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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