NATIONALISM AND SEXUALITY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi
Northeast Missouri State University

This article attempts to answer the question of why confining women's sexuality within the imagined nation-community of a "thousand villages" is a feature of nationalist rhetoric in Papua New Guinea. I begin with a brief history of women and nationalism in Papua New Guinea, showing that postcolonial elites have, as elsewhere in the Third World, failed to deliver on their promises to women. One such promise was to improve the lives of rural women. Another was to emancipate women by promoting their equal participation in the development of Papua New Guinea society. I then narrow my focus to look at three aspects of women's involvement in Papua New Guinea nationalism. The first is how the country's nationalist male elite condemn women for striking out in the modern directions (sexual choice, fashion, lifestyle) that many have permitted themselves. The second and third are sharp divisions in the experiences and aspirations of both educated women and men and of rural women and urban elite women.

A premise of this article is that today's conservative sexual politics reflect a desire of nationalist leaders to connect with a "grass-roots majority" and a "respected past" in which, supposedly, men were superior to women and women's primary role was to support male interests. Ironically, it is the elite who have created the idea of a unitary grass roots as Papua New Guinea continues to be characterized by extreme cultural diversity, a diversity compounded by the effects of history and uneven development. Nevertheless, this diversity assumes a gendered political importance in the composition of the elite class, for most educated women are from matrilineal societies on the coast and islands

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and from families with long involvement in Western education and urban employment. The opposite is true of many educated men, who come from the less developed and more recently contacted patrilineal societies in the interior highlands. By publicly supporting a myth of chaste and selfless village women contrasting with sexually promiscuous Westernized women living in selfish abundance in town, Papua New Guinea's male leadership has contributed to the marginalization of the national women's movement. Playing on the gulf between rural women and urban elite women and appealing to the larger proportion of Papua New Guinea's populace, male leaders have contained the aspirations of women in their own class while at the same time diverting attention away from the needs and interests of all women.

Women and Nationalism

In much of the Third World, the struggle for women's emancipation began as women fought alongside men for decolonization (see Jayawardena 1986; Parker et al. 1992). In India, women hoped for equality in return for their help in bringing down the colonial government (Katrak 1992). In 1980, the year Vanuatu achieved independence, female leader Grace Mera Molisa argued that independence would be only a half-victory if Vanuatu's women did not achieve political equality with their men (Jolly n.d.:11). And in New Zealand, Maori women's long involvement in the struggle against white domination has from the beginning included a quest for equality in the face of traditional male dominance (Dominy 1990:248).

In the postcolonial era, women are disappointed with the pace of change and setbacks in their economic and political situations. The process of women's economic marginalization, begun during colonialism (see Boserup 1970; Etienne and Leacock 1980), has intensified as men fill vacancies left by departing expatriates and monopolize new technologies and economic opportunities (Leacock and Safa 1986). Deprived of former productive functions or forced to accept low wages for their labor, women lose status as well as subsidize development for others' benefit (Eviota 1986; Hammam 1986). Cases of women's marginalization abound in the South Pacific, where women make indispensable contributions to subsistence and yet are excluded from direct participation in the development of commercial farming and fishing because of official perceptions--held by Westerners and Pacific Islanders alike--that women's work is not "real farming" or "real fishing" (Hughes 1985; Schoeffel 1985:163).

In the political arena, Third World women suffer a less-than-hoped-for participation. This is especially apparent in African societies where traditionally there were male and female leaders and each sex managed its own affairs (Hafkin and Bay 1976; Potash 1989) but where colonial sex biases marked the end of such equality. Among the Igbo, for example, the British filled colonial government posts with men, gave only the male monarch a monthly stipend, replaced women's religious functions with Christianity, and destroyed the market-women's system of price-fixing by introducing imported goods into the market. In a paper on the 1929 Igbo "women's war," Van Allen describes how the colonials' shock over the extent of the resistance led to reforms, but not for women (1976:71-75). More native courts were introduced, but only Igbo men were in charge of them. Throughout the "war," Igbo men expressed little concern with what was to them "a women's affair." Afterwards, they accepted women's dependency as befitting a Victorian view of women that Igbo men--but not many women--eventually adopted. Since Nigerian independence and a resurgence of interest in traditional values, Igbo women have tried to recapture their lost power, but at the national level single-sex rule continues (Okonjo 1976:57-58).

In many countries, the disappointment women feel over their lack of progress is sharpened by the fact that during the fight for independence men encouraged women to return to their traditional roles (real or imagined) in order to advance the cause, promised them equality, and then reneged on their promises. In India, Gandhi's nationalist movement conformed to this "familiar pattern of mobilizing and then subordinating women" (Katrak 1992:395). Espousing a nonviolent philosophy, Gandhi called for men and women to engage in acts of passive resistance as a means of bringing down the colonial government. Essentializing Indian women's sexuality, Gandhi appealed to men and women to assume the "female" virtues of chastity, purity, self-sacrifice, and suffering (Katrak 1992:398). The legacy of Gandhi's representations of female sexuality for the Indian women's movement is complex. The more negative aspects, however, include that a view of women as passive does not challenge Indian society's patriarchal order and that it places educated women in the bind of appearing to be aggressive harlots when they attempt to enter the public world of work and politics. Gandhi's advice for the educated woman (but not the educated man) was "to remain unmarried, and to abnegate her sexuality so that she could dedicate herself 'to work with her rural sisters' " (Katrak 1992:399).

Where women's roles are more restricted, reformers striving to modernize their societies or enlist women's aid in nationalist movements

may promote ideas of "new women" or idealize past civilizations in which women held high positions and enjoyed untold freedoms (Hale 1989; Jayawardena 1986). Thus, Iranian reformers seeking to promote capitalist development and a bourgeois society of "monogamous nuclear families with educated and employable women" recalled early Zoroastrian traditions that accorded women a high status and many of the same freedoms as men (Jayawardena 1986:15). Such allusions, however, do not guarantee women's emancipation. In 1979, in spite of women's active participation in the Islamic populist movement and the Left's promise of continued equality and support, Iranian women were rendered dependent minors by legislation enacted to make gender relations as "different as possible from gender norms in the West" (Moghadam 1992:427-430). With the formation of the revolutionary government, men physically attacked women seen in public without the veil, calling them "whores, bourgeois degenerates, un-Islamic, and deculturated." These women, seen as having "lost their modesty" and become intoxicated with the West, were considered a threat to men's honor that must be obliterated along with Western capitalism.

Slandering elite women's sexuality and using them as scapegoats for religious, class, or racial tensions have also been common practice in many African nations. Ghanian women traders are "regularly accused by government officials and in the press of hoarding and profiteering. Nigerians call successful women 'cash madams'. Nigerian businesswomen who do not come from prominent families with influential connections are widely thought to use 'bottom power' to obtain lucrative contracts" and in Kenya, in addition to "sugar daddies" there are thought to be "sugar mommies" who use their wealth to attract young lovers (Potash 1989: 199).

As the above examples suggest, women are rarely a single mass; and in contexts of unequal opportunities for women, playing up and contrasting women's sexuality in appeals to rural women or women in the underclasses is often politically expedient, however destructive it may be to certain or even all women. The same is true in Papua New Guinea but this theme will be developed later, after first reviewing some of the history of women's political involvement and situation there. In the years leading up to independence in 1975, women--particularly women in the urban elite--believed that they would share in the benefits of national liberation and development, that past inequities (colonial or traditional) would be done away with, and that they would help form and lead the nation. Women's suffrage was a part of Papua New Guinea's Constitution. The cabinet included the intention to promote wom-

en's equal participation in all forms of political, economic, social, and religious activities in the Eight Point Improvement Plan (1972) and National Goals and Directive Principles (1975). In 1974, the first prime minister, Michael Somare, appointed an advisor on women's affairs. At a meeting of the Port Moresby YWCA, Papua New Guinea women leaders called for and helped organize the first Pacific Women's Conference, timed to coincide with International Women's Year (1975) and Papua New Guinea's independence. And in 1975, a national group of women established the National Council of Women and convened the country's first National Convention for Women.

From the mid-1960s on, education programs and women's clubs for rural women were encouraged by church and colonial government officials. Thousands of women participated, learning better hygiene, nutrition, and child care or training for leadership positions in local church organizations or business cooperatives (Baker 1975; Temu 1975). Small but increasing numbers of women were prepared for the public service and other professions by being given a Western education. By 1970, 12 percent of the University of Papua New Guinea's first graduating class were women, rising to 17 percent in 1978 (Murphy 1985: 147).

The first woman to be elected to national office was Papuan separatist leader Josephine Abaijah. Elected to the Third House of Assembly in 1972, Abaijah represented the Central District of the Australian Territory of Papua. Unofficially, she represented Papua Besena, an anticolonial movement she helped form in 1973 (Abaijah 1991:284-304). A primary objective of Papua Besena was to fight the forced political union of Papua with New Guinea, but both Papuan women and women from the United Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea saw her as a political role model (Daro 1975a:12; Loko 1974:7; Rooney 1985:40; Taylor 1970).

Women's high expectations were captured in a special issue of *Point* in 1975. In the words of Lady Kiki, women's activist and the wife of a famous politician, "I have no doubt that women will dominate men in politics in the villages . . . [and] that I as a politician's wife have an important role to play in my husband's career" (1975:66-67). Or as Bess Daro, then a research assistant with the New Guinea Research Unit, put it, "there has been a great acceptance in this country of many NON-Papua New Guinea values . . . [including] an international awareness of women as liberated and liberating agents" (1975b:41). Rose Kekedo, then principal of Port Moresby Teacher's College, spoke plainly: "The ambitious woman is looking forward to the day when she can be given the opportunities her male counterparts take for granted. She would

like these opportunities because she has proved herself qualified and capable; because she is NOT JUST WINDOW DRESSING (1975:21).

Women were soon aware, however, that change would not come easily given the overwhelming dominance of men in the government and in their own societies. In 1974, Margarete Loko pointed out that there was no mention Of women's political activity in Point Seven of the Eight Point Improvement Plan and that without women's involvement in politics they would not be positively integrated into the development process (1974:4). This point was later included in the National Goals and Directive Principles (1975)--the preamble to the Constitution--but seems to have made little difference. At the most only three women have served in the national Parliament at the same time (from 1977 to 1982) and since 1987 there have been none. Few hold senior positions in the public service, private enterprise, or church organizations (Crossley 1988:2). And at the level of government and public service closest to village life, only 2 percent of agricultural extension workers are female (Crossley 1988:6), and in 1978 only seven local government councillors of 4,313 were female (Nakikus 1985b:41).

Educational gains have been significant at lower levels. But by the time girls are of an age to enter high school and college, the numbers of females enrolled drops sharply. Fifty percent of Papua New Guinea's young female population were enrolled in Grade 1 in 1971-1972 (compared to 77 percent of the same-age male population). By the mid-eighties the same figures were 75 percent for girls and 90 percent for boys (Weeks 1985a:95). At the tertiary level, however, female enrollment has remained below 15 percent at the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of Technology since shortly after independence (Crossley 1988:9).

Even more than might be expected from women's lesser participation in education is women's low participation in the work force. By 1981, Papua New Guinea's tertiary institutions had produced only nine female lawyers and ten female doctors (Crossley 1988:9). By the late 1980s only a little over 10 percent of women living in town were wage earners, with most female workers concentrated in clerical and lower-level public service jobs (Crossley 1988:4-5). Urban women's unemployment is troublesome in Papua New Guinea, where traditionally women are expected to contribute to household subsistence and ceremonial exchange (Chowning 1985; Strathern 197213). Urban husbands are often resentful when their wives do not help them financially, a resentment fueled by endless pressures on urban couples to give generously to rural or unemployed kin and to repay expensive bride-prices (Filer

1985; Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993; Toft 1985, 1986; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993, n.d.*a*).

In the villages, where 85 percent of Papua New Guinea's population lives, women struggle to support their families with older forms of food production *and* help their husbands with introduced cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, and cardamom. In a study in East New Britain, Epstein found that Tolai women were spending more time tending their husbands' cash crops than the men were (1968: 100). While men's work has been lightened by the use of steel axes (Salisbury 1962), women have received little practical training or improved technology (Cox 1987; Nakikus 1985a). Women's heavier work load is often exacerbated by male labor migration, more frequent childbearing as old sexual mores break down, and demands for greater production of ceremonial wealth such as pigs, leaving women less time to participate in politics or women's clubs (Meleisea 1983). Overwork and more frequent pregnancies also contribute to women's (and children's) ill-health and malnutrition (Jenkins n.d.; *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992a:29; Townsend 1985).

Other areas of concern to both rural and urban women are men's drinking and high levels of domestic violence and rape (Kivung, Doiwa, and Cox 1985). Studies by the Papua New Guinea Law Commission have revealed the extent and causes of violence against women (Toft 1985, 1986; Toft and Bonnell 1985). A campaign is currently under way to make the findings more general (Waram 1992a). Women leaders in Port Moresby chose the theme "Violence Against Women" for their May 1993 International Women's Day Celebration (*The Times of Papua New Guinea* 1993b). And in East New Britain, provincial women's leaders have embarked on a campaign against violence, hoping to open a women's crisis center by 1994 (*The Times of Papua New Guinea* 1993a). Nonetheless, the sex bias in Papua New Guinea society makes it difficult for women to combat the problem. Having less access to cash than men do, women have less access to lawyers who will press for women's right to live in safety from physical assault (Slarke 1992). With few women to represent them in the political arena, women suffer men's disregard, as happened when the Law Reform Commission presented its interim report on domestic violence to an all-male Parliament in 1987 and was booed from the floor (*The Times of Papua New Guinea* 1992).

As women have articulated their separate concerns from men (see King, Lee, and Warakai 1985; Stratigos and Hughes 1987), there has not been a corresponding drawing together to form an effective na-

tional women's movement. Rather, cleavages exist everywhere, between village women and urban elite women, between women in different regions of the country, and among village women as they align themselves in competing church and local women's groups. Although well-meaning members of the bureaucratic elite and such prestigious groups as the Port Moresby-based Women in Politics see their role as providing communication links among women and educating village women to use the various women's councils to further their special interests (Kekedo 1985; Mandie 1985:53), such suggestions are rejected by women who feel that urban elite women are too far removed from village women's concerns to be of much help. As one rural women's leader put it, "Village women await the help of trained sisters with open arms but they are very wary of young sophisticates who do not wish to get their hands dirty" (Ogi 1985: 150).

The disunity among Papua New Guinea's female national leadership has been apparent for years (see Johnson 1984; Macintyre n.d.; Wormald 1992), but never more so than in 1992. In March 1992, efforts to coordinate celebrations on International Women's Day failed, with provincial and local women's groups organizing their own celebrations without the promised help of the National Women's Council (Bunpalau 1992; *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992b). In Port Moresby the president of the National Council of Women, Maria Kopkop, and the invited guest speaker (a male) were not on hand on the big day (Waram 1992b). And in East New Britain, neither provincial leaders nor other invited guests showed up to head the festivities (*Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992b).

The strongest indications of a lack of unity, however, are statistics showing that few women stand for election or vote for other women. Only 41 women have ever run in national elections. In the 1987 elections, a year in which no women were elected or reelected, there were 18 women out of a total of 1,464 candidates. In 1992, another year of defeat for women, there were only 12 women among 1,653 candidates. In the 1987 elections, women made up 1.2 percent of the field of candidates and received only 1.4 percent of the vote, demonstrating that women-- with half the vote--do not have a bias for female candidates or women's issues (Wormald 1992:23-24). Fragmentation at the national level has accelerated following female candidates' defeat, as there is a florescence of new women's groups and nationally known women realign themselves with the newly organized regional councils (Bengi 1992; Waram 1992c, 1992d, 1992e).

The failure of women to fight for and to achieve significant numbers

of leadership positions in Papua New Guinea can be attributed to sexism and unequal opportunities (in education, the workplace, and the home), to regionalism, to the double workday many women contend with, and to women's fear of rape or being beaten by their husbands should they venture too far out into the public domain and bend local conceptions of appropriate women's behavior. The disabling lack of unity among women's groups, however, demands additional explanations since men too are divided along economic and regional lines and yet elite males continue to be elected in larger numbers and to go beyond their home regions for support.

In the remainder of this article, I will look at several other reasons why I believe women are unable to put together a strong women's movement in Papua New Guinea. The first is that Papua New Guinea's male leaders have consistently slandered the sexuality of women in their own class, thereby stigmatizing them and hurting women candidates' chances in rural electorates. The second is the alienating distance between most elite men's and elite women's goals and experiences. And the third is the politics of difference among Papua New Guinea women that makes it easy for leaders to scapegoat elite women.

The Brotherhood of PNG Nationalism

On the eve of independence and on appropriate (but rare) occasions since, male nationalist leaders have called for women's "full" involvement in the development of Papua New Guinea society. Quoting from the Eight Point Improvement Plan of 1972, former Prime Minister Michael Somare called for a "rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity." In his newspaper series, "The Melanesian Voice," lawyer and Supreme Court Judge Bernard Narokobi declared that both men and women "are needed to meet the changing needs [of Papua New Guinea], and both must be paid according to their merits" (1983:38). In 1982, at a seminar on the successes and failures of the Eight Point Plan and National Goals after a decade of performance, the then (and now) prime minister, Paias Wingti, opined that the government "is not happy with the fact that this total [of girls in grades 7 to 10] is only 33 per cent now when it was 31.8 percent at the time of independence. In universities, only 15 per cent of enrolments are women, the same as in 1975" (1985: 17). And in 1992, a year in which few politicians felt compelled to comment on women's issues, former Morobe premier and now member of national Parliament Jerry Nalau publicly invited a Morobe women's group to

work for the development of Morobe Province and the nation (Bunpalau 1992).

Male leaders have also said and done things, however, that demonstrate their insincerity or opposition to women's "full" involvement in the development of Papua New Guinea society. In his 1975 autobiography, Michael Somare said little about women other than to express irritation with politician Josephine Abaijah for supporting a demonstration of church women seeking higher pay (from his administration) for their husbands and the end of inflation (1975: 132). And in spite of his avowed commitment to women's equality, there was no section on women in the 1976 National Development Strategy (Turner 1990:87). It is worth remembering, of course, that both the Eight Point Plan and the Constitution were drafted by committees that included non-Papua New Guinea members and derived many of their liberal democratic ideas from non-Papua New Guinea sources. Thus, it was inevitable in the years subsequent to independence, as Papua New Guineans came to dominate their own country, that their own ideas about women's appropriate roles would come to the fore.

These more traditional ideas are reflected in Narokobi's struggle with the idea of giving women too much latitude for fear that like "Westernized woman" they will reject traditional values of family and marriage (1983:34-38, 51-57, 74-78). In a pre-independence statement, Kaibelt Diria, then minister for posts and telegraphs, put it more forcefully: "Women should never be allowed to become equal because it would be against the social culture and tradition of the people" (quoted in Turner 1990:87). A similiar sentiment is apparent in the words of Paul Langro, a former member for West Sepik: "As far as Papua New Guinea is concerned, women are always regarded as the lowest in the family. I do not want the concept of Western civilisation to give equal rights to women as are given to men. Men must get first priority in the society and not women" (quoted in Turner 1990:87). In 1992, women were still far from being given first priority as severe cuts in government funding to women's activities (Miria 1992) made it difficult for women groups to carry out their operations, much less "work for the development of the nation" as Jerry Nalau and others thought they should.

A rich source of elite males' ideas on modernity and women's emancipation can be found in their literary creations. In the poems and stories of male students at the University of Papua New Guinea and the National Arts School, valued roles for women are wife and mother, upholding tradition and carrying out their duties to husbands and children in the village or urban household. Mathew Sil, in the poem "The

Village That My Grandmother Knew" (1986), mourns a way of life that is "fading under a modern sun" as men are determined to have "lots of paper money," "hard shiny cars," and roads "right through the centre" of villages that were once places of calm and pride, "jealousy guarded" and "loved" by women who never knew the modern-day horrors of "wife-beatings" and children afraid of their fathers "like dogs in a stranger's way." Francis Nii's poem "Peaceful Village" paints a more idyllic picture of a world both he and Sil have left behind (1985): "Birds sing unchanged jungle melodies, while country kids dance free for joy. . . . Kids hide and seek, and mum and dad have endless honeymoon."

The idealization of village life and village women is further elaborated in Benjamin Umba's novel *The Fires of Dawn* (1976), in which he portrays village women as uncomplaining and always looking after the needs of their husbands and sons. In Vincent Eri's *The Crocodile* (1970) and Ignatius Kilage's *My Mother Calls Me Yaltep* (1980), village women are portrayed variously as hard-working, sympathetic mothers or young, submissive sex partners. In Russell Soaba's *Maiba* (1979), the female lead is wise enough to hold her village together in the face of the conflicting forces of tradition and modernization.

By comparison, images of urban women are often negative, especially men's depictions of women students. In numerous poems in *The PNG Writer,* the male authors accuse female university students of participating in wanton drinking parties with wealthy politicians (Dondoli 1985b), engaging in promiscuous sex (Kilburn 1985; Yatu 1985:72), and being the dupes of untrustworthy, white boyfriends (Yatu 1986:48). When such behavior results in pregnancy, the blame is placed on the woman, as in Dondoli's unsympathetic "Blame Yourself"--quoted here in full--and in other poems (Kilburn 1985; Yatu 1986:48):

Blame Yourself

Out of the Darkness, Unwanted,
An insect attracted by bright lights,
You enjoyed what came your way.
Distrustful of tribal values,
You sucked the sugar-cane.
Now with swollen belly,
And a fatherless piglet,
You twist the truth,
But cannot blame the Stone Age.
Sophisticated, overeducated, westernized

> You scream, shout, yell:
> Women's Lib, Women's Council, Women's Rights.
> Granma is entertained by your comedy.
> You've got your rights.
> You've got your piglet.
>
> B. M. Dondoli (1985a)

More generally, women and girls from all segments of urban society are stigmatized as promiscuous carriers of venereal disease, prostitutes, or potential rape victims, as in the poems "Hohola in the Night" (Kerpi 1987) and "Yupela Meri i Senis Hariap Pinis" (Umetrifo 1987).

From their writings, young men are clearly ambivalent about modernization. Less obvious is their hypocrisy in depicting village women as morally superior to educated women, while often they themselves desire the pleasures of urban life and the freedom to experiment in love and sex with more "liberated women" (see Houbein 1982; Sharrad 1984:2). In Kama Kerpi's "Kulpu's Daughter" (1974), however, two young men consider the pros and cons of educated girlfriends, with such girls being associated with sex appeal and free sex while village girls are credited with affirming a man's manhood and giving him more mental security:

> Well, there is more to say than merely having secret lovers. I have taken advantage of several educated girls and discovered that they all put up an act in bed. They make believe they are innocent . . . that they knew no other men before. . . . It becomes rather an act of retaining their boyfriend's love. A village girl is fair to you and to herself. (Quoted in Houbein 1982:16)

Setting aside, for the moment, the question of whether or not the hostilities and ambivalence of the educated male writers are justified, their sense that women are less likely than men to prosper in modern circumstances is grounded in reality. I have already mentioned sexism in education and economic opportunities, and the dangers women contend with in Papua New Guinea's towns. A part of women's failure to prosper, however, is attributable to the same men who have publicized their anxieties or contempt for women of their own class. From the start, Papua New Guinea's leaders and their expatriate mentors and teachers have done little to include women in such important nation-building

institutions as the Administrative College in Port Moresby and an early political training ground and association called the Bully Beef Club.

In her dissertation on Papua New Guinea's government women, Dianne Johnson describes how women's early education was designed to make them better housewives and models of Christian womanhood (1984: chap. 4). Even after education became a priority in the 1960s, the stress was less on sexual equality than hurriedly building a local elite to lead the country through independence. According to Johnson:

> Given the roles of women in both traditional Papua New Guinean societies and in the country of colonial power, Australia, and the totally male-dominated colonial administration . . . the obvious but unstated intention and the directions taken for leadership training were in order to create a *male* leadership. It is not surprising then that western colonial education at all levels, despite the massive expansion, was much more accessible to males. (Johnson 1984: 124)

The mission of the Administrative College, opened in 1963, was to train an indigenous administrative leadership. Female students have been few. This male bias in formal leadership training was matched informally in the organization of the Bully Beef Club, a forerunner to the political party that became known as Pangu Pati and about which Michael Somare writes extensively in his autobiography. Formed in 1964 at the Administrative College, the club began with a membership of seven men and one woman. The woman was subjected to teasing and sexual harassment (Johnson 1984: 124); by the time Michael Somare joined in 1965 and began his maturation as a politician, she was gone.

The political motivations for prejudice against women politicians are easy to discern. The issue of women's liberation is an inflammatory one in Papua New Guinea, where most men and women associate it with white society and resent women who compete with men for political and economic power. In the 1970s, as some urban elite women sought to create new images for themselves and to exercise freedom of choice over family planning, work, and involvement in public life, elite males were seeking to rid the country of the vestiges of colonialism (or at least those elements that conflicted with their own interests) and to assert a Melanesian cultural identity consisting mostly of recreated myths of what life had been like before colonization (Hogan 1985:54). As Papua New Guinea neared independence, women who wore makeup and

miniskirts were subjected to public harassment, denounced by church leaders, and even fined. In the minds of many, miniskirts were associated with white women and white women's alleged (and sometimes real) promiscuity. From 1971 to 1981, the issue was fought in the letters to the editor column in the *Post-Courier.*

Analyzed by Evelyn Hogan, this debate is revealing of the polities of men's almost complete unity against women's right to determine their own lives. A few selections from Hogan's article capture the emotions the debate aroused:

> In February 1973 a circular . . . signed by Tolai politicians, community and church leaders, was distributed throughout East New Britain [Province]. It suggested a campaign in school against immodest dress. The rapid rise in gonorrhoea, syphilis and other diseases . . . was attributed to immodest dress . . . men claimed that women who dressed immodestly were looking for carnal pleasures (*Post-Courier* 27 February 1973). (Quoted in Hogan 1985:55)

> In response to the circular condemning the wearing of miniskirts there were three letters from women (*Post-Courier* 7 March 1973, 28 May 1973, 13 June 1973). One signed "Four Tolai Girls" (13 June 1973) had no doubts that the banning of mini-skirts would have wider implications. For its writers, wearing mini-skirts signified that they wanted greater control over their lives. They accused the initiators of the circular of having political motivations--of using the issue of public morality for their own political purposes . . . and [of knowing] that with education women would be able to judge the decisions of men. (Quoted in Hogan 1985:56-57)

Three male Tolai students from the University of Papua New Guinea added their opinions to the debate by arguing that the "women were not freely determining their own lives, but were blindly following the dictates of Western culture: 'They want to keep on "pleasing" and "praising" the colonial administration without stopping and asking themselves a single question' (*Post-Courier* 28 June 1973)" (quoted in Hogan 1985:57).

Similar debates have set young and especially educated women apart as a separate category from the majority of women in Papua New Guinea.

Attending to the sensitivities of the rural majority is a feature of not only men's political campaigns, however. At one time or another, the few women who have attained national political positions have publicly disavowed feminist leanings and extolled the virtues of women playing supportive versus independent roles in the development of Papua New Guinea society. Describing her first major political campaign in a semifictional account, the nation's first female member of Parliament--Josephine Abaijah--repeatedly portrayed herself in public and in the book as "a modest Papuan girl supporting traditional Papuan values in the new era" (1991: 178). Asked by a reporter if she supported women's liberation, Abaijah replied, "I don't really know what women's liberation means. . . . Personally, I am as liberated as I want to be. It might be unhealthy to be any more liberated than I am now. I don't want to be a man. I don't think women's liberation means anything to Papuans. It is not relevant . . . to us" (1991: 216-217).

More recently, however, after Abaijah's defeat and the defeat of all other women candidates in the 1992 national elections, she has become more feminist, arguing publicly that "women are half the population in PNG. . . . However, the women population is saddened and highly demoralized by the lack of government's insight into the women's plight as the women continue to be victims of rape, abuse, molestation and break-enter and stealing activities in our communities" (*Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992c).

New Men for New Women

Elite women's views on "ancestral ways," the future of Papua New Guinea, and their role in that future differ in telling ways from men's views of the same things. Writing on "The Changing Role of Women in Society," women's advocate Margarete Loko early on contested the view that traditionally women did not play politically important roles within the family, clan, and tribe: "Women, throughout the years, have been the backbone to development and expansion in the above three groups" (1974:6). In contrast to the sexist content of PNG schoolbooks (Gough 1984:97) and their male schoolmates' idealizations of village women, educated women's claims for greater autonomy in the new order are based on a more earthy and less submissive view of women. Contrast, for example, Loujaya Kouza's energetic and daring poem "Teenage World" with men's condemning tone in the above-mentioned miniskirt debate.

Teenage World

The pulsating beat
at a discotheque,
sweaty palms and smelly
feet,
fried chicken, fish n' chips,
tight fitting sneakers and a
swinging hip.
Comic books, the latest
gag,
choosing cheap junk
and the best looking rag.
Loujaya Kouza (1987)

Or the realism in Joyce Kumbeli's and May Paipaira's poetry (Kumbeli 1985a, 1985b; Paipaira 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1986d, 1986e) contrasted with the dreamlike quality of such male authors as Francis Nii and Benjamin Umba (see above):

Mother Stands

From dawn to dusk, mother stands
Amid clattering dishes and undug gardens.
Sweat is her shower; the sun her energy.

By the evening table she stands: Has everyone eaten?
Her duty comes first. Tiredness is her satisfaction.
Last to bed. First up to prepare breakfast.

How have I rewarded her life-time's work?
An illegitimate child; another burden.
When all she wanted was my love.
May Paipara (1986e)

On the subjects of development and nation building, women like poet May Paipara (1986d) and filmmaker Maggie Wilson decry men's drinking and violence and challenge them to share both authority and responsibility for family matters and the work of nation building with women. In Wilson's words, village women are the "backbone of Papua New Guinea society" while educated women are in "business and politics and many other well-paid and important positions where they . . . give much to society" (1987: 174). In the first stanza of her poem "Beer

and Shotguns--Is This Development?" Wilson turns the table on poet Justin Yatu, who has accused female university students of being the dupes of white lovers (Yatu 1986:48) and falling prey to the seductions of Western civilization (Yatu 1985:72), by accusing the male elite of chasing after the chimera of Western civilization:

> This is the 20th century
> The age of high technology.
> They lead us into television.
> Have we enough money for a TV studio?
> It's only 50 million.
> The boys are into communication,
> Too busy communicating.
> The problems at home don't matter,
> Even if people are murdered in cold blood.
> Eager to copy the so-called civilised countries,
> Where are the boys leading us?
> Where are the women in this?
> Beer and shotguns--IS THIS DEVELOPMENT?
>
> Maggie Wilson (1987: 175-176)

In numerous other matters, elite women are identifying themselves as being more concerned than elite men with the well-being and health of individuals, the family, and the larger society. In the pages of the *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier's* new series "Women Today," articles focus on topics ranging from health and law-and-order problems (1992a, 1992c; Waram 1992a) to the benefits of exercise and the right way to dress (1992d; also S.M.R. 1992).

Although there are many other differences in elite men's and women's self-definitions and representations of the opposite sex, objective differences also divide them. These differences go far in explaining the alienation elite men have from women of their class. They also go far in explaining why it is women more often than men in Papua New Guinea who call for new kinds of relationships--an ethnographic twist contradicting the usual pattern in which it is men who call for "new women" to fit the new or desired social order (see Jayawardena 1986; Little 1973).

An important set of differences in the lives and experiences of many of Papua New Guinea's male and female elite are differences in their educational, social, economic, and regional backgrounds. In Papua New Guinea, early missionaries promoted the education of women by refus-

ing to teach boys unless girls were also sent to school (Smith 1987). In part this was related to a widespread belief among missionaries that educated Christian men (and the children of these men) needed educated Christian wives and mothers if they were to remain true to the new faith. In part it was related to the fact that at the turn of the century, at least in Papua, one-third of the missionary force was female and most of these women were committed to raising local women's status and quality of life (Langmore 1989: chap. 7).

In spite of this potentially equalizing force, fewer women than men have received a high school or college education in Papua New Guinea. And those women who have are distinctive in that a majority come from the coastal and island areas, where mission education has been in place the longest and where matrilineality and its greater stress on women's active involvement in society are common. In studies of PNG university students, researchers have also discovered that female students are much more likely than male students to have educated and employed fathers (Weeks 1985b), fathers who by virtue of their own education are aware of the benefits of education for women and thus more likely to be supportive of their daughters' aspirations (see Wormald and Crossley 1988).

Dianne Johnson found similar factors in the backgrounds of the government women she studied. The effects of individual missionary zeal and feminism were most apparent in the students and intellectual and biological descendants of students taught at the Kwato school in Milne Bay by Charles Abel and his wife, Beatrice (Johnson 1984:111). At Kwato, established by the Abels in the 1890s, girls were accorded high status, considered as capable of leadership as boys, and taught nursing and teaching skills as well as homecraft skills and Western etiquette (Johnson 1984:112). According to Papua New Guinean historian Anne Kaniku (now Waiko), Kwato-influenced women have an attitude of Kwato elitism and a willingness to compete that is consonant with political aspirations and other ambitions (1981:190).

In the Highlands, where mission activity and Western-style education are more recent, among the educated Simbu women interviewed by anthropologist Paula Brown, most grew up "near schools at missions or in towns, often because their father was employed" (1988:135). According to Brown, these unusual women live unusual lives that require a greater break with traditional roles than is the case for elite men:

> Urban men's roles are continuations and adaptations of traditional men's competition and dominance. Rural support groups

> are essential to political ambition and election to national or provincial office. . . . Urban women discard many aspects of the traditional wife/mother role in exchange for wage-earning, household management rather than housework, and independence. They maintain close family ties with visits and often incorporate rural relatives into their urban households . . . [but they do so] without the domestic role of wife. (Brown 1988: 138; see also Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1990, n.d.*a*)

Reflecting differences in their socioeconomic backgrounds, many male and female members of the educated elite hold opposing expectations regarding male-female relationships, marriage, and women's proper station and work. There are also lifestyle differences, particularly in the family backgrounds of educated men and women, that further alienate educated men and women from one another. In a paper written on love and marriage among the educated elite in Port Moresby, Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993) document the conflicting viewpoints of many students at the University of Papua New Guinea and the National Arts School. In a survey of more than 200 first-year students at UPNG, Zimmer-Tamakoshi found important gender differences among her students on the questions of conjugal relations and women's careers. Although attitudes of both males and females toward interethnic marriage and having the right to choose their own marriage partner became more liberal between first entering and the time they were in their second semester, young women were much more adamant that marriages should be monogamous, that women's careers were as important as men's, and that spouses should spend significant amounts of time together both at home and in the company of friends and relatives.

In a study at the National Arts School, Rosi discovered similar trends. Both young men and women thought that good looks and sexual attractiveness were important features of a potential spouse and that mutual love should be the basis for marriage. Young men, however, wanted wives who would both work and be good homemakers and who would subordinate their careers to their husbands', while young women wanted husbands who would be supportive of their careers and considerate of whatever arrangements the women made to see that their homes and children were taken care of.

Growing up in different social environments is also a potential source of conflict between male and female members of the educated elite. Whereas many educated men in Papua New Guinea spent at least some of their childhood in villages, many educated women grew up on gov-

ernment stations or in urban areas as a result of their fathers' level of education and work. Such women often lack traditional skills and have personal expectations about dress, social life, and marriage that tend to alienate them from village in-laws and, in some cases, from their husbands, Young wives, for example, may resent the interference of village in-laws who expect them to help their husbands pay back large bride-prices or to make way for village co-wives who will raise pigs for the husband while the first wife works at a job (for examples, see Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993).

One aspect of the sophistication and opportunities that educated women have that is especially galling to many of Papua New Guinea's men is the possibility of their meeting and marrying non-Papua New Guineans. A recurring element in the writings of poets like Justin Yatu is the theme of female university students falling prey to the seductions of Western civilization and of being white men's clowns (1986; see also Yatu 1985). Although many women agree with men that interracial marriages are wrong--see, for example, Susan Balen's story "A Date with Danger" (1985) and Frances Deklin's negative reflections on mixed marriages involving Papua New Guinean women and Australian men (1987)--a surprising number disagree and, in some cases, actively seek partnerships with foreign men. Air Niugini stewardesses are notorious in this regard, many of them being outspoken about their preference for white men whom they believe are more supportive of their ambitions and less likely to use physical force to control their behavior (see Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1990). Even more visible are women like former parliamentarians Josephine Abaijah and Nahau Rooney (now widowed) and the president of the National Council of Women, Maria Kopkop, who are only three of many government women and women's leaders to have long-standing relations or marriages with white men. These women have been harassed for having non-Papua New Guinean men in their lives. The same is not often true for those Papua New Guinean men who have white wives and lovers.

An interesting and relevant link between interracial sexual relations and most Papua New Guineans' aversion to "women's liberation" was pointed out to me by Penelope Schoeffel (pers. com., 1993):

> When I was a student at UPNG in the early seventies (1971-1973) there was a "Black Power" group and "Women's Liberation" group. The former comprised PNG men and the latter mainly expatriate women. The two groups were quite close to one another and several of the white women in the latter had

> relationships with men in the former. Perhaps because of this, most PNG men and women at UPNG interpreted "women's liberation" as being concerned with women's sexual freedom, which they generally considered an alarming idea. Some PNG male students enjoyed or hoped to enjoy relationships with liberated white women, but would have been shocked to see PNG women openly espouse women's sexual freedom. Few PNG women students wished to be linked to "Women's Liberation" because of their ambivalence about what they thought its agenda was, and because of the strong disapproval among the student elite directed to anything seen as being "white dominated." . . . The few outspoken PNG women on Campus (such as Margarete Loko and Paula Paliau) would have nothing to do with the group.

A Divided Sisterhood

It is less easy to characterize the views of Papua New Guinea's village women given so many cultural and historical differences in their experiences. Nevertheless, in common with women in town, village women have spoken out on several issues. Two of these are the high levels of domestic violence and rape. Marital violence is widespread in rural areas, with 67 percent of rural women (compared with 56 percent of low-income urban women and 62 percent of elite urban women) admitting to being hit on occasion by their husbands (Ranck and Toft 1986:22-23). Although villagers say they accept wife-beating as normal (see Chowning 1985), severe or undeserved beatings are *not* accepted by women, and today abused wives regularly take their husbands to court (see Scaglion and Whittingham 1985; Westermark 1985). Women began taking their domestic complaints outside the village to get a fairer hearing during the colonial period, bringing their complaints before foreign *kiaps* and church and welfare officers (Strathern 1972a, 1972b).

The high incidence of rape in Papua New Guinea (see Kivung, Doiwa, and Cox 1985; Zimmer 1990) has brought out women of every level of society to condemn rapists and a male-dominated court system that many women feel leaves rapists free to prey on women and girls in both town and country, During a much reported-on rape and murder case in Lae, thousands of women--including nearby village women--turned out in Port Moresby and Lae to call for longer sentences and castration for the rapist-murderers. Fear of rape and sexual harassment keeps many women and girls from attending school (in rural and urban

areas), from asserting themselves in gatherings where men are also present, and from experimenting with new lifestyles (see Crossley 1988, Meek 1982; Oliver 1987; Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993).

A third issue of importance to women is the willingness of many husbands to engage in adulterous liaisons with prostitutes and women who try to steal them away from their wives and families. In response to this many village women go to town with their husbands to keep a watchful eye over them and their husbands' incomes (Zimmer-Tamakoshi n.d.*a*); women who work frequently rely on children and other kin to accompany husbands on outings and to report on any wrongdoing or suspicious actions. In 1988, highly placed women in the Law Reform Commission and other government bodies pushed into law the Adultery and Enticement Act. This act makes it possible for a husband or wife to bring suit against an adulterous spouse, and to forestall an adulterous affair by allowing them to sue anyone who attempts to entice their spouses to have sex with them. Designed to give women control over their husbands' sexuality, the law is--ironically--potentially detrimental to the very women who framed it, women whose jobs as lawmakers and politicians require them to spend time alone with male co-workers. Proof of adultery, for example, can be as simple as having a witness testify that the alleged adulterers went into a room, shut the door behind them, and stayed in the room long enough to have sex! However, in the context of some men's efforts to discredit educated women and in a country where 85 percent of the population lives in rural villages, the promotion of the act by educated women can only be seen as politically motivated. In the words of one member of the elite women's group Women in Politics, "Their needs must come first. Without their support there will be few women elected to higher office and all women's interests will suffer" (Angela Mandie, pers. corn., 1988; see also Mandie 1985).

Regardless of the potential of these issues to unite women, almost insurmountable differences keep them apart. Although village women and women living in urban squatter settlements share elite women's desire for greater autonomy in the new social order, they do SO for quite different reasons. On the one hand are women like my former students at UPNG, who will travel overseas for purposes of education, business, or pleasure, and who expect to one day be working in positions of authority over both men and women. For such women, freedom to travel around the country without fear of sexual harassment and to share the same job opportunities and respect as their male co-workers are fundamental. On the other hand are village women who are over-

burdened with traditional and new forms of work at the same time as their men are receiving (or appropriating) most of the available government services and most of the income from cash crops and other lucrative enterprises (see Cox 1987; Hughes 1985; Zimmer 1988). For these women, gaining control over money means spending it on things they believe to be more important than the things men spend money on. The situation at Hoskins Oil Palm Settlement in West New Britain Province is fairly typical of the household division of labor and finances throughout rural Papua New Guinea:

> . . . while most women were given some money by their husbands for food and household needs, these expenses were met predominantly from income earned by the women selling garden produce at market. On the other hand, 78 per cent of women interviewed shared their market-earned income with their husbands. . . . [Even though nearly all women worked on their husbands' oil palm plots, the men retained] control over their "own" oil palm income and also control the income earned independently by their wives. (Nakikus 1985a:125)

In Sexton's study of the *wok meri* movement in Eastern Highlands Province, she found that members of the market-women's savings association felt that men wasted money on cards and alcohol and spent too little on household consumption. Pooling their earnings from vegetable sales, women from diverse language groups took turns investing their savings in what they felt were worthwhile, profitable businesses. Since the money was kept separate from the women's take-home pay, most men could do little but admire their wives' ingenuity, thereby fulfilling at least one of the women's stated aims, which was to teach by example (Sexton 1982, 1986).

More commonly, however, it is men who have the access to cash, resulting in a shift in the balance of power between genders, as men can earn cash independently of women and men's cash contributions to ceremonial exchange payments can outweigh women's contributions of pigs and vegetables (Zimmer 1985; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993). Women chafe at the loss of status that goes along with their not having access to cash. Mirroring men's complaints against independent career women and schoolgirls, village women I have met in different parts of Papua New Guinea deplore town men's excessive drinking and womanizing and openly mock men who return to the village dressed like colonial *mastas* in white knee socks, shorts, white shirt, polished boots, and Aus-

sie hat. Keeping fit and forgoing expensive Western-style clothing, town women of modest means pride themselves on their economy and on their ability to return to the village and take up gardening at a moment's notice (see Zimmer-Tamakoshi n.d.*a*). Having learned to expect little from the few agricultural extension officers and others (academics included) who make their way out to the villages, more and more women are involved in organizations like the East Sepik Women's Development Documentation and Communication Project that are dedicated to putting village women in control of development and nonformal education projects, as well as creating opportunities for village women to travel and to meet with leaders elsewhere in the country (Samuel, Goro, and Kimbange 1987; see also Aarnink and Blydorp 1986).

In a context in which most women have inadequate access to cash for essentials, the more frivolous elements of wealthier women's lifestyles are offensive and easily conjured up as reasons to reject them or their ideas out of hand. While the women's pages in the *Post-Courier* and the *Times of Papua New Guinea* include many articles on practical issues concerning rural and urban women (see *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992a, 1992d; Waram 1992a), they are also crowded with advertisements for things most women can't afford, like ladies' swimwear fashions and expensive hotels and restaurants, as well as many articles on fashion, beauty salons, and ways to "Decorate Your Bathroom" (*Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992e).

Intended as satire of the "Miss Papua New Guinea" contest and playful mockery of the male judges (one of whom was Bernard Narokobi), in 1984 female students at the University of Papua New Guinea staged a "Miss Traditional UPNG" contest to which some participants came bare-breasted (Tannos 1984). By going topless for a few hours, female university students may have "honored tradition" and made the point that traditional women's dress could be as provocative as miniskirts and lipstick, but their intended message was undoubtedly lost on other young women. Influenced by mission teaching against "lewd and improper dress" but less financially able to try different lifestyles, many village and town girls wear the modest (and cheap) *meri* blouses and only dream about what it would be like to wear the expensive Western clothing sold in Port Moresby's boutiques and shopping centers.

The ways in which villagers react to modernity as they variously link into the national economy and become part of larger identities and new interest groups can be quite surprising and, at first glance, contradictory. Long-contacted and more prosperous groups living in the vicinity

of large towns--the very groups one might expect to be more tolerant--may support their daughters' higher education but resist their wearing miniskirts and high heels in attempts to maintain group solidarity by curbing women's independence and preventing them from marrying outsiders (see the Tolai miniskirt debate above; also Hogan 1985). On the other hand, more distant and less privileged groups may tolerate new dress codes and women's liaisons with strangers in order to gain a foothold in the urban economy. Gende villagers, for example, regularly send their mostly uneducated teenage daughters to live in town with migrant relatives in the hope that these daughters will attract prosperous husbands, whether Gende or not (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993). When successful, some of these girls find themselves in situations where they have little in common with either their village sisters or the educated elite. Dependent on their husbands' wages, they are often abused by them, and little respected by squatter settlement women who have to clean other women's houses, village women who have to tend babies, pigs, gardens, and family, and working women who see them as poaching on their men. For such women, hoped-for emancipation may mean no more than finding a husband who is appreciative of their housekeeping skills and being recognized as contributing to the development of Papua New Guinea by being conduits of wealth from urban to rural areas in the form of bride-price payments and other investments of cash in the women's relatives (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993, n.d.*a*).

Conclusion

In this article I have illustrated some of the various perspectives of Papua New Guinea men and women concerning women's role in today's society. In the section on men's views, I used men's writings--both literary and political--to reveal their opposition to women's freedom to forge new relations and to actively participate in the building of the nation. I also argued (as others have already suggested; see Hogan 1985; Johnson 1984; Lindstrom 1992; Macintyre n.d.) that at least some men and a few highly placed women have exploited differences and antagonisms among women for political ends, condemning the privileges and actions of elite women in order to appeal to the majority.

What is at stake is more than simply achieving high political office, however. In a review of Papua New Guinea nationalists' attempts to create a sense of national unity in a nation riven by differences of culture, language, history, ecology, and more, Lindstrom (1992) demonstrates how politicians and others have used the idea of a shared set of

"core traditions," or what is termed the "Melanesian Way," to try to lessen disunity. Similar agendas are apparent elsewhere in the Pacific--for example, in Fijian nationalism (Rutz n.d.). And in the construction of Papua New Guinea's new national Parliament building, we have seen how the planners of a central national institution purposefully incorporated traditional designs from all over Papua New Guinea--such as designing the outer structure of the building in the shape of a Sepik men's house--in an attempt to embody Papua New Guineans' shared village origins (Rosi 1991).

Another "tradition" that Papua New Guinea nationalists play up is the notion that women, especially young women, should be under the control of parents and spouse. In spite of constitutional rights granting women full participation in the social, economic, and political development of their country, statements such as the following by "Melanesian Way" spokesman and creator Bernard Narokobi stand firmly on the side of male dominance and parental control of young women:

> Women are not inferior to men but different. . . . Within the family, the woman's authority is as important as the man's. . . . However, at the clan and village level, the woman cannot be head. . . .
>
> [Directing his words to "Westernised girl"] As for sex, only the West of today has achieved sexual heights of excitement in which the human body is thoroughly depraved, perverted, corrupted, debased. . . . Forced marriages, I will readily agree with you are a scandal. But . . . [t]here are important sociological reasons too, for arranged marriages and for payment of bride and groom wealth. Marriage brings families and tribes together. . . . Marriage in Melanesia still is a collective communal relationship of a public nature, not a one to one private affair. (Narokobi 1983:35-36, 52-53)

Playing up to villagers' fears that their educated daughters will run wild and contract marriages for which no bride-price is paid and portraying independent women as Jezebels who threaten the stability of both society and the family, male nationalists divert attention from differences (particularly economic and political) that divide them from other Papua New Guineans while blaming at least some of the nation's problems on a very small minority of women.

As with other facets in the construction of a national culture, however, elite males' portrayal of women is contested ground. In the section

on new women, I have shown how elite women are dissatisfied with men's actions in the development of Papua New Guinea and how women are calling for new relations with men. At the national level and in Papua New Guinea's towns and cities, this dissatisfaction is expressed in the campaign rhetoric and increasingly women-centered demands of female leaders and politicians (*Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* 1992c; Wormald 1992), in the aspirations of female students (Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993), and in the refusal of some women to even consider marriage to Papua New Guineans (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1990).

The campaign strategies and efforts of such women to "improve" the lives of all women have thus far, however, made little impression on the majority of Papua New Guinea's women. Most of the latter continue to support male over female candidates for public office and to envy (or spurn) the real or imagined privileges of educated and elite women. This division has been detrimental to creating a united women's movement and has generated a multiplicity of local and regional movements. Rural women are making themselves heard and what they are saying is that they do not trust elite women (or elite men, for that matter) to help them improve their situations. In organizing themselves, rural women are seeking greater recognition and rewards for being the "economic and social backbone of Papua New Guinea society," an expression that is more and more being adopted by women leaders at all levels of Papua New Guinea society to describe and appeal to rural women (e.g., Wilson 1987:174).

NOTE

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