six, even seven generations, the younger teller memorializes the Ladaven and claims to demonstrate the weight of her significance. Women tell the tale to demonstrate that the Ladaven carried the burden of social power to create the clan; hence it could be said that her body contained the power to extend contemporary social relationships between the clans into the future.

Women speak wittingly of the different historical contexts in which the Mandak moieties hosted the Ladaven rites. In so doing, they compare the weight of the Ladaven of one generation with that of another. Their grandmothers, of Teptep's generation, celebrated the rites during the years of severe population decline following the decades of migration to plantation work in an effort to encourage population growth following those years of

deprivation. Their mothers participated in a revival of the Ladaven rites after the Japanese occupation of New Ireland. During this time, New Ireland men worked with the Australian administrators toward the social and economic development of the province. In those rites of Ladaven, the women established privileges of participation in ceremonial exchanges and the right to deliver public speeches at civic events. As well, the Ladaven of the postwar generation advised on plans for marriage in the clan or about plans for mortuary feasts. In these roles they emulated the power of prestigious men who might speak to the plausibility of a marriage between two clans, calculating the history of relationships that better enabled their interests in reclaiming ceremonial wealth in their own clan. This timely award of social powers enabled women to stay abreast of the intensification of the local politics of prestige that accompanied the effort to establish capital business cooperatives in the central New Ireland region in the postwar period.

In postwar New Ireland, the Ladavens' consciousness of their social power also enabled them to take up responsibilities for public oratory. Like the contemporary secondary school graduate who enjoys the privilege of participation in national politics, the renowned Ladaven of central New Ireland enjoyed a privilege unknown to her sisters of speaking publicly about clan interests. As one Ladaven, now the deputy headmistress of the community school, said to the assembled parents at a school meeting: "Forgive my lateness, but I cannot speak to you as a teacher today. I have come from the gardens, where I work to carry food to my family. I speak to you as a Papua New Guinean mother who worries for the future of these children in the school." Everyone knew that years ago she had "sat on the Ladaven bench" when the gifts of her fathers clan had enabled her to become a nurturing member of the larger community. Only now did she give that fact significance in public debate. In this moment of speaking, as she took up the responsibility of exercising her promised authority to care for the community at large, the deputy headmistress revealed her social power as the Ladaven.

The New Ladaven as a Papua New Guinean Woman

In the wake of such criticisms as those by Lyons-Johnston (1993) and Wormald and Crossley (1992) that education has created new inequalities between men and women in Papua New Guinea, might we hope for the Ladaven to provide a feminist revision of the PNG state? Certainly, in the performance of ritual New Ireland women came to understand the feminist argument that gender is malleable. But they also learned that, like their grandmothers, they can create women through puberty rites known as Lada-

ven, Dawan, or Luan (Clay 1986; Wagner 1986b; Fergie 1995).[14] Through reflection on their participation, initiates in these central New Ireland rituals claim to have become ***"hevi,"*** their heads filled with the "meaning" of their experience, by which they mean that they comprehend the weight, the responsibilities, and the significance of their social power. New Irelanders make initiates into powerful women in two ways. A student displays her femininity by meeting obligations to the relatives who supported her through school. This makes and sustains her womanly reputation as industrious and compassionate, the qualities exhibited in their best form by the Ladaven. In the effort to raise student awareness to womanly responsibilities, femininity is also created by raising the student's consciousness to feminine aesthetics. The Ladaven's sexual beauty echoes the aesthetics of carving or rattan artwork prepared for the last stage of ***malaggan*** mortuary rites. The glistening ***malaggan*** art and the glistening Ladaven body strike the eyes of the beholder, refracting the light of the sky down into the crowd of feasters (Mandak ***ixumes).*** After they have viewed the carefully crafted bodies or seen the ***malaggans,*** the members of the crowd feel the desire to have a younger woman of their own clan attend a ritual or to make the ***malaggan*** for themselves. Thus,' the Mandak acknowledge and sustain the Ladaven's ritual.

As much as the consciousness raised by the Ladaven bears similarity to some aspects of a feminist one, it fails as a radical political ideology critical of the arbitrariness of men's social power. Hence, we can make only tentative claims for the Ladaven's feminist politics. Instead of revealing men's power to contain or control all women, the display of Ladaven facilitates the recognition that the enactment of the ***linnendaven*** ritual remade village social relations because men and women all consent for that to be so. Further, the graduates of secondary school, these contemporary Ladaven, advance a Melanesian perspective on the politics of the nation and its international relations. In so doing, women do alter New Ireland social relations in their own network of exchange relations. Indeed, the Ladaven could alter social relations more widely, more quickly, and more extensively in the broader net of trades than the Melanesian woman could. The Papua New Guinean woman's continued capacity to alter social relations and her future opportunity to work critically to adjust and reshape their emerging forms depend on the extension of Melanesian innovative processes into the future.

Curiously, the way to critical political participation in the interest of empowering women was found in the enactment of the traditional prestigious role for women. Traditionally, the burden to authenticate one's own role as a Ladaven was discharged by meeting social obligations to one's affinal relatives. In contemporary Papua New Guinea, the power to create new

women's duties in the nation evinces this social ethos of the more ancient Ladaven. Woman graduates' status as authentic Ladaven obliges them to make the nation anew, to speak for small community development and against international investment, to speak of women's duties to the state as its mothers and against the liberties taken with their role as statesmen by the fathers of its independence; to speak for the need to pay taxes and against the use of tax shelters. These are aspects of their power in the role of Ladaven more than their role as feminist critics of the state.

Here, let me return to the first concern of this article, the making of the Papua New Guinean woman. Decolonization through educational development in Papua New Guinea from 1963 through to the present created contexts for new social relationships among women with shifts in the interrelations of state- and village-based knowledge. As newly enfranchised citizens of Papua New Guinea, Melanesian women worked to create a role for their daughters in the young state. Those daughters, the first generation to be born Papua New Guinean women with all the possibilities that such a woman's citizenship promised, confronted anew the burdens of the Ladaven obligations. From about 1970 forward, finding a national role for women as Papua New Guinean mothers became a concern of social policy planners and developers. Village mothers worked as local resource managers and community developers in the fields of agriculture, health, and education. In New Ireland, in fact, the new national image appeared to be but a patriotic rendering of a long-standing, traditionally recognized role of women.

This new role for Papua New Guinean woman was so deeply entrenched by 1993 that Papua New Guineans could reject immediately an accusation made by an international environmental group. The environmentalists claimed that women had harmed the environment through slash and bum gardening. But PNG women argued that little more than Western aesthetics informed their judgments. Moreover, they challenged the conventional antagonism between developers and environmentalists, proposing their mutual encompassment by giving evidence that Papua New Guinean women had been both developers and conservers of the wilderness for generations. Indeed, Melanesian women had chosen to develop their wilderness respectfully, using their expert knowledge as gardeners and by restoring the fertility of the land through magic learned from their clanswomen. In their public reply at the conference on environment conservation, they focused on women's work as "mothers of local development" (see the example of the ***wok meri*** movement documented in Sexton 1986). They thereby usurped the public attention from environmental to national politics by conjoining the work of nurturing the environment with nurturing the community.

I have argued that the Melanesian roots of formal education enabled the branching out of Papua New Guinean women in various arenas of political participation. At the same time, a feminist graft onto their formal education undoubtedly sharpened their critical insight. Throughout I have investigated the possibilities for Melanesians to comprehend their social position and to discharge the obligation to those who made their contemporary relationships possible, whether they be the father's moiety, the state, or both. Self-awareness that is raised through raucous joking and through magic ultimately comprehends a Melanesian conception of the Ladaven as powerful and of social weight (Tok Pisin ***hevi).*** The person of the Ladaven is ***hevi*** in the sense that bodies are believed to contain the history of relationships to other persons. The practices of reciprocal exchange evince once again those relationships.

In sum, extending Foster's interest in a new Melanesian anthropology, this article has undertaken the analysis of the articulation of disparate processes of women's socialization in the context of national development. It has described the extension of a women's initiation rite called ***linnendaven*** to the contemporary generation. This process reproduces or sustains the social relations of kin politics by replacing the Ladaven of the elder generation with the graduate of the younger generation. In doing so, gifts toward the school fee of a young woman from the clan of the father reciprocate gifts once given by the matrilineal clan of the young woman for the Ladaven ceremony of a generation past. Indeed, young women secondary school students are sometimes called Ladaven in order to stress the equation of one with the other. This process of replacement, as Foster has named it following Tangan practices, is a common exchange practice throughout New Ireland and much of Melanesia.

Descriptions of earlier rituals have also made clear that the goals of those ceremonies were particular to their contemporary history. Moreover, the rites performed expressed confidence in Melanesians' control over their own innovative cultural changes. Two generations ago, the Ladaven stimulated clan fertility toward the future. Because women had been held accountable for village depopulation of the early twentieth century by their husbands' brothers, the exercise of the ***linnendaven*** ritual was demonstrable proof that a woman's clan wished her future children and wished her husband the good fortune of a large family. In the ***linnendaven*** ritual of a generation ago, the woman emerged with the privilege of public speaking. This fit in with the development of business cooperatives for copra production in the region and both government and kin politics as they affected these business developments. Hence, the contemporary ***linnendaven*** ritual assures the authority of the present over the lives of the future rather than establishing

the power of tradition over the activities of present. Perhaps, given such a history of innovation, the extension of these rites to the generation of young women going to high school was only to be expected.

NOTES

This article is based on twenty-eight months of research between 1990 and 1993 in Lengkamen village on the Lelet Plateau, in central New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. I thank the residents of the Lelet and the teachers of the provincial high schools who assisted me with their thoughtful comments on the issues I address here. I also thank the provincial secretary of New Ireland Province, Mr. Ephraim Apelis, and the National Research Institute of Papua New Guinea for permission to conduct research in New Ireland. I thank the following foundations and institutions for their support: the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Institute of Intercultural Studies, and the graduate school of Princeton University. For remarks on earlier versions of this article, I also thank the members of the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Wales. Jeanette Dickerson-Putman and the editors of this volume also made careful remarks on drafts of this article.

1. Independence in Papua New Guinea came a full decade after the decolonization of most African nations and followed a much briefer period of colonial rule than in any of those nations. Moreover, Papua New Guinea elided those stages of sociopolitical colonial development that are common elsewhere. It never was an industrial economy, but moved from plantation to service economy in twenty years after the Second World War (Keesing 1937; Downs 1975).

2. As a state that intensified its formal relationships with the Australian administration toward the end of decolonization, Papua New Guinea has sought to sustain its dependency on the former administrating state without remaining a protectorate of that nation (Cleland 1983; Hasluck 1976; Todd 1974). However, the extensive extraction of timber and minerals undertaken after independence by foreign companies highlights the threat of a new economic colonialism. The implications of contemporary foreign economic investment for urban-rural relationships have yet to be fully documented, and efforts to analyze the opportunities for capital accumulation by PNG bureaucratic and business elites involved in mining or forestry have been thwarted by political intrigues.

3. Most schools established with administration grants in 1956 closed by 1958 for lack of staff or failure to keep a student roll.

4. During the period of its greatest success, just before the First World War, the copra trade escalated to three times its volume in 1902 (Firth 1983).

5. Throughout this article I refer to the initiate in the *linnendaven* ritual as Ladaven. The use of uppercase indicates that the name is commonly used as if a title or an honorific. I refer to the ritual as the *linnendaven,* using lowercase for consistency with other vernacular names.

6. The food that Nirut brought to the Lelet Mandak includes more recent varieties such as sugarcane and bananas in some accounts. Others insist that the Nirut brought only the

kinds of foods used in ceremonial feasting, including taro, bananas, and sugarcane. The discrepant classifications of varieties are not officially resolved in village discussions.

7. The discussion was not a binding agreement but a pretext for future agreements. As if to remind the girl's father of his respect and continuing interest in the plan, the boy's father sent a bundle of taro to the house of the girl. This gift is conventionally recognized as an early betrothal payment that the girl's father could choose to acknowledge by reciprocating with a small gift of firewood.

8. I attended a meeting at Mongop High School for the discussion of girls' dress and movement. It was said that the girls needed to learn to control the "messages" they were sending to the male students. About dress, it was said that girls were to wear knee-length uniforms with small, tidy armholes at all times. Shorts covered by loose long shirts were to be worn only for athletic purposes on the playing fields. Otherwise, casual clothes to be worn at free time should consist of T-shirts and skirts, or *meri*-blouses and *lap laps.* About movement, it was said that girls should not seek permission to go off campus in order to go to the nearby shore and beaches, where they might meet *raskels* from the villages; that girls should not seek the company of such school support staff as the bakers and the maintenance people; that girls may ask a male student to carry any item they wish to send into the boys' area so as not to interrupt the thoughts of boys from their work and activities; and that girls should not walk alone across campus, as this may signal that they are seeking the company of boys. Girls should never talk or laugh loudly in the company of boys, as this will attract inappropriate attention from them.

9. High school teachers are well informed of the efforts of the national women's movement through both the newsletters and workshops of the PNG Teachers' Association and their years of teacher training at the secondary school teachers' college in Goroka.

10. See Fergie 1995 for a different discussion of how central New Ireland women learn to manage sexuality through the rites of initiation.

11. An elderly woman remembered seeing axe and snake emblems in a different Ladaven rite.

12. In the *linnendaven* in the postwar period of the late 1940s strands of *mis* were given by the father of the girl to the feast organizer in exchange for her care during the seclusion.

13. This New Ireland epistemology is further elaborated in Wagner's theoretical work *Symbols That Stand for Themselves* (1986b). Here, Wagner compares this alternative nondiscursive semiotics with the more explicit, conventional representational logics, especially those of speech, in order to remind his reader of meanings that abound in domains of communication beyond language, such as sexuality.

14. In stating this I diverge slightly from Fergie's 1995 analysis of Tabar women's ritual as the means for the inculcation of cultural controls over feminine sexuality by emphasizing that Ladaven women come to comprehend how to use sexuality to achieve social ends.

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TARAMAGUTI TODAY: CHANGING ROLES OF SENIOR TIWI WIVES AS HOUSEHOLD MANAGERS

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Among the Tiwi of North Australia, before the arrival of the missionaries and Australian "protectors," all female Tiwi were considered married to their mother's son-in-law, selected at the time of the mother's puberty ceremony. A woman was born a wife and died a wife, having been inherited by a succession of men throughout her lifetime. Although all women were wives, some were designated in one of two particular categories of wife, the *ningyka* (chosen one) and the *taramaguti* (first one). This article discusses these two categories of wife and their transformations throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. I show that the economic "household" of the earlier period is still a socially important institution. A successful contemporary household is often headed by a senior woman (married or widowed) and comprises several nuclear family units. This article will explore how the contemporary household operates under the senior woman's direction in order to utilize the talents and skills of all age groups and provide a satisfactory subsistence and support basis for all.

IN PRECOLONIAL ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY, men and women acquired knowledge and wisdom throughout their lifetimes. Those in the oldest cohort were the most respected and revered members of the society. They were always consulted by younger dependents on important issues and rarely if ever contradicted. In return it was the elders' responsibility to pass their knowledge and wisdom on to the next generation. They were also responsible for the health and welfare of all members, until finally they were replaced as elders. On my last visit to Melville Island in 1995 my Aboriginal "sisters" remarked to me that we had grown old together, and we reflected on a time forty years earlier when we were all young and carefree at the

beginning of our respective careers (as junior wives or, in my case, as a Ph.D. candidate). Now, we carried many responsibilities and worries for our dependents (children and grandchildren and/or students) as we sought to share our knowledge with them and to keep them from harm's way. Today my own role is significantly more complex as I simultaneously try to pass on to the next Tiwi generations valued information on the "good old days" and gather information from them about the challenges they now face in the last decade of the twentieth century. While I have grown old in a gradually evolving Western society over the past decades, my Aboriginal sisters have aged during five decades of radical change.[1]

In this article I shall focus on the life course of Tiwi women, outlining the changes in their roles over the last half-century. Unlike some of the people discussed in articles in this volume, Tiwi women's power comes from two sources: age and the gender-assigned life responsibilities that coordinate, rather than compete, with roles assigned to males. As women age, they gain influence over younger women, in the same way they had control of younger co-wives in the polygynous past. They take increasingly important roles in the two major rituals, as in the past, working in coordination with their male kin. In order to understand the present situation it is necessary to outline women's life course in the past as well as the external cultural forces that have influenced the changes we see today.

European missionaries settled on the southeast comer of Bathurst Island in 1911 and over the decades following attracted a large number of converts among the native population from Bathurst and the western areas of neighboring Melville Island. The Snake Bay community (on which my discussion is based) is on the north coast of Melville Island and began as a government-run Aboriginal settlement only after the conclusion of World War II. Snake Bay (later known as Milikapiti) drew its population from the northern and eastern areas of Melville Island--people who were never attracted to the mission or who left it at this time. This early period (1946-1954), however, was for the most part a period of government neglect. There was a single European in charge of the settlement, who did little more than oversee distribution of food, tobacco, blankets, calico, steel axes, and limited medical aid. The European aim was to counter the trade of Malaysian and Japanese pearl and trepang fishers with Tiwi men, which consisted largely of exchange of food and axes for sexual favors with the Tiwi men's wives. During World War II many of the Tiwi men served as auxiliaries to the Australian forces in maintaining coastal patrols.

The first school was established at Snake Bay in mid-1954, during my first visit. Its students were my younger sibling cohort. In the succeeding twenty years, between 1955 and the mid-1970s the community experienced

considerable and intensive physical and personal development as the government sought to transform the attitudes and behavior of people they considered dependent "wards" into those of independent "citizens." The government policy of training-for-assimilation into the greater (white) Australian society allowed those in charge almost complete control of every aspect of life of all residents.[2]

The training-for-assimilation period came to a close in 1976 with the passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act of 1976 by the federal government. This legislation gave all the lands of Melville and Bathurst Islands back to the traditional owners--the Tiwi. The Tiwi Land Council, made up of representatives from all traditional land divisions, was formed to manage further development and use of these islands.

In 1981 Snake Bay incorporated as the Milikapiti Township. Pularumpi Township, also on Melville Island, and Nguiu Township (which supplanted the physical space of the Sacred Heart Mission on Bathurst Island) followed. In the 1980s and 1990s the respective local government councils restored considerable personal and community autonomy, no more or less than enjoyed by other citizens of the Commonwealth. There is considerable variation among the communities': The former mission, now known as Nguiu, on Bathurst Island has always been the largest community, numbering close to one thousand Tiwi in 1987. Pularumpi and Milikapiti each average between three and four hundred Tiwi residents. The following discussion concerns only the population at Milikapiti.

Against this background of rapid and significant change affecting the very fabric of their lives, my sibling cohort spent their childhood, matured into adulthood and parenthood, and are now the active senior generation. In this discussion I draw on the full range of my study dating from 1954 through 1995. I have divided my discussion of the nearly one hundred years from 1900 to the present into two parts, each of approximately fifty years' duration.

Tiwi Life, 1900-1950

The Aboriginal inhabitants of Melville and Bathurst Islands have been isolated from the Aboriginal life on the mainland by dangerous ocean currents in the intervening straits. Their social and political organization is in some respects similar to that of Arnhem Land in having a matrilineal basis, but differs in lacking the social categories of moiety and subsection distinctions. The matrilineal (clan) categories, called in Tiwi ***pukwi,*** or "skins," were variable in number and name over the period for which we have records and were grouped into exogamous phratries ***(aramipi).*** Phratries also varied from three to four in number. While the living members of the "skins" were

not strictly localized, the unborn members ***(pitapitui)*** were to be found in clan-specific spirit-children sites--most of them in tidal shallows within the bounds of localized "country" groups ***(tungarima).***

The stated cultural norm was that one should marry into one's father's matrilineal group (a group known as one's ***dreaming)***[3] and within one's ***tungarima,*** or country group. These preferred (and statistically significant) marriages have resulted in a skewed distribution of matrilineal group members among the countries and in the resident population of the three contemporary townships (see Goodale 1994).

Before moving to the permanent settlements (which evolved into the contemporary townships), individuals were affiliated with and preferred to reside in the country in which their father and grandfather were buried, then married within the country, and eventually died and were buried there as well. The coaffiliate members of a country resided in one of many ***tabuda,*** or camps, forming what Hart and Pilling called "households" (1960), a term I shall use here. A household or camp might consist of a single male or as many as fifty-odd individuals (a Tiwi estimate): a man, his many wives, their children and sons-in-law, and others who were dependent residents. The household was a single economic unit with a division of labor in which the young "worked" for their elders. Able-bodied men ***and*** women hunted for land- and shore-based protein (for example, wallaby, goana, possum, and shellfish), men (only) exploited the air (birds and bats) and the sea (fish, turtles, and so forth), and women (only) dug roots or collected other rooted vegetables and fruits. In large households, the senior male and the senior female heads of the household had the power to influence and direct the available labor force on a daily or occasional basis. On a conceptual level, the gendered division of labor was predicated on the assumption that all women were primarily responsible for the well-being of their households, and by extension, the society, while all men were primarily responsible for effecting the transference of individuals members of the household (and tribe) through the major stages of existence.

Men were solely responsible for conception by directing each of their predestined children ***(imerani*** [S], ***imeraninga*** [D]) to its own mother (a wife of the appropriate matrilineal group) while ***dreaming*** of separate encounters with the individual spirit children ***(pitapitui).***

Men were also primarily responsible for the physiological transformation of young, sexually immature girls ***(alinga)*** to menstruating woman ***(muringaleta)*** (see below). Men were responsible, but not solely, for carrying out the annual ***kulama*** (yam) ritual, in which knowledge of the underlying order of the universe (world view) was acknowledged by the initiated and transferred

to younger ***married*** and mature men and women. According to my 1954 informants, women as well as men were initiated in this complex ceremony. The ritual continues to be organized and carried out by fully initiated men, and takes place in the presence of and with the assistance of women and children (see Goodale 1982). The final transformation from living Tiwi to deceased ancestor ***(mobuditi)*** was also led by males, although assisted in appropriate roles by ritually adept women.

In the Tiwi system of marriage all women were married to their first husband before their birth, and most men inherited a first wife around the age of thirty. Whereas a woman's first husband was categorically older than she, a man's first wife was most certainly an inherited widow of an older brother and might well be considerably older than he. Later in life a man might negotiate with other men to obtain a potential ***promised*** wife (or wives), through prior investment in her mother at the time she was given to him as a mother-in-law (by her father at the time of her puberty rituals). For the son-in-law the investment involved living in his mother-in-law's household, hunting for her, and giving her gifts until she died. In return, his mother-in-law promised to give him all of her female children as promised wives. The two referred to each other as "my ***ambrinua."***

Among Tiwi men acquisition of multiple wives was the ambition of many, as described by Hart and Pilling (1960; also Hart, Pilling, and Goodale 1988). Men competed and negotiated with other men to acquire widows and young virgin (promised) wives. Some few men succeeded, late in life, in acquiring a large number of wives ("a hundred," according to informants), but some males never succeeded in acquiring the prestigious virgin or "promised" type of wife. In contrast, a woman was born a wife and died a wife, often having serially married nearly as many husbands as most men acquired wives in polygamous households.

The Life Course of Tiwi Women

A Tiwi female was born into a household consisting at a minimum of her parents, and at a maximum of her father and (in the past) all of his other wives, a maternal grandmother, siblings (children of all of father's wives), and her future husband. Often there were a number of other dependents. In this household, the ***kitjinga*** (small child) was nourished and trained in resource management by her parents and other resident adults for the first decade or so of her life.

Significantly, a few years before puberty, the young girl (now termed ***alinga)*** was taken by her father to her husband's fire, located within the

same household, and told that that was where she would now sleep, always by her husband's side. Her residence in any given household was dictated by his obligations.

Her first husband took over her education, including gradual introduction to sexual intercourse, which was considered essential for her sexual maturation. In earlier days, menarche was reached in the mid-teens and marked the most significant life change for the young girl, now called a ***muringaleta.*** In 1954 a women related these events in her life to me.

> When I saw that I was bleeding I was frightened. I told my aunti [FZ] and she was very happy. I stayed in a new camp with my mothers and auntis until there was no longer blood. Then I went to where my father, my husband and his brothers, and my ***ambrinua*** (son-in-law) waited. My father took a "woman-spear" (a carved double-sided wooden spear) and after he put it between my legs, he gave it to my son-in-law. My son-in-law hugged it as a wife and danced with it. Then I ran until my husband and his brothers caught me and, taking turns, struck my shoulder with a feathered ornament.[4]

In the week that these events took place, the young girl ritually became a woman, a mother-in-law, and had her first marriage ritually validated as well as all subsequent marriages to her husbands younger brothers. As each husband died and left her a widow, she was inherited by the next younger brother as his wife without further ritual. The young wife was now termed a ***murukubara,*** until she became pregnant (a ***poperinganta),*** and became a mother: ***pernamberdi,*** mother of a girl, or ***awriawri,*** mother of a boy. If she never became a mother, she was termed a ***badamoringa,*** while a postmenopausal woman was termed ***intula.***

It is in the enduring ***ambrinua*** and cross-sex sibling relationships that the Tiwi concepts of codependency of cross-sex relationships are most clearly expressed. A woman's son-in-law was frequently close to her own age, and this ***ambrinua*** relationship was likely to last considerably longer than any particular husband-wife relationship she had. There was (and is) an ideology of equality and cooperative mutual support between ***ambrinua*** that also existed between close siblings of the opposite sex. Both types of kin relationships prohibit directed speech between the pairs, marking the importance of these relationships. This prohibition did not preclude physical proximity, and communication was easily achieved by using a third person to receive and repeat the message. Both relationships required the parties to support

each other throughout life. While there was a certain amount of division of labor by sex, there were few other restrictions based on gender, and responsibilities were shared.

Categories of Wives

Although all women were wives for all their lives, some were also designated in one of two particular categories of wife, the ***ningyka*** (selected one) and the ***taramaguti*** (first or oldest one).

A successful household was usually headed by a married (or today, a widowed) senior woman and her husband. The unit comprised several nuclear family units but operated on a daily basis under the senior woman's direction. It was her responsibility to provide a satisfactory subsistence and support basis for all residents dependent on her. In order to utilize the talents and skills of all age groups resident in the unit, it was her prerogative to assign daily tasks to younger men and women alike. Her husband might be considerably younger than she, but if of a senior age, he would have responsibilities that were more political and religious than economic.

One category of wife, the ***ningyka*** (selected one), was an option a man could impose on a virgin (and prepubescent) girl when she was first brought to his fire as a promised wife. This man was no stranger to his young wife, for he resided in the same household or camp as his wife's mother. A ***ningyka,*** according to my informants in 1954, had to follow her husband everywhere. With her hand on his shoulder and her head cast downward, she was led by him to the water to bathe, to the bush to defecate, or even to hunt! She could eat only food given to her by her husband. She could not "look at" (have sex with) other men. The only local example of a ***ningyka*** they could point to was a mentally disturbed woman whose husband had died in the recent past. This former ***ningyka*** wandered the bush hunting and gathering food still believing herself in the company of her deceased husband, with whom she carried on a running conversation.

Not all virgin promised wives were designated as ***ningyka,*** but all were expected to begin their sexual lives with this "old man" who undertook the responsibility of "making her a woman"-- a transformative act for which he alone was responsible.

My informants (resident in 1954 in the government settlement at Snake Bay) told me that, while none of them were or would want to be a ***ningyka,*** everyone at the Catholic mission at Nguiu was "like ***ningyka"*** in that they were expected never to "look at" more than one man--their husband. I have no way of knowing whether a ***ningyka*** could have survived for long in

such a restricted existence as described; it hardly seems possible. Should a ***ningyka*** take a lover, she was no longer considered a ***ningyka.*** Perhaps the category existed in the eyes of the men only as an ideal type.

Young and middle-aged wives often took young lovers--a pattern of extramarital affairs set in place by Bima, the wife of the culture hero Purukupali. Bima and her lover Tjapara (the moon) arranged to meet in the bush. She left her young infant son in the camp sleeping under a shade. However, she and her lover dallied too long and the sun shifted, and when Purukupali returned from hunting he found his son had died in the hot noonday sun. Tjapara, the moon, offered to take the dead boy and return with him alive in three days. Purukupali refused this offer even as he battled with and killed the moon. He then walked with the body of his son into the sea and declared that from then on all Tiwi would die and never return.

This episode, however, did not make love affairs between young people against the law of the ancestral beings. Women would refer me to Bima for justification of extramarital love affairs, while acknowledging that in following her they were risking their husbands' anger. When a woman became pregnant, the child was automatically considered to be her current husband's child (of his conception ***dreaming),*** regardless of which sexual partner had "made it" (as they distinguished). There were no illegitimate births in precolonial days.[5]

The Taramaguti

As I have discussed elsewhere (Goodale 1994), the practice of arranging inlaws ***(ambrinua)*** instead of marriages resulted in a significant age difference between a girl and her first husband, often as much as thirty to forty years, but averaging around a twenty-year difference. The first husband would usually die before his younger wife. No woman remained a widow after her deceased husbands funeral rituals were concluded, as immediately she became a wife of the designated inheritor. Each successive husband became progressively younger until, as a mature and elderly wife, she was inherited by a man quite a bit younger than she and assumed the position of his first wife ***(taramaguti).***[6] The older wife (and her younger co-wives and sisters) moved into her new husband's camp along with any attached dependents she had already acquired, including her daughters and son-in-law. If a daughter had reached puberty herself, she moved together with her own son-in-law into the camp of her new father (her mother's husband). This is the nucleus of what Hart and Pilling call a "household" (1960) (Figure 1).

In the normal development of this household, the husband would acquire future wives. Some, like his first wife, came as widows of his older

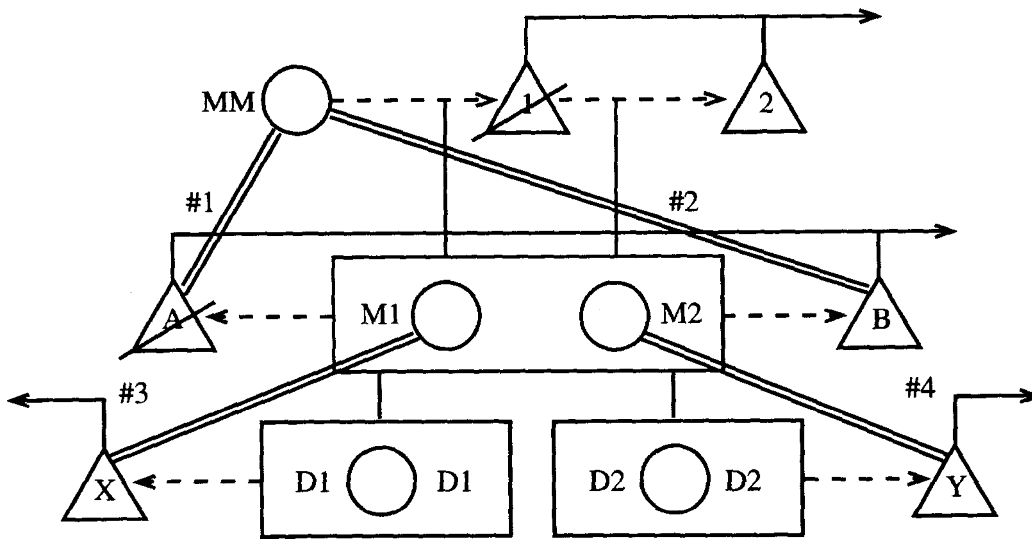

FIGURE 1. In this figure, we see that the *taramaguti* (MM) has been married (- - ->) to two husbands (1 and 2) in sequence. At her (MM) puberty, she acquired a son-in-law (A), forming *ambrinua* relationship #1 (=), and when he died his brother (B) inherited her, forming *ambrinua* relationship #2 (=). Meanwhile, as each of her daughters (Ml and M2) reached puberty, MM's current husband (1 then 2) arranged for each to have separate *ambrinua* relationships (#3 and #4) with sons-in-law X and Y.

brothers and entered the household establishment with their own dependent unmarried sons, daughters, sons-in-law, and daughters' children. Should he have a "good" mother-in-law, he could expect that she would take all of her daughters to his fire (as ***alinga),*** where they would join their older sisters as co-wives of their husband. An ambitious man would continue to negotiate for wives (including those unborn) throughout his lifetime. A man with ten coresident wives might have had, in the past, seventy-five to one hundred people in his household.

At the head of this very large establishment was the ***taramaguti,*** the oldest or first wife. She could and did direct (and instruct) all the women regarding what tasks they should perform and what variety of food they should hunt and gather each day, where, and when. She also directed (through her husband, since direct speech was tabu between ***ambrinua)*** what choice foods her sons and sons-in-law (at the peak of their hunting skills) should go and seek, whether meat, fish, turtles, geese, or flying foxes. She instructed the mothers in the care of their children and the youngest adolescent wives when to draw water, collect firewood, and baby-sit for the younger children.

In 1954, some ***taramaguti*** were spoken of (by younger co-wives) as powerful and "hard" women, almost dictators (who would sit all day in the camp while the younger wives and children went to gather food for the household). Other ***taramaguti*** were spoken of as "kind" women who always "looked after" (provided food for) everyone in the camp. Clearly the position entailed great respect, due to all senior women ***(intula),*** and carried the potential of great power--the right to direct others to do one's will--but always balanced by the Aboriginal expectation that along with respect granted to those senior goes the responsibility of seniors to care for all dependents.[7]

In the household of old, the power of the coresident ***ambrinua*** (mother-in-law) over her son-in-law was of a different order from the power of a husband's oldest wife ***(taramaguti)*** over the other household members. ***Ambrinua*** power only involved two individuals and was characterized by fulfilling the personal interests of mother-in-law and son-in-law. The power of the ***taramaguti*** was over all household members. It was, however, restricted to concerns generally assigned to women--care, health, and welfare of living dependents--the male head of household was ritually responsible for his dependents' orderly course through life.

In summary, all women began their married life, before reaching puberty, with a first husband universally described as "that nice old man who grew me up and made me a woman." In their early married life they were under control of older wives, as described above, but they also found plenty of time for sexual liaisons with unattached men. As long as they didn't flaunt their affairs and bring embarrassment to their husbands, they could have, as they told me, "a lot of men." Later on, the elderly first husband would die and, through the prior arrangement at her mothers puberty rituals, there was an ideal pattern of a woman's inheritance by the deceased husband's next younger brother. It is important to note, however, that the women expressed to me the great freedom they felt they had--to choose anyone they wanted as lover, and indeed as a husband, throughout their lifetimes. I interpret their statements to mean that with increasing age they had a greater voice in choosing from among those eligible who would become their next husband, as indeed they always had in choosing a lover.

Households among the Tiwi varied greatly in size and composition in precolonial times. Only a few in any given generation would eventually come to count "one hundred' wives. But it was a woman's expectation that if she lived long enough she could become the oldest wife ***(taramaguti)*** even if her establishment consisted only of her husband and perhaps one or two children, and if one of the children was a daughter, there would be a son-in-law to hunt for her. If a woman was childless ***(badamorunga),*** she could adopt a sister's young daughter, who came with an attached and promised

husband to "feed" his new mother-in-law. Men worked for their mothers-in-law for as long as the women lived.

Co-wives were sisters (older or younger) to each other, some with the same mother, others with the same "granny" (MM). Both categories of sisters required close cooperation throughout a woman's lifetime. Ideally, they moved together into successive marriages. They cared for each others children as their own, making no terminological distinction. Relative age was the only basis for any differential power.

When the Order of the Sacred Heart Missionaries arrived to stay at Nguiu (Bathurst Island) in 1911, they viewed the acquisition of infant wives by men in their fifties and sixties as rampant lechery and set about to put an instant stop to this practice. In the view of the first missionary, Father Gzell (1955), elderly men appeared to be paying other men for sexual access to present and future (infant) wives. He decided to "buy up" all the young wives he could for the mission and proceeded to offer riches beyond comprehension to the elderly husbands and fathers of the very young girls. I do not believe that he or the missionaries following ever really understood the key importance of the girl's puberty ***(muringaleta)*** ritual to the orderly working of the Tiwi marriage system (see Goodale 1994). Hart, working at Nguiu in 1930, and Pilling, also based there in 1953-1954, do not mention the ***muringaleta*** rituals (see Hart and Pilling 1960). In 1954 Arnold Pilling and I both knew a man who still had ten wives, typically counting some who were then dead and some yet unborn. There was no doubt that he was a powerful man in the precontact scheme of things. He lived midway between the mission at Nguiu and the government settlement at Snake Bay (Milikapiti) because both had asked him to leave "for causing trouble." The trouble had to do with his continued negotiations for wives and related business. I met him when he visited the government settlement with his household for a funeral ritual, but Pilling had an opportunity of visiting him in the bush. Pilling told me that once he had entered the camp, there was no doubt in his mind who was the boss of the household--it was the old woman, his first wife. This woman had no children of her own, and therefore no sons-in-law, but she was still a powerful woman and completely in charge of the household, including all dependents both male and female.

Contemporary Life, 1950-1995

Changes in Tiwi women's lives at Snake Bay (Milikapiti) have come about by a combination of greater Christian influence and, perhaps more important, an intensification of "development" involving Western education, job training, and eventually achievement of citizenship for all. All of these resulted

from Commonwealth-funded education and development schemes during the 1950s, 1960s, and into the mid-1970s, and the passing of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act of 1976. Development has continued into the last quarter of the century with greater involvement in planning by the local population through the Tiwi Land Council and the local government (township) councils.

The physical changes in the townships include changes in housing that were gradual, but by the 1990s all residents in all townships had permanent housing with electricity, inside kitchens, and plumbing. Although planned for nuclear families, this housing is always in short supply, and most units house extended families, often numbering over ten persons. Each township has an elementary school. Nguiu has in addition a middle school and a high school, all run by the Sacred Heart Church. There are medical clinics and health workers in each community, with an inpatient facility at Nguiu. The local government council handles local ordinances and maintains the physical plant of the township. All townships have a trade store (handling groceries and small hard goods) and from one to three small businesses, mostly producing carvings, bark paintings, silk-screened textiles, and clothing. The Tiwi Land Council meets monthly (rotating between the townships) to make. decisions on islandwide affairs. A business wing of the Tiwi Land Council owns a number of fledgling tourist enterprises and a timber business inherited from the government. None of these enterprises employs more than a few members of the local communities. Some employ both men and women, but others only one or the other gender--a pattern that, I believe, reflects the gender ideas of the European advisors who have been instrumental in setting up the majority of the businesses.

Contemporary Marriages

At least as late as the 1960s some young women as they reached puberty were still being given sons-in-law--men to whom their as yet unborn daughters were promised wives. Although it was rare that their daughters actually married their promised husbands, it was surprising to me that some did. In most cases, a promised husband together with a girl's parents were all "consulted" about any proposed marriage and had therefore a say in the political correctness of that marriage. In spite of the general change from prior arrangement to personal selection of spouse, the "correctness" of both bride and groom marrying into their fathers matrilineal group (their ***dreaming)*** was still important. An informal analysis of marriage data from the late 1980s indicates that it was still strongly preferred.

Also quite evident in the 1980s was that the mother-in-law/son-in-law

relationship was for many women of middle age still a very important and quite egalitarian cross-sex relationship. The precolonial tabu against directed speech between in-laws was still maintained by most ***ambrinua*** as was the support given by the son-in-law to his mother-in-law.

The most significant change in marriage patterns has been the almost complete suppression of polygamy as an acceptable form of household formation. Not all Tiwi are married in the church, but I know of no contemporary man who lives with more than one wife at a time. However, many in the younger generations live a life of what I call serial polygamy rather than permanent monogamy.

Younger women are frequently "marrying" one of their teenage lovers at an age between fifteen and twenty years old. Increasing numbers of eleven to fifteen year-olds are finding themselves pregnant, These pregnancies are occurring at approximately the same level of maturity that, in the past, women would have been brought to their promised husbands ***before*** sexual maturity. There has been a dramatic drop in the age of puberty from around fifteen to seventeen to about twelve or thirteen.[8] One of my older informants said this earlier maturity and pregnancy was because girls today are promiscuous and have sex with many lovers when they are between ten and fifteen years old. In the old days, she said, girls of this age only had sex with one man, their quite elderly first husband, and because of this they would not get pregnant until they were about twenty years old.[9] Today the young mother nearly always continues to live with her own mother in the traditional pattern of residence.

The great impact of early pregnancy (and often subsequent marriage) is not only felt by the teenage women, but by the equally premature young fathers. In pre-Mission times a man traditionally did not marry a wife of any age until at least thirty and did not become a socially responsible father for ten or more years. As impregnators, lovers in the past had no social responsibility for any child they "made," as the distinction was then phrased. Today, for many young husbands, fatherhood (social as well as biological) is a challenge for which they have no role models, either as husband or father. In the earlier time, they owed responsibility to and were dependent on their own parents until they acquired a wife (and/or mother-in-law) and joined her household. In this household the young husband's role as son-in-law, husband, and father was always under the eyes of his wife's mother and father, and other in-laws.

The contemporary marriages of many (but not all) young couples are apt to be unstable. There is considerable domestic violence, and divorce and remarriage are frequent.[10] Violence among the Tiwi is a topic requiring much more discussion that I have space for here. In the past, conflict was predom-

inantly over rights to women, and the accepted practice was for a husband to fight his wife's lover, while the jealous wife attacked her husbands lover. If a husband abused his wife, she could rely on the support of her own brothers and other male kin, and could leave her abusive husband if he continued his violence. One strategy young lovers took to escape a husbands revenge was to flee and live together either in the bush, forming an independent household, or in other communities where distant kin would afford protection.

As life has become more complex in the contemporary townships, so have the causes of conflict become more numerous. The availability of alcohol has the effect of increasing the number of arguments that escalate into physical violence. Old restraints against domestic violence (between husband and wife) have broken down. It is significant, however, that most of the abuse is at night and after nearly all male and female adults have bought their legal (and illegal) limit of beer.[11]

Women in contemporary junior households have little influence, and some take frequent beatings from their intoxicated husbands. Such a woman may (as in the past) retreat to her mother's household. If the mother is a powerful woman, a modem ***taramaguti,*** she can provide protection for her daughter using whatever inherent influence she still has (as ***ambrinua)*** over her son-in-law.[12]

I would argue that in this contemporary marriage pattern (of frequently changing partners) there is a reflection of the precolonial pattern of serial marriages plus lovers for all women and love affairs followed by polygynous marriages for most men. I was impressed by the number of forty- to sixty-year-old men who, while married in serial monogamy, also took one lover after another. These were powerful men, one of whom was referred to by an older woman, saying, "Look at him. He is acting just like his famous grandfather who had 'one hundred' wives."

In 1980 and following, I heard no one at Milikapiti use the term ***ningyka*** to refer to a wife in a monogamous union. Nor did I hear the term ***taramaguti*** used to describe female heads of extended households. I was aware that there were some households in the township that were dominated by strong women in the senior generation that approximated the earlier form in structure, organization, and economic function. It is in reference to these that I use the term ***taramaguti,*** and to them I now turn.

Modern Households and the Taramaguti

In 1987 Milikapiti Township had a population of approximately three hundred people living in seventy-two single-family houses.[13] Those who slept in these houses rarely formed an independent economic unit, a "household,"

by themselves. Five township subdivisions were themselves informally divided into two to five areas, each of which constituted what I call a single "household," made up of the occupants of two, three, or four houses usually located close by each other. I define household, as Hart and Pilling did (1960), as an economic unit containing a number of social units of married and widowed men and/or women, their married daughters (and sons-in-law and daughters' children), and unmarried sons and daughters. Many households had parental siblings, or another relative or two as dependents. Whereas a traditional household or camp might have as many as forty people constituting the economic unit, the modem aggregated household may number up to twenty or twenty-five but averages about ten.

In the modem community the economic viability of a household depends on having access to money from wages or from various kinds of government pensions (old age, disability, unemployment, child endowment, and so on). Money is necessary to purchase store food, clothes, fuel for trucks and boats, basic hunting equipment, cigarettes and beer, and airplane tickets to the mainland or beyond, and to pay rent and school fees, to mention only the most obvious and general areas of monetization of contemporary life.

There are a number of strategies in place by which some households even out the unequal access to money through wages and various pensions. One strategy is to gamble with cards for money (see Goodale 1987).[14] Women of all ages gamble ("hunt for money," they say), beginning to learn the complexities and subtleties of the adult games in their early teens. Although men also gamble, their participation is sporadic, as was their hunting (in the sea and air) in precontact days. Women consider gambling to be essential to maintaining a healthy household by providing a means of obtaining store food and goods, including hunting and fishing equipment, and gasoline (and sometimes the car, truck, or boat) for modem motorized transportation to productive hunting and fishing areas well outside of the township. Both genders gamble to amass cash with which to pay traditional ceremonial expenses that are now fully monetized.

Senior women of fifty and older are considered to be the "best" players of cards. "Best" does not mean merely that they tend to win more often, but that they play with greater intensity and are more skilled in knowing when to continue and when to retreat. All the senior adult women admitted to me that they gambled for groceries most of the time. While younger women said this also, they frequently added "and for beer." It is not that senior women didn't like getting their beer, but I noticed they often asked a dependent junior to buy it for them and were not refused.

The economic viability of the large household also depends on having manpower available to exploit the many resources of bush, air, and sea. The

large households (with only one or two wage earners) have to contain a number of hunters/foragers so that the natural food resources of the region considered essential for the health and well-being of all dependents can be assured. All households take to the bush or shore on Sundays, but large households with many mouths to feed also tap these resources by sending ablebodied but dependent pensioners and unemployed youths out to hunt during the week.

Another strategy for economic viability, enabling a household to balance income and expenditures, is to rearrange dependents. Elderly widows and widowers, with no dependents but receiving old-age pensions, are distributed to households to help make an economic base that can support them. Naturally there is always some kin connection between the dependent and the head of household. One dependentless elderly couple benefited from the "child endowment" check they received for a brothers child sent to live with them. It is noteworthy that in this case both husband and wife were powerful ritual leaders.

The formation of a contemporary household is not based, as it was earlier, on extensive polygamous marriage in all its structural and political complexity. The result, nevertheless, is the same--an economically viable group composed of both men and women at various age levels who can be sent, according to their abilities, to collect necessary and diverse resources (from shop and bush) to support the household. The organization of such a work force takes skillful management on a daily basis, and this task falls to the senior woman or wife--the contemporary head of household, the ***taramaguti*** of old. My 1987 census at Milikapiti shows that there were approximately sixty-two married women in the following age groups:

Year Born	***Number***	***Age***
1920s	14	67+
1930s	12	57+
1940s	14	47+
1950s	17	37+
1960s	23	27+
1970s	12	17+

Only in the two oldest cohorts do we find women who are (in my view) equivalent in power, influence, and respect to the ***taramaguti*** of old. The prime criterion by which I judged a woman to be a modem-day ***taramaguti*** was the number of kin who were dependent on her and who considered her commands to be theirs to obey. Of the twenty-six women above fifty-seven years old in the two oldest cohorts, only nine still had husbands; each of the

others elected to remain a widow at the death of her last husband. In the age sixty-seven-plus cohort four of the fourteen women head large households. Of these four, three were widows, managing without the help or support of a husband. In the age fifty-seven-plus group three women managed considerably large households, but only one did so with her husband, the others being widows. I give a number of examples below.

Isobel (not her name) was nearly senile, but everyone referred to her establishment by her name, not that of her coresident forty-year-old daughter, son-in-law, or married sons. Food contributions were given to the household in her name. Card games located in or near her house were said to be "in her name." She sat on her porch throughout the many hours of card playing surrounded by her six dogs and possibly eighteen cats and greeted every newcomer with grace. Although I never heard her tell anyone to do anything, there was little doubt that she was "boss" of that household.

Nona (not her name) was a sixty-odd-year-old household head whose husband (her second) still lived. Together they managed a large establishment with from twelve to fifteen dependents. There were only one or sometimes two wage earners. There were three "unemployed" teenage grandsons and sometimes additional young male kin who were regularly sent forth to get turtle, geese, or fish using the motorboat bought by their mother, the wage earner. In this household lived four, sometimes five, pensioners (including the youngest co-wife widow of Nona's father), all still in good health, who were regularly sent out to collect various resources of the nearby mangroves and creeks. Nona always organized and sometimes accompanied these gathering expeditions, which were often held in combination with the smaller households of her husbands widowed sisters. Once in the bush or on the beach or even when riding in the back of the moving truck, Nona told everyone where to go and what to get. Although her eyesight was growing dim, she often spotted a honeybee's nest or a sleeping goana from the moving truck and would direct the driver to stop for her "crew" to collect. Nona was also an avid and good gambler who, together with her coresident and dependent elderly "mother" (MZ), successfully "hunted" for money in the township card games.

Nona's husband was a quiet yet forceful senior man. He rarely disagreed with his wife concerning daily affairs, but he strongly voiced his concerns on issues of land management, politics of marriage, ceremonial organization, and discipline of the young--all traditional areas of male responsibility. During a cyclone he refused to move his household into what the township officials designated as a shelter for pensioners. He declared that in this matter he alone was responsible for his household. As a pensioner, he also had time for and interest in daily gambling, often playing as a team with his wife.

Phyllis (not her name) was a sixty-odd-year-old woman, the widow of a locally powerful man. She managed a large household numbering over twenty persons, although she herself had no house in the community. In good weather she preferred to make her open camp near the three separate houses of her married son, daughter, and granddaughter, their spouses, and their children. Her daughter, granddaughter, and son (all married) were wage earners and would contribute money, but Phyllis spent a considerable number of hours each day gambling to get money to feed her extended family. The main meal during the week, when the children were in school and the wage earners working, was at noon or in the early afternoon. It fell to the household head to make sure there was food for this meal. On weekends she was the one who decided where the household should go together to hunt or fish, and she was a diligent and keen-eyed hunter herself.

Phyllis often combined her household with that of another widow with a large number of dependents. This generally occurred when they took their large households to the bush on Sundays or for longer periods of time during school holidays. As very skilled foragers, they were intent on training the younger women, men, and grandchildren in the necessary skills and techniques. The two households together were more effective in bush foraging, and each of the old women liked the company of the other as they stayed in the camp minding the youngest while they boiled the billy of tea and perhaps played a game of cards together.

Although sisters are equal managers of traditional country groups with their brothers and are consulted on important matters, no women has yet been elected as a representative of a land-managing group to sit on the Tiwi Land Council.[15] Phyllis, however, frequently came to the Tiwi Land Council meetings and always loudly voiced her opinion on land issues that concerned the rights of her deceased husbands children. Phyllis's daughter Maria was frequently reelected to the local township council and unsuccessfully ran for president of that council during my stay. It is not irrelevant that during this time the president of the Milikapiti town council was Maria's ***ambrinua,*** who was promised her two-year-old daughter as a wife, although both Maria and the president knew that the still young daughter would eventually marry another man. Both the council president and Maria were very involved in the political life of the community. Although they strictly maintained the tabu on directed speech between mothers-in-law and their sons-in-law, they frequently consulted each other through intermediaries.

Other Contemporary Leadership Roles

I do not know whether the role of the modem ***taramaguti*** will continue to be expressed as other women reach fifty years of age and assume responsi-

bility for a large number of dependents. There are some women in the forty-plus age group who show potential as leaders of expanded households. Other women seem determined to make the smaller and economically independent European-style family work for them. It is significant that both types of households are headed by women who earn the highest wages in the community. The remaining married women are largely dependent on others for economic stability.

Two of the modem professions open to women, health worker and teacher, are the two most stable employment positions in the community, have little or no turnover, and are also the best paid. As employees of the Northern Territory Health and Education Departments, they are free of the politics faced by employees of the local township council.

The health workers at Milikapiti were collectively a highly trained team. The resident European nursing sister was experimentally withdrawn from Milikapiti in 1987 to test the capacity of the four women (and one temporary male health worker) to run the clinic without direct supervision. Their non-resident supervisor said to me, "They handle emergencies far better than any non-Aboriginal person, because they do not panic." They punched no time clock, but were always available when needed. As health minders, they were carrying on a traditional female role. As educated and wealthy women, they tried to influence men and women to drink and smoke less, to care for their children and their aged, and to run their own families according to a model more European than Aboriginal. In my view, they drew what they valued from both cultures.

The Aboriginal teachers did not have the opportunity to run their own school, although initially in the mid-1950s when the township school was first established, they were promised equality with their European "advisors and mentors." They were initially given considerable autonomy in the curriculum of the preschool, which was their domain. Unfortunately, three of the women with approximately thirty years in the employ of the Northern Territory Education Department are ranked today only as teacher's aids, for they have not completed the (now available) courses for an Aboriginal teacher's certificate. The opportunity for certification was offered to them years after they had begun their careers, at a time when they had already established families. To gain a certificate necessitated long absences from their families that they could not tolerate. Their influence in the community is a bit less than that of the health workers, and their families are more traditional in shape and form. As teacher's assistants, these women earn a relatively large salary for the community, and with this they have 'been able to provide cars, boats, motors, and relatively good furnishings for their households. But their influence is felt mainly within their own households. In the two modem roles of health and education workers, Tiwi

women are continuing in their culturally assigned female roles of caring and teaching.

Over the past two decades (the 1980s and 1990s), all of the health and education workers and many other women in the thirty-seven and older age groups have served on the local township council in almost equal numbers with men in the thirty-plus age group. At one point, when the council was all female except for the president, the council resigned as a group in an effort to coerce the men into sober behavior. I came to believe that some of these women view the township as one superhousehold for which they are responsible. They have no problem justifying their leadership position in this public domain, although their abilities are frequently ignored by European male heads of departments.

Periodically throughout the past thirty years, the women have formed a "women's club." The history of these organizations shows that most lasted no more than a few months to a year. One club, formed in 1986 and led by two politically dominant middle-aged women, had as its single goal to obtain a grant to buy a truck, boat, and motor that would be under ***their*** control, "since we do most of the hunting," they said. I was with them one day when they received a message of "urgent business of mutual concern to discuss" coming from the Nguiu Women's Club of Bathurst Island. The hour-and-a-' half truck ride and boat crossing to Nguiu took most of the morning. When the Nguiu women were finally brought together, they said that they were worried about teenage pregnancies, underage drinking, and mothers gambling. The Milikapiti club women said that they had the same problems and therefore couldn't offer any solutions! The women of both clubs then spent the rest of the afternoon gambling. This women's club went out of business shortly after I left in 1987.

While men are culturally charged with the role of organizer and leader of the major life-cycle rituals--the funeral ***(pukumani)*** and the annual ***kulama*** yam ritual--women have coordinated the performance of dance and some of the singing. The funeral ritual is also the occasion for production of the major art form--carved and painted poles. Never restricted from such production, older women are increasingly being commissioned for this important ritual act. In 1987, the European adult educator encouraged the formation and independent management of Jilimara, a small clothing business, producing initially silk-screened T-shirts, skirts, shorts, and fabric lengths, all with distinctive Tiwi designs. Jilimara sold most of its production locally and was making a small profit when I left. One of its young female employees was sent away to learn bookkeeping and business economics, but she has subsequently decided that a career as a health worker is more challenging and lucrative.

Jilimara was still in existence in 1995, occupying expanded quarters that also housed a small local art museum. The business helped market traditional crafts and artifacts, for which the Tiwi have long been famous, produced mainly by senior (and today the physically challenged) women and men. Both elderly men and women also spend some time carving spears, clubs, and poles, and painting them as well as bark baskets, all of which are important in the funeral ceremonies. Being a good carver and painter as well as a good ceremonial singer and dancer is still valued--although chiefly by and among the women and men over forty

Conclusion

If there is anything I have learned while engaged in long-term research among the Tiwi, it is to be cautious and to hesitate before drawing any firm conclusions and predictions. However, I foresee the resiliency of the traditional aggregated household, with powerful leadership roles for the senior woman. This arrangement depends only in part on the continuing pattern of "arranged" mother-in-law/son-in-law relationships and in part on the partial monetization of the contemporary household economy. Because everyone (including children) greatly prefers the bush "tucker" (food), considering it healthier and far tastier than what is available in the store, there is continued and concerted effort to educate all members of the household of all ages in hunting and foraging techniques. I can see, therefore, the continued viability and long stability of well-managed aggregates of families and dependents forming a large household and depending on size to give them a balance and diversity of resource foragers and consumers.

The position and influence of older women in other contemporary settings is less clear. They have held positions of power in the local council and perhaps they will gain similar positions of power in the Tiwi Land Council. The land council is extremely interested in helping individuals and communities to develop small-scale ventures. Such ventures in the recent past have included several tourist tours, buffalo meat export, and a forest and timber plantation scheme that they inherited from the government. Women have applied to the land council for small business grants, but have been less successful than men have been. Some business ventures have only lasted a few years, but there will be others and as always women have a voice in the planning. It is still early in this period of self-directed development, and it is possible that in the future women will have equal opportunities for employment, ownership, and management. This future would conform to the Aboriginal sense of gender cooperation and coordination of responsibilities in all matters, whereas the contemporary model has been, up to now,

strongly influenced by white Australia's sense of gender inequality in the workplace.

Certainly in areas of traditional control pertaining to community (household) health and economic stability, older women will continue to have significant influence over both younger women and younger men. In their roles in the schools and at home, women and men are overtly passing on traditional foraging knowledge, as well as language, ceremonial songs, and dances. Senior women are acknowledged by all to be the source of stability in the township as they were in the household or camp of the past. And, as in the past, as the next generation of women ages and supplants deceased elders, each should find her public as well as private voice.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to the National Geographic Society for funding in 1954 and 1980-1981, which allowed me to spend eleven and fifteen months at Milikapiti, respectively. The National Science Foundation financed in part my brief (three-week) visit in 1962 and my fifteen-month visit in 1980-1981. Additional funds were given by the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Bryn Mawr College, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation. In 1986-1987, I financed my stay in part through employment at the Darwin Institute of Technology as Principal Lecturer. In 1995 I spent a month in Darwin and Melville Island as preparation for a continued visit, in 1996-1997.

2. My data on this period come from Milikapiti settlement records that I obtained in 1980.

3. The Australian Aboriginal people's concept of the *dreaming* pertains to their view of the origin of the world, all its physical features, and its life forms. It also includes their view of the laws by which all of these features and life forms should relate to each other. *Dreaming* is a multifaceted concept that is far more complex than is connoted by the English word *dreaming* with which the Aboriginal people translate their concept.

4. A twitch in one's shoulder indicates that a spouse is thinking of you. A widow dances with a club with which she strikes herself on her shoulder in the mortuary rituals.

5. This practice also took care of any mixed-race children that might result from men trading with Maccassans and Malays, exchanging their wives for sexual partners and receiving axes and other goods. The children were considered to have been conceived *(dreamed)* by their mother's husband.

6. An older man, while still alive, might also give one of his wives to a younger brother.

7. In the early 1950s, when the white employees of the Department of Welfare demanded that Tiwi give them respect and follow their orders, the Tiwi felt it was justified since the Europeans were feeding, clothing, and otherwise caring for them. When the government (Department of Welfare), in the mid-1970s withdrew from controlling

care for Aboriginal dependents and turned responsibility for daily care back to the Tiwi, they did not relinquish the power of the government over citizens' lives, and the Tiwi were confused. In their mind, power and responsibility went together.

8. This drop in age of menarche is probably related to the increased fat content in the diet. The Tiwi consider the diet they consume in the township not as healthy as what is available in the surrounding bush and sea. For this reason, when feeling ill, they still turn to a bush diet, and everyone considers leaving the community to hunt on Sundays as essential for maintaining general health and for transmission of important bush and health knowledge to the younger generation.

9. My informant believed that the first husband, as sole sexual partner, not only saw to it physically that she did not take on other lovers, but that because she had sex only with him she was somehow protected from becoming pregnant until her late teens. The Tiwi believed that pregnancy too soon after menarche was dangerous for the young wife. If it occurred then, abortion was a common solution (see Goodale 1994).

10. I write here of Milikapiti, for I suspect a greater stability among those marriages at Nguiu, where most couples are married in the Catholic Church.

11. The Milikapiti Township Council sets the limit and kind of alcoholic beverage that may be sold at the Social Club. Since 1980 the legal limit is six cans of beer per adult and no wine or spirits. When the limit is enforced, many Tiwi gamble using beer instead of money. Losers remain relatively sober, while the winners can get very drunk.

12. In the past, should a husband mistreat a wife, the wife's father and brothers were obligated to provide safe haven for her and to punish the husband with physical force if necessary.

13. The year 1987 is the collection date of the data analyzed here. In the short period in 1995 during which I visited the community, I was unable to gather the extensive data necessary to update this portion of the article.

14. The principal card games are a version of gin rummy called *kunkan,* and *kunti,* a version of a game played throughout Aboriginal Australia and in Papua New Guinea resembling baccarat.

15. The nonelection of women to the Tiwi Land Council has been a concern of all the European managers of the council from the beginning. As employees of the council, managers are in an advisory position only and have no vote.

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