

6. At the Intersection

Law ... defines the boundaries of civic community and the expected behaviors of citizenship. In the same manner as a religious community is defined by its relation to the scriptures, the civic community in which one belongs is defined by its public laws.

Ryan Goodman, 2001.¹

My research has provided a qualitative review of the stigmatisation, discrimination, abuses and other deleterious effects suffered by sex sellers and gays in Port Moresby, both at law and in everyday life. But this research has also thrown up some perplexing conundrums, which Foucauldian theories seem inadequate to answer. Why, for example, do women leaders evince deep sympathy for abused women and go to great lengths to assist and support them, but then condemn them if they turn to selling sex for survival?² If the sale of sex represents performance of a commercial contract like any other, why are sellers of sex condemned and criminalised, while the buyers, their clients, are not? Why did Justice Narokobi, renowned human rights lawyer, merely distinguish *Anna Wemay's Case* when he let the women off in *Monika Jon's Case*, instead of overturning Justice Wilson's decision completely?³ Why did public figures invoke the constitutional right to equality to justify their calls for the arrest of the alleged 'male prostitutes' caught up in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid, but make no mention of the highly irregular arrest procedure which clearly amounted to a breach of human rights? Why, in the face of evidence that 'ritual homosexuality' has been a feature of traditional male initiation ceremonies in many parts of the country, is homosexuality now labelled as a foreign, anti-Christian import? What about gays among the *elites*—why are they hiding? Why was openly gay musician Moses Tau chosen for the honour of singing at the state funeral of Prime Minister Skate? Why do pastors and preachers of today's Christian churches condemn certain sexualities as deviant, abominable, sinful and so on, while ignoring Christ's messages of tolerance, love and forgiveness?

1 Ryan Goodman, 2001, 'Beyond the enforcement principle: sodomy laws, social norms, and social panoptics,' *California Law Review* 89: 643–740, 732.

2 I have noted the rhetoric of condemnation by women leaders in various places in this work. A recent comment on this came from Sally Joseph, a PNG sex worker representative at an Australian HIV/AIDS Conference, when she identified stigma from women's groups and church groups as two major challenges to work on decriminalising the sex trade. See Sally Joseph, 2011, 'Working towards law reform for sex workers in PNG,' paper presented at the Australasian HIV/AIDS Conference, 28–30 September 2011, Canberra.

3 When a court reaches a decision in a case which differs from that reached in a previous similar case, rather than 'overturning' the previous line of reasoning, it may find that the fact situation differs sufficiently from the previous decision so that it can 'distinguish' the previous case.

To address questions such as these, I have turned to the concept of intersectionality. So far I have taken a narrative approach to my materials, describing individual experiences and extrapolating from them to form a picture of the broader social location of the individual in a range of groups.⁴ Narrative-based studies of sex sellers, such as those set out in Chapter 4, identify the characteristics of the subjects which they share with other members of the group, primarily that of sexuality, and examine issues of gender, class, ethnicity and location from that perspective. But these subjects share the characteristics of only one dimension of each of the categories, which intersect to describe their social location, and this description does not explain the configurations of the stigmatisation and oppression they experience. This can be done however by comparing and contrasting the relationships between multiple dimensions of groups through the lens of intersectionality theory.

Beginning in the late 1970s, feminist scholars around the world began studying the problems of creating a space for non-white feminism.⁵ Gender, no longer the sole marker of a common female identity, was problematised by a combination of race, class and gender. But this too became mired in the additive approach, the claims of 'triple oppression.' In 1989, American feminist lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw used the term 'intersectionality' to analyse the law's treatment of employment discrimination on the grounds of race and sex claimed by black women in the USA.⁶ The claims failed, because the court found that the alleged discrimination was not exclusively race or sex discrimination, and there was no combined race-sex category recognised in law. Crenshaw observed that categories such as race, class and gender are mutually exclusive, and within each of them, the subordination of one group to another (such as the subordination of women to men in the category of gender, or the subordination of black working-class women to white middle-class non-working women in that of women) becomes a disadvantage occurring within a single dimension. The simultaneous subordination of a group within two or more categories leaves those at the intersection of the categories increasingly subordinated, not necessarily cumulatively but often in qualitatively different ways. The subordinated group may not be capable of advancing one agenda (such as racial discrimination)

4 Leslie McCall, 2005, 'The complexity of intersectionality,' *Signs* 30(3): 1771–800, 1781.

5 Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, 1983, 'Contextualizing feminism: gender, ethnic and class divisions,' *Feminist Review* 15: 62–75; Dorothy H. Broom, 1987, 'Another tribe: gender and inequality,' in *Three Worlds of Inequality: Race, Class and Gender*, ed. Christine Jennett and Randal G. Stewart, South Melbourne: Macmillan Company of Australia, 264–82; Gill Bottomley, Marie de Lepervanche and Jeannie Martin (eds), 1991, *Intersexions: Gender, Class, Culture, Ethnicity*, North Sydney: Allen & Unwin; and see the historical reviews in Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix, 2004, 'Ain't i a woman? revisiting intersectionality,' *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5(3): 75–86; Nira Yuval-Davis, 2006, 'Intersectionality and feminist politics,' *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13: 193–209; and Ann Denis, 2008, 'Intersectional analysis: a contribution of feminism to sociology,' *International Sociology* 23(5): 677–94.

6 Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989, 'Demarginalising the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics,' *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140: 139–67.

without encountering conflict with that of another category (such as gender discrimination) and because of single-dimensional frameworks, they may not be able or allowed to create a multiple identity. The existence of one category may completely deny another, and those at the intersection may even be excluded from both (or several) categories by the subordination process.

‘Power is everywhere,’ Michel Foucault reminds us, and it is immanent in all kinds of relations.⁷ The problem, Crenshaw claims, is not the existence of the categories so much as the way in which power operates within them. It clusters around certain groups in those categories and is used against others to discriminate and oppress. A dominant group identifies and names a subordinate group and then attributes values and qualities to the subordinate group, thus creating and maintaining social hierarchies of domination and subordination.⁸

This chapter first presents data, mainly textual and spanning more than four decades, to illustrate the process of naming and constructing the subordinate groups of sex sellers and gays. The expression of the attitudes and opinions of today’s Papua New Guinea (PNG) society found in the national media illustrates the range of negative values which are attributed to these groups so as to justify their stigmatisation and oppression. Then I turn to ideas of the ways by which intersectionality can illuminate dominant narratives about sex sellers and gays in PNG today, and how these stigmatised categories also intersect.

Attitudes and opinions

Sex crime studies

The Crown Law Department’s 1973–75 review of the criminal law mentioned in Chapter 2 focused on attitudes to sexual offences, with a view to reform which would bring sexuality laws more into line with people’s perceptions of unacceptable behaviour. Nine specific sexual offences were selected for study. One was the category of ‘unnatural offences,’ which included sodomy.⁹ A questionnaire was circulated to all anthropologists working in PNG, and Marilyn Strathern, then of the New Guinea Research Unit, prepared a summary

7 Michel Foucault, 1978 [1976], *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, London: Penguin Books, 93–94.

8 Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1991, ‘Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color,’ *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–99, 1297–98.

9 No comments were sourced directly on the issue of prostitution, possibly because urban areas were barely represented in the responses from the anthropologists polled, who worked predominantly in rural and remote areas: Marilyn Strathern, 1975, *Report on Questionnaire Relating to Sexual Offences as Defined in the Criminal Code*, Report prepared for New Guinea Research Unit, Boroko, Papua New Guinea, 8.

report, which provides probably the closest thing we have to a baseline survey.¹⁰ Responses to queries about 'homosexual dealings' (as they were termed in the study) showed that while most PNG societies considered that intercourse should be *per vaginam*, deviations were not generally regarded as offensive perversions. 'Homosexual dealings,' in societies where they were rare, were regarded as distasteful or merely silly. Where they were normal, they were usually regarded as 'play,' and where they were institutionalised, for example in boys' initiation ceremonies, they were considered beneficial. Objections to male-male sex arose only in situations of physical assault or deliberate insult. Otherwise, as Strathern explained, even where it was considered improper, it was 'not thought to hurt anyone, nor to produce a class of perverts, nor to threaten general sexual morality or the moral fibre of society.'¹¹

Another Justice Department review of the *Criminal Code* followed in 1983. Members of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) Psychology Department undertook a fresh study of the level of correspondence between the Code and community perceptions of particular types of human behaviour, aiming to provide a comparison between society's perceptions of the relative seriousness of particular types of crimes and their ranking in the law. They collected data from both men and women in rural areas, and from a sample of expatriate men and women in Port Moresby. Their results showed that overall, society considered sexual offences to be more serious than did the law; but the greatest discrepancy found was not in the views of homosexuality and prostitution as they termed them, but of adultery and indecent exposure, which were felt to be far more serious than the law allowed in all areas surveyed. The study concluded by posing the question whether the laws should be changed to reflect the views of the people, or whether people should adjust their views to accord with the law.¹²

In order to determine the effects of urbanisation on traditional attitudes, the same team undertook a further study among a random selection of adult Papua New Guineans living in suburbs of Port Moresby and on the UPNG campus.¹³ They found that overall, attitudes of urban dwellers to the seriousness of crimes, including the sexual crimes of homosexuality and prostitution, more

10 Strathern, *Report on Questionnaire Relating to Sexual Offences*. The report was circulated but never officially 'published'. Nevertheless it is widely available, as a 'large book' in the ANU library for example.

11 *Ibid.*, 46–47. The same view was affirmed in interview with Bernard Narokobi. But contrast the sad tale of the informant in Gilbert Herdt, who evinced little or no interest in women, preferring to deplete his semen by inseminating males, and attributed his stigmatisation to the fact that he failed to fulfil his social duty to marry and produce children. See Herdt, 1992, 'Semen depletion and the sense of maleness,' in *Oceanic Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 33–68.

12 Dennis Moore, Barry Richardson and Dianne Wullemin, 1985, 'A comparison of rural and legal ranking of seriousness of crimes in Papua New Guinea,' *Melanesian Law Journal* 12: 149–58.

13 Dianne Wullemin, Barry Richardson and Dennis Moore, 1986, 'Ranking of crime seriousness in Papua New Guinea,' *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 17(1): 29–44.

closely approximated those of the state legal system than did the attitudes of the rural people previously studied. The question posed by the first survey, as to whether the law or the attitudes of the people should be changed, now needed no answer. As Dianne Wuillemin, Barry Richardson and Dennis Moore tell us, 'In a developing country with expanding towns and cities it appears that the people will change their values by adopting those imposed by the government and its legal system.'¹⁴ They proposed various influences which might have contributed to these changes in attitude: weakening of traditional ties and values; changes in gender roles; greater exposure to 'global culture'; the presence of many strangers in the urban environment; changes in the likelihood or the occurrence of crime; more frequent and reliable public information about crime.¹⁵

The role of the media

The local media are also a rich source of public opinion in their daily news stories, their editorials, their feature pieces and their letters to the editor. In Port Moresby, the daily newspapers are purchased by people on the way to work and reading them is the first activity of the day in many offices. In bars frequented after work by the rich, the famous and the politically well placed, the music is stopped and a hush descends when the evening newscasts start on the local TV channels. Talkback radio shows are highly popular, and here the voice of the urban *grassroots* may be clearly heard. With the arrival in recent years of broadband internet and smartphones, blogs and Facebook have become popular means of disseminating opinion for those who can access the web.¹⁶ In Australia, where in-country PNG television and radio broadcasts are not available to me on a regular basis, I have relied on a mixture of the online postings of the daily newspapers, combined with hard copy when available,¹⁷ and more recently, several online blogs, to compile the account that follows.

Newspapers have been published in various towns in the country since the early twentieth century,¹⁸ mainly though not entirely in English—some have appeared in Tok Pisin. The two current dailies are the venerable *Post-Courier*

14 Ibid., 42–43.

15 Ibid., 40–42; Dennis Altman, 2001, *Global Sex*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

16 Access is by no means limited to the *elites*. One popular blog is written by a medical school dropout who took to selling *buai* on the streets for a living. See the *Namorong Report*, online: <http://namorong.blogspot.com>.

17 The National Library of Australia has a good though incomplete collection of newspapers. I was able to fill vital gaps in my data during field trips from the excellent library of the National Research Institute in Port Moresby.

18 The earliest that I can find in the National Library of Australia holdings is the *Papuan Times*, first published in 1911 in Port Moresby. The *Rabaul Times* started in 1925 after the Australian Administration takeover, and amalgamated in 1959 with the *New Guinea Courier* (based in Lae) to form the *New Guinea Times-Courier*, which in turn amalgamated with the *South Pacific Post* in 1969 to produce the *Post-Courier* of today.

and the comparative newcomer the *National*, started in 1993 under sponsorship of the Malaysian firm Rimbunan Hijau, which had entrenched itself via a multitude of subsidiaries as the principal logging operation in the country and in the early 1990s was looking to expand its PNG investment base and to counter some of its bad press.¹⁹

The newspapers were originally written for and by the expatriate colonisers, but this situation was already changing before Independence, with Papua New Guinean journalists trained and writing for the *Post-Courier*, statements by national politicians being given good coverage, and Letters to the Editor being penned by future citizens.²⁰ These letter writers, who usually concealed their identity behind pen-names, were not and still are not representative of the entire citizenry, many of whom are illiterate, or at least not literate in English;²¹ do not have regular access to the newspapers; are not interested in writing letters to newspapers or do not have the means or resources to do so. The target audience is not limited to other letter writers, but it has been suggested that writers and readers are still by no means representative of public opinion as a whole; that they mainly constitute an educated, urbanised group interested in national rather than parochial affairs, manifesting pro-capitalist and liberal views, with some measure of influence over those involved in determining national policy.²²

Television is available only in towns, but radio is available, if sometimes only intermittently, even in the far reaches of rural areas, and is an important source of information for *grassroots* and villagers. Whereas until recently most village people lacked access to media sources other than newspapers and local radio,²³ they have now found new voices in the very recent entrants onto the media scene: the digital media, in the form of blogs, Facebook and similar internet resources. These provide a vivid alternative to the often biased information put out by the newspapers, are used more by younger people, their users do not

19 By comparison, the Murdoch-owned *Post-Courier* is relatively autonomous, and editorial policy is very much localised.

20 Colin Filer has estimated that by 1980 the 'great majority' of Letters to the Editor in the *Post-Courier* were received from Papua New Guineans rather than from expatriates. See Colin Filer 1985, 'What is this thing called "brideprice"?' *Mankind* 15(2): 163–83: 165.

21 The UNESCO Institute of Statistics gives basic literacy rates for PNG population aged 15 and older at around 65% in 2009. See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 'The official source of literary data,' *UNESCO Institute of Statistics*, online: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx>, accessed 11 April 2014.

22 Filer, 'What is this thing called "brideprice"?' 164–65; and see the caveats in Hank Nelson, 2003, 'Dear Sir...: Evidence of civil society in the media of Papua New Guinea,' paper presented at the USP/ANU/FDC Suva Symposium Conference, Suva, 30 September–2 October 2003.

23 Vicki Luker, 2003. 'Civil society, social capital and the churches: HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea,' paper presented at the Governance and Civil Society Seminar, in Symposium Governance in Pacific States: Reassessing Roles and Remedies Conference, Suva: University of the South Pacific, 30 September–2 October 2003, 7.

hesitate to criticise and condemn ‘the establishment,’ and they have become the means by which civil society in PNG has found a strong new voice, augmenting the former limited options of churches, sporting groups and *wantok* systems.²⁴

The media are by no means impartial and can also be very inaccurate, as the erroneous *Post-Courier* report about the males freed in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid shows. The newspaper never checked, and was never called to account. Although the newspapers purport to represent all sectors of society, in reality they mainly express the opinions of the *elites*, are politically biased towards their owners and can be very selective in what they print. Dame Carol Kidu cites the ‘moralist negative response’ of the media as one of the three main challenges to her decriminalisation initiative, along with that of sectors of the religious community and ‘concerned individuals from the society at large.’²⁵ But for information on the development of PNG’s ‘public opinion’ on the topics of selling sex and homosexuality, they provide an enduring record. By studying newspaper reports and letters back to the decolonisation era of the early 1970s, I have been able to construct the development of these opinions.

The sex trade

Selling sex always makes good headlines in PNG. Discussion of the pros and cons is abundant, and the newspapers often carry alarmist headlines, for example: ‘PNG prostitute has AIDS,’²⁶ ‘Betelnut for sex rife on highway,’²⁷ ‘Sex workers spread HIV,’²⁸ ‘Children into sex for fees,’²⁹ ‘Floating brothels,’³⁰ and ‘Sex trade shock.’³¹ Headlines such as these appeal to readers’ preconceived reactions of horror and disgust. How did such views develop?

Papua New Guinean *elite* opinion regarding prostitution has been largely but not exclusively informed by many of the shifts and changes in opinion occurring internationally throughout the twentieth century. In the colonial era, the Administration through the minutely detailed Native Regulations of both Territories sought to control every aspect of ‘native’ life, including prostitution which was opposed in any form.³² But at the same time, colonial economic policy

24 Ibid.

25 Carol Kidu, 2011, ‘A national response to the HIV epidemic in Papua New Guinea,’ *UN Chronicle* XLVIII (1) May, online: <http://www.un.org:80/wcm/content/site/chronicle/home/archive/issues2011/hivaidsthefourthdecade/nationalresponsetohivpapuanewguinea>, accessed 20 August 2011.

26 ‘PNG prostitute has AIDS,’ 1987, *Post-Courier* (online), 6 July.

27 ‘Betelnut for sex rife on highway,’ 2005, *Post-Courier* (online), 7 April.

28 ‘Sex workers spread HIV,’ 2007, *Post-Courier* (online), 10 September.

29 ‘Children into sex for fees,’ 2008, *Post-Courier* (online), 14 March.

30 ‘Floating brothels,’ 2008, *Post-Courier* (online), 26 September.

31 ‘Sex trade shock.’ 2004, *Post-Courier*, 17 August, 1.

32 Chilla Bulbeck, 1992, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 190; Jan Roberts, 1996, *Voices from a Lost World: Australian Women and Children in Papua New Guinea before the Japanese Invasion*, Alexandria, NSW: Millennium Books, 55; Edward P. Wolfers, 1975, *Race Relations and*

created a need for cash in an opportunity-poor environment (particularly for women). It also created new opportunities for women to escape some of the worst strictures of traditional village life.³³ All this encouraged a burgeoning sex trade. Its practitioners may not necessarily have seen prostitution as anything very shameful,³⁴ but divisions of opinion were already apparent even before Independence, with 'good housewives' disapproving of their relatives selling sex.³⁵ In the decolonisation era, Papua New Guineans were participating in media discussions around prostitution, and this has continued to the present, although attitudes and opinions have changed with other changes in post-colonial society.

The legalisation debate

The most heated discussion of the sex trade appearing in the media revolves around the question of legalisation and occasionally, the establishment of brothels.³⁶ Legalisation was an issue which arose even before Independence, and an examination of the debates and the arguments for and against which have appeared in the newspapers over the years reveals much about public attitudes to selling sex.³⁷ Opinions and comments may be classified into three categories: disease control, socio-economic factors and moral/social arguments.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were a concern of the colonial administration from the outset. In the decolonisation era, writers of letters and articles were debating the need for control of prostitution to prevent the spread of these diseases. Some blamed prostitution, while others urged legalisation as a control measure. The debate continued sporadically after Independence, until HIV arrived in PNG. In 1987, a PNG citizen living overseas was reported to have died of AIDS; an expatriate actually in the country was diagnosed with the virus; and so was a sex seller, who was immediately accused of 'spreading AIDS.'³⁸ From then on, the legalisation debate was inextricably linked to the epidemic, and the language began changing, as donor aid found its way into the country and epidemic control measures demanded the investigation of social

Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea, Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 55, 98–100.

33 For example, the need to escape from intolerable situations created by the lack of respect and support shown by male kin in certain circumstances: Holly Wardlow, 2006, *Wayward Women: Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

34 For example Joan Drikoré Johnstone, 1993, 'The Gumini *Bisnis-Meri*: a study of the development of an innovative indigenous entrepreneurial activity in Port Moresby in the early 1970s,' Ph.D. thesis, Brisbane: University of Queensland, 124, 139–40, 186.

35 *Ibid.*, 185.

36 The distinction between 'legalisation,' 'decriminalisation' and 'regulation' is discussed in Chapter 7. Public confusion has led to the frequent use of the conflating term 'legalisation.'

37 The opinions that follow are drawn from a multitude of articles, editorials and letters appearing in the *Post-Courier*, 1972–2011, and the *National*, 1993–2011.

38 'PNG prostitute has AIDS,' 1987, *Post-Courier*, 6 July, 11.

behaviours.³⁹ Arguments supporting legalisation included: criminalisation drives it underground; legalisation will ensure access to proper medical and health facilities; legalised prostitution will reduce the incidence of rape. Arguments against were more numerous, though often less well reasoned: prostitution spreads disease; nightclubs promote prostitution which spreads disease; prostitutes don't use condoms, which prevent disease; condoms spread disease; legalisation will not prevent the spread of HIV, which can only be checked by mandatory testing of the entire population.

After the health arguments comes a long list of what can best be described as social and moral arguments. Before Independence, Highlands leaders expressed concern with urban drift, particularly of uneducated and unemployable women, and particularly down the Highlands Highway to settlements in Lae: they claimed that this brought shame to the status of the Highlands region.⁴⁰ The Administration was willing to cooperate and prosecute prostitutes under vagrancy laws. Shortly after Independence, church and women's group leaders expressed concern that a legalised sex trade would adversely affect the new nation's image on the world stage, and called for stronger control measures.⁴¹ Reflecting PNG concerns to begin crafting a new society, one letter writer argued that, 'all too often expatriates have sought to impose alien standards of morals and behaviour on dependent peoples with disastrous results. At this sensitive stage of the country's history, it appears appropriate for Papua New Guineans to begin setting their own standards.'⁴²

Employment identity cards were debated, and measures to combat the unemployment problem were called for. Social issues such as unwanted pregnancies and disruption to family life were blamed on prostitution. By 1986, the practice of seeking opinions from the man (and woman) on the street had taken hold in the PNG media, and the *Post-Courier* published three feature

39 For example, an article on a survey of 'high-risk settings' (nightclubs) referred to 'multiple sex partners,' 'high-risk groups' and the availability of condoms. See 'Sex study shock: 6000 unprotected sex reportedly from nightclub outings,' 2004, *Post-Courier* (online), 17 August.

40 Paul Cowdy, 1972, 'The 'crime' of being out of work in a town like Lae,' *Post-Courier*, 10 March, 17; '1-Day upstaged by prostitutes,' 1974, *Post-Courier*, 9 May, 11; Robert Famundi, 1974, 'Prostitution must stop,' *Post-Courier*, 18 October, 2.

41 'Two bishops reject legal prostitution,' 1976, *Post-Courier*, 17 August, 14; 'Women may seek world affiliation,' 1976, *Post-Courier*, 26 August, 3.

42 Ultra-Realist, 1973, 'Govts cannot legislate against sin,' *Post-Courier*, 3 October, 23. As the letter was signed 'Ultra-Realist,' it is impossible to tell whether the writer is expatriate or indigenous. However the point was an interesting one, and in keeping with the spirit of the times; and see the discussion of the 'race narrative' below.

pieces on legalisation. Elizabeth Kogomoni was struck by the reluctance of people to talk about 'it',⁴³ although eventually several people were found, all of whom supported legalisation.⁴⁴

At the same time, the rhetoric was shifting from international image to more domestic concerns: destruction of family life, destruction of cultural norms, un-Christian sinfulness. Leaders began to advise girls who sold sex to return home to the village and help their parents. The arrival of HIV prompted an upsurge of public awareness and discussion. The spread of the virus (allegedly by prostitution) was proof of a breakdown of cultural norms and a state of sinfulness, a situation which could only become worse following legalisation.

Economic factors—poverty, urban drift, inadequate schooling and the crackdown on urban street vending—have all been blamed at various times.⁴⁵ Women are pimped by relatives, girls are expected to provide for their families, mobile men with money or 'sugar daddies' are accused, and one writer even claimed that mothers who abandon their families 'force' fathers to prostitute their daughters (this was given as a rationale to make legal provision for such women to pay maintenance to fathers).⁴⁶ 'Legalisation' has been suggested as a solution to these problems because it provides greater income opportunities for women. Other suggestions however are for lazy and greedy women to return to the village and work the land, or alternatively that they be rehabilitated by teaching them income-earning skills such as sewing, cooking, and for the literate, typing.

Brothels (as opposed to freelance sex selling by individuals) have been discussed in Chapter 3. Politicians have made several proposals over the years to legalise them: in 1973, for Mt. Hagen;⁴⁷ in 1977, for East New Britain;⁴⁸ and by Dame Carol Kidu when she first started her decriminalisation campaign.⁴⁹ Arguments for brothels have included: legalising them could provide taxable income from operators; they will facilitate better health checks and disease management;

43 Elizabeth Kogomoni, 1986, 'Prostitutes: we are not ashamed,' *Post-Courier*, 8 January, 3; Elizabeth Kogomoni, 1986, 'The unhappy life on the streets,' *Post-Courier*, 9 January, 3.

44 Peter Kili, 1986, 'What the public thinks,' *Post-Courier*, 8 January, 3.

45 When I left PNG in 1976, there were no beggars, although many people walked the city streets asking at businesses and private homes for work. When I returned in 1990, one or two beggars sat on the pavements of commercial areas. Now, beggars roam the streets throughout the city.

46 Peter Korugl, 2010, 'Women to pay,' *Post-Courier* (online), 6 January.

47 'Brothel call,' 1973, *Post-Courier*, 15 August, 1; 'Brothel call "not serious",' 1973, *Post-Courier*, 17 August, 10; 'Opposition to brothels,' 1973, *Post-Courier*, 31 August, 8; 'Synod again brothel idea,' 1973, *Post-Courier*, 18 September, 3; also 'I-Day upstaged by prostitutes,' 1974, *Post-Courier*, 9 May, 11.

48 Editorial, 'Unemployment the real issue,' 1977, *Post-Courier*, 22 April, 2.

49 'PNG politicians study Australian prostitution laws,' 2005, *PACNEWS* (online), 23 June; Editorial, 2005, 'Let's debate Dame Carol's proposal,' *Post-Courier*, 23 June, 10.

and they will be testing grounds for men's moral strength. Against, it has been asserted that brothels encourage exploitation and organised crime such as gambling, robbery and murder.

By the 2000s, brothel establishments began to be associated with 'Asians.' As explained to me by a UPNG classmate, the Chinese in PNG are of two kinds. The 'good' Chinese, whose ancestors were imported into German New Guinea in the nineteenth century as indentured labourers, intermarried with Papua New Guineans, formed business associations with them, provided much of the petty merchant class in both urban and rural areas, and became naturalised citizens.⁵⁰ The 'new Asians' started arriving in the 1980s, when Malaysian logging interests were beginning to extend their activities beyond Borneo. Other resource-extraction entrepreneurs followed, and 'Asian' can now refer not only to Malaysian loggers but also to Indian car mechanics, Singaporean service providers, Taiwanese fishing boat crews, Mainland Chinese miners and so on. They are often reported to display arrogance and disdain for Papua New Guineans and their land and this has earned them considerable resentment.⁵¹ An example of the issues involved comes from a newspaper report in 2010, of the arrest of two 'Asians of Chinese origin' for the attempted murder of a (good Chinese) businessman. The two were allegedly associated with a group involved in illegal casino, nightclub and brothel operations, and there was also mention of breaches of immigration laws. Jeffrey Elapa wrote, 'Two highly placed government officers have warned since that the country was sitting on a time bomb. "We are being virtually invaded. These people will be the next biggest group in PNG."' ⁵²

Another report followed quickly, of the exposure of a 'sex ring' at a logging camp in the Sepik, where arrests were thwarted when the women involved all claimed to be married to the foreign loggers, and the police Inspector was left fuming that, 'these marriages only result in the poor young mothers striving daily to raise their "fatherless" children.... These foreigners are smart at this game but I will not rest this time until they learn to respect our children and women folk.'⁵³

Attention had already focused on nightclubs, as part of attention to HIV management. New strategies were being introduced which focused on high-

50 Hank Nelson, 1982, Taim Bilong Masta: *The Australian Involvement with Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 29–30, 170–71, 216.

51 See for example Centre for Environmental Law and Community Rights (CELCoR) and Australian Conservation Foundation, 2006, *Bulldozing Progress: Human Rights Abuses and Corruption in Papua New Guinea's Large Scale Logging Industry*, Boroko, PNG: Australian Conservation Foundation. Numerous complaints have also been published regarding mining, fish-canning and other resource extraction enterprises in PNG.

52 Mohammed Bashir, 'Chinese duo appear in court,' 2010, *Post-Courier* (online), 5 January.

53 'Sex-for-sale case hit snag,' 2010, *National* (online), 23 February.

risk groups and involved a survey of sex-selling venues.⁵⁴ A year later, Dame Carol's suggestion that brothels be legalised for better HIV management was referred to a parliamentary committee, which commenced a nationwide study of nightclubs.⁵⁵ A proposal to close down nightclubs entirely was eventually rejected, and operators were urged to comply with existing laws.⁵⁶ In 2007, a newly appointed Justice Minister began his own anti-nightclub campaign, declaring that he would 'fight evil and any foreign practices that are brought into this country with an intention to destroy Melanesian and Christian family values.' Nightclubs, he claimed, promoted evil, contributed to family break-up and to the increase in HIV/AIDS, and should be banned outright. He deployed a range of emotive terms designed to depict the women as victims of evil nightclub owners, terms such as 'sex slaves,' 'sex objects,' 'unhealthy practices,' 'manipulate, abuse,' and 'malicious activities.'⁵⁷

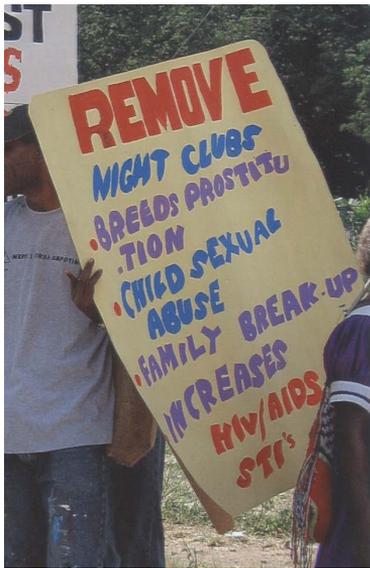


Figure 6.1. Poster (carried by a man) from the 'Stop Violence Against Women' march of 2006, displaying some of the prevalent arguments against nightclubs.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 2006.

54 'Sex study shock,' 2004, *Post-Courier* (online), 17 August.

55 Jessie Lapou, 2005, 'Prostitution issue sent to committee,' *Post-Courier*, 25 July, 2; Editorial, 2005, 'Committee set to study night clubs,' *Post-Courier*, 25 July, 10.

56 'Nightclubs urged to help enquiry,' *Post-Courier* (online), 3 February 2006.

57 'Dr Marat wants night clubs to be banned,' 2007, *National* (online) 10 December; Camillus Vovore, First Secretary to Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, 2008, 'Nightclubs promote evil, should be banned,' *National* (online), 7 January; Joshua Arlo, 2008, 'Nightclubs leading to moral decay: Marat,' *National* (online), 18 February; Michael Unagi, 2008, 'Deal with actors in sexual immorality,' *National* (online), 20 March; and various other newspaper items 2004–2009.

Christian rhetoric has increased in recent years.⁵⁸ Legalisation was most frequently opposed by appeals to Christian principles and ‘family values.’ Prostitution is immoral, sinful and contrary to Christian values; it is the devil’s evil practice, from the time of Sodom and Gomorrah. On the contrary, it has been argued that it is a social rather than a criminal problem, politics and religion should not mix, and anyway, churches and moral preaching cannot prevent it. In 2005, the Minister for Community Development suggested amending the *Summary Offences Act* so as to prevent law-enforcing agents such as police from being legally entitled to victimise sex workers, and proposed consideration of establishing ‘adult entertainment centres,’ which would ensure compliance with health requirements and the prohibition on commercial sexual exploitation of children.⁵⁹ The *Post-Courier* chimed in swiftly with a remarkably sympathetic editorial:

DAME Carol Kidu wants ‘adult entertainment centres’ established with the aim of reducing illegal sex activities on our streets. She told Parliament she does not want to favour the idea but due to rising illegal sex activities, Papua New Guinea must face up to reality. This is a controversial subject. Churches and other groups will oppose it while others will favour it. Whatever the arguments may be, this issue must be carefully considered before any decision is made.

We have a serious problem on our streets where thousands of young women have turned to prostitution to earn a living. This is a risky behaviour which places them at a greater risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS. Many have died as a result, others now live with the virus but the numbers keep rising. Dame Carol is right. PNG must face up to reality in dealing with this problem. Our present systems and institutions are not capable of dealing with a tide that is rising right in front of our eyes.

The reality facing us is that prostitution will continue to increase and no amount of force used by the state and its law enforcement organisations will end it. The Government and various state authorities can look at ways of ensuring that those involved in this behaviour as a means of survival must be protected and those who use their services are also protected. Adult entertainment centres, if these are to be legally established in PNG, must be treated with sensitivity. Strict rules of conduct must be established and enforced to ensure the interests of the

58 Not only in relation to sexual matters. Judicial opinion in recent times has veered away from condemning witch-killing on humanitarian grounds, and more towards claiming it is contrary to Christian principles. See Christine Stewart, 2010, ‘The courts, the churches, the witches and their killers,’ paper presented at the Law and Culture: Meaningful Legal Pluralism in the Pacific and Beyond Conference, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 30 August–1 September 2010.

59 ‘License brothels,’ 2005, *Post-Courier* (online), 23 June; Damaris Minikula and Fiona Harepa, 2005, ‘No legal sex: Kidu,’ *National*, 5 August.

community are protected. This newspaper encourages all our readers to come forward with your views on this issue. Let's have all points of view, for and against.

The only way to reach an acceptable answer to this issue is for wider public discussion. As a nation, we have been turning a blind eye to this problem for far too long.⁶⁰

And discuss it the public did. A flood of letters defended and opposed the proposal as if it were already law, each usually attacking the one before:

Don't forget sex workers are also important citizens of this country ... as they are also human beings created by the Almighty.... Only those living in a fantasy Christian perspective seem to be having narrow notions and seem to think that they are the perfect ones and seem to marginalise the sinners.⁶¹

I cannot condone something that belittles another human being and dehumanises our society.⁶²

It is a social problem and whether we legalise it or not will never make a difference as this activity will continue as long as we live.... If someone wants to enter prostitution to earn an easy leaving, let them be. Who are we to decide? Sex workers or not, they are still human beings, like us they too have rights.⁶³

The president of the PNG National Council of Women submitted a plea for regard to Christian principles, the real value of sex, marriage and family, the norms and values of the society, PNG's strong traditional and cultural values, and the 'societal context' which regarded prostitutes as animals. She thought that legalisation would prevent an adequate HIV/AIDS response, and that 'strip tease' at hotels and nightclubs is a corrupt activity that leads to 'evil acts of adultery and fornication.'⁶⁴

The abomination

Lessons can be learnt from the Bible about the wrath of God when men contended that God flawed in our designs and decided to use our bodies for other purposes than those intended by the Creator. The Great Flood

60 Editorial, 'Let's debate Dame Carol's proposal.'

61 Kopi K. Lou, 2005, 'Dame Carol has no hidden agenda,' *Post-Courier*, 8 August.

62 Vina Mer, 2005, 'Why legalise another crime?' *Post-Courier*, 8 August.

63 Hate Me Not, 2005, 'Consider both sides on prostitution,' *Post-Courier* (online), 11 August.

64 'Women's group slams plans to legalise brothels,' 2005, *National* (online), 10 August.

during Noah's time and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah came about when society at large accepted unnatural, immoral and un-Godly acts.... Be warned.

Dominic Kakas, *Post-Courier*, 2010.⁶⁵

Although PNG's daily newspapers are a rich source of information on public discourse regarding the sex trade, a similar study of newspapers for debate on homosexuality reveals very little in the way of public discourse through opinion pieces and letters. However, the norms of the colonisers were gradually being accepted in the newly independent nation, as shown by the following two tales recorded in the press.

Tale from a high school⁶⁶

In 1980, Kerevat in East New Britain Province was one of the country's four 'National' high schools, providing Grade 11 and 12 education to selected students from around the country. It was staffed by both expatriate and Papua New Guinean teachers. That year, allegations surfaced of homosexual relations at the school involving a married expatriate teacher and a PNG student. A group of mainly expatriate teachers banded together to agitate for investigation of the allegations. The expatriate Inspector for National High Schools was accused of irregular practices in school supervision and the school chaplain was co-opted into finding evidence of homosexuality on the part of the Inspector.⁶⁷

The Secretary for Education appointed a Committee of Enquiry in March 1981 to investigate the Inspector's conduct. By this time the teacher implicated had left the country and the student had moved on to University studies. The Committee exonerated the Inspector and condemned the teachers who called for the investigation. They were accused of stirring up trouble and were sacked. Students became upset over a radio broadcast alleging homosexuality at the school, boycotted classes and stoned school buildings. Armed police were called in, some 230 students were charged with unlawful assembly, and it was several days before order was restored.

The sacked teachers complained to the Ombudsman Commission, which is charged under the *Constitution* Section 219 to investigate 'cases where the conduct [of government officers] is or may be wrong, taking into account, amongst other things, the National Goals and Directive Principles, the Basic

65 Dominic Kakas, 2010, 'Throw out Dame Carol's idea,' *Post-Courier*, 25 November, 10.

66 Account derived from Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea 1981, *Final Report on the Kerevat National High School Enquiry*, Port Moresby: National Parliament; as well as various *Post-Courier* reports and commentaries. I was not able to discover a copy of the original Education Department Committee Report.

67 Ironically, the chaplain himself was eventually found to have been involved in sexual relations with other men, and was forced out of town by other gays there. Pers. comm., Adam, 12 January 2006.

Rights and the Basic Social Obligations.’ The Commission in its report made in October 1981⁶⁸ found the Education Department Committee’s inquiry to be ‘biased, dishonest and untruthful’⁶⁹ and the complaint against the Inspector to be justified, saying, ‘where a public servant allows his private life to interfere with his public duties—especially where those duties touch upon the education of our children ... it no longer remains a private matter.’⁷⁰

It recommended reinstatement of the sacked teachers and dismissal of the Inspector and the Superintendent of Operations (responsible for the staffing of National High Schools). The Education Department ‘vehemently’ defended the Committee, but reinstated the sacked teachers. Attempts to direct the police to withdraw the charges against the students were protested by the police on grounds of the constitutional independence of the Constabulary. A test case against student ringleaders went to court and was dismissed. The Inspector resigned and left the country, claiming pressure from unsubstantiated allegations. The Superintendent protested his innocence and wrote to the Education Secretary complaining that the opinions expressed in the Ombudsman Commission report were not supported by evidence. Accusations of misrepresentation, distortions of the truth, unfair dealings and disparaging innuendo flew back and forth in early 1982, and the government was pressured to act against the superintendent. The Public Services Commission conducted an ‘assessment’ of the superintendent’s case, and he was ultimately sacked and afforded no opportunity to appeal.⁷¹

At the time of the affair (1981–82), public comment focused mainly on condemning expatriate education officers and the Department in general.⁷² A very few PNG letter writers came out for and against homosexuality in educational institutions in November and December 1981. In December 1982, however, the two teachers most prominent in agitating for action against the teacher and the Inspector (a married couple who had been sacked, reinstated and redeployed elsewhere in the country) revived the matter in a lengthy letter to the newspaper. In it they claimed that ‘homosexual abuse of students by male expatriates remains widespread’; and ‘during our time at Kerevat two of our students became mentally unstable and violent following interference by homosexuals.’ The inspection system, they claimed, continued to be abused, and ‘expatriates or

68 Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea, 1981, *Final Report on the Kerevat National High School Enquiry*, Report prepared for National Parliament, Port Moresby.

69 *Ibid.*, 6.

70 *Ibid.*, 42–43.

71 ‘Donohue sacked,’ 1982, *Post-Courier*, 20 May, 1.

72 For example, a *Post-Courier* Editorial of 18 November 1981 entitled ‘Clean out the closets’ proposed that ‘any mess’ should be cleaned up to restore public confidence in the education system, 2; subsequent letters to the newspaper argued the case for and against permitting homosexuality.

“co-operative” nationals are given posts ahead of eligible national applicants.’ The problem, they said, still lay in Department headquarters, where the ‘small group of senior expatriates remaining from colonial days operate as they wish.’⁷³

There are two ways of viewing the affair. If the Ombudsman Commission and these two teachers are to be believed, the Education Department Committee embarked on a witch-hunt against certain teachers at the school who were simply trying to bring to the attention of the authorities a case of malpractice on the part of the Inspector. He had covered up a breach of moral duty at the school. Resentment against his actions, and allegations of homosexuality, had led to the deployment of armed police against children. The Committee itself was negligent in failing to enquire whether the Inspector’s alleged homosexual involvements affected his public responsibilities, on the grounds that it would violate his right to privacy under Section 49 of the *Constitution*. It was misled by the actions of the Superintendent, who had intimidated a witness to the Committee. Subsequent public discussion unearthed the likelihood that a band of expatriate officers at department headquarters were the ones dictating policy, keeping secret files on teachers, and so on. An expatriate teacher in a provincial high school condemned the ‘expatriate clique’ in the Department of Education which ‘function[ed] as a close knit, incestuous operation which favors and protects those loyal to it but will not hesitate to use dirty tricks to remove or disadvantage anyone who challenges or threatens its existence ... an assessment system in which obsequious and scurrilous backbiting count for much more than professional competence.’⁷⁴

Another writer claimed that, ‘the problem is not simply confined to senior expatriate officers. Alliances have developed between some of these officers and some of the new national elite.... These alliances do not augur well for the health and vitality of the nation ... one legacy left to PNG has been particular Australian forms of incompetence.’⁷⁵ In this view, the Ombudsman Commission had acted properly in ‘put[ting] aside our normal Melanesian politeness’ and speaking plainly.⁷⁶ It placed primary significance on the special role of teachers in society, and the ethical obligations therefore placed upon them, stating that ‘the public has the right to be assured that its publicly funded education system does not expose the youth of this nation to sexual treatment which may damage them psychologically and permanently affect their lives by leading them into a minority life style which does not have the approval of the majority of society,’ and quoted from a Circular entitled ‘Simplified Interpretation of the Papua New

73 J. Mendzela and E. Mendzela, 1982, ‘Kerevat: the lesson wasn’t learnt,’ *Post-Courier*, 16 December, 4.

74 ‘Secret files on teachers deter recruitment,’ 1982, *Post-Courier*, 1 April, 4.

75 ‘Report gathers dust,’ 1982, *Post-Courier*, 2 April, 4.

76 Ombudsman Commission, *Final Report on the Kerevat National High School Enquiry*, 6.

Guinea Teachers Association Code of Ethics' thus: 'healthy moral development relates to the child's behaviour and how he views his [*sic*] social relationship through the accepted social and religious values.'⁷⁷

This is the view of the Kerevat Affair taken by the majority of letter writers, and the *Post-Courier* itself, in its implicit condemnation of the conduct of the teacher alleged to have had the relationship with the student, the Inspector who supported him and the Superintendent who allegedly supported both of them and allegedly intimidated a witness to that effect.

But there is another view: one lone voice pointed out that the Commission report and recommendations were not grounded in fact.⁷⁸ This is the view taken by the original Education Department enquiry, which was supported throughout by the Secretary for Education. The Committee Report says that neither the relationship between the student (who had not been proved to be under eighteen at the relevant time) and the teacher,⁷⁹ nor the sexual proclivities of the Inspector, ought to be a matter of public scrutiny. Rather, it claimed, the teachers who lodged the complaints about the relationship were themselves involved in a homophobic witch-hunt. There is no proof that the Superintendent intimidated anyone, and no matter how strongly he protested his innocence, he was ultimately sacrificed. There are also no proofs, only allegations, of a group of officers at Department headquarters (some of whom were supposedly themselves homosexual) protecting their own.

Either way, the report of the investigations and the public comment demonstrate how easily insinuations of homosexuality can be made, and the drastic consequences this can have for those involved. The media role was pivotal. The new nation was developing an anti-colonial reconstruction of the 'expatriate' as the villain in the piece, while paradoxically emulating colonial concepts of normative sex, with 'perverted' (expatriate) homosexuals condemned for their influence on precocious but innocent (Papua New Guinean) children.⁸⁰

The Tale of a parliamentarian⁸¹

At the end of 1983, a scandal broke in the media surrounding allegations of sexual misconduct in the late 1970s on the part of two Ministers in the Somare National Government. The allegations were made by a Minister in the Morobe

77 Ibid., 43.

78 Concerned Resident, 'Report needs scrutiny,' 1982, *Post-Courier*, 14 April, 4.

79 Given that most children starting school before Independence were at least six or seven years old, he would have been very close to attaining his majority, if he had not already done so. The fact that the Commission did not raise the possibility, relying instead on reference to teachers' ethics and the duty of a public servant not to let his private life interfere with his public duties, seem to bear out this conclusion.

80 Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, 146.

81 Account derived from *Post-Courier* reports of 1983–1984. The newspaper ran the story as front-page news for over two months.

Provincial Government, formerly a Deputy Police Commissioner. One allegation of sex with an under-aged girl was made against Sir Pita Lus and Boyamo Sali, Member for Morobe Province in the National Government, was accused of sodomy. It was claimed that the original cases had been covered up by the government's applying political pressure to the police involved.⁸² The sodomy allegation against Sali arose in connection with a prosecution in 1978 for driving under the influence of liquor in Rabaul. The driving charge was upheld, but the allegation of sodomy was thrown out for lack of evidence.

The allegations appear to have been politically motivated. Conflicts between national and provincial governments were frequent in the twenty years following Independence. Many provincial governments were investigated and suspended, until a law revision in 1995 gave the national government greater control over them. The Morobe Premier and the Prime Minister clashed often.⁸³ The Premier at the time was embroiled in conflict with the National Government, resulting in a prosecution for insulting a police officer,⁸⁴ and the Provincial Minister declared he was critical of the police and supported the Premier.⁸⁵ A *Post-Courier* editorial wondered whether the nation was on the verge of an era of witch-hunts. Sali himself claimed that it was 'cheap politics,'⁸⁶ and the Commission of Inquiry which eventually sat on the matter supported the view that the whole incident was politically motivated.⁸⁷

Despite initial attempts by the Police Minister and the Prime Minister to brush the matter off, the Opposition mounted a strong campaign against the 'cover-ups,' which included advertising for signatures to a petition to have both cases re-opened on the grounds of political interference with the course of justice. The Ombudsman Commission rapidly backed out of any involvement in the matter, but the Prime Minister bowed to public pressure and appointed a Commission of Inquiry on 13 January 1984. The two Ministers stood aside pending the outcome of the inquiry, which was conducted by (then) Deputy Chief Justice Kapi. The inquiry investigated the allegations against Sir Pita first, and then moved on to those against Sali. Various police officers allegedly or actually involved at the time gave somewhat confused evidence, but all denied

82 'Govt Ministers in sex case – claim,' 1983, *Post-Courier*, 21 November, 1.

83 Hartmut Holzknicht, 'Morobe Province 1978–1991,' 1997, in *Political Decentralisation in a New State: The Experience of Provincial Government in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Ronald James May, A.J. Regan and Allison Ley, Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing, 199–227, 222; Sean Dorney, 1990, *Papua New Guinea: People, Politics and History since 1975*, Milsons Point, NSW: Random House: 150–52, 164.

84 *Samana v Waki* (Unreported) N449, 23 January 1984.

85 'Govt Ministers in sex case – claim,' 1983, *Post-Courier*, 21 November, 1; Angwi Hriehwazi, 1983, 'PG to reveal names,' 1983, *Post Courier*, 15 December, 1–2.

86 Angwi Hriehwazi, 1983, 'It's Sali and Lus: Merire,' 1983, *Post-Courier*, 16 December, 1, 2.

87 'Police were not influenced,' 1984, *Post-Courier*, 5 June, 2.

any political pressure. Sali, through his counsel, claimed to be 'scandalised' by the constant use of the word 'sodomy' and objected to its use, but Justice Kapi allowed reference to both 'sodomy' and 'gross indecency.'

The inquiry report was tabled in Parliament on 4 June 1984. It ruled out any interference with police investigations, and cleared both Ministers of any alleged wrongdoing. The Prime Minister professed himself 'appalled and outraged' at the behaviour of the Provincial Minister who first raised the matter, the Opposition and the *Post-Courier*. He announced that he would recommend to the National Executive Council that the State cover any costs incurred by either Minister in libel actions against the newspaper.⁸⁸

The matter provoked little written public comment. During the course of the inquiry, an Opposition frontbencher announced that he intended to reveal the names of some MPs and top public servants who were homosexual, and working in league with expatriates recruited to work in PNG.⁸⁹ A letter writer retaliated by calling it all a 'storm in a teacup' and suggested that it might be better to name parliamentarians and officials who had mistresses.⁹⁰ Otherwise, nothing further appeared in the press. It is worth noting, however, that Prime Minister Somare had, by then, gained a reputation for protecting his ministers, as had emerged in the Rooney Affair of 1979, resulting in the mass resignation of expatriate judges from the bench and the downfall of the Somare government of the time.⁹¹

Both these tales illustrate the many ways in which allegations of sexual impropriety can form a basis for public discussion and the construction of social mores. The Kerevat Affair gave rise to a storm of allegation and innuendo, and a public airing of the belief that it was expatriates who were 'teaching' national youth to indulge in 'it' (homosexuality). The MPs' Scandal did not provoke much in the way of letter writing, but newspaper reports ensured that it was kept well in the public view. Homosexuality was becoming entrenched in the new nation as anti-social.

'Males freed' – the gender factor

Apart from the report of Johnny Mala's conviction in 1997, very little comment on homosexuality appeared for many years, other than the occasional report

88 'Lus, Sali clear – Somare,' 1984, *Post-Courier*, 5 June, 1.

89 'Homosexual MPs to be named,' 1984, *Post-Courier*, 25 January, 10.

90 P.R. Sharp, 1984, 'Storm in a teacup,' *Post-Courier*, 2 February, 4.

91 David Weisbrot, 1979, 'Judges and politicians,' *Legal Service Bulletin* 4(6): 240–45; Weisbrot, 1980, 'Judges and politicians Pt II: the Wilson affair,' *Legal Service Bulletin* 5(5): 214–17.

of forced sex or sex in prisons. But in 2004, considerable public debate ensued about the freeing of alleged male prostitutes in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid. This reveals a lot about public perceptions of prostitutes as always being female. The gendering of the category of 'prostitute' had already been confirmed in the discourse of the colonial law simultaneously with its naming. References are made in the colonial Ordinances to prostitution by a 'female native,' a 'native woman,' or simply, a 'female.'⁹² Extra emphasis is given to this female gendering by the long-standing rule in the imported legal system that 'words importing the masculine gender include females,'⁹³ and it is still standard legislative drafting practice in PNG to use 'he' to denote either male or female. So the use of these female terms places explicit emphasis on the gender of prostitutes. Until the reforms of 1977, the law held that only women could be prostitutes.

It was already amply clear that males had been selling sex in colonial times. Several cases from that era mentioned monetary exchange, and one file document from the *Siune Wel Cases* specifically stated that one party to consensual male-male sex was entitled to be exonerated as 'the victim of a male prostitute.'⁹⁴ However, the criminal charges laid in all such cases are those of male-male sex, which carry far higher penalties than the 'prostitution' offences which criminalise those who sell sex. This is probably the reason why no public discourse has emerged around commercial sex between males. Rather, in the case of sex between males, attention has focused on the conflation of consensual sex between adults with forced sex and sex with under-aged males, all of which are lumped together in media reportage as 'sodomy.' As Cindy Patton has stated, the global HIV discourse has assisted in conflating AIDS and selling sex, and 'sex workers were largely presumed to be women, and women at risk were assumed to be prostitutes,' while 'men who sell sex to men were lumped together as men who have sex with men.'⁹⁵

Perhaps because of this history of avoiding reference to the selling of sex by males, it is not surprising that the comparatively novel concept of 'male prostitutes' caught up in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid was taken up so eagerly by the media. The *Post-Courier* had already headlined this aspect of the raid on the front page with its 'Males freed' story,⁹⁶ and reported the comments of the National AIDS Council lawyer to the effect that 'the release of the male suspects was not fair to their female counterparts.' Over the week following the raid, both newspapers solicited comments from prominent people on this topic. The *Post-Courier* on the following day reported that officials of the NGO ICRAF

92 *Native Regulations* 1939 (Papua) Section 85; *Native Administration Regulations* 1924 (New Guinea) Section 87; *Police Offences Ordinance* (New Guinea) Section 79.

93 *Interpretation Act* 1975 Section 6.

94 Robert Aldrich, 2003, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, London and New York: Routledge.

95 Cindy Patton, 2002, *Globalising AIDS*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 92.

96 'Males freed,' 2004, *Post-Courier*, 16 March, 1.

explained that the law 'covered both male and female prostitutes.... How can the police justify their actions by saying the law only relates to women? Where is the justice that they are supposed to be providing to the people of this land when they clearly have a prejudice against women?'⁹⁷

On the same day, in a horrified letter headed 'Crime to Be a Woman?' a (male) writer complained bitterly about the discrimination evidenced by

this apparent male chauvinistic ideology which stigmatises the female gender as sexual entrepreneurs. After the motley gang of both male and female sex workers were detained and interrogated, males were vindicated but the females were castigated ... if this case reveals an inherent legislative bias that privileges the male gender against moral and legal indictment, it is also a case that points to the dehumanisation of the female species. Is it a crime to be a woman?⁹⁸

The *Post-Courier* sought comment from Minister Kidu who on Thursday condemned the police brutality and reportedly mentioned that 'the fact that only the women were victimised was unjust because both males and females were arrested during the raid.'⁹⁹ On Friday, the Minister responsible for the police, Bire Kimisopa, described the release of the forty-five male prostitutes as a 'joke' and a 'completely stupid' action by police because not all sex workers were females. He condemned the police action in forcing the shameful march to the station 'because by doing such a thing, people would lose the respect they have for the force.' He went on,

'I want a review on the whole incident and all male suspects to be brought in and charged appropriately,' he said ... he would be writing to Police Commissioner Sam Inguba to have the officer responsible charged for releasing the male prostitutes. 'The release of the male prostitutes is a terrible injustice to the female citizens of this country,' Mr. Kimisopa said.¹⁰⁰

What is intriguing, if not frightening, is that not one voice in those newspaper reports and statements, amidst all the cries for recognition of the equal rights of males and females, all the complaints about police abuses, suggested that the women should have been freed too, along with the 'male prostitutes.' Apart from the ICRAF representatives, who complained about police violence and foreshadowed civil suits for damages, no-one expressed any opinion about the breaches of human rights in the actions of the police. I have suggested elsewhere

97 Maureen Gerawa, 'Police wrong: NGO,' 2004, *Post-Courier*, 17 March, 4.

98 A. Moutu, 2004, 'Crime to be a woman?' *Post-Courier*, 17 March, 10.

99 Michelle Yiprukaman, 2004, 'Kidu: probe raid on city brothel,' *Post-Courier*, 18 March, 4.

100 Michelle Yiprukaman, 2004, 'Police actions damned,' *Post-Courier*, 19 March, 4.

that ‘rather than complaining about the unfair violence, or the unfair law which led to it, some preferred to ensure that all males who might behave similarly to the outclass of “prostitutes” should be re-gendered so as to deserve equal ill-treatment.’¹⁰¹

The decriminalisation furore

I have referred above to Dame Carol Kidu’s first suggestion in 2005 that brothels, or ‘adult entertainment centres’ as she termed them, be legalised, and the flood of discussion that ensued.¹⁰² She defused the issue by sending the matter to the parliamentary committee of Health and Family Welfare, and the whole matter evolved into an investigation of nightclubs.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, debate continued for several months.

Meanwhile, as Minister, she established a semi-formal Decriminalisation Task Force to start looking into the decriminalisation of both sex work and sodomy.¹⁰⁴ She tried repeatedly to take submissions to Cabinet, only to be rejected by the pre-screening committees. When she was re-elected in 2007 and re-allocated the Community Development Ministry, she moved quickly to gain endorsement by Cabinet of a proposal to refer a review of the laws in question to the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC), with instructions to undertake widespread and lengthy community consultation. She formalised the Task Force and reconstituted it as a Decriminalisation Reference Group, to work in consultation with the CLRC and also to consider alternative strategies for decriminalisation of both sex work and sodomy. She also made a statement to the press about the CLRC reference.¹⁰⁵

Whilst the discourse on decriminalisation of prostitution has been dense, that on the sodomy law has not, consisting mainly of innuendo during the Kerevat Affair regarding the ‘foreign influence’ of expatriate men leading innocent young PNG men astray¹⁰⁶ and, more recently, horror expressed at sodomy committed by force in prisons or on young boys. Stigma and shame have largely kept male-male sex from the public view, only noticed when the law steps in. But the

101 Christine Stewart, 2012, ‘“Crime to be a woman?” Engendering violence against female sex workers in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea,’ in *Engendering Violence in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Margaret Jolly, Christine Stewart with Carolyn Brewer, Canberra: ANU E Press, online: <http://press.anu.edu.au?p=182671>, accessed 31 March 2014.

102 Eric Tappakau, ‘License brothels,’ *Post-Courier*, 23 June 2005, 1; Editorial, ‘Let’s debate Dame Carol’s proposal.’

103 Lapou, ‘Prostitution issue sent to committee.’

104 Kidu, ‘A national response to the HIV epidemic in Papua New Guinea.’

105 ‘Cabinet endorses review on country’s sex laws,’ 2010, *National*, 22 October, 3; H. Joku, ‘PNG sex laws under review: homosexuality and prostitution may be legalised,’ 2010, *Post-Courier*, 5 November, 1, 4.

106 As explained to me by a member of the National AIDS Council Legal and Ethical Committee, 2001; also, interview Ume Wainetti, Port Moresby, 20 March 2006.

Minister's decriminalisation statement unleashed a massive backlash, notable not least for the fact that for the first time, homosexuality became the subject of much public condemnation. According to those whose press statements were published, the proposal would 'contribute to moral decay in the very fabric of a nation of Christians'; she was 'legalising mass murder in PNG'; 'those practising are not fit to live as human'; 'prostitution and homosexual activities (including same sex marriages) are abominations in the sight of God'; and so on. It was even suggested that the Minister should apologise to God and the people of PNG over her moves to legalise prostitution and homosexuality.

There was little support. The *Post-Courier* of 9 November 2010 printed an explanatory letter from Dame Carol herself, together with the supporting views of the NACS Director, and the Editorial of that edition urged reason, presenting the arguments for both sides and welcoming the CLRC review. But that was all. The media appear to be highly selective in choosing what to print.¹⁰⁷ The anti-decriminalisation stories and letters have continued.

Categories and intersections

[A] large and continuing project for subordinated people ... is thinking about the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others. This project attempts to unveil the processes of subordination and the various ways those processes are experienced by people who are subordinated and people who are privileged by them. It is, then, a project that presumes that categories have meaning and consequences. And this project's most pressing problem, in many if not most cases, is not the existence of the categories, but rather the particular values attached to them and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1991.¹⁰⁸

The deployment of intersectionality

Kathy Davis claims that one of the reasons intersectionality theory is so popular is that it coincides with Foucauldian perspectives on power, through its focus on dynamic processes and the deconstruction of homogenous categories.¹⁰⁹ Those dominant in society create and maintain their superior position of power

107 Kidu, 'A national response to the HIV epidemic in Papua New Guinea'; field notes 12 November 2010.

108 Crenshaw, 'Mapping the margins,' 1296–97.

109 Kathy Davis, 2008, 'Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful,' *Feminist Theory* 9(1): 67–85, 71.

by imagining and stigmatising the outlawed. The illicit is necessary for the licit, the abnormal for normality, the unclean for the pure and moral.¹¹⁰ This process must be ongoing if the dominant position is to be maintained, and when danger threatens, the dominant in society seek to expand the range of controls exerted over the outlaws who are perceived as the source of the threat.¹¹¹ Stigma and discrimination are not so much an individual practice as a social process, producing relations of power and control. Culturally constituted stigmatisation is essential to the establishment and maintenance of social order.¹¹²

Intersectionality theory explains how social control is produced. Cultural narratives imagine members of dominant and subordinate groups (for example, white middle-class women, being chaste and submissive, can be raped against their wills while African-American women, being sexual, autonomous and earthy, cannot). These narratives are then deployed to justify discrimination against members of the subordinate groups.

In PNG today, there is little dispute that men are dominant over women.¹¹³ But neither of these gender groups is unitary. The understanding of each is always intermeshed with other social divisions, such as those of class, sexuality, place and so on, in a process which creates a multiplicity of understandings of manhood and womanhood.¹¹⁴ To draw a comprehensive picture of the narratives of the PNG man and the PNG woman, the content and influence of these other divisions must be considered.

Class, which at its simplest is divided into *elites* and *grassroots*,¹¹⁵ has emerged as one of the most significant social categories in the country today. In many ways, the *elites* are dominant, the *grassroots*, a conceptualised category created by the *elites* from a nation evincing extreme cultural diversity, are subordinate.¹¹⁶ In

110 Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton, 2003, 'HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination: a conceptual framework and implications for action,' *Social Science & Medicine* 57: 13–24, 14–17.

111 Catherine Campbell and Andrew Gibbs, 2009, 'Stigma, gender and HIV: case studies of intersectionality,' in *Gender and HIV/AIDS: Critical Perspectives from the Developing World*, ed. Jelke Boesten and Nana K. Poku, Farnham: Ashgate, 29–46, 32; following Mary Douglas, 1966, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

112 Parker and Aggleton, 'HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination,' 17.

113 See for example the many chapters in Peter King, Wendy Lee and Vincent Warakai (eds), 1985, *From Rhetoric to Reality? Papua New Guinea's Eight Point Plan and National Goals after a Decade*, Waigani, Papua New Guinea: University of Papua New Guinea Press; and the many letters opposing the two-year-long battle for reserved seats for women in the almost totally male-dominated national parliament. First-stage legislation was finally passed late in 2011. See Eoin Blackwell, 2011, 'Activists welcome PNG women's bill,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November, online: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/activists-welcome-png-womens-bill-20111123-1nue2.html>, accessed 30 June 2014.

114 Yuval-Davis, 'Intersectionality and feminist politics,' 195.

115 See M. Goddard, 2005, *The Unseen City: Anthropological Perspectives on Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*, Canberra: Pandanus Press, 50n8, where he explains that both terms, pluralised in Tok Pisin, lend themselves readily to singularisation, as an *elite* leader, a settlement-dwelling *grassroot*.

116 Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1993, 'Nationalism and sexuality in Papua New Guinea,' *Pacific Studies* 16(4): 61–97, 61.

2003, for example, a police officer was reported to have been 'surprised to learn from the media that a sex trade exists in Kokopo.... An SOS officer ... said there were reports of one-off incidents happening around town where women were selling their bodies for money. He said when one deals with people from the lower class, such situations occurred.'¹¹⁷

Considering that some of the earliest published reports of arrests for soliciting come from pre-Independence East New Britain, the surprise is to learn that these police officers claim to have become aware of the local sex trade for the first time. Nevertheless, it illustrates one of the predominant themes of the *elites'* constructions of the sex trade today. These women are the 'lower classes' from which a police officer wished to dissociate himself. Those involved in selling sex are somehow set apart from 'normal' people, occupying different places in society, visibly different, behaving in different ways, and automatically relegated to the 'lower class.' In the same vein, the *Post-Courier* Editorial quoted in Chapter 5 pontificated:

prostitutes ... are often on the bottom rung of society's ladder and have few social or working skills to be able to climb higher in society.

Usually, their prime task is to find money to feed and house themselves and the knowledge that they can satisfy those needs by selling their bodies comes before the 'finer things of life.'¹¹⁸

Within these class groupings, the dominant narrative of the *elites* is that of the male leader, successful in a range of enterprises;¹¹⁹ that of the *grassroots* is of an honest, hardworking villager, respectful and observant of custom, a good Christian and member of his local community, the backbone of the country. Others within these groupings who fail to meet these standards are lacking in some way.

Culture is also a category of significance. Charges of lack of respect for cultural or traditional values are used in condemning 'badness' of various kinds. Culture also includes Christianity, as orator after orator, letter writer after letter writer, claim that 'PNG is a Christian nation,' ignoring the import of the precise wording of the *Constitution* which talks of 'our noble traditions and *the Christian principles* that are ours now [emphasis added].'¹²⁰ The 'good Christian' rhetoric adds a powerful dimension to the narratives of other categories. This

117 'Sex trade surprise,' 2003, *Post-Courier*, 28 March, 3.

118 Editorial, 2004, 'Give thought to rehabilitation,' *Post-Courier*, 15 March, 10.

119 Keir Martin, 2007, 'Your own *buai* you must buy: the ideology of possessive individualism in Papua New Guinea,' *Anthropological Forum* 17(3): 285–98; Joel Robbins, 2007, 'Afterword: possessive individualism and cultural change in the western Pacific,' *Anthropological Forum* 17(3): 299–308; Karen Sykes, 2007, 'Interrogating individuals: the theory of possessive individualism in the western Pacific,' *Anthropological Forum* 17(3): 213–24.

120 Preamble to the *Constitution*.

narrative is drawn from the perpetuation of much of the pre-Independence mission evangelisation carried out by the mainline churches, combined with the fundamentalist teachings of the 'new churches' (Pentecostal, charismatic, fundamentalist, Evangelical) which owe much of their inspiration to their largely North American origins.¹²¹ So the dominant narrative of PNG Christianity is increasingly a fundamentalist one, of a God-fearing congregation dedicated to stamping out evil as defined by (sometimes self-ordained) church pastors and leaders. Reference is made to the Christian virtues of respect and obedience, the sinful sexuality of Sodom and Gomorrah, the abominations of Leviticus, and the decay of society's moral fabric, as it was in response to the announcement of Dame Carol's decriminalisation proposals.

With these significant features in mind, I can begin to describe the dominant, or idealised, narratives of man and woman in PNG today. Gender narratives have undergone a significant shift since Independence. In colonial times the 'native male' as constructed by the Australian colonists included features such as childishness, duplicity, laziness and lasciviousness.¹²² But independence and modernity have changed that. Now the dominant group consists of PNG's political and business leaders, whether village or urban, *grassroots* or *elite*, who have reconstructed the patriarchal narrative to portray the PNG male as head of the household, prominent in the extended family and the clan, as well as in newer social networks such as work-groups and leisure activities.¹²³ The narrative of the PNG woman has undergone similar changes, but women today, whether *elite* or *grassroots*, remain subordinate, unable to participate fully in the construction of their own narratives. The complex intersections of race, class, kinship, culture and gender ensure that the *elites* must constantly strive to ensure that their dominant position is maintained. As Foucault reminds us, constant resistance ensures that no power relations are simple.¹²⁴ The *elites* may make the laws, determine social policies, publish the newspapers, but this power is tempered by the threat of subaltern resistance. All PNG *elites* are to varying extents obliged to assuage the jealousies of their village and urban *wantoks*, both directly through prestations and indirectly through adapting their viewpoints to reflect grassroots mores.

121 Franco Zocca, 2007, *Melanesia and its Churches: Past and Present*, Goroka, PNG: Melanesian Institute, 200–201.

122 Wolfers, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule*; and for a valiant attempt to the contrary, Charles Rowley, 1966, *The New Guinea Villager: The Impact of Colonial Rule on Primitive Society and Economy*, New York: Praeger; for sexuality features see, Amirah Inglis, 1974, *'Not a White Woman Safe': Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920–1934*, Canberra: Australian National University Press; and Jean G. Zorn, 2010, 'The paradoxes of sexism: proving rape in the Papua New Guinea courts,' *LAWASIA Journal* 2010: 17–58.

123 Bruce M. Knauff, 1997, 'Gender identity, political economy and modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3(2): 233–59, 250.

124 Michel Foucault, 1982, 'The subject and power,' *Critical Inquiry* 8(4): 777–95.

Good mother, bad *pamuk*

Much intersectionality scholarship in the West has focused on the dominant narrative of 'woman' as white, middle-class, chaste, passive.¹²⁵ But the dominant narrative of the 'good woman' in PNG differs in some respects. White colonial women were classically constructed by their menfolk as respectable, passionless and fragile,¹²⁶ contrasted in every possible way to indigenous PNG women, who were considered at the time to be irresponsible, poor mothers, sexually unrestrained and ever-available.¹²⁷ The decolonisation period brought a shift, both in action and narratives. As the emerging PNG *elites* started to supplant such narratives, they re-cast colonial women as 'extreme racists and domestic bullies.' At the same time, progressive white women who allied themselves with nationalist political struggles and social improvement programmes were rejecting the practice of hiring black men to perform 'demeaning' domestic work, and socialising with them, even taking them as lovers. But rather than being hailed as heroines, these women often encountered hostility and abuse from Papua New Guineans.¹²⁸ The construction of these white women as loose and sexually available continued into the post-Independence era, while PNG women, as expected, 'follow[ed] their gender roles into occupying the private spaces vacated by colonial women.'¹²⁹ They have also been affected by the influences of modernity, but in contradistinction to men, whose status depends on constraining women's sexuality and limiting their access to non-traditional cultural and economic relationships,¹³⁰ women themselves were reconstructed as hardworking *grassroots* village dwellers, modest, pure, unassertive, who observe and uphold custom.¹³¹ Age is a factor, requiring unmarried girls to be

125 Crenshaw, 'Demarginalising the intersection of race and sex,' especially 155–57; Denis, 'Intersectional analysis,' 679.

126 Inglis, 'Not a White Woman Safe', 14; Adam Reed, 1997, 'Contested images and common strategies: early colonial sexual politics in the Massim,' in *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Lenore Manderson and Margaret Jolly. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 48–71, 66; P. Reid, 2005, 'Whiteness as goodness: white women in PNG and Australia, 1960's to the present,' Ph.D. thesis, Brisbane: Griffith University, 74. Trish Reid notes that progressive white women in PNG's decolonising period constructed and lived disloyalty to that narrative. Amirah Inglis relates how such rebellions had taken place for decades, though not to the extent practised in the immediate pre-Independence period.

127 Inglis, 'Not a White Woman Safe'; Adam Reed, 'Contested images and common strategies.'

128 P. Reid, 'Whiteness as goodness.'

129 Anne Dickson-Waiko, 2010, *Taking Over, of What and From Whom? Women and Independence, the PNG Experience*, Report for Deakin University, Geelong VIC: Alfred Deakin Research Institute, 8.

130 Bruce M. Knauft, 1997, 'Gender identity, political economy and modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3(2): 233–59, 250.

131 Pamela Rosi and Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1993, 'Love and marriage among the educated elite in Port Moresby,' in *The Business of Marriage: Transformations in Oceanic Matrimony*, ed. Richard A. Marksburly, ASAO Monograph No.14, Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 175–204; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 'Nationalism and sexuality in Papua New Guinea.' Needless to say, such narratives bear little relation to the reality of a vast range of local, ethnic and other differences. See Martha Macintyre, 1998, 'The persistence of inequality: women in Papua New Guinea since Independence,' in *Modern Papua New Guinea*, ed. Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 211–30, 214.

chaste virgins,¹³² and grown women to be married, monogamous and maternal. Stress is laid on the core values of Christianity and motherhood—the standard term now used by the media and in everyday parlance for PNG women is ‘mothers.’ Elis Onda, a married Highlands village-dweller, was vilified through massive public outcry for having drowned her four children and attempting to drown herself in mid-2009 as a result, she claimed, of her husband’s drug-taking and neglect. The ‘shocked’ local MP said, ‘the mother should be put to death ... she was not fit to live in this world ... she is worse than an animal and should not live in our society.’¹³³

Similarly, a report of young single women in desperate circumstances selling their babies at the market in Kokopo in East New Britain brought the furious response from the town mayor that it was ‘illegal and against Christian teachings and principles ... a cheap and fast way of getting rid of the infants.... He condemned this type of business which he described as immoral and portrayed total disrespect for the souls of the newborns.’¹³⁴

By contrast, the fatal assault in 2009 by police on a woman selling sex in Lae barely elicited public comment;¹³⁵ reports of the sexual abuse by men of daughters, nieces and grandchildren often appear, unaccompanied by any similar outcry; while men abandon women and their children frequently and are only penalised to the extent of being required to pay maintenance, and then only if the deserted woman is able to mount a successful court case.¹³⁶

The educated urban woman of today is having a hard time of it. She is transgressing accepted gender roles.¹³⁷ Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi argues that (male) *elites* have created the myth of the selfless, obedient village woman to counter threats to male dominance from educated, urbanised women, many of whom come from coastal and island communities where matriliney is common and traditions of employment and education well-established.¹³⁸ Such women

132 Social standards for unmarried Trobriand girls are a notable exception in some respects, although girls are still expected to conform to cultural expectations. See Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

133 James Apa Gumono, 2009, ‘Kids killed: Mum tells cops she drowned children as hubby failed to look after them,’ *National* (online), 6 July; and numerous other newspaper reports from July 2009, many contributors (both men and women) lamenting the slaughter of the ‘little angels’ labelling it ‘a heinous crime’ and calling for the death penalty for Onda’s ‘crimes against humanity.’

134 Evah Kuamin, 2010, ‘Single mothers sell newborns at Kokopo market,’ *National* (online), 23 August.

135 Franco Nebas and Frank Rai, 2009, ‘Sex worker bashed to death,’ *Post-Courier* (online), 13 May.

136 Under the *Deserted Wives and Children Act* 1951. On 11 April 2006, while interviewing the late Lady Hilan Los, CEO of the NGO ICRAF, I watched floods of women discussing proposed maintenance cases with the one paralegal officer on duty. I was told that maintenance cases formed the bulk of ICRAF’s court work. I have no idea of the success rate of these cases.

137 Ceridwen Spark, 2010, ‘Changing lives: understanding the barriers that confront educated women in Papua New Guinea,’ *Australian Feminist Studies* 25(63): 17–30; Ceridwen Spark, 2011, ‘Educated women in PNG: who are they today?’ Paper presented at the Symposium PNG Today—and Tomorrow, Deakin University, 27 May.

138 Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1993, ‘Nationalism and sexuality in Papua New Guinea,’ *Pacific Studies* 16(4): 61–97.

are thereby marginalised, their aspirations are suppressed, the divide between rural and urban educated women is exacerbated and women's nationalist movements are sabotaged. *Elite* men may elect to marry women of lower status simply to affirm their status and power—either way, wives must suffer husbands' infidelities and neglect.

An illustration of a woman's attempt to portray the modern woman comes from a letter in early 2009, in response to a call for applications for three women to be nominated to Parliament, which proposed that:

Nominee must be a very well educated PNG woman. At this time and age, we need parliamentarians who can read between the lines, who can articulate issues, and who can understand the modern language of development, and are able to communicate effectively in this modern world.

Nominee must be a PNG woman that is a good role model with basic understanding of the differing views of PNG cultures. In addition, she is a wife, and a mother. Select a woman who understands the importance of family and her role in the family. It is also important to select a married woman who values her matrimonial vows, whether her marriage is through customary or statutory means, and this marriage is recognised in the community.

Nominee must not be a woman who has caused disharmony, pain and family problems by her acts of adultery and fornication against other women folk in local communities

Nominee is a PNG woman who regards personal integrity to be of importance in society. That criteria have proven to enable individuals to be very good persons/leaders that are able to differentiate between what is right and wrong.¹³⁹

In relation to the same issues, another woman letter writer called for, 'women with qualifications and knowledgeable, women with quality leadership, women with hearts for the people, women with good heart and intentions, strong cultural values with Christian principles and mothers at heart.'¹⁴⁰

139 Theresa Kas, 2009, 'Give women a fair go for 2012 elections,' *Post-Courier*, 28 January. These same sentiments were later echoed in a letter by Aspiring wife politician, 2011, 'Gender and politics are different,' *National* (online), 5 October.

140 Aspiring wife politician, 2011, 'Gender and politics – two different issues,' *Post-Courier* (online), 1 September.

The educated working woman is resented on many fronts: she is economically independent, and may be accused of taking jobs from educated male high-school drop-outs.¹⁴¹ Maybe, if she is sufficiently humble and unassertive, she may gain a measure of credibility, as one letter writer opined that

there are two kinds of women, moral and immoral.... Moral women with Proverbs 31 characteristics are ones that should enter parliament as they will be God-fearing and would have the god's given wisdom to help govern the nation. God says such women are hard to find as they work in humility unnoticed.... God's strategy is in the book of Ester, We have many Esthers busy working today in various strategic positions in Ministries, Government Department, private sector, NGOs and community levels, advising and making positive impacts unnoticed.... When these ladies go to the polls in this male dominant society in prayer and faith, God willing they will win the elections to enter parliament.¹⁴²

The breach of almost any of the dimensions of the narrative of the multiply subordinated category of 'good' woman are capable of rendering her 'bad.' At the village and *grassroots* level, evidence of promiscuity even after the death or desertion of a husband can render her liable to imprisonment by an all-male Village Court.¹⁴³ If a PNG woman is urban-dwelling, if she asserts her autonomy in any way, if she is educated, single, employed in the formal workforce or otherwise supporting herself financially, then her degradation is inevitable.¹⁴⁴ The 'good village woman' narrative persists, despite signs that a critical mass of tertiary-educated women has been emerging over the past two decades.¹⁴⁵ The breach of the submissiveness quality is a strong factor in 'female' badness. The individualisation of modern female agency poses huge threats to male insecurities.¹⁴⁶ So the 'bad' urbanised, educated, financially independent, smartly-dressed woman is condemned for campaigning against domestic

141 Macintyre, 'The persistence of inequality,' 221.

142 Friendly & caring citizen, 2010, 'Unwise creation,' *Post-Courier* (online), 29 December.

143 Jean G. Zorn, 1994–1995, 'Women, custom and state law in Papua New Guinea,' *Third World Legal Studies* 13(7): 169–205, online: <http://scholar.valpo.edu/twls/vol13/iss1/7>, accessed 11 April 2014, discussing *Re Wagi Non and Section 42(5) of the Constitution* [1991] PNGLR 84; see also *Re Kaka Ruk and Section 42(5) of the Constitution* [1991] PNGLR 105; *In the Matter of Kepo Raramu and in the Matter of Yowe Village Court* [1994] PNGLR 486; *In the Matter of Kopa Kaipia and in the Matter of Constitution Section 42 (5)* (Unreported) N709(M) 10 May 1989.

144 Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 'Nationalism and sexuality in Papua New Guinea'; Rosi and Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 'Love and marriage among the educated elite in Port Moresby'; Spark, 'Changing lives'; and for the non-urbanised and uneducated woman, see Wardlow, *Wayward Women*.

145 Dickson-Waiko, *Taking Over, of What and From Whom?*; Spark, 'Changing lives.'

146 Knauff, 'Gender identity, political economy and modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia,' 250; Bruce M. Knauff 2007, 'Moral exchange and exchanging morals: alternative paths of cultural change in Papua New Guinea,' in *The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond*, ed. John Barker, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 59–73, 73; Bruce M. Knauff, 2011, 'Men, modernity and Melanesia,' in *Echoes of the Tambaran: Masculinity, History and the Subject in the Work of Donald F. Tuzin*, ed. David Lipset and Paul Roscoe, Canberra: ANU E Press, 103–14, 105, online: <http://press.anu.edu.au?p=146101>, accessed 10 April 2014.

violence and rape,¹⁴⁷ or being so non-submissive as to advocate the provision of special women's seats in Parliament, notwithstanding the attempt to rationalise the process in the letter above.¹⁴⁸ Even Bernard Narokobi, champion of human rights, thought that modern Melanesian women did not need 'women's lib' because they were already liberated, in that they wore make-up and mini-skirts, but then conceded that in other respects, (the surely more important matter of political power, for example, or the right to speak out in public) they could not and should not assert themselves.¹⁴⁹

Worst of all is the prostitute. Autonomy was one of the earliest features by which public discourse distinguished the prostitute from the 'good' woman. In Sir Rabbie Namaliu's play penned and performed in the 1970s, entitled with fine irony *The Good Woman of Konedobu*, the woman in question is discovered in a city bar, insisting that the men who approach her buy her drinks and cigarettes, and she lives in her own flat in town, where the final scene of humiliation of the country boy come to town takes place.¹⁵⁰

The prostitute today is automatically presumed to be female, and 'from the lower class,' as the Kokopo policeman said, and as the *Post-Courier* Editor noted in his comment on the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid, when he described those charged as being 'on the bottom rung of society's ladder [with] few social or working skills to be able to climb higher in society,' destined to become the 'inevitable dregs of hospital wards ... among those anonymous carcasses to be bulldozed into mass graves.'¹⁵¹ She has abandoned her village, her kin and her reproductivity to survive by taking ownership of her own sexuality. She is non-submissive and above all promiscuous. It is in the inflection of the gender narrative of woman by these dimensions of sexuality and assertiveness that I locate the answer to my question about *elite* women's reactions to the abused woman who turns to selling sex. Those who represent the dominant narrative in any group are often the most eager to assert their superior place in the social hierarchy. So women 'leaders' may be the first to condemn subordinated sex sellers. The president of the PNG National Council of Women, for example, responded to Dame Carol's 2005 proposal to legalise brothels by begging:

147 When the Law Reform Commission's Interim Report on domestic violence was first presented to Parliament in 1987, it created an uproar amongst male members, as I was informed when I joined the Commission in late 1989; and see Law Reform Commission of Papua New Guinea, 1992, *Report No. 14: Final Report on Domestic Violence*, Boroko: Law Reform Commission of Papua New Guinea, 9.

148 This move has been strongly promoted by Dame Carol Kidu for some years now.

149 Narokobi, *The Melanesian Way*, 70–74.

150 Namaliu, *The Good Woman of Konedobu*. I had the good fortune to see the first performance of this play at UPNG, with the Good Woman played by one of PNG's most famous women, Dame Meg Taylor, costumed in mini-skirt and bright blue eye-shadow.

151 Editorial, 2004, 'Give thought to rehabilitation,' *Post-Courier* (online), 15 March.

Do not tolerate unchristian practices and beliefs to rot this country ... the real value of sex, marriage and family will be lost forever.... PNG must be conscious about its strong traditional and cultural values ... prostitutes or 'raun raun (*pamuk*) meri/man' are regarded as animals.... Strip tease is against our societal norms and customs ... it's a corrupt act that leads to evil acts of adultery and fornication.¹⁵²

The outcast woman may retain society's sympathy if she is the victim of domestic violence, even if she demonstrates a lack of fidelity and submissiveness in leaving a violent marriage. But if she exercises too much autonomy, if she assumes responsibility for her body and her financial independence by selling sex, she becomes bad. She may yet be saved, but only if she leaves the sex trade, adopts a socially acceptable income-earning strategy and becomes a 'good woman.'¹⁵³ Good women—not just women leaders, but any good Christian housewife—are doubly threatened. Her own marriage and livelihood is at risk through the possibilities of her husband's infidelities of whatever kind. The family income may be applied not only to drink and gambling but to the purchase of sex as well. Little wonder that they are so vocal in retaining the criminalisation of sex selling, and of chastising those who sell it.

This good/bad narrative was reflected in both *Anna Wemay's Case* and *Monika Jon's Case*. Justice Wilson in *Anna Wemay's Case* was totally convinced by the bad woman stereotype, carried over from colonial times. His choice of language (allying 'the prostitute' with 'the madam, the tout, the bully, the protector or the pimp') was emotionally charged. He refused to accept any evidence of the newly independent state's expressed desire to alter that narrative, and constructed his own legal reasoning to ensure that the classic stereotype was continued into the post-Independence era.

152 'Women group slams plans to legalise brothels,' 2005, *National* (online), 10 August.

153 For example, 'Sex workers learn,' 2009, *Post-Courier* (online), 12 November. Stories such as this, which joyfully relates how thirty sex workers were trained for a week in everything from 'cooking, baking, screen printing to tie dying, flower arrangement to gender-based violence training,' often appear in the press.

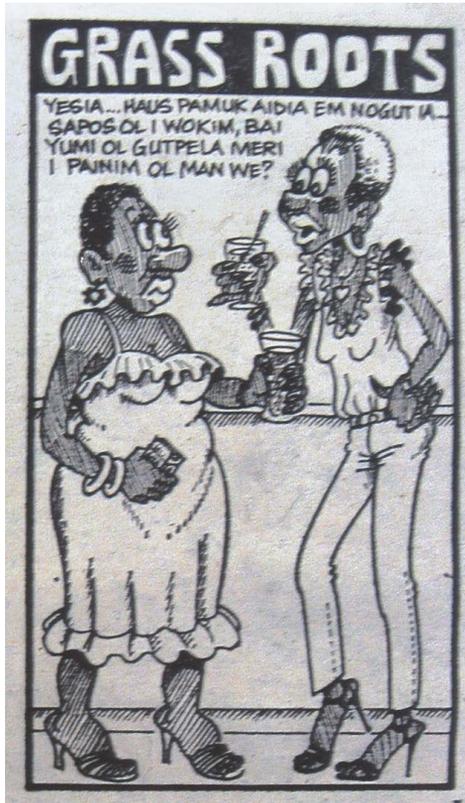


Figure 6.2. 'Good or Bad? – a cartoon from 1981. The caption reads 'Yes, this brothel idea is no good. If they do start one, where will the good women like us find any men?'

Source: *Post-Courier*, 21 December 1981, 2.

In *Monika Jon's Case*, however, Acting Justice Narokobi was more restrained.¹⁵⁴ He agreed only partially with the bad-woman stereotype, when he created a distinction between the mythical 'real' prostitute and the good *tukina bus meri*, and exonerated the latter.¹⁵⁵ Narokobi was a staunch supporter of all that smacked of 'village' and custom,¹⁵⁶ and this is what saved the appellants. He imagined them as essentially 'good' *grassroots* village-style women (using the term *tukina bus*) who had temporarily lapsed, or in the case of Kuragi Ku, had simply carried out a quasi-customary form of protest at the behaviour of an errant husband. The real criminals are the 'prostitutes' whom he imagined as

154 Bernard Narokobi, 1980, *The Melanesian Way: Total Cosmic Vision of Life*, Boroko: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.

155 Narokobi affirmed this distinction in interview with me, Auckland, 16 November 2005.

156 Narokobi, *The Melanesian Way*.

‘those who make it a habit or a regular practice of living either wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution,’ who say, ‘every Friday, I would go and earn for myself.’

The ‘mother’ factor plays a part in the construction of sex sellers as ‘bad.’¹⁵⁷ The dumping of a dead baby was quickly attributed to a ‘known sex worker’:

The woman who allegedly dumped her new-born in a storm water drain at Erima, Port Moresby, has been identified by police as a known sex worker. Less than a week after disposing her baby with the umbilical cord and placenta still intact, police tracked her to a nightclub in Port Moresby, where she had been seen allegedly plying her trade again ... an apparent barbaric act.¹⁵⁸

The rhetoric in the Sepik ‘sex ring’ incident described above changed very rapidly from that surrounding the prosecution of prostitutes to one of sympathy for imagined ‘poor young mothers striving daily to raise their “fatherless” children,’ when the foreign loggers’ contracts ended and they left the country.¹⁵⁹

One of the women caught up in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid deployed the term successfully:

I was marketing *buai* and smoke outside of the guesthouse gate.... I brought my son to the laundry and was showering him ... they [police] brought condoms and distributed them to everyone except me as my son was all the time in my hands with me.... I joined hands with my son on my shoulders and we walked along the streets.... I was asked to swallow condom but I told the policeman I am mother and how can I swallow condom so I did not (Miriam).

Sex seller groups generally have recently attempted to reclaim the valorised status of hapless victim accorded to battered wives by styling themselves ‘problem mothers’—mothers with problems. Problem mothers are laying a claim to the universality described by Crenshaw, saying, first of all, that they are one with all worthy PNG women, but they are unable to conform totally due to the problems they confront. These problems have categorised them in a way that is merely ‘contingent, circumstantial, nondeterminant.’¹⁶⁰ They have created a name for themselves which is designed to elicit the same sympathy as the battered wives from whom they have been distinguished.

157 Anne Dickson-Waiko reminds us, however, that the construction of women as gendered beings has worked against their acceptance as full citizens of the post-colonial state, hence much of the opposition to reserved women’s seats in Parliament. See Dickson-Waiko, ‘The missing rib,’ 101–02.

158 Bonney Bonsella, 2006, ‘Sex worker dumped baby: Police track mum to nightclub barely a week after incident,’ *National* (online), 6 February.

159 Gabriel Fito, 2010, ‘Sex-for-sale case hit snag,’ *National* (online), 20 February.

160 Crenshaw, ‘Mapping the margins,’ 1297.

The sex seller's clients however, always presumed to be male,¹⁶¹ are not similarly stigmatised. It is not essential that PNG men be monogamous and faithful—rather, excessive displays of potency are excused, even admired, and their purchase of sex passes unremarked (except, probably, by their wives): 'the men who trade money for sex are protected and their involvement is not foregrounded in the discussions about prostitution. In other words, women's involvement in the trade is highlighted, but the men's involvement is almost invisible. Here women are seen as the inferior, immoral "Other."' ¹⁶²

Man tru, rabis man

The dominant narrative of the PNG man, *man tru* as Anastasia Sai terms him,¹⁶³ is productive and hardworking; has ready access to resources which he shares appropriately; he is physically and mentally strong and protective of his immediate family, extended family and other kin.¹⁶⁴ His prestige depends increasingly on the acquisition of cash and commodities. He is heteronormative, married, potent and paternal; sexual infidelity is permitted him to varying degrees depending on such factors as status and locale,¹⁶⁵ and in this he is supported by the law which recognises customary marriages including polygyny.¹⁶⁶

However, a man who breaches any essential feature of the masculine norm (as constructed by successful married men) stands to be rendered worthless, a *rabis man*.¹⁶⁷ If he is not strong or productive, and does not share, he is *rabis man*. If

161 Hence the public amazement at news of research which has shown that women may also be clients of sex sellers.

162 Anastasia Sai, 2007, '*Tamot*: masculinities in transition in Papua New Guinea,' Ph.D. thesis, Melbourne: Victoria University, 61–62. Unfortunately, although Sai realised that the men netted in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid were set free, she continued to believe that it was because they were male sex workers. Had she realised that many were purchasing sex, it would have strengthened her argument.

163 Ibid.

164 See Kenelm Burridge, 1960, *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium*, London: Methuen, 75, 108–11; Sai, '*Tamot*,' 160, for a more nuanced description of the urban *elite* man's view of the ideal man, whom she terms *man tru*; and Holly Wardlow, 2009, 'Whip him in the head with a stick!' in *The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV*, ed. Jennifer S. Hirsch et al., Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 136–67, 146–47, 155 for a rural equivalent, which nevertheless takes the urbanised wealthy man as the ideal to be emulated.

165 Wardlow, 'Whip him in the head with a stick!'

166 The *Marriage Act* 1963 Section 3, which recognises all forms of customary marriage. Unfortunately, the proviso that the marriage must be 'in accordance with the custom prevailing in the tribe or group to which the parties to the marriage or either of them belong or belongs' and other customary conditions such as co-wives' permission (e.g., Alome Kyakas and Polly Wiessner, 1992, *From Inside the Women's House: Enga Women's Lives and Traditions*, Buranda, Qld: Robert Brown & Associates (Qld) Pty Ltd., 153–60) have become increasingly ignored, to the extent that multiple 'wives' have become the order of the day among men of all classes and locales.

167 Sai, '*Tamot*.'

he is lacking in adequate social relationships, he is *rabis man*.¹⁶⁸ Criminals are regarded (by *elite* men, at least) as *rabis man*, but may redeem themselves by sharing with their immediate community.¹⁶⁹

Male sexuality is of utmost significance. While a man loses little status through promiscuity, whether or not the sex is purchased, he stands to lose a good deal if he is found to have breached the dimension of heteronormativity. MP Sali's political career was ruined when he was publicly exposed as having engaged in homosexual activities, even though the police case was never proven and an enquiry exonerated him, while Sir Pita Lus was able to continue a long and distinguished career in Parliament despite the allegations, at the same time, of his having had sex with an under-aged girl; there is very little wrong seen in a leader having sex with a female minor. An *elite* man may even lose status from mere allegations of homosexual conduct. The students who rioted in the Kerevat Affair were reported to be protesting against the mere possibility of their being labelled gay,¹⁷⁰ even though little was actually said in the press about the sexuality of PNG students involved. The reportage of the Kerevat Affair was focused mainly on the race factor, and although debate revolved largely around the professional integrity or otherwise of expatriate teachers, it turned out that the main and enduring concern of their (expatriate) opponents, writing a year later, was the homosexual proclivities of those teachers. They wrote of the 'administrative and moral corruption in the Education Department,' and related how

homosexual abuse of students by male expatriates remains widespread ... two of our students [at Kerevat] became mentally instable and violent following interference by homosexuals—one had to be expelled, and the other had to be jailed and then went home.... The roots of the problem lie at Education Department headquarters. The small group of senior expatriates remaining from colonial days operate as they wish.¹⁷¹

So great, in fact, is the fear of exposure as a gay that *elite* gays remain firmly in the closet. Exposure can ruin a national parliamentarian's career and visit brutal punishment on an activist such as Victor. The need for *elite* gays to dissemble is even greater than for the *grassroots*. So Henry explained that gays on the streets, jobless, are not harassed, but a PNG gay with a university degree and a good job will 'be treated like an expatriate.' If he is caught by the police, he claims to be a jobless grade school dropout, otherwise 'they'll want to get something

168 Joel Robbins, 1994, 'Equality as a value: ideology in Dumont, Melanesia and the West,' *Social Analysis* 36: 21–70, 38–39.

169 Sinclair Dinnen, 2001, *Law and Order in a Weak State: Crime and Politics in Papua New Guinea*, Adelaide: University of Hawai'i Press and Crawford House Publishing, 79.

170 Ombudsman Commission, *Final Report on the Kerevat National High School Enquiry*.

171 Mendzela and Mendzela, 'Kerevat: the lesson wasn't learnt,' 4.

out of me' (Henry). Another gay, a teacher, told me that no gay in PNG would dare to speak out publicly for gay rights, even in the face of evidence that this would support HIV prevention efforts, for fear of retaliation. He approved the suggestion that I as a woman should support decriminalisation work. So it was *grassroots* gays who were most willing to give me interviews, while those which I obtained from *elite* gays were arranged covertly through their personal networks.

Even less comment was made to me about 'ritual homosexuality,' and in fact it is seldom discussed today, except by anthropologists.¹⁷² A Papua New Guinean wrote from Wabag in Enga in relation to the aftermath of the Kerevat Affair scolding another writer from Goroka for claiming that homosexuality 'was not a new thing, it was not introduced, it has been part of our society.' He continued: 'All I want is the good culture of Papua New Guinea and not the bad practice of yours to be exposed.'¹⁷³

This makes sense if ritual homosexuality is seen not as a matter of homoerotic sexuality, but as part of male bonding and the male gender narrative of deference to custom: many practices of ritual homosexuality involved practices such as the transfer of semen (and other substances) from grown men to boys to make men of them.¹⁷⁴

As Justice Wilson did in describing the sex trade, Justice Prentice displayed a voyeuristic fascination with language in his judgement in the Full Court case *R v M.K.* 'Buggery,' he said, 'is traditionally hedged about with pejorative adverbs and adjectives in statutes, and in indictments alleging its achievement. I cite one old form ... "did permit and suffer the said—feloniously, wickedly, diabolically and against the order of nature to have a venereal affair with him and then ... to carnally know him."'

He was merely following in the footsteps of a long line of white male colonists in his choice of 'pejorative adverbs and adjectives.' But was it really necessary so to indulge himself in the course of handing down a decision on appeal? Judges are, after all, supposed to decide cases 'based solely on reason and logic. Emotion, bias, prejudice and the judge's own personal values are presumed to play no part

172 Bruce Knauff, 2003, 'What ever happened to ritualized homosexuality? Modern sexual subjects in Melanesia and elsewhere,' *Annual Review of Sex Research* 14: 137–59. Only one reference was made to me in interviews—the overwhelming majority claimed that, while growing up, each thought he was alone in the world.

173 'Getting a bad name,' 1983, *Post-Courier*, 17 February, 4.

174 Knauff, 'Gender identity, political economy and modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia'; Gilbert Herdt, 1984, *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Deborah A. Elliston, 1995, 'Erotic anthropology: "ritualized homosexuality" in Melanesia and beyond,' *American Ethnologist* 22(4): 848–67; Carol Jenkins, 2004, 'Male sexuality, diversity and culture: implications for HIV prevention and care,' unpublished report prepared for UNAIDS, Geneva, online: <http://www.popline.org/node/264909>, accessed 7 July 2014.

... the applicable rules are supposed to be applied equally to everyone, regardless of power relations based upon socio-economic class, or race, or gender.¹⁷⁵ This judge seems to have let his emotions, biases, prejudices and personal values suffuse his reasoned decision.

The alleged 'male prostitutes' caught up in the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid posed a dilemma to political leaders. The suggestion of homoeroticism undermined their status as PNG males. But this could not be proved, only inferred from the fact that they were selling sex—presumably to other men.¹⁷⁶ And as they were males, the promiscuity inherent in selling sex was not a factor which could render them 'bad.' Only women could commit the offence of prostitution, and these were not women—or were they? The solution to the dilemma was to reclassify them as female, and to call for their 'equal right' to be treated as criminals, without human rights.¹⁷⁷

The case of Moses Tau and the invitation to sing at the funeral of Prime Minister Skate in 2006 is also a puzzle. One explanation of the fact that his overtly gay identity did not render him 'bad' is that by the time of the funeral, several years after his solo career began, his immense popularity as a singer and his unmitigated efforts at outreach work had made of him something of a national icon, a celebrity in his own right, and this afforded him considerable protection.¹⁷⁸ It helped, too, that he was working at Parliament House at the time (albeit in a somewhat humble clerical position) and was well known to the leaders of the nation. And finally, it was fitting that he should publicly mourn the passing of the Prime Minister who, as representative of a Port Moresby electorate consisting largely of formal and informal settlements, had constructed himself as a 'man of the people' and emphasised his *grassroots* background in his 1997 election campaign. As Michael Goddard observes, 'The potential of the obverse, positive meaning added to those already existing in the simplistic imagery of settlements appropriated from European usage cannot be overlooked.'¹⁷⁹

It seems that Moses Tau enjoyed a similar 'obverse, positive' image. Or perhaps his position is better explained as one of what Ratna Kapur terms the resistive

175 Zorn, 'The paradoxes of sexism,' 24.

176 At this stage, evidence of men selling sex to women had not yet been published: see Angela Kelly et al., 2011, *Askim na Save (Ask and Understand): People who Sell and/or Exchange Sex in Port Moresby*, Sydney: Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and the University of New South Wales; and Holly Buchanan et al., 2010, *Behavioural Surveillance Research in Rural Development Enclaves in Papua New Guinea: A Study with the WR Carpenters Workforce*, Port Moresby: National Research Institute.

177 See also Stewart, "'Crime to be a woman?'" where I develop this argument about re-gendering.

178 In 2010, a highly placed bureaucrat shot and killed a national football star in an altercation outside a nightclub. Despite the bureaucrat's high status and strong connections to the government of the time, he was condemned by all commentators, arrested and refused bail. National icons are not to be messed with!

179 M. Goddard, 2001, 'From rolling thunder to reggae: imagining squatter settlements in Papua New Guinea,' *Contemporary Pacific* 13(1): 1–32, 19.

subject.¹⁸⁰ Kapur warns of the dangers of essentialising both subject positions and social groups. But a resistive subject, poised on the periphery, can challenge normative stereotypes and may open up a space for others. 'Where there is power, there is resistance,' Foucault claims, but resistances are part of power, 'mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them ... the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities.'¹⁸¹

In participating in the Sydney Mardi Gras as a 'Pacific Queen' and in initiating drag shows Moses not only provided a safe space for gay and transgender performance. He was also challenging the dominant cultural and gender stereotypes of contemporary PNG society and opening a space for others to follow suit. Then he moved on to use his star status and his songs to promote awareness about gay rights, HIV, the dangers of consuming drugs, and other social issues. He is one of PNG's best examples of successful resistance to stigmatising norms.

Conclusions

Intersectionality theory has provided some answers to many of the questions that have troubled me throughout the process of writing this book. My survey of media and other documents through which social representations of the sex trade and male-male sex have been identified and described has displayed clear trends in the formation of the *elites'* arguments, opinions and beliefs. By delineating the categories of identity, experience and analysis formed by law, politics and social action in PNG, by identifying the narratives attaching to the social groups and sub-groups within those categories, I have reached some understanding of the ways by which those dominant in PNG society today have created and maintained the set of social norms through which members of outgroups are imagined and stigmatised—norms which are shored up by the law, and simultaneously dictate the content and direction of the law. Categories and the narratives within them are essentialised, and it is in this essentialising process that norms gain their strength.

In the concluding chapter, I sum up the results of my research: the adverse effects of society's stigmatisation of sexually marginalised groups and the theoretical approaches I have taken to try to understand the societal forces which have produced these effects. I attempt to evaluate the chances of successful

180 Ratna Kapur, 2002, 'The tragedy of victimization rhetoric: resurrecting the "native" subject in international/post-colonial feminist legal politics,' *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 15: 1–37, 29–34.

181 Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, 95–96.

decriminalisation and the means by which it might be attained, and pose the crucial question: given all of the above, what are the chances of success for decriminalisation, as urged by international opinion and by reformers within the country?

This text taken from *Name, Shame and Blame: Criminalising consensual sex in Papua New Guinea*, by Christine Stewart, published 2014 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.