

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page. It features three blue circles of varying sizes (large, medium, and large) connected by thin blue lines. The lines form a network-like structure, with one line connecting the top and middle circles, another connecting the middle and bottom circles, and a third line connecting the top and bottom circles. The circles have a slight gradient and are semi-transparent.

Appendix IV.

**The Webs of
Significance –
Debate Time!!!**

WOMEN KASTOM AND MODERNITY



Department of
Community
Development



A Symposium organized by the
Dame Carol Kidu, Minister for Community Development and the
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea

**The University of Papua New Guinea and the
Department of Community Development**

present

“Women, Kastom and Modernity in Papua New Guinea”

Monday 16th May 2011

**A symposium organized under the Patronage of
Dame Carol Kidu, MP
Minister for Community Development**

**THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT
*State Function Hall***

The symposium is organized by

Conveners:

Dr. Anne Dickson-Waiko	waikoad@upng.ac.pg
Dr. Nicolas Garnier	ngarnier@upng.ac.pg
Ms. Fa'afu Pat	fnpate@upng.ac.pg
Ms. Eleina Butuna	ebutuna@gmail.com

“Women, Kastom and Modernity in Papua New Guinea”

Kastom continues to determine the thinking, reactions, relationships, solutions and behaviour of over 95% of our people. It determines who we are as Papua New Guineans. It evokes both negative and positive emotions and reactions. Some may claim that the desire for participation in public life is not a breach to Kastom, but a natural accomplishment of traditional systems and values. Others may use Kastom as an excuse to minimise women’s modernizing efforts in nation building. Still others may use Kastom to legitimise inequality.

The construction of women in a modernizing Papua New Guinea has been fraught with challenges that emanate from Kastom. On the one hand, women have been given opportunities to participate in the economy, in education, in science, in religious affairs, in the military and to a lesser extent in politics. On the other hand Kastom has been an obstacle to women’s participation in modern Papua New Guinea. Women’s voices have been growing since Independence and an increasing number of women taking part in public life, proposing new alternatives and perspectives for the development of the country.

This symposium aims to provide the opportunity to critically discuss the changing perspective on Kastom and how they continue to empower and disempower women in Papua New Guinea today.

PROGRAM OF THE SYMPOSIUM

MORNING SESSIONS:

9.00 **Opening prayer**

9.05 **Public address**

Hon. Dame Carol Kidu, MP, Minister for Community Development

Sub theme I:

Kastom and Sexuality

Chair: Dr. Anne Waiko

9.30-10.50

Prof. Betty Lovai

“Changing values about gender based violence”

Ms Monika Sikas,

“Flying Foxes: women as Sex Workers”

Mr. David Kombako,

“Gender Inequality as a Mirage: Women, Their Sexuality and Power”

Mr. Gabriel Kuman

“The Impact of Polygynous Marriage on Papua New Guinea Society today”

Ms. Consilliah Menda, Ms. Fredah Jose, Mr. Julious Leng Jacobs

“Addressing sexuality at all stages of human growth vital for a healthy nation”

Sub theme 2:

Bride prices: Women as Commodities or Women as Community Pride?

Chair: Ms Eleina Butuna

10.50-12.00

Ms Rachel Tommbe

“Bride Price and its Significance in Traditional and Contemporary Enga”

Ms. Naomi Simet,

“Exploring the significance of “Bride Price” amongst the Yangoru of Papua New Guinea”

AFTERNOON SESSIONS:

Sub theme 3:

Women’s changing identity in the Public and Economic Arena

Chair: Dr. Nicolas Garnier

1.30-2.20

Ms. Pauline Riman,

“The PNG Hybrid”

Dr. Bill Sagir,

“Mining, Women, Kastom & Modernity in Lihir”

Sub theme 4:

Women, Sorcery and Witchcraft.

Chair: Ms Fa’afo Pat

2.20-3.10

Dr. Gabriel Richter,

“The “witch” and the Church”

Dr. Anne Waiko, Ms. Eleina Butuna and Mr. Billy Nuegu,

“Living with Witchcraft and Sorcery”

General discussion

3.10-4.00

Final remarks

By Prof. Ross Hynes, Vice-Chancellor, University of Papua New Guinea

4.05

Closing allocution

Hon. Malakai Tabar, the Chair for the PNG Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (PNGPGPD)

4.15

ABSTRACTS

1/ **Professor Betty Lovai**

Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Professor Betty Lovai has been a vibrant advocate for women's rights in Papua New Guinea. She has been involved in important research and policy making in the domain of gender, HIV Aids, land reform...

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Title: Changing values about gender based violence.

The paper highlights preliminary results of a research about perception of gender based violence. The research started in 2008 and was first conducted amongst male academics from the University of Papua New Guinea. This investigation was to establish on how the level of education could impact the way men perceive gender based violence.

This paper presents the preliminary results of this ongoing research. It will analyse the way sets of cultural values define and impact the perception of gender based violence. In analysing the results of investigation conducted amongst academics, it appears that the level of education does not impact on such practices. The preliminary results also imply that practice and knowledge are to be distinguished. While most recognized the necessity of condemning gender based violence, many still practice it on the basis of cultural values.

It is intended that this ongoing research will bring considerable insights in designing awareness campaigns in highlighting domains to focus on in order to reduce gender based violence.

The overall concept behind this research is to better understand the male perspective on gender based violence.

2/ **Ms Monika Sikas**

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Title: Flying foxes: women as sex workers

Stereotypically, single, young-adult female prostitutes strut themselves on the pavement, in bars and clubs, and in questionable hotels and boarding establishments. Contrary to simplistic pictures, wives, mothers, and children in Papua New Guinea also become sex workers. Female participants in the sex trade tell their stories, including their age; direct causes of their prostitution; other contributing factors; types of sexual acts in which they engage; groupings clients; venues; pay and other remuneration; and effects on themselves and their families, community, and society at large. Often when customary marriages break up, the women lose status, and they cannot return to their families. Their relatives and other people in the local community reject them. They turn to sex work to support themselves and their children. Children become engaged in the sex trade for a range of reasons, including that adults force them into prostitution, parents do not supervise them or provide for them, or parents abandon them altogether. Law enforcers treat female sex workers differently from their clients or from male sex workers, and law enforcers often mistreat female prostitutes. Children are not exempt from police brutality. Societal relationships that are supposed to bind and care for individuals—marriages, parenting, and police protection—are failing and causing further problems. Promiscuous partners, negligent parents, and brutal officials increase the likelihood of prostitution contributing to a vicious cycle. Understanding the causes and consequences of prostitution is key

to limiting its damage to society. Listening to the voices of women and children who are prostitutes will help to educate the public about greater societal issues that cause stigmatization, discrimination, with mental and physical harm. Holistic awareness will show that society needs rehabilitation, not just sex workers.

3/ Mr. David Kombako

Strand Leader, Anthropology, Sociology and Archaeology Strand, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Papua New Guinea

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Title: Gender Inequality as a Mirage: Women, Their Sexuality and Power.

This paper argues that that gender relations in PNG ought to be framed in a division-of-labor perspective and sees gender roles as complementing each other on a daily basis while projecting a mirage of gender inequality. This mirage of gender inequality is being blindly embraced by foreign governments and international donor institutions as their indispensable platform to channel foreign discourses and aid intervention to address gender “imbalance and inequality” in PNG. When sex roles are seen as complementary, this suggests possessions of power and realms of independence. It is assumed that there are power displays in everyday gender relations and that most of the time it is power wielded by men that becomes the focus of attention and forms a considerable part of our everyday discourse. This paper argues that women also wield “behind-the-scenes” powers that bear considerable influences on family life and that power is derived from their sexuality and child bearing properties.

The paper demonstrates these arguments by using qualitative data collected from a social research project in 2010 in selected rural and urban locations around PNG. Finally the paper stresses the need to come away from the mirage of power struggle and imbalances in gender relations and shift focus to ordinary PNG families’ everyday struggle to improve their basic socioeconomic existence as the basis for international intervention and foreign aid.

4/ Mr. Gabriel Kuman

Research Officer, the Melanesian Institute, Goroka

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Title: The Impact of Polygynous Marriage on Papua New Guinea Society today

Papua New Guinea is a multicultural society with hundreds of customary practices and behaviours. While many of these customs are beneficial as they identify who and what we are and where we come from and so on, others pose as hindrances to development and progress of our people and the nation as a whole. One of such practices that hinder positive development progress is polygamy.

In the traditional Melanesian society, the practice of having more than one wife was encouraged for genuine reasons. Polygamy was used as a medium to establish peace and harmony between warring tribes, for instance. Or a man may acquire more wives because he has many garden plots to be worked at, to look after lots of pigs for ceremonial feasts, to have more children, especially sons to add number and strength to his tribe and to create a wider network of kinsmen and for economic and political alliance with the neighbouring clans or tribes.

Today the practice is still common, perhaps, widespread among many Papua New Guineans. However, today’s practice is not according to custom. Today the practitioners invoke custom as an excuse to justify and legitimize their evil behaviours. Evidence shows that the practice is becoming more pervasive than before to the advantage of young men who would not have the

prerequisite economic and political power in the traditional context to support all their wives and children.

Polygamy is another form of violence that impacts greatly on the lives of women and girls, depriving them of their inalienable rights to freedom, a sense of justice and peace, of social progress and a better standard of living, of equality, tolerance and dignity. The custom brings no profit into the family and community but only problems, disharmony, disrespect, violence and even killings and deaths. Media reports show numerous incidences of women and men being murdered by frustrated co-wives. The courts are full of cases related to issues of polygamous relationships. Most women ended up in prison because they have killed either the husband or the co-wife. And not forgetting that most women today contract STIs and HIV through polygamous relationships. However, the sad reality is that polygamy continues to have official status through the legality of customary marriage. This law needs to be changed if PNG has to move forward and to keep pace with the rest of the world in its economic, political, infrastructural and human developments.

5/ Ms. Consilliah Menda, Ms. Fredah Joses, Mr. Julious Leng Jacobs

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Our culture and traditions determine who we are. It triggers our thoughts, actions, behaviour, and relationships and how we settle conflicts. This means from the time we are born to the stage we are in is shaped and moulded by our traditional way of life. There is however an increasing clash of tradition and modernity that our rapidly changing world continues to dominate, our perception on gender also changes thus many women fall victim to these misunderstandings. Coming from an adolescent view, we believe Education and Information is the key to bring peace to the mind. Therefore this paper is aimed at breaking the taboo barrier of our traditions and cultures by addressing sexuality in human growth thus informing and educating our population past the traditional taboo.

6/ Ms Rachel Tommbe

Pacific Adventist University

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Title: Bride Price and its Significance in Traditional and Contemporary Enga

In traditional Enga women were the pride of the clan. It was common knowledge that clans went to war for land, pigs and women. Women bore children for the future of the clan and tended the gardens and raised the pigs. More importantly women were referred to as “bridges” and marriages brought with it vital tribal and clan alliances and support by in-laws during times of famine, warfare and huge compensation payments known as “tee”.

Communities traditionally in Enga took a lot of pride in conducting a marriage ceremony which took up to a month sometimes. During this period the men’s family and the entire clan came together with their contribution towards the payment of the bride price. Young women with their reputation intact (virginity) in the community usually collected more payments from the man’s family. Bride price payments are part of the Enga culture and traditional way of life. Payments of bride price were in cash, pigs, kina shells, cassowaries and other valuables.

Today in the Enga Province, there is an increasing number of young couples living together, the traditional obligation of bride price payments being deliberately ignored or delayed due to

unavailability of resources and a high cost of living experienced by many families. Consequently marriages are not stable and women are not regarded or respected as before. And there is a growing trend of young couples living for short while together then separating or living abusive lives. The cultural norms and values bridging a marriage together are slowly eroding causing people to enjoy casual relationships with a high rate of marriage problems and divorces.

Contemporary Enga now is going through many changes and unforeseen pressure on the lives of the people is being exerted from outside. The increasing number of school drop outs and unemployment problems are putting a lot of unnecessary pressure on the youth and the economic boom in the country contributed by Porgera Joint Venture, the Mount Kare project, the Kompiam Gold project and the neighbouring gas and oil projects in Hela have shot prices of basic goods and services to inaccessible heights. Many families are struggling to meet basic daily needs and expenses such as bride price payments are becoming another burden for them. As such the whole perception and pride associated with traditional norms of the institution of marriage is slowly fading way to a whole new meaning to “convenient living”.

7/ Ms. Naomi Simet

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Title: Exploring the significance of ‘Bride price’ amongst the Yangoru of Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is blessed with immense cultural diversity and traditional knowledge systems. There is a need to investigate traditional systems of knowledge relating to women’s customary beliefs and practices in PNG to understand the role of women today. Although women’s participation in rituals and ceremonial performances are prevalent in PNG, they are seldom researched by past researchers.

This paper discusses the socio-political role of women in the Yangoru society of the East Sepik province which is associated with female initiation and marriage ceremonies. It looks at how these ceremonies have altered drastically over the years and further discusses the effects of these changes.

Questions pursued in this paper are; How do initiations and marriage ceremonies construct the role of women in traditional contexts? In what ways do these ceremonies further reinforce the role of women in today’s modern contexts? How have these performances legitimize the gender divide?

In addressing the above questions, the paper discusses issues relating to ‘Bride-price’ ceremonies currently practiced in Yangoru and how these ceremonies empowers the role of women in marginalised, male dominated communities.

8/ Ms. Pauline Riman

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Title: The PNG Hybrid

“Hybrid?” I repeated.

“Yes. Hybrid. They have parents from different provinces; they speak little or neither one of their parent’s languages nor were they brought up in their parent’s provinces,” my aunty said.

“So I would be a hybrid then?” I asked her.

“Yes, I suppose you are,” she replied.

Troubling thoughts creased my forehead.

Then she replied, “But that’s nothing to be ashamed of. It doesn’t make you any less a Papua New Guinean – you’re a new breed of Papua New Guinean.”

My aunty, a lifelong teacher whom I deeply admire and respect, has developed fascinating insights from her experiences with teaching. Interesting of all was the term *Hybrid* she would use to describe many young people she’s taught over the years. Hybrid was someone with parents from two or more provinces who grew up away from their parents provinces.

Growing up I’ve dealt with many comments coming from my family, wantoks and others that have made me sensitive as to my sense of identity. Words like “Ekting”, “Fancy”, “Kamap” and “Missus” were all too familiar insults. Growing up as a young girl in Port Moresby, the way I dressed, wore my hair, spoke English and Tok-pisin in a region-less accent, my refusal to do housework unless my brother or cousin-brothers were doing it too – would always draw criticism. Even when people would ask me where I’m from, I would usually tell them where my parents are from instead, and then gradually overtime I began to add: “...but I grew up in Port Moresby”, especially when they would look at me with a little incredulity. It felt strange to me that it was my parents that gave me my roots. I often wonder how my great-grandchildren would respond if someone asked them where they were from, supposing they came from several different provinces and live elsewhere in PNG.

Even though I did not grow up with the kastoms of my mother’s and father’s people I felt it through their piercing expectations and attitudes towards me when they visited Moresby. ‘Meri Mosbi’ or ‘Meri bilong siti’ were terms they would tease me with, but I hated these names because they had so many negative connotations.

I have always had the utmost respect and admiration for my fellow Papua New Guineans raised in their villages and provinces but have made a life for themselves in the city. But it seems to me that the generalized perception of women raised in the city is that they’re shallow, lazy and are ignorant of their culture. The many popular songs on the radio berating women are a testament to this.

I wasn’t raised in the city but I knew enough to realize that women didn’t own land, that women and men lived in separate households, it was men who spoke at traditional ceremonies while women served men, men beat the sago and women washed it. It didn’t take an outsider let alone someone from the city to see that women’s roles were different to that of men. However, in the city some things were the same, most women of my mother’s generation cooked, cleaned and took care of the children, and yet many like my mother maintained their careers and had a steady income – it takes a superhuman feat to achieve all this, especially without the support of a husband, partner, family and a nation. If I ever I’m in need of a hero I look to the women of my mother’s generation who dared to have a higher education, join the paid work force and have careers all in the midst of marriage and raising children.

Growing up in the city was for me both liberating and displacing. As a Papua New Guinean woman I’ve come to accept where and how I was raised. I may not know a lot but about my roots but I’m eager to know it, even if it takes a lifetime. I may be from somewhere else but I can call anywhere in PNG my home. I am a proud PNG hybrid – a new breed of Papua New Guinean from some of the best stock of women in this country

9/ Dr. Bill Sagir
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Bill Sagir is a Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, at the University of Papua New Guinea and working as coordinator of Assurance & Social Impact Monitoring, Lihir Gold Limited, a fully owned subsidiary of Newcrest Mining Limited. He has a BA in Sociology from UPNG, MA in Human Geography from Victoria University of Wellington and PhD in Anthropology from the Australian National University. He has a particular interest in the differential impacts of mining, petroleum and gas projects on different groups of men and women in resource project areas and is undertaking some research on the impacts of mining on women in different parts of Lihir.

Title: Mining, Women, Kastom & Modernity in Lihir

Lihir is a matrilineal society with a very strong ideology of masculinity. Unlike women in most other matrilineal societies, women in Lihir are far less assertive and are submissive to their uncles, brothers and husbands. Lihirian women had no roles in negotiating the establishment of the gold mine and still continue to live in the shadow of men and watch them deal with the company almost 15 years after production started. What is the mining company doing to improve the situation of women in Lihir?

This paper picks on a contradiction in the sustainable development policy of the mining company and argues that “upholding fundamental human rights” and respecting Lihirian kastom basically results in maintaining the status quo where Lihirian women’s fundamental human rights are not respected and protected. Is it in the best interest of the mining company as a commercial enterprise to challenge this status quo? Should it be the role of the state of PNG, as a signatory to UN conventions, to challenge this status quo and uphold the fundamental human rights of women in PNG generally, and in Lihir in particular?

10/ **Dr. Gabriel Richter**

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Dr Gabriele Richter studied theology, history, religious studies, ethics, and conflict resolution at Hamburg University, Humboldt-University Berlin, Yale University Divinity School, Columbia University, and the Union Theological Seminary (Columbia affiliated). She wrote her doctoral thesis in the field of Religious History at Rostock University supervised by Prof. Dr. Klaus Hock (University of Rostock) und Prof. Hank Nelson (Australian National University, Canberra). After teaching at Rostock University in Religious History for one and a half years, she is lecturing at the History Department of den University of Papua New Guinea. She is a research fellow (“Kollegiatin”) at the post-graduate seminar "Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship" at Rostock University.

Title: The “witch” and the Church

With a focus on the historical dimension of what is called the “witchcraft” of Chimbu, i.e. kumo, I will talk about the relationship between kumo accusations and its consequences for women during the time of the earliest Christian missionization of Chimbu. Both in studying mission archival material as well as anthropological studies on kumo up until the 1960s, I am interested in the intriguing similarities between kumo accusations as well as mission work. The key in understanding both the accusations as well as the mission work from the angle of (dis-)empowerment and Othering. At least up until the 1960s, kumo was researched by anthropologists as particular and unique within (Papua) New Guinea, because it was thought to be not a threat to outsiders but to insiders. Earliest ethnological reports about the Chimbu suggested that Chimbu people were so open and fearless in contacting foreigners, because their utmost fears were embodied by “witches” inside of their own communities and not outside. Of course, a closer look also suggested that the “inside” was actually the “outside.” Most often

women and their children were accused and the women as well as the children under their influence were still in a way outsiders. because the men married women from outside of their own group, or as they say in the Chimbu: “We marry our enemies.” Nevertheless, this interplay of “inside is outside is inside” then very soon was also reflected in the mission work that in a way profited from the kumo accusations. Prior to mission work kumo accused people were mostly killed and thrown into the water (not burned like in Europe!), or, if they were lucky, could flee to their relatives. With the appearance of the missionaries, a new neutral and protected “outside” appeared “inside”: the mission station.

11 / Dr. Anne Waiko, Ms Eleina Butuna and Mr. Billy Nuegu

Anne Dickson-Waiko is a senior lecturer in History & Gender Studies at the University of Papua New Guinea. Since completing a doctoral dissertation on feminism and nationalism in the Philippines, she has been involved in designing and teaching the gender studies programme at UPNG. Most of her research and writing covers various aspects on the historical and political efforts by women in PNG society and the gendered impacts of state policies on women in post-colonial PNG.

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12 / Ms Eleina Butuna is Lecturer in Demography & Population Studies, in the Discipline of Environmental Sciences & Geography, School of Science Natural & Physical Sciences, at the University of Papua New Guinea. Ms Butuna designed the new Demography & Population Studies Undergraduate Program at UPNG since she took up lectureship in 2006, She formally worked with International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) as Program Officer and Officer- In-Charge of IPPF- East and South East Asia and Oceania Region –Western Pacific Field Office, based in PNG and Executive Director of the Pacific Island Parenthood Affiliation based in Suva, Fiji. She has extensive experiences in community development projects both in PNG and abroad in the area of population and development.

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13 / Mr. Billy Nuegu is Lecturer in Communication and Life Skills in the Strand of Literature and English Communication, School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Papua New Guinea

Title: Living with Witchcraft and Sorcery

An increasing number of sorcery-related killings have been reported in the newspapers over the last seven years, many such incidents emanating from the Simbu and Eastern Highlands provinces. The victims of these brutal killings have been women, elderly and widowed women. The practice of sorcery is found in the Sepik, the Purari, Koiari, amongst the Tolai, Roro and Mekeo . This paper will focus its attention on Milne Bay. The entire province is known for the practice of black magic, sorcery and witchcraft; from Wedau, Ware to Suau, Tawala, Ealeba to Kiriwina, the Buhutu Valley to Goodenough, Misima, Rossel and Sudest Islands.

Sorcery in Milne Bay is practiced by the male gender, a small number of men combine the practice of sorcery and witchcraft. Witchcraft, on the other hand, is practiced entirely by women, young and old. In keeping with the theme of this symposium this presentation focuses on women rather than men. Secondly the paper raises questions about the origin of this practice in the Highlands, whether it is indeed kastom or is it a recently imported kastom in the first stages of

evolution and internalisation? Or is it a symptom of a gender crisis, a symptom of deep psychological stress and turmoil brought on by forces of modernity which is being manifested as a crisis in gender relations? Women are blamed for the practice of sorcery and witchcraft as an excuse to escape brutal criminal behaviour? Or is it indeed an example of an invention of Kastom

Sorcery and witchcraft are part of culture and Kastom in Milne Bay and therefore specific cultural mechanisms have evolved to deal with such practices rather than resorting to violence. The presentation will enumerate options available to those who are forced to live under such threats. The practice of sorcery and witchcraft is an elaborate ploy which instils fear terror and suspicion by women who have taken up this practice. It is manifested in another physical dimension often concealed as “illness, accidents and ultimately death”.