4. On the Streets

> Disciplinary power is constitutively linked to the knowledge of the individual and society and the way in which the 'reversal of the procedures of individualization' rendered necessary the giving of every person (not just the politically powerful or the socially significant) a distinct individuality, a discrete place in the great social continuum of abnormal to normal.
>
> Ben Golder and Peter Fitzpatrick, 2009.[1]

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the placing, on this 'great social continuum of abnormal to normal' as the epigraph above has it, of subjects whose sexual activities are criminalised in PNG. The ethnographic record includes some accounts of homosexuality but fewer of the sale or exchange of sex,[2] and I refer to some accounts in Chapter 2 and summarise them below. Chapter 3 has described the engagement of the formal law before and after Independence, and also refers to Aldrich's historical overview of homosexuality. But scholarly attention only really began to focus on these matters with the arrival of the HIV epidemic, which prompted a wealth of sexual behavioural research and reporting. One of the earliest truly comprehensive studies was the landmark *National Study of Sexual and Reproductive Knowledge and Behaviour in Papua New Guinea* (*National Study*) conducted under the auspices of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (IMR) in the early 1990s.[3] This quantitative study surveyed sexual behaviours, attitudes and issues at rural community level, focusing specifically on the full range of sexual behaviours and knowledge, not just as practised in traditional village settings but also as affected by the influences of urbanisation and modernity. So it included studies of a range of sexual behaviours which included same-sex practices and the commercialisation of sex.[4] Researchers found that although the influences of

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1 Ben Golder and Peter Fitzpatrick, 2009, *Foucault's Law*, Abingdon: Routledge, 63.

2 Notable exceptions are the work of 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; and of Holly Wardlow, especially her 2006 book, *Wayward Women: Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

3 National Sex and Reproduction Research Team and Carol Jenkins, 1994, *National Study of Sexual and Reproductive Knowledge and Behaviour in Papua New Guinea*, Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (*National Study*).

4 Ibid., particularly, 24–36 and 76–122.

church, state, the cash economy and greatly increased communication, both nationally and internationally, have had deep and often homogenising effects, the range of cultural practices, ideologies and beliefs remains 'extraordinary.'[5] Further studies of sexual behaviour have continued to appear, many penned by Carol Jenkins and Lawrence Hammar, medical anthropologists working with the IMR. In 2008, the National Research Institute conducted an intensive behavioural surveillance study in a group of coffee plantations in an area of high HIV prevalence in Western Highlands Province.[6] Findings show that both male and female workers sell and exchange sex, including the purchase of sex by men from men and by women from men.[7] At the end of 2010, the *Askim na Save* [Ask and Understand] Report, a quantitative mapping survey conducted jointly by the IMR and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) appeared.[8] The study was designed to fill gaps in knowledge and provide a better understanding of the sexual networks of those who sell and exchange sex in Port Moresby, from a socio-cultural as well as a behavioural perspective.[9] Nearly 600 women, men and transgenders aged nine years and older who had sold or exchanged sex in Port Moresby during a six-month period in 2010 were sampled.

A crucial point of entry for my research, although by no means my only source of information, has been the Poro Sapot Project. This Project is the successor to the Transex Project of 1996 and the Transex-Plus Project of 1996–2000.[10] The Poro Sapot Project provides HIV awareness, clinic facilities and para-legal assistance for what it terms 'female sex workers' (FSW) and 'men who have sex with men' (MSM) in several PNG centres. So I commence with a snapshot of the Project as it was at the time of my project fieldwork, in the mid-2000s.[11]

The Poro Sapot Project

In a Boroko street, behind the usual high tin fence, is a colonial bungalow converted for use by Poro Sapot. Outside the gate are the ubiquitous *buai-*

5 Ibid., 5.

6 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.

7 Ibid., xii, 38–42.

8 Angela Kelly et al., 2011, Askim na Save *(Ask and Understand): People Who Sell and/or Exchange Sex in Port Moresby*, Sydney, Australia: Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and the University of New South Wales.

9 Ibid., 9.

10 Described in detail in Carol Jenkins 2000, *Female Sex Worker HIV Prevention Projects: Lessons Learned from Papua New Guinea, India and Bangladesh*, UNAIDS Best Practice Collection, Geneva: UNAIDS, 19–56. These projects mainly targeted sex and transport workers, police and security guards in Port Moresby, Goroka and Lae, and along the Highlands Highway.

11 This section was written before the Project was required to vacate the premises by the landlord in 2010. A new location was eventually identified nearby, and the Project moved at the beginning of 2011. I took most of these photos in 2006–07.

sellers, where passers-by, including students from the nearby Christian college, stop to purchase and chew Port Moresby's drug of choice. The security guard operates an electric gate to admit vehicles, while people pass constantly in and out of the small pedestrian gate beside it.

Figure 4.1. Poro Sapot outreach workers leave the Project yard to conduct site visits.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 18 January 2006.

Inside, the former front garden is now a gravelled parking lot. Extensions and additional buildings crowd around the original building, to house a reception area, offices, a kitchen, a conference room. To one side, shadecloth screens the clinic's 'waiting room.' There are two *hauswin* [roofed sitting platforms] in the grounds, which function as drop-in centres.

Figure 4.2. MSM drop-in centre in Poro Sapot's front yard.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 28 August 2007.

Figure 4.3. FSW drop-in centre at the rear of the building. A literacy class, conducted by a teacher funded by Dame Carol Kidu, is in progress.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 2 September 2007.

Gays live with family, relatives or friends around town and come to the Project to find a safe space and involve themselves in the various meetings and activities which are constantly taking place there. By contrast, the street women who base themselves at their drop-in centre do so as a matter of survival. For those who sell sex in the evenings, this is the only place where they can store their meagre possessions, sleep undisturbed during the day, bathe, do their laundry and cook themselves decent meals.

The Project centre is open during office hours on weekdays only, so on weekends they are left to their own devices. The reasoning behind this policy is that otherwise, they would simply move in—and as it is estimated that there are several hundred such women in the Boroko area alone,[12] this would place an impossible strain on the Project's facilities.[13]

12 Interview, Scarlet Alliance Project Officer, 15 April 2006.

13 The Project is already plagued by high water and electricity bills. Staff have, however, taken the initiative to purchase in bulk and sell, at cost, such items as toilet rolls and sanitary wear.

Figure 4.4. Many women sleep, dress and prepare themselves for work at the FSW drop-in centre. Their only possessions are stored in bags in the rafters.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 4 September 2007.

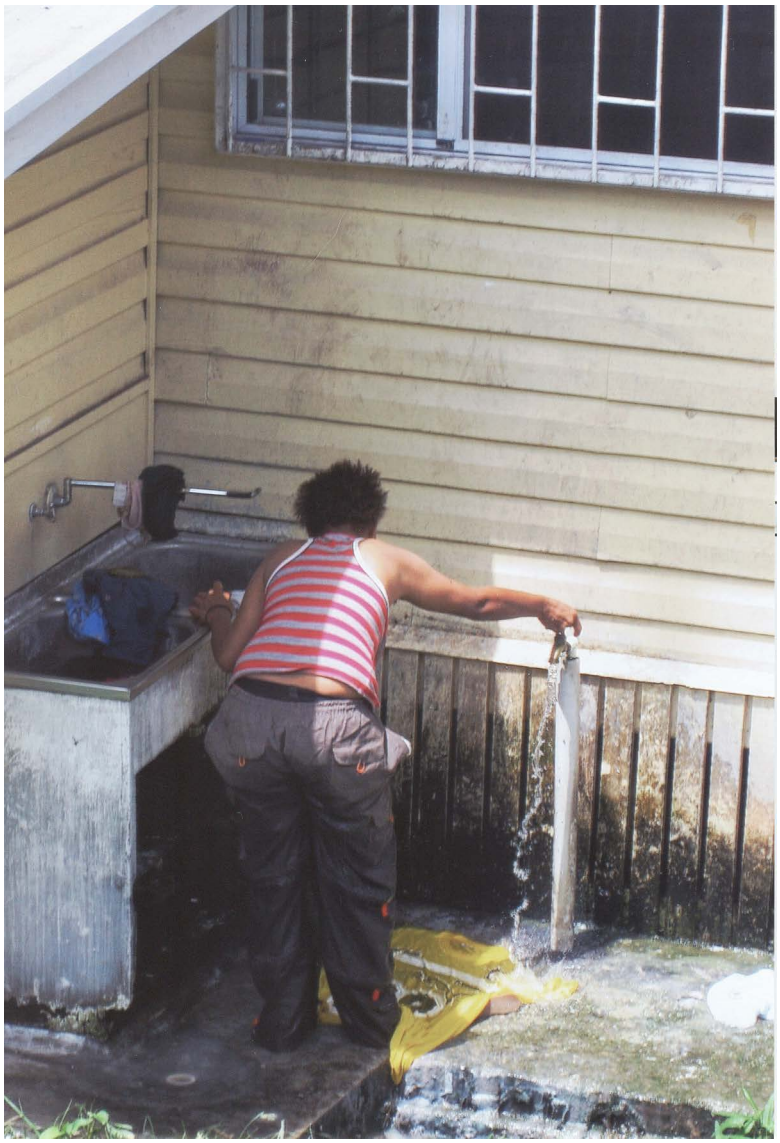

Figure 4.5. Laundry at the tubs.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 2 September 2007.

The clinic offers treatment for sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and voluntary counselling and testing for HIV. It is probably unique in the Pacific for providing these services to men who have sex with other men and for women who sell and exchange sex, and for their partners.

Through a system of outreach volunteers (OV) who travel around town and to clubs and guesthouses, meeting and talking with sex sellers, clients, gays, club and guesthouse staff and outreach workers in other areas and so on, the Project spreads word of its work, gives advice on HIV and sexual health, distributes male and female condoms and lubricant and provides demonstrations of their use, and encourages and organises visits to the clinic.

The emphasis is on one-to-one interaction, and on changing behaviour rather than simply passing on information, and the Project runs a variety of training sessions for this purpose. When a new nightclub opens, for example, OVs quickly arrange a visit to talk with the women there and encourage them to visit the clinic. The OVs have been issued with blue 'Poro' shirts, with lettering saying in Tok Pisin 'FRIEND, if you want to know more, talk to me…' which makes them more easily identifiable. More and more people are accosting them to ask questions and seek advice. On occasion, they encounter negative reactions, or forms of sanctimonious preaching, but this does not deter them.[14]

Another part of Poro Sapot outreach work involves working with the police. In 2006, I attended an awareness session for police held at the Poro Sapot centre. In response to much phoning-around, organisers were promised thirty-six police participants, but only six actually attended. I was told that this was usual. Those who attended were presented with sessions on sexuality, sexual health and human rights awareness conducted by various presenters. The participants at this session urged the removal of the session locale to the police stations—at that time, with tales of police abuse of sex sellers and gays abounding, this proposal seemed somewhat alarming, but outreach workers were undeterred, and started work on establishing processes for this. By early 2007, the project was able to run a lengthy (nearly week-long) workshop at the Bomana Police Training College for new police recruits. Liaison Officers began to visit police stations regularly for awareness sessions with the different shifts. Before long, police sensitisation sessions were taking place regularly in all the urban centres where Poro Sapot works.[15]

The emphasis in awareness sessions is on the human rights of all to protect themselves from infection: those selling sex, instead of being accused of spreading HIV, should be allowed and encouraged to insist on condom use, and police themselves should also use condoms consistently. Additionally, the Liaison Officers take up matters with the police on behalf of sex sellers and gays,

14 When I visited the Project in August 2008, staff were preparing to interview some ninety applicants for OV positions. Interest in this work is keen, which is no surprise, it is a way for those with little formal education and no other job prospects to gain on-the-job training for a variety of skills.

15 Elizabeth Reid, 2010, 'Putting values into practice in PNG: the Poro Sapot Project and aid effectiveness,' *Pacificurrents* 1.2 and 2.1, online: http://intersections.anu.edu.au/pacificurrents/reid.htm, accessed 9 August 2013.

and where appropriate, refer cases on to such bodies as the Department for Community Development for welfare matters, or human rights NGOs for legal advice and assistance.[16] Meanwhile, OVs and Project staff had extended their activities to HIV awareness performances at nightclubs, and open participation in World AIDS Day celebrations. In the five years since the Three-Mile Guesthouse Raid, police attitudes had changed considerably. The 2009 World AIDS Day motorcade was escorted by police, whose first demand on arrival at the assembly point was for their promised 'payment' of red Poro Sapot/Save the Children T-shirts and posters to adorn their police escort vehicles.

Figure 4.6. Project workers in their condom costumes, ready for the motorcade around town. World AIDS Day, 2009, Port Moresby.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 1 December 2009.

It is not always an easy road for the Project. Its work targets predominantly those with little education and no formal employment, who have the least to lose by admitting their identities and activities. This is evidenced in surveys carried

16 Interview, Poro Sapot outreach worker, 6 September 2007.

out in 2004–2005 and 2006–2007.[17] Their sample is confined to one particular group of sister-girls, and the Project Director considers that the sample used in the survey may have been skewed by attracting responses only from those with the least to conceal.[18]

Figure 4.7. Here the police are shown placing posters on their escort vehicles.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 1 December 2009.

But Poro Sapot does more than all this. Elizabeth Reid, in a tribute to the Project and its HIV work,[19] says that the instrumentalist approach insisted upon by aid donors, with its emphasis on ascribing *numerical* values to targeted achievements, ignores the values-based and human rights-centred approach so vital to achieving success in epidemic control, and so vital to Poro Sapot. This

17 Geraldine Maibani-Michie and William Yeka, 2005, *Baseline Research for Poro Sapot Project: A Program for Prevention of HIV/AIDS among MSM in Port Moresby and FSW in Goroka and Port Moresby Papua New Guinea (PNG)*, report prepared for Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research, Goroka, Papua New Guinea; Geraldine Maibani-Michie et al., 2007, *Evaluation of the Poro Sapot Project: Baseline and End-of-Project (EOP) Studies: An HIV Prevention Program among MSM in Port Moresby and FSW in Goroka and Port Moresby*, report prepared for Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and Family Health International, Asia and Pacific Department, Goroka, Papua New Guinea.

18 Christopher Hershey, 2008, 'Reflections on Poro Sapot: one model of care for men's sexual and reproductive health,' paper presented at the Men's Sexual and Reproductive Health in PNG Conference, Port Moresby, PNG, 12 June, 3.

19 Reid, 'Putting values into practice in PNG.'

Project interfaces with those most outcast by society: those whose sexuality has been criminalised. It places emphasis on the way it practises its processes as much as on evaluating and enumerating its outcomes.

As an organisation working with stigmatised men and women, Poro Sapot has itself become stigmatised. This can inhibit new contacts from accessing its premises and services.[20] The criminalisation of anal sex and prostitution adds to the negative image of the Project. For example, a 2006 Letter to the *Post-Courier* called on various agencies to do something about illegal sexual activities going on, 'just opposite the Three-Mile bus stop. Towards the end of the street on the left side as you go towards the rugby oval, there is a building where sex workers are accommodated. I doubt this illegal brothel provides condoms for sex workers and clients.'[21] The portrayal of the Project as a brothel and the completely erroneous assumption regarding condom provision (the Project's main task is to distribute condoms to high-use sites and establishments, and promote their use) is typical of public reaction.

The ancient profession

> The rate and nature of historical change in Papua New Guinea is remarkable, although not evenly experienced across all cultural domains or geographical regions.... What the effects have been on sexuality, the social contexts of sexual behaviour, complex ideologies of sex and gender, the institutions of marriage and family are not well-known. Few societies were well described early enough to have a pre-missionary ethnographic baseline; even fewer of these have had a contemporary re-study to examine effects of modernization on sex and gender issues.
>
> Carol Jenkins, 1996.[22]

Ethnographic studies and administrative reports from such widely divergent parts of the country as the Papuan Plateau (south-west), Anga (central Highlands) and Massim (south-east mainland and islands) indicate that wife- and sister-exchange (whether swapping or in exchange for food and other commodities) has been a long-standing practice.[23] In some groups, extra-marital sex and even pre-

20 Hershey, 'Reflections on Poro Sapot,' 7.

21 Ngalye Concerned Observer, 2006, 'Call to probe illegal brothel,' *Post-Courier* (online) letter, 4 January.

22 Carol Jenkins, 1996, 'The homosexual context of heterosexual practice in Papua New Guinea,' in *Bisexualities and AIDS*, ed. Peter Aggleton, London: Taylor and Francis, 191–206, 193.

23 C. Kowald, 1894, 'Appendix R: native habits and customs of the Mekeo District (Central Division,' in *Annual Report on British New Guinea 1892–1893*, Brisbane: Edmund Gregory, Government Printer, 63; L.A. Flint, 1919, 'Muguru at Torobina, Bamu River,' *Man* 19: 38–39; John Nilles ,1950/51, 'The Kuman of the Chimbu Region, Central Highlands, New Guinea,' *Oceania* 21(1): 25–65, 30, 48; *National Study*, 115; Lawrence

marital promiscuity were strongly disapproved and often violently punished,[24] but even there, respondents to the *National Study* stated that although sex was never actually paid for with cash, unattached women might be kept supplied with food in exchange for providing sex.[25] In societies which encourage pre-marital sexual experimentation, it may be customary for the boy to give the girl a small gift, even for a one-time-only encounter.[26]

The colonists brought new cultural influences and new ways of living, being and doing to the scattered villages of PNG. The money and goods which they exchanged for food, labour, land and other commodities transformed reciprocal exchange networks generally, and in many instances, converted a system of sexual favours into a commercial commodity exchange capable of attracting immediate payment. Transactional sex meshed with prior forms of sexual networking or introduced new ones. The expanding cash economy, no matter how meagre, promoted an increase in internal migration, the growth of towns and unequal wealth distribution, which widened the scope for such transactions.[27] Various strategies (introducing store-bought goods, the levying of a head-tax) were employed to instil in the colonised a need for cash, which could best be fulfilled by signing up for indentured labour. But cash could be acquired in other ways too.

Movement of people from villages to towns was restricted by law until the 1960s, but women were already available for sex. Of the nearby Motu/Koitabu villages, the closest was Hanuabada, the 'great village,' which has now been geographically, if not socially, absorbed into the city. In the 1950s, the main offences against public morality were considered by Hanuabada village leaders to include prostitution, mainly involving the prostitution of village women to Europeans—internal prostitution only occurred 'on a significant scale' in other

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Hammar, n.d., 'Sex and secrecy in the South Fly: *tu kina bus* in historical perspective,' unpublished, 5; Hammar. 2010, *Sin, Sex and Stigma: A Pacific Response to HIV and AIDS*, Wantage: Sean Kingston Publishing, especially 63, 73–78; Johnstone, 'The Gumini *Bisnis-Meri*,' 202.

24 See e.g., Peter Sack, 1974, 'The range of traditional Tolai remedies,' in *Contention and Dispute: Aspects of Law and Social Control in Melanesia*, ed. A.L. Epstein, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 67–92, 82–91. Many crimes among the Tolai, including sexual crimes such as wife-stealing, could be redressed by compensation of shell money.

25 *National Study*, 115–16; and see the discussion in Lawrence Hammar, 1998, 'AIDS, STDs and sex work in Papua New Guinea,' in *Modern Papua New Guinea*, ed. Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi, Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 257–89, pp. 275–77.

26 This is certainly true of Trobriand society today, where the custom of giving (by the boy) and receiving (by the girl) of gifts, including gifts of cash, is expected as a sign of respect, mutual pleasure and the importance of the developing relationship. See Katherine Lepani, 2007, '"In the process of knowing": making sense of HIV and AIDS in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea,' Ph.D. thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 106, 164–70.

27 For example Hammar, *Sin, Sex and Stigma*, 66–68; Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 9; Lae Mission Station, *Annual Report*, 1936, cited in Ian Willis, 1974, *Lae: Village and City*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 107–08; *National Study*, 115; Holly Wardlow, 2004, 'Anger, economy and female agency: problematizing "prostitution" and "sex work" among the Huli of Papua New Guinea,' *Signs* 29(4): 1017–39, 1028.

nearby villages.[28] Nevertheless, it was the concerns of Hanuabadan village leaders which had prompted the enactment of the *Native Women's Protection Ordinance*, and occasionally a case was brought to court.[29] Nigel Oram also recounted in 1976 how a District Officer in 1959 evicted some Hula men from a canoe settlement on 'Koke Island'[30] because he considered it had become a centre for prostitution, drinking and gambling.[31] He also wrote:

> The extent of prostitution [in Port Moresby in 1976] is unknown but compared to its incidence in towns in other developing countries it is small. It has existed in the sense of sexual associations for material gain in villages and settlements since 1945 (Belshaw, 1957: 239) and even earlier (F.E. Williams nd). In November 1967 the *Pacific Islands Monthly* observed that while sex had been available in the past in canoes and villages, groups of girls could be seen at street corners and in bars and lounges, which indicated their availability. Women provide services for people of their own and allied groups in a number of settlements and in some areas men prostitute their wives. There is no long-term organisation of prostitutes although one house near Sabama served as a brothel for a time. Gangs of three or four girls sometimes share flats for short periods and are available to young European males who are 'tourists' in the town (J. Whiteman, pers. comm.) With the increasing emancipation of women from male control, semi-professional prostitution is likely to increase.[32]

An example of this 'semi-professional prostitution' was provided by Rabbie Namaliu, later to become Prime Minister, who in the early 1970s wrote and staged an entertaining play ironically entitled *The Good Woman of Konedobu*.[33] It depicted a beautiful *pamuk* [*sic*] drinking, dancing and demanding cigarettes, drinks and snacks (though not money) from her mainly expatriate admirers at a local tavern. She is portrayed as modern, sophisticated, in pursuit of moneyed expatriate men and having her own flat, where the final scene of the play takes place.

Meanwhile, Joan Johnstone was researching her landmark study of prostitution amongst a Highlands group, although she did not write up her findings until

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28 Cyril Shirley Belshaw, 1957, *The Great Village: The Economic and Social Welfare of Hanuabada, an Urban Community in Papua*, London: Routledge & K. Paul, 216, 218, 237.

29 Ibid., 239.

30 Now known as Koki, to the east of Ela Beach, Port Moresby; the former island has now been linked to the mainland by a causeway.

31 Nigel Oram, 1976, *Colonial Town to Melanesian City: Port Moresby 1884–1974*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 98. The seafaring Hula people from further east along the coast were able to circumvent the restrictions on movement by anchoring their canoes below the high-water mark, where the Administration's jurisdiction ended. See Ian Stuart, 1970, *Port Moresby Yesterday and Today*, Sydney: Pacific Publications, 117. This jurisdictional limit has been a feature of European laws for centuries.

32 Oram, *Colonial Town to Melanesian City*, 152.

33 Rabbie Namaliu, 1970, 'The good woman of Konedobu,' *Kovave* 1(2): 44–53.

nearly three decades later.[34] Johnstone's thesis describes an 'innovative' pattern of selling sex among one specific ethnic group in the capital, the Gumini people of Simbu, in the Highlands. She explains how the entrepreneurial Gumini wanted to start up some form of business enterprise, and found a means when significant numbers began migrating to Port Moresby in the late 1960s.[35] They imitated other urban migrants who had already brought their wives to town and established systematised commercial sexual services for indigenous men. First one couple, then more, set up their enterprise of *bisnismeri* (businesswoman), a form of sexual entrepreneurship which involved a woman and her male partner (husband, brother, father) setting forth each day to one of the established workplaces of the city, in the open in long grass, under trees or along the rocky harbour foreshores. The women did no active soliciting, for it was not necessary. Demand outstripped supply at the time,[36] and all that was needed was to await custom. The male proprietor appropriated all the earnings, as Gumini women had no control over their earnings but were defined solely by their relationship to a husband or male relative.[37] The exception to this near universal arrangement was the *pasinja-meri* (lit. passenger-woman), usually a divorced or single woman who for one reason or another had rebelled against society and left home, engaging in commercial sex or at least a succession of short-term serial partnerships for survival.[38] But this was not the case with the *bisnismeri*. Johnstone's research revealed that the behaviour resulted from the socio-economic traditions of the Guminis and their adaptation to the ways of life in Port Moresby, and as far as those involved were concerned, selling sex was a 'business' just like any other small-scale trading enterprise. Nevertheless, the behaviour of *bisnismeri* was condemned by the virtuous Gumini housewives of the town.[39]

Johnstone also noted other types of prostitution in Port Moresby at the time; mainly young unmarried women operating in nightclubs, sports clubs and hotels, and she hinted at call-girl services.[40] She told me that Tatana, a peri-

34 Johnstone, 'The Gumini *Bisnis-Meri*.'

35 I recall that at that time, the Simbu people constituted the majority of Highlanders coming to the town, impelled by land shortages and lack of money-making opportunities at home. They were deeply resented by the local Motu-Koitabuans, and other peoples from the Territory of Papua. The presence of Highlanders in Moresby was one of the factors prompting Josephine Abaijah's *Papua Besena* separatist political movement in the early 1970s. See Josephine Abaijah and Eric Wright, 1991, *A Thousand Coloured Dreams*, Mount Waverley, Vic: Dellasta Pacific.

36 Rew notes the conspicuous preponderance of young unmarried men in Port Moresby in the mid-1960s. See Alan Rew, 1974, *Social Images and Process in Urban New Guinea: A Study of Port Moresby*, St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 12.

37 Johnstone, 'The Gumini *Bisnis-Meri*,' 98, 108–09, 132, 138.

38 Ibid., 94, 201. *Pasinjia-meri* are discussed in detail in Wardlow, '"Prostitution," "Sexwork," and "Passenger Women"'; Holly Wardlow, 2002, 'Passenger-women: changing gender relations in the Tari Basin,' *Papua New Guinea Medical Journal* 45(1–2): 142–46; Wardlow, *Wayward Women*.

39 Johnstone, 'The Gumini *Bisnis-Meri*,' especially 1–2, 140–42, 186.

40 Ibid., 94.

urban Motu village on an island in the harbour, was known as the village supplying sex for Port Moresby at the time, and also that an expatriate living in Hohola, a low-cost-housing suburb, imported girls from Hula village to the east on the pretext that he was going to marry them, and effectively ran a brothel there.[41] I recall a call-girl enterprise operating out of the laundry behind a block of flats in the Port Moresby suburb of Boroko where I lived briefly in the early 1970s. Taxis would arrive regularly throughout the night to collect and return the women, who spent most of the following day sleeping on the floor of the communal laundry, necessitating my stepping over them to reach the washing machines. I also recall male students at UPNG in the early 1970s mentioning the wisdom of using condoms when visiting prostitutes, as a precaution against VD (as STIs were then known). The spread of venereal disease, which was becoming a concern by the early 1970s, was being attributed to the increased prevalence of prostitution, due to mass migration to urban centres. A marked sex imbalance meant that uneducated girls in towns turned to prostitution 'almost through necessity,' although it was not necessarily viewed as a permanent state of affairs.[42] As it has turned out, however, necessity has persisted as a factor in maintaining a sex trade in PNG.

The most recent and comprehensive survey of Port Moresby's sex industry to date is the *Askim Na Save* Report.[43] Its findings challenge many popularly-held conceptions about sexual behaviour across all classes and groups engaged in the sex trade of Port Moresby, by demonstrating that: people as young as nine years were selling sex; the most common location for selling or exchanging sex was a settlement or (peri-urban) village; landowners were the most common clients, followed by company employees, public servants, businessmen and students; both men and transgenders had women as clients; the major perpetrators of violence against sex sellers were family members, police and regular partners; transgenders were more physically and sexually abused than men or women; most who sold sex also sold other items such as *buai*, cigarettes and store items, strengthening the argument that 'seller of sex' is not their primary identification.

Why do it?

Jenny's Tale

Jenny was in Year 10 at High School outside Port Moresby when a girlfriend introduced her to her boyfriend's friend, a new recruit at the Police Training

41 Johnstone, pers. comm., Canberra, 10 December 2004.

42 Anne MacGregor, 1972, 'VD—shame and social stigma: concern is growing at rapid spread of disease,' *Post-Courier* (Port Moresby), 5 October 1972, 5; Anne MacGregor, 1972, 'VD is not new to territory: prostitutes—should they be legalised?' *Post-Courier* (Port Moresby), 10 October 1972, 5.

43 Kelly et al., Askim na Save.

College. Every weekend, she and her girlfriend headed to town to spend time with their sweethearts. But then Jenny fell pregnant and had to drop out of school.[44]

From the outset, it was a bad marriage. Her husband drank and abused her. Her father was ill, out of work, and still had debts and traditional obligations, but her husband refused to help her support her own family. He told her in front of her two sons to 'go and sell her cunt to feed her parents.' He started having affairs with other women. Then he wanted to move one into his house.

Polygyny is not customary amongst Jenny's people, but her husband came from another part of the country, where it is. The best that can be said for him was that he did at least observe the tradition of seeking her permission, as first wife, before moving another woman into the house.[45] But these requests were preceded by drinking and accompanied by humiliation and violence so bad that Jenny's friends and neighbours told her she was a 'punching bag' and urged her to leave him. Eventually, after more than ten years of abuse, her husband beat her so badly (a police boot smashed into her face, her skull hammered with rocks) that she needed seven stitches. One night he threw all her things out of the house, and she and her two little boys were left to find their way home to her parents' place, along streets and through settlements dangerous for strangers to traverse. Somehow they arrived safely.

Even there, though, she found no comfort. The 'owner' of the family home was now her brother, who already had his own family there and resented the arrival of three more people to house and feed. Jenny found work as a female security guard, but the pay was not good, so she sold sex as well. Her brother resented her children and fought with them to the point where she decided to send them back to their father, where at least they would have a reasonable home. The elder, now nineteen, left his father's house, and Jenny is deeply concerned that he will turn to crime. She is the only one currently earning. Her parents are too old and ill, her younger sister is married to a man with no job. Her brother, the householder, is out of work too, and Jenny supports them all, despite the ill-treatment from her brother. She hands over almost all the money she earns to her mother, keeping only a bit of pocket-money for her 'beer and smokes.' She has learned to live on the streets of Boroko, paying the night-guards posted outside the stores and business houses to let her sleep on a sheet of cardboard in the shelter of a doorway or a shopping arcade.

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44 Interview, Jenny, Port Moresby, 8 September 2007.

45 For some illuminating descriptions of the operation of this practice, see 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., 153–61.

Jenny's tale is typical of many of the street walkers in Port Moresby. Theodore Levantis, speaking from an economist's viewpoint, notes that by the mid-1990s nearly half the unemployed and under-employed female youth of Port Moresby were engaged in prostitution, which provides a better financial return than other menial jobs on offer.[46] This situation has since worsened, with respondents to a more recent report on commercial child sexual exploitation saying, 'We have to survive. The boys turn to petty crime and the girls have to sell themselves. Everybody knows that. That's why no one says anything and accepts the cash, food and other things that we can bring home.'[47]

Recent reports claim that women and girls sell sex to earn money for school fees, both their own and those of relatives; for everyday subsistence; and even for items as seemingly paltry as bus fares.[48] In mid-2006, a video store in Mt Hagen was reportedly closed because it was being used as a brothel. The girls and women working there bravely planned a protest to alert the government to their plight:

> The women claimed they have 'suffered terribly'.... A 15-year-old girl ... said they had nowhere to go since the DVD room was forced to close, as their clients (men) saw hotels and guesthouses as too expensive. The girl, who has earned a living in the area since she was 11, said she did not care if people called her names or mistreated her, as 'nobody would come and put rice and tinned fish on my plate everyday.... We are trying to make ends meet. Every time the media gives prominence to politicians and bureaucrats and forget about us. Do we have a government that will care for us, or just because we are prostitutes they will dump us like this.'[49]

But poverty is not the whole story, as Hammar points out, 'When women gave testimony [to the Parliamentary Special Committee on HIV and AIDS] about their lives in prostitution they, to a one, began with busted, violent marriages, but what the committee heard was poverty. When they mentioned sexual molestation by fathers and step-fathers, the committee mentioned nightclubs.'[50]

Jenny is by no means the only one to have suffered a 'busted, violent marriage.' Many of the street and disco workers are women who leave unhappy marriages,

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46 Theodore Levantis, 2000, *Papua New Guinea: Employment, Wages and Economic Development*, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 67–69.

47 HELP Resources Inc., 2005, *A Situational Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse & the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Papua New Guinea (draft)* (*HELP Resources Report*), report prepared for UNICEF, Port Moresby, PNG, 14.

48 E.g., 'Sex trade shock,' *Post-Courier*, 30 November 2005, 1; 'Social dangers in earning,' *Post-Courier* (online), 30 November 2007; 'School-girl sex news stuns,' *Post-Courier* (online) 12 January 2011.

49 'Prostitutes plan "strike,"' *Post-Courier*, 19 July 2006, 1.

50 Hammar, pers. comm. by email, 29 November 2005.

or are driven out in favour of a new 'wife.' Others face problems with families at home who do not want single mothers placing greater strains on the household. With no social security services, and a system which ensures that the husband or eldest son or brother is 'head of the house,' cast-out women have very little choice but to live on the streets and sell sex, so much so that they commonly term themselves, with some irony, 'problem mothers'—mothers with problems.[51] Some of the street-dwellers state that, due to the stigma and discrimination they know they will face, they are frightened to go back to their families after they are known to have been involved in selling sex. However, many other sex sellers still live with their families, constituting the main if not the only breadwinner, supporting an entire extended family.

Figure 4.8. Market—selling soft drinks, boiled eggs, ice blocks and vegetables—and in the background, sex, 2006.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 22 January 2006.

There may be other reasons. Teenage girls in a provincial town claimed that they sold sex 'out of boredom, poverty and the desire to have some money to buy things.'[52] Transactional sex may be employed as a means of payback for ill-treatment by husbands, brothers or other kin.[53] A history of abuse is common.

51 It is a cruel irony that the very civil society services which sympathise with and strive to assist deserted or battered wives usually end up condemning those same women for selling sex in order to survive.

52 *HELP Resources Report*, 34.

53 Wardlow, 'Anger, economy and female agency'; and see Penelope Schoeffel Meleisea, 2008, *Gender and HIV in the Pacific Islands Region: A Review of Evidence, Policies and Strategies with Recommendations (Final*

Younger workers are often victims of sexual abuse, daughters of discarded women who have turned to selling sex themselves, or they have been rejected by a stepfather when the mother has remarried.[54] During the course of a nation-wide study conducted by the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research in 2005, Hammar found in respect of the sex trade in the city of Lae that commonly, the first developmental precursor was sexual victimisation by older men, often relatives, at or near puberty; followed by being sold or otherwise transacted into sexualised relationships with other men.[55] The study found a high level of commercial sex throughout the country. Many of the women admitting to selling sex also revealed low self-esteem and a lack of autonomy. Many told of early-age rape and being introduced to the sex trade by relatives.

Some choose to sell sex. The *Poro Sapot Database* of 2006 includes an entry from an outreach worker who was approached by the mother and aunt of a girl who, they complained, was 'hanging around Boroko.' They said they tried to change her lifestyle by tying her up and beating her. To no avail.[56] Some are organised into selling sex while not necessarily seeing themselves as victims.[57] At a forum which I attended in 2006, facilitated by Scarlet Alliance to establish a PNG sex-worker community network, I observed that most of the older women told stories of being abandoned by husbands or partners, while most of the younger ones said they were introduced to selling sex by relatives.

Many factors drive women into the sex trade, with poverty and failure of family security predominating. Male violence, abuse and neglect (from husbands and kin, either in childhood or later) are factors which feature widely in research but are often overlooked in public discourse, while the woman or girl who exercises agency in the face of adversity is condemned.

Draft), UNDP Pacific Centre: §83–4. Kuragi Ku, one of the appellants in *Monika Jon's Case*, 'explained to the police that her husband did not give her some money so she sold her body' (from the judgement).

54 Lawrence Hammar, 2005, 'A different kind of "Original Sin": coitarche, commercial sex, and (non-) consent in Lae, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea,' paper for session Gender Violence in Oceania, 2005 annual meeting of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania.

55 Hammar, 'A different kind of "Original Sin."'

56 *Poro Sapot Database*, 5 October 2006.

57 *HELP Resources Report*, 60. I do not intend to enter here into the 'trafficking' debate, others have done it better. See Holly Wardlow, 2001, '"Prostitution," "sexwork," and "passenger women"'; Melissa Ditmore, 2002, 'Trafficking and prostitution: a problematic conflation,' Ph.D. thesis, City University of New York; Larissa Sandy, 2006, '"My blood, sweat and tears": female sex workers in Cambodia–victims, vectors or agents?' Ph.D. thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University; Sandy, 2007, 'Just choices: representations of choice and coercion in sex work in Cambodia,' *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 18(2): 194–206.

Figure 4.9. Up-market—freelance workers wait outside one of Port Moresby's classier hotels for security guards to summon them to work, 2006.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 22 January 2006.

Who does it?

> Only the danger-loving would attempt to nail down precisely all of the forms and locations of Port Moresby's exploding sex industry.
>
> Lawrence Hammar, 2010.[58]

The IMR *National Study* referred to above was undertaken in order to determine the range of sexual behaviours in the country, both to develop strategies for preventing HIV and other STIs, and to assist those working in family planning,[59] and included a section on the commercialisation of sex.[60] Other studies soon followed, revealing the extensive and growing range of sexual networking practices in the country, and it was soon followed by others.[61] These studies

58 Lawrence Hammar, 2010, 'From gift to commodity … and back again: form and fluidity of sexual networking in Papua New Guinea,' in *Civic Insecurity: Law, Order and HIV in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Vicki Luker and Sinclair Dinnen, Canberra: ANU E Press, 119–39, 129, online: http://press.anu.edu.au?p=94091, accessed 7 April 2014.

59 *National Study*, vii, 4.

60 Ibid., 113–19.

61 Some examples: Carol Jenkins, 1994, *Situational Assessment of Commercial Sex Workers in Urban Papua New Guinea*, Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research; Lawrence Hammar, 1996, 'Sex and political economy in the South Fly: Daru Island, Western Province, Papua New Guinea,' Ph.D. thesis, New York: City University of New York; Hammar, 'AIDS, STDs and sex work in Papua New Guinea'; Hammar, 1998, 'Sex industries and sexual networking in Papua New Guinea: public health risks and implications,' *Pacific Health Dialog* 5(1): 47–53; *HELP Resources Report*; Lawrence Hammar 2008, 'Fear and loathing in Papua New Guinea: sexual health in a nation under siege,' in *Making Sense of AIDS: Culture, Sexuality, and Power in Melanesia*, ed. Leslie Butt and Richard Eves, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 60–79; Karen Fletcher and Bomal Gonapa, 2010, 'Decriminalisation of prostitution in Papua New Guinea,' in *Civic Insecurity: Law, Order and HIV in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Vicki Luker and Sinclair Dinnen, Canberra: ANU E Press, 141–52, 129, online: http://press.anu.edu.au?p=94091, accessed 7 April 2014; Lawrence Hammar 2010, '"I am an 'MSM'!… I think": Melanesian perspectives on self, risk, and other in HIV prevention,' paper presented at the Gendered Mobility, Intimate Consumption, and HIV in Postcolonial Melanesia, American Anthropological Association Meeting Conference, New Orleans, 17–21 November; Hammar, 'From gift to commodity … and back again'; Carol Jenkins, 2010, 'Sex workers and police in Port Moresby (1994–1998): research and intervention,' in *Civic Insecurity: Law, Order and HIV in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Vicki Luker and Sinclair Dinnen, Canberra: ANU E Press, 153–64, online: http://press.anu.edu.au?p=94091, accessed 7 April 2014; Christine Stewart, 2010,

have distinguished several general categories which may be summarised as: independent sellers, who work the streets, the discos, clubs and bars; brothel and quasi-brothel sellers, operating from clubs, guesthouses, settlement houses, and so on under a variety or arrangements for payments, protection, and management; part-time sellers, often school-girls or housewives, needing money from time to time for specific purposes; *pasinjia meri* who sell sex to protest ill-treatment by relatives;[62] and opportunistic sellers who give sex for a wide variety of returns—protection from arrest, food, drink, *buai* and cigarettes, transport, better grades at school, employment, phone access or credit.[63]

Within all these categories, traditional and emergent, there may be a range of local variations throughout the country. For example, Hammar noted varying categories in the town of Daru in the early 1990s.[64] Economic enclaves throughout the country, such as logging camps, mines, plantations and fish canneries, attract sellers of sex and those who market them.[65] A considerable amount of transactional sex also targets specific areas such as major ports and the stopping places along the Highlands Highway.[66] Male-dominated corporations known generically as landowner groups have created an ever-increasing demand for sexual services in the larger towns, primarily Port Moresby. The standard method of negotiating resource deals is to round up those considered to be *papa*

'Enabling environments: the role of the law,' in *Civic Insecurity: Law, Order and HIV in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Vicki Luker and Sinclair Dinnen, Canberra: ANU E Press, 275–85, online: http://press.anu.edu.au?p=94091, accessed 7 April 2014; and most recently, Kelly et al., Askim na Save.

62 Holly Wardlow, 2002, 'Headless ghosts and roving women: specters of modernity in Papua New Guinea,' *American Ethnologist* 29(1): 5–32; Wardlow, 'Anger, economy and female agency'; and see also the testimony of Kuragi Ku in *Monika Jon's Case*.

63 See particularly *HELP Resources Report*; and Hammar, 'From gift to commodity ... and back again,' 122–24, with its well-crafted series of snapshots of sexual networking.

64 Hammar, 'Sex and political economy in the South Fly.'

65 E.g. 'Alleged sexual abuse uncovered,' *Post-Courier*, 30 June 2004; Masalai Blog, 'Government Department reports slam Rimbunan Hijau: RH workers "treated like slaves",' *Masalai i tokaut*, no. 30 (10 July 2004), online: masalai.wordpress.com, accessed 3 July 2006; group discussion with MSWs, Post Moresby, 12 September 2007; *HELP Resources Report*, vi, 13–14; Gabriel Fito, 'Sepik sex ring busted,' *National* (online), 18 February 2010; Barnabas Orere Pondros, 'Minister warns logging companies,' *National* (online), 22 February 2010; Gabriel Fito, 'Sex-for-sale case hit snag,' *National* (online), 23 February 2010; Johnny Poiya, 'Illegal activites on the rise in Hela,' *Post-Courier* (online), 22 November 2011, which tells of trucks arriving regularly from the new LNG project to collect schoolgirls from the Catholic Tari Secondary School; Deborah B. Gewertz and Frederick K. Errington, 2009, 'Jealous women of the cane,' in *Empirical Futures: Anthropologists and Historians Engage the Work of Sidney W. Mintz*, ed. George Baca, Aisha Kahn and Stephen Palmie, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 173–95; Buchanan et al., *Behavioural Surveillance Research in Rural Development Enclaves in Papua New Guinea*; and see Nicole Haley, 2009, 'HIV/AIDS and witchcraft at Lake Kopiago,' *Catalyst* 39(1): 115–34, 118–19, where she relates that the shrinking cash economy in the Lake Kopiago area of the Southern Highlands Province has prompted young women, encouraged by male relatives, to seek out mine workers for casual sex in order to be able to buy store goods.

66 *National Study*; Jenkins, *Female Sex Worker HIV Prevention Projects*; 'Betelnut for sex rife on highway,' *Post-Courier* (online), 7 April 2005; 'PNG: health officials target HIV-AIDS hotspots,' *ABC Radio Australia Pacific Beat*, interview, 16 May 2005.

bilong graun (landowners) and treat them to a funded stay in the city. The recent negotiations for the multi-billion-dollar Liquefied Natural Gas project have produced a significant increase in this practice.[67]

Political processes, whether national or local, may provide a setting for transactional sex. In recent years, tribal fighting in the Highlands has been accompanied by the exchange of young women for guns; they may also be given by tribal leaders as payment for mercenary services in tribal fighting.[68] At election time, 'campaign houses' are set up in towns and electoral centres by candidates to distribute campaign materials and host feasts and parties. Campaign houses are also used as venues for sex with women provided by or campaigning for candidates,[69] to the point where the Electoral Commission ran newspaper advertisements prior to the 2007 general election, advising voters not to be swayed by campaigning tactics, including the free sex offered in campaign houses portrayed in an accompanying cartoon.[70]

During my fieldwork in 2006–07, I recorded interviews,[71] visited sites, took field notes of what I saw and heard around the city. I was able to get a reasonable impression of many of the forms of activity, but because my main contacts came from Poro Sapot, my picture is skewed in favour of the most disadvantaged, the ones for whom the Project provides some form of safe haven: the street walkers.

Street walkers can roam the streets and beats by day, and finish up in clubs in the evening. I was repeatedly told that they move around constantly: a woman sighted at one venue may not be there a few weeks later. On land or water, many locations provide opportunities to sell sex. A letter to the *National* in 2006, for example, described the Moresby harbour trade, where women lived aboard moored boats, coming ashore by night to work the wharf and waterfront or to be collected for parties on board visiting fishing vessels,[72] and I was shown a harbourside venue where snacks, *buai* and women were offered for sale.

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67 Editorial, 'Use money wisely,' *Post-Courier* (online), 30 October 2009.

68 'Betelnut for sex rife on highway,' *Post-Courier* (online), 7 April 2005; 'PNG: health officials target HIV-AIDS hotspots'; 'YWCA: exchange of girls for firearms shameful,' *National* (online), 25 May 2005.

69 'Campaign houses used as brothels,' *National* (online,) 7 June 2007; Philip Gibbs and Marie Mondu, 2009, 'The context of HIV transmission during the 2007 Elections in the Enga Province Papua New Guinea,' *Catalyst* 39(1): 135–57.

70 For example, 'Campaign houses used as brothels,' *National* (online), 7 June 2007.

71 Group discussion with PSP Outreach Workers, Port Moresby, 19 January 2006; Group discussion with FSW Outreach Workers, Port Moresby, 6 September 2007; and with individuals as listed in Appendix 1.

72 'Sex on waterfront,' *National*, 24 April 2006, 24.

Figure 4.10. Harbourside sales. This landfill site has now been built over and no longer exists.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 22 January 2006.

Port Moresby street walkers live an uneasy life:

> We used to get cardboards and make our beds [in the retail sector of Boroko]. It's just around the police station so we feel safer there. Sometimes men really drunk come. Come and check our pockets and pick up our money. Still happens with the girls too. The *raskols* are bigger problems than the police. They cut bags and take money. When the girls are really drunk, that's what they do … only the mobile policemen, they're the ones who come and threaten, pick us up, take our money.[73]

Guesthouses fit halfway between street work and the late-opening clubs. They are places which open through the day, where people can go and hang out, play a game of snooker, have a few beers and buy sex if they feel like it. The establishments may be licensed to sell alcohol. Or they may conduct unlicensed 'black-market' trade.

73 Group discussion with FSW Outreach Workers.

Figure 4.11. Typical club, with bar and snooker table.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart.

Outreach workers estimate that they interact with some 7,000 street, club and guesthouse women selling sex in Port Moresby alone.[74] This does not include those who frequent the exclusive clubs sometimes attached to business complexes; or who seek to sell sex at the high-class hotels, either as bar visitors or as part of an operation run by hotel staff. These women, say the outreach workers, have proved very difficult to contact. But it is generally known that the hotel trade is a thriving one: 'In larger hotels, security guards, receptionists and waiters are often involved, sometimes offering to potential clients their female co-workers and sometimes the regular sex workers who congregate in nightclub bars.'[75]

Of the clubs, some feature live-in women, who may go 'home' on Sundays if their families still accept them there. The *HELP Resources Report* describes the active recruitment of young girls for live-in arrangements in various premises in Port Moresby.[76] Their ranks are swelled by others who come in on a casual basis. Other clubs have no live-in facilities, although they may provide lounges for the women. Some rent rooms to independent women, but the phenomenon of the brothel, a place where the club takes the payment and gives the woman

74 Ibid.
75 Alfredo P. Hernandez, 'Sex trade of Papua New Guinea,' *National*, 19 January 2007, 24.
76 *HELP Resources Report*, 57–58.

a percentage, or pays her on a bonus system according to how many drinks she can persuade a client to buy, has only recently emerged in Port Moresby.[77] These women are usually known as 'ground hostesses' and outreach workers claim this pattern of work is of Asian origin. Bargirls and waitresses are employed, and may also sell sex. Certainly, many of the classier clubs are Asian-owned, although the manager may not be Asian. They employ very young women, often under-aged girls, who are required to maintain a high standard of beauty and presentation.[78] Most of the clientele is Asian, and I was told that Papua New Guinean men claim that '*em bilong waitman tasol*' [they are only for non-indigenes].[79] Many of the workers at clubs will have regular clients, and fights can break out over theft of a client. Club rules can in some places be harsh, with women sacked if they do not satisfy a client's requirements. They may be plied with alcohol and marijuana to assist them in enduring their trade. Overall, however, there is far less male control than in the sex trade in Asia, for example.[80]

Brothels are sometimes mentioned publicly. It was alleged in 2008 for example that a 'Chinese mafia' was already operating businesses such as money-laundering, trading in counterfeit products, human smuggling, prostitution, kidnapping for ransom and illegal gambling, in collaboration with police, immigration officers, the Labour Department and the Internal Revenue Commission.[81] Occasional raids have been reported in the media: on a 'child sex ring' in Madang in 2007;[82] on a restaurant, bar and brothel compound in Port Moresby;[83] and most recently, on a brothel in a logging camp in the Sepik, where investigations were foiled when the women produced apparently valid marriage certificates, leaving police to fulminate over the prospect of future 'fatherless children' when the 'husbands' left the country.[84] A newspaper report appearing in early 2008 tells of 'Asian' prostitutes being brought illegally into PNG:

> The prostitutes, reported to be mainly from Asian countries, are part of an illegal chain of businesses operated allegedly by the Chinese mafia gang members which were confirmed to be already in the country.

77 By the time the *Askim na Save* survey was carried out in 2010, 46% of participants gave 'brothels' as a sex-selling location. See Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 18.

78 Group discussion with FSW Outreach Workers; personal observations at site visits 2006; *HELP Resources Report*: 58.

79 Group discussion with FSW Outreach Workers. The term *waitman* seems to have acquired an extended meaning, beyond just white men.

80 Michael Alpers, 1997, *Final Report to UNAIDS: Police and Sex Workers in Papua New Guinea*, Goroka: Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research, 8.

81 Asian sex racket,' *Post-Courier* (online), 20 March 2008.

82 'Cops crack child sex ring,' *National* (online), 28 May 2007.

83 'Crime ring hit,' *Post-Courier* (online), 2 April 2009.

84 *National* (online), 21 February, 22 February, 23 February, 16 March 2010.

> These prostitutes were reportedly brought into the country illegally and are engaged in prostitution behind closed doors with arranged clients.…
>
> The Chinese mafia is also involved in many illegal activities like money laundering, human smuggling, prostitution, and operating illegal lottery games in the country.[85]

More recently, a study of human trafficking in the Pacific has highlighted the smuggling of Asian people into Pacific countries, including the (often illegal) importation of women and girls for purposes of prostitution.[86] There is nothing new about this: when I first joined the Department of Health's National AIDS Committee in 1992, I heard of logging ships beaching in remote provinces, and bringing with them a bevy of 'cooks' who overcame the language barrier when plying their trade by using picture-books of various positions and types of sex by number. Medical officers reported an alarming increase in some very exotic STIs, and a corresponding increase in the number of assaults on husbands by wives.

Outreach workers had already pointed out several closed-door establishments to me during my fieldwork in 2006–2007, telling me that Asian women operated there, and for a high fee, would 'do anything.' Clients, I was told, were themselves foreigners, or highly-placed PNG officials and businessmen. But outreach workers are not welcome there and detail is scant.

Another category of sex seller in Port Moresby today is termed the 'hidden sex worker.' This refers to women, usually married and often high-class, who are seeking extra money to support their households, or avenging themselves on philandering husbands. They may go to great lengths to hide the fact that they are selling sex. Many operate from their homes during the day when family members are at work or school. Some frequent clubs where they sit with beer pretending they are just enjoying the music, or go to all-day venues during daytime hours and leave before the after-work trade starts.[87] Some of the younger ones pretend that they are simply going out with their girlfriends for a good time.[88] Many of the older women purport to 'mother' the younger workers, but they will also sell sex if the opportunity presents. Certain clubs are known for their excellent security and high-class clientele, such as politicians, lawyers, doctors and landowners.

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85 Asian sex racket,' *Post-Courier* (online), 20 March 2008.

86 Jade Lindley and Laura Beacroft, 2011, *Vulnerabilities to Trafficking in Persons in the Pacific Islands*, Australian Institute of Criminology, online: http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/C/1/9/%7BC19D723B-44B8-4B02-9FA5-CB4470207AE7%7Dtandi428.pdf, accessed 4 December 2011.

87 Interview Maggie; fieldnotes and observations at site visits, 8 September 2007.

88 *Poro Sapot Database*, 7 October 2006.

Not only 'hidden sex workers' operate out of houses. In 2009, Poro Sapot outreach workers were asked to prepare site maps of the area where they live, showing churches, stores, markets (selling *buai*, cooked food, fresh fruit and vegetables), their own houses and those of 'FSW.' Lower-class suburbs, peri-urban villages and settlements all over town were mapped in this fashion, and all clearly identifying varying numbers of women who sold sex, sometimes in close proximity to churches and missions. The *Askim na Save* Report confirms this, and lists these settlements and villages as the most common venues for selling sex, followed by hotels, guesthouses and private dwellings.[89]

These are not the only forms of the sex trade in Port Moresby today. Where the opportunity to make money from selling a family member presents, it is taken. Wives may be offered in public (sometimes unwillingly)[90] and teenage girls may be seen on weekdays at lunchtime in government and other offices, being escorted by an older female relative to what is termed a 'wet lunch.'[91]

Port Moresby's sex trade is characterised by a considerable amount of 'mixing' of ethnic groups. Jenkins told me in the mid-1990s that she could not hold joint meetings of Highlands and Motuan women at the IMR premises in Port Moresby for fear of potential conflict, echoing the sentiments of the 1960s which saw the local Papuan people developing a growing resentment of the Highlands 'invasion' of the capital on their doorsteps. But although this division persists to an extent, Moresby is fast becoming inhabited by many who call it their first and only home. They are often the offspring of parents from differing parts of the country. The melding of ethnic groups in the city is echoed in the mixed ethnic representation in groups of contemporary sex sellers. The *Askim na Save* Report shows almost equal proportions of Highlands (47%) and Southern (42%) regions of origin for participants, although 'Southern' would encompass all those born and raised in Port Moresby, irrespective of the ethnic origin of their parents. Over 40 per cent had lived in Port Moresby for fewer than ten years.[92]

Pimping is a long-standing practice. The *HELP Resources Report* describes the expectations of colonial bosses that their workers would obtain girls for them, and many local men took the opportunity to become go-betweens.[93] Johnstone's Gumini *bisnismeris* were always accompanied by their husbands on their street-rounds and, if caught, denied the involvement of their husbands in their trade.[94] Similar operational styles can be discerned in a *Post-Courier* story from 1969, which told of a Tolai man who hired a taxi to drive himself and a woman

89 Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 18.

90 Pers comm outreach worker April 2006, Port Moresby; and Hammar, 'Sex and political economy in the South Fly.'

91 Personal observations while working in Port Moresby during the 1990s.

92 Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 13.

93 *HELP Resources Report*, 12.

94 Johnstone, 'The Gumini *Bisnis-Meri*,' 226.

around Rabaul town and outlying villages. The woman admitted selling sex and was convicted under vagrancy laws, but denied that she had given any of her earnings to the man. An attempt to convict him for living on part of the earnings of prostitution failed.[95]

Today, pimping is commonplace, though not necessarily the norm. An entry in the 2006 *Poro Sapot Database* describes a contact simply as 'pimp.'[96] A 2005 feature article in the *National* describes it:

> In the PNG context, the term can be loosely used to refer to the hordes of young men (and in some cases women) that are now roaming the streets and arranging girls and women for one-night sexual encounters with men. These men are mostly those with influence or resources at their disposal like money and cars. The PNG pimps are working for a commission. The commissions range from goods to cash and to even employment.
>
> A sad aspect of the work of the PNG pimps is that they are now arranging or as they say in Tokpisin, 'setim' even their own female relatives and wantoks to sleep around with unknown men for a night for the commission.[97]

The *HELP Resources Report* noted some pimping in Port Moresby, often by relatives or putative relatives. These may be older blood relatives, or partners who may be described as boyfriends or husbands. Such liaisons can just as readily be arranged at the behest of the client rather than the seller, most often by taxi drivers or security guards.[98]

At issue here is the connection with custom. While studying at UPNG in the 1970s, I was told by many friends that a common way of establishing a liaison with a potential girlfriend or boyfriend was to request a close friend or relative to act as go-between. Occasionally, I was approached myself to carry out such a task. The process of arranging marriages by parents often involves the prior bringing and displaying of the potential bride to the boy and his family. It is a short leap to the criminalised concept of 'pimping' as known in English law.

And despite attempts to characterise pimps as evil exploiters, the practice of pimping must be contextualised. Going through the *Poro Sapot Database* records of outreach worker site visits, I came across two particularly poignant stories related by elderly men who were respectively a security guard and a

95 'Tolai woman gaoled for two weeks,' *Post-Courier*, 19 November 1969, 20.
96 *Poro Sapot Database*, OV NCD 8/12/2006 record #138.
97 'HIV/AIDS and the work of pimps in PNG,' *National* (online), 23 August 2005; and see *Help Resources Report*, 60, 63–65.
98 *Help Resources Report*, 56, 64–65.

buai-seller in the downtown area. Each had befriended and assumed avuncular responsibility for a young woman in the sex trade (I was told by Poro Sapot outreach workers that this was not uncommon). One told how he had cared for his charge, bathing her and tending her open lesions as she deteriorated and passed away with AIDS. The other admitted to having had sex with his charge before she too fell ill and passed away.[99]

However sex sellers are described, viewed and categorised, there is no doubt that the sex trade is highly visible in PNG today. This is not so evident when it comes to discourse on homosexuality. It has been left largely to historians and researchers to describe and comment on manifestations of homosexual practices in PNG.

The abominable habit

> It's that bisexuality, most Melanesian men … so hard to come to terms with.… I think it would be only a tiny minority of Papua New Guinean males who would not be interested in same-sex activity at some stage in their lives, or who have probably not had same-sex relationships of some sort … and if alcohol comes in, or detention in a prison, it goes up that much higher. It really amazes me, that sexual activity is not seen really as just a male-female thing.
>
> Longtime expatriate resident, 2006.[100]

Male-male sex has long been acceptable in some Melanesian cultures, whether for pleasure or other purposes.[101] In PNG, trangenderism was accepted in some areas in the past, if not in the present:

> When I was a child [in the 1960s] … we had several of them, not in our village, from X, come on church conference-type meetings, and they would come as the women's delegates, dressed up in skirts and blouses, and absolutely wonderful human beings, very well respected, I suppose a bit like the *fa'afafines* from Samoa … the village people accepted them

99 *Poro Sapot Database*, 11 October 2006. Both men claimed to be feeling unwell, which was why they had approached the outreach workers.

100 Interview with Adam, Port Moresby, 12 January 2006.

101 For example, Gilbert Herdt, 1984, *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Tobias Schneebaum, 1988, *Where the Spirits Dwell: an Odyssey in the New Guinea Jungle*, New York: Grove Press; Bruce M. Knauft, 1993, *South Coast New Guinea Cultures: History, Comparison, Dialectic*, New York: Cambridge University Press; *National Study*, 99; Gilbert Herdt, 1997, *Same Sex, Different Cultures: Gays and Lesbians across Cultures*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press; Jenkins, 'Male sexuality and HIV.'

> … they were men, and they would go help in the garden.… I remember one of them coming to our house … 'she' was just an amazing person, very dignified (Steven).

However, most discussion of the historical record of non-heteronormative sexualities and gender in PNG starts with mention of what was first termed 'ritualised homosexuality.'

Sexuality, ritual or growth?

> Melanesian male sexuality does not follow a Western pattern: homosexuality is part of male socialisation, there is no clear division between heterosexual and homosexual activity and relations, and there are fewer inhibitions.
>
> Professor Clive Moore, University of Queensland.[102]

The pioneer in this field of study is Gilbert Herdt.[103] His work with the Highland group he named the Sambia revealed initiation practices designed to ensure that the innate male essence, tenuous in childhood, must be transformed and 'grown' into adult masculinity. This transformation is achieved by rituals of oral and anal homosexual inseminations which create maleness, which is then maintained by later heterosexuality in adulthood.[104] Further consideration, though, led Herdt to question the ascription 'ritual homosexuality,' renaming it 'boy insemination.' As has been discussed both by Herdt and others,[105] these practices are intended not for pleasure but for the essential purpose of growing boys into men capable of marrying and founding a family. They often involve fear, pain and violence, and were regarded as a social duty.[106] In fact, continued practice of homoerotic sex may well be regarded with as much stigma and self-loathing as in western societies, although for different cultural reasons, as Herdt describes.[107]

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102 Clive Moore, 2005, 'Changes in Melanesian masculinities: an historical approach,' paper presented at the Moving Masculinities: Crossing Regional and Historical Borders Conference, Canberra: The Australian National University, 29 November–2 December 2005, 12.

103 Herdt, *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*; Gilbert Herdt, 1987, *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*, Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Gilbert Herdt, 1992, 'Semen depletion and the sense of maleness,' in *Oceanic Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 33–68.

104 Herdt, *The Sambia*, 6.

105 Referred to in Bruce M. Knauft, 2003, 'What ever happened to ritualized homosexuality? Modern sexual subjects in Melanesia and elsewhere,' *Annual Review of Sex Research* 14: 137–59, 138; and see also Deborah A. Elliston, 1995, 'Erotic anthropology: "ritualized homosexuality" in Melanesia and beyond,' *American Ethnologist* 22(4): 848–67.

106 See Carol Jenkins, 2004, 'Male sexuality, diversity and culture: Implications for HIV Prevention and Care,' unpublished report prepared for UNAIDS, Geneva, 8–9.

107 Herdt, 'Semen depletion and the sense of maleness.'

Herdt's later work has challenged the western view of fixed sexual preferences, showing how cultural changes among the Sambia have altered sexual practices but not necessarily their gender categories.[108] In this he joins similar studies in Southeast Asia, such as Peter Jackson's on the gay/man/*kathoey* identities in Thailand and later additions and further nuancing of these categories in recent decades in the face of advancing global trends;[109] Tom Boellstorff on *gay* in Indonesia;[110] and Bruce M. Knauft's observations on the measure of change amongst the Gebusi of Western Province which has seen, in a single generation, the complete obliteration of openly proclaimed male homoeroticism in favour of 'modern' heteronormativity.[111]

As Boellstorff has argued for Indonesia, it would be a mistake to assume that such cultural practices, despite involving male-male fellatio, are direct forerunners of or indeed have any clear connection with homoeroticism in PNG today. Clive Moore considers that PNG men from areas known for ritual homosexuality in earlier times predominate in the present-day urban gay scene, but adds that this is not always the case.[112] Jenkins doubts whether earlier customs of ritualised homosexuality are essential preconditions for the entry of young men into selling sex today. Herdt describes the dilemma faced by a Sambia man who pursued his homoerotic relationships into adult life, when he should have married and turned away from such practices.[113]

I discovered scant evidence of any such historical link in the subject positions currently adopted by gays in Port Moresby. 'Ritual homosexuality' was mentioned only once, in group conversation by a gay outreach worker who, I surmise, had learned of it through his work, 'Practices from before, like the men have to go to the bush for some … manhood training.… ''You are grown-up young men and you will be living with a woman, and this is what you have to do with a woman'' … so they have to teach them … it's like practice' (*Palopa*).

From the earliest days of contact, colonisers' disapproval of ritual homosexuality was made clear, even in the most distant parts. The *Annual Report for British*

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108 Herdt, *Same Sex, Different Cultures: Gays and Lesbians across Cultures*.

109 Peter Jackson, 2000, 'An explosion of Thai identities: global queering and re-imagining queer theory,' *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 2(4): 405–24; Peter Jackson, 2001, 'Interpreting ''Sambia'' masculine erotics: a question of sexuality or gender?' *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 2(1): 109–13; Peter Jackson, 2009, 'Capitalism and global queering: national markets, parallels among sexual cultures, and multiple queer modernities,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15(3): 357–95.

110 Tom Boellstorff, 2003, 'I knew it was me: mass media, ''globalization,'' and lesbian and gay Indonesia,' in *Mobile Cultures: New Media in Queer Asia*, ed. Chris Berry, Fran Martin and Audrey Yue, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 21–51; Boellstorff, 2005, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

111 Knauft, 'What ever happened to ritualized homosexuality?'

112 Moore, 'Changes in Melanesian masculinities,' 12.

113 Gilbert Herdt, 1992, 'Semen depletion and the sense of maleness,' in *Oceanic Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 33-68.

New Guinea of 1888 contains a summary from government officer Hugh Milman on Mowatta, in what was then the remote Western District, to the effect that a newly appointed 'chief' had been urged to 'do his best to put down the hideous practice of sodomy, which is carried on most extensively and almost openly, young boys being initiated into the practice formally at a certain season of the year. It is probable that this abominable habit is not confined to Mowatta.'[114] But only four years later, Resident Magistrate B.A. Hely wrote,

> *Admission of boys to manhood and girls to womanhood*. I cannot find that any ceremonies exist in these cases. Turi Turi, Mawatta, and other tribes say not. There are stories current of ceremonies at Kiwai and elsewhere of which there are not sufficient proofs, and which are unfit for publication, if true.[115]

It is highly improbable that the Mowatta citizenry had in fact abandoned their initiation ceremonies as instructed in the space of a few years. It is far more likely that they had quickly learned to deny and conceal their customary practices, even to point the finger at others a safe distance away.[116]

The *National Study* discovered evidence of a range of practices and attitudes throughout the country.[117] The evidence showed that among those disclosing same-sex behaviour, there was an equal division between Highlanders and lowlanders, and most of the culture areas were represented. However, the team found it difficult to elicit much information in an atmosphere of intolerance and marginalisation, and many men disguised their same-sex preferences by a presentation of bisexuality.

I learned that gays today often discuss sexual practice in ethnic context.

> Now you see … apart from the guys from Central Province and Gulf Province, you'll see people from the Highlands and New Guinea Islands. But New Guinea Islands, there are more Tolais than from any other New Guinea Island group (Len).
>
> Coastal areas, they understand, but … most of the 'girls' are scared of Highlanders, they get very aggressive (*Palopa*).
>
> Homosexual things in the Koitabuan community … all the boys from the day they were born, they are fit enough to carry a spear, they are

114 Hugh Milman, 1889, 'Appendix C,' in *British New Guinea, Report for the Year 1888*, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner for the Protected Territory, Brisbane: James C. Beal, 16–17.
115 B.A. Hely, 1894, 'Appendix P. Native habits and customs in the Western Division,' in *Annual Report on British New Guinea 1892–1893*, Brisbane: Edmund Gregory, Government Printer, 57–59.
116 This area of south-western Papua is well-known for these initiation rituals: Herdt, *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*, 18–22.
117 *National Study*, 98–101.

> trained to fight, and in their mind is to become tough men. That's what the Koitabuan community have always maintained.… The Motuans are more open about homosexuality than the Koitabuans (Robin).
>
> There was an Engan [Highlands ethnic group] guy, he says that he's part East New Britain and Enga, and he was living in Port Moresby and he was in drag. Every day of his life he was wearing a dress. And when I came across this guy I couldn't believe it. I said that this is the first person that I've ever seen wearing a dress, and he's from the Highlands.… [Highlanders] *hate* feminine men … for him to be accepted by these people, that's the thing I always wanted to know about (Len).

Plantations: 'A problem of the white man's own making'

The *kiaps* and the missionaries may have brought colonisation to the villages, even in some cases drawing them to administrative or mission stations, but it was the colonial economy which prompted the mass migration of people to distant parts of the territory. One of the principal attractions of both territories to their various colonists was the prospect of commercial development, in mining[118] and plantations.[119] By the end of the nineteenth century, moves were made by the British administration in British New Guinea to attract small-scale settlers with capital to help develop the new land and defray administrative costs. But despite strenuous efforts it proved difficult to attract small-scale planters in large numbers, and plantations were eventually opened up in the new century by large trading companies operating through managers and overseers.[120] In German New Guinea, greater success was achieved. The Imperial Charter granted to the *Neu-Guinea-Compagnie* required the economic development of the colony, where plantations had developed earlier, and more successfully, along the north coast and in the more fertile offshore islands, although the company failed to show a profit.[121]

Developing-country plantations, as Hank Nelson states baldly, 'depend on cheap labour.'[122] The importation of foreign labourers was considered unfeasible in British New Guinea,[123] but not in the German colony which imported

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118 Hank Nelson, 1976, *Black, White and Gold: Gold Mining in Papua New Guinea, 1878–1930*, Canberra: Australian National University Press.

119 D.C. Lewis, 1996, *The Plantation Dream: Developing British New Guinea and Papua, 1884–1942*, Canberra: The Journal of Pacific History.

120 Ibid., 24–25, 30.

121 B. Jinks, P. Biskup and H. Nelson, 1973, *Readings in New Guinea History*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 154.

122 Hank Nelson, 1982, Taim Bilong Masta*: The Australian Involvement with Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 75.

123 Hubert Murray, 1925, *Papua of Today: or an Australian Colony in the Making*, London: P.S. King & Son, Ltd., 107–08.

numbers of Chinese, though mainly as traders and service-providers.[124] In both Territories, colonial administration began with the regulation of internal migrant labour: British and Germans instituted an indentured labour system, subsequently inherited by the Australian administration and continued until 1950, which bound master and servant to a fixed contractual term, usually three years, after which the labourer was to be repatriated to his village of origin.[125] It was claimed that this was to prevent the development of a landless proletariat but, as Fitzpatrick argues, the policy also served the purpose of preventing the possibility of non-traditional labour organisation.[126] It also must have saved plantations a considerable amount in housing and maintaining entire villages—men were accommodated in barrack-style quarters (labour-lines). The traditional village provided the labour force, fully grown and ready to go to work, and then absorbed it back into the bush and the mountains, complete with the much-desired modern-day trade-store goods purchased with meagre pay.[127]

Entry into the plantation labour system was in theory voluntary, and recruitment became an occupation in itself for many expatriates.[128] Recruits were mainly or exclusively male. No provision was made for additional wage allowances, transport or housing for dependants, although in theory, recruits could bring their wives with them. In Papua, however, Administrator Murray opposed the recruitment of women for plantation work in Papua, saying:

> The arguments usually put forward to support the indenture of women are:-
>
> (1) That the men are more contented if they have their wives with them—of course in any case only wives accompanied by their husbands would be recruited, for the indenture of single women is merely open prostitution;
>
> (2) That the decrease of population, which is likely to ensue if a large number of men leave their villages to go to work, is prevented if the men bring their wives with them; and

124 Jinks, Biskup and Nelson, *Readings in New Guinea History*, 158; Charles Rowley, 1966, *The New Guinea Villager: The Impact of Colonial Rule on Primitive Society and Economy*, New York: Praeger, 193.

125 Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager*, 60.

126 Peter Fitzpatrick, 1980, 'Really rather like slavery: law and labour in the colonial economy in Papua New Guinea,' *Contemporary Crises* 4(1): 77–95, 78.

127 In 1969, I witnessed such a homeward journey in Lae: a few dozen men being returned to the Highlands were first delivered to a Chinese trade store in Ninth Street to stock up on kerosene lamps, axes, shirts, boots, brightly coloured cotton materials and the like.

128 Fitzpatrick, 'Really rather like slavery'; Lewis, *The Plantation Dream*, 47–48; Peter Sack, 2001, *Phantom History, the Rule of Law and the Colonial State: The Case of German New Guinea*, Canberra: Division of Pacific and Asian History, The Australian National University, 172, 290.

> (3) That if there are no women, unnatural vice will prevail among the labourers.
>
> As to (1) it must be remembered that this can apply only to the small number of men who bring their wives with them …
>
> With regard to (2) and (3) it is not too much to say that these arguments are not seriously intended, and are put forward merely as an afterthought … the numbers of these women are so small that their presence can have no effect upon the practice of unnatural vice—assuming this vice to be prevalent. In Papua it is rare.[129]

In New Guinea, wives could be recruited with their husbands and single women could be recruited for domestic service,[130] and from 1921 onward, labour recruits were to be actively encouraged to bring their wives with them.[131] But it was noted that most recruits were unmarried, and most married recruits left their wives behind in the village.[132]

The reality was that women were to remain in the village and their men were to be returned to them, in order to provide the next generation of labourers, and also to ensure some measure of social continuity.[133] All this was achieved by legislation governing not only movement of 'natives' and 'restricted areas,' but also the labour laws themselves, which provided a careful balance of economic expediency and some measure of social justice. Many of the laws were not properly observed, but the repatriation requirements were always strictly followed—it was essential to return the labourer to his village, which was responsible for the continued maintenance of him and his family.[134] It had long been acknowledged that the indenture system was 'obnoxious.'

> As for the social aspects, the less said the better. The fact that labourers must go to other divisions tells the whole story of social disruption in itself; it has been clearly proved that indenture breaks up native life and causes the spread of loathsome disease into districts untouched by

129 Murray, *Papua of Today*, 112–13. For all Murray supported custom and regarded his colonial charges with benevolent paternalism, the frequency of youthful homosexual practice seems to have escaped his gaze.
130 Commonwealth of Australia, 1922, *Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea 1914–1921*, Melbourne: Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, 12–13.
131 Ibid., 15.
132 Commonwealth of Australia, 1923, *Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea 1922*, Melbourne: Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, 53.
133 Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager*, 104, 109. Heavy recruiting by the Germans in some areas in the early years of their stewardship of German New Guinea had led to economic and social collapse of some villages.
134 Fitzpatrick, 'Really rather like slavery,' 82–83.

> Europeans and more than a third of the criminal cases in the Territory are by 'boys' for sexual offences, even to interfering with dead female bodies.[135]

But the recruitment of plantation labour was considered essential to development.[136] Public justification for the indentured labour system in New Guinea was that, 'whether by means of the present system or in other ways, the native must be induced to work; for the experience of neighbouring islands seems to make it clear that unless the native is given both physical exercise and interest in life, to replace the occupations and excitements of his former savage life, he will surely die out.'[137]

Plantations, then, were often remote places, with a handful of whites in the form of managers, overseers and sometimes their white families, plus a large, constantly changing contingent of young, mainly unmarried village men housed in 'labour lines,' a long way from home.[138] Single white men could, and often did, avail themselves of the companionship of local women and girls, in temporary or ongoing relationships,[139] but what of the labourers themselves?

Only a small minority ever brought their wives with them. Not a lot has been written about conditions in those labour lines in PNG—the record is more detailed when it describes plantation life from the perspective of the white settlers[140] and the documentation generated by discussion between commercial interests and administrations, which viewed the labourers as a labour force rather than as individual people.[141] The official records show problems with 'marriages' by indentured labourers. The Australian administration was quick to deplore the practice, under German administration, of giving (sometimes forcing) PNG women on plantations (be they domestic servants, or sometimes widows of labourers who had died in service) to favoured workers as an inducement to sign on for a further term. This was done without regard to the possibility of different marriage customs or different place of origin of the two. Problems would arise, it was asserted, when the labourer would return to his village of origin, take a new local wife, and abandon his plantation wife who

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135 Stephen H. Roberts, 1928, 'Racial and labour problems,' in *The Australian Mandate for New Guinea: Record of Round Table Discussion*, ed. F.W. Eggleston, Melbourne: Macmillan, 74–84, 78.

136 F.W. Eggleston, 1928, 'Record of discussion,' in *The Australian Mandate for New Guinea: Record of Round Table Discussion*, ed. Eggleston, Melbourne: Macmillan, 112–19, 116.

137 Commonwealth of Australia, *Report to the League of Nations 1922*, 52.

138 Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager*, 103.

139 Andrew W. Lind, 1969, *Inter-Ethnic Marriage in New Guinea*, Port Moresby: New Guinea Research Unit, 13.

140 For exhaustive treatments, see for example Chilla Bulbeck, 1992, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages 1920–1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Jan Roberts, 1996, *Voices from a Lost World: Australian Women and Children in Papua New Guinea before the Japanese Invasion*, Alexandria, NSW: Millennium Books.

141 Various documents are provided in Jinks, Biskup and Nelson, *Readings in New Guinea History*.

would then 'degenerate into the village prostitute.'[142] Stricter controls were put into place, both as regards the employment of women for domestic service and their return to their home villages.

But what of the great majority of labourers who arrived single and remained single? The main information comes from the work of those anthropologists who studied not only 'traditional' village life but also observed the impact of plantation labour on the traditional ways of the village societies they studied. J.A. Todd did fieldwork in what is now the Kandrian area of south-west New Britain in 1933–34. In his paper on the problems of 'the maintenance of law and order' among the people whom he studied,[143] he wrote:

> Although the incidence of native sodomy is much talked about by the Europeans in New Guinea, prevention rather than cure is the solution of the problem. It seems fatuous to punish it when large numbers of natives are herded together on plantations and so on away from their women and the normal outlet for their sexual energies. It is largely a product of abnormal conditions and is certainly not common, if it occurs at all, in the normal native society around Möwehafen.[144]

Shortly afterwards, Stephen Winsor Reed conducted anthropological fieldwork in the Upper Sepik in 1936–37, and followed it with what he termed a sociological study of the transformations wrought in traditional societies by culture contact. Of homosexuality in plantation labour lines, he wrote,

> The natives have a growing awareness of the extreme revulsion with which Europeans view such behaviour … and they know of the harsh prison sentences that are frequently imposed for it. In the aboriginal cultures, however, there existed no such severe sanctions on this form of conduct, and thus the native will try to get away with it when he can. Enlightened Europeans, in private life as well as in governmental service, realize that this is a problem of the white man's own making. The only sanctioned 'solution' offered to the natives so far is the sublimation preached by the missionary. It simply does not work.[145]

Peter Worsley's study of millenarian cults is prefaced by an explanation of the poor regard in which the villager held the white colonist. He claims that the stresses and strains of living in the labour lines where the labourers' companions were exclusively male manifested in 'gambling, homosexuality and

142 Commonwealth of Australia, *Report to the League of Nations 1922*, 53.
143 J.A. Todd 1934/35, 'Native offences and European law in South-West New Britain,' *Oceania* 5: 437–60.
144 Ibid., 445.
145 Stephen Winsor Reed, 1943, *The Making of Modern New Guinea with Special Reference to Culture Contact in the Mandated Territory*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 220–21.

prostitution.'[146] In 1970, a report made by the Industrial Advocate of the Public Service Association of PNG into labour line conditions expressed concerns about fornication in general, and the 'unnatural vice' of homosexuality in particular, that went on in these places.[147]

Others took a more empirical view. Anthropologist Ian Hogbin, in his account of post-war Busama in the Morobe District, tells of the boring life in the labour-line compound in the post-war years, and how, in the light of the paucity of available female prostitutes, homosexuality was 'inevitable'—he describes how older men first bribed their teenage prospects, then threatened them with sorcery if they resisted or deserted.[148]

So, in response to the question: what of the labourers themselves, who were unable to bring their women with them if they were married, or to access women from local villages even if one were nearby, the answer appears to be that they resorted to relations among themselves. The criminalisation of sodomy under the *Native Administration Regulations* in New Guinea in 1936[149] was possibly a response to the growing awareness by the colonists of the prevalence of homosexual practices in plantation labour lines.[150]

Meanwhile, though, homosexuals both among the colonised and the colonists were finding companionship in other quarters.

The unmentionable vice—sex in the colony

> For right-minded Europeans, the world overseas threatened a sexual dystopia of lascivious licence, lewd dancing, polygamy, prostitution and promiscuity, the horrors of child marriage, the evils of the harem, the unbridled pleasures of the *Kama Sutra* and *The Thousand and One Nights*, the fright of foreign genitalia, the unmentionable vice of sodomy.
>
> Robert Aldrich, 2003.[151]

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146 Peter Worsley, 1970, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia* [2nd ed.], London: Paladin, 49.

147 Rodney Magwich, 1970, *A Submission on Plantation Wages to Rural Wages Board of Industry*, 13 May 1970, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, cited in Robert Aldrich, 2003, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, London and New York: Routledge, 247–48.

148 H. Ian Hogbin, 1951, *Transformation Scene: The Changing Culture of a New Guinea Village*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 190–91; Hogbin, 1963, *Kinship and Marriage in a New Guinea Village*, London: University of London, 97–98. See also Hogbin, 1946, 'Puberty to marriage: a study of the sexual life of the natives of Wogeo, New Guinea,' *Oceania* 16(3): 185–209, where he describes how the Wogeo people of the Sepik term homosexuality by the name of another Sepik village where, they claim, it has long been common.

149 Edward P. Wolfers, 1975, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 95.

150 These ethnographical references are supported by court cases which came before the pre-Independence courts.

151 Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, 409.

Aldrich goes on to point out that the colonial world provided many benefits for intrepid male colonists. Colonies were refuges from the constraints of Europe; they were places of sexual experimentation and of cultural inspiration; they were testing grounds for masculinities; they were sites of incredible eroticism, the lowering of inhibitions and the blurring of boundaries. For PNG,[152] he presents the results of an intensive survey not only of published literature, but also of old newspaper accounts of court cases, and the casebooks of Justice Gore of the Port Moresby Criminal Court. He concludes that it is evident that erotic encounters between males can occur and have long occurred in many situations, settings and forms in PNG, particularly in the latter part of the colonial era, describing for the 1950s and 1960s:[153]

> a range of homosexual arrangements and behaviours … sex conceded after intimidation and sex given for money, sex between New Guineans and between Europeans and New Guineans, as well as between Europeans, sex on the beach, in a car and in a house, sex that may have been 'situational' among labourers without women companions, but also sex that fell into a regular pattern of cruising to find partners and continuing links between homosexuals, sex between men conscious of their homosexual desires or considered repeat offenders by the authorities and between men who said homosexuality was their 'fashion.'[154]

Older gays, both national and expatriate, recall the pre-Independence era with nostalgia.

> The contacts of those years … it was a very social time too, there was a lot of bonding I think because the Europeans of that time with similar interests tended to gravitate together, because there wasn't much in the way of theatre or dances, and no TV (Adam).

> We had never any problems in those days. Never seemed to have any problems. In the 70s and that (James).

Nelson, in describing the social and sexual mixing across race barriers in colonial PNG, mentions inter-racial homosexual relations, which were 'tacitly accepted' so long as they were not paraded too obviously in public.[155] He describes what Jenkins has elsewhere called the 'patron-client' relationship, whereby an older expatriate man takes on the care, responsibility, feeding and schooling of a young man who eventually marries, whereupon the patron assumes the role of 'uncle' or 'father,' and the first-born boy is often named after him.[156] Jenkins

152 Ibid., 247–62.
153 Ibid., 258, 261–62.
154 Ibid., 258.
155 Nelson, Taim Bilong Masta, 181.
156 Jenkins, 'The homosexual context of heterosexual practice in Papua New Guinea,' 197.

thinks that this may have been more a feature of colonialism, although I have observed that many gay Papua New Guineans today make a point of seeking out or preferring expatriate partners, possibly for the financial benefits such a relationship may bring.

Two different worlds: Gay in the city

> I live in two different worlds. When I live in the city, I'm gay. When I go to the village, I'm like a man (Douglas).

Attention to male-male sex in the literature is often confined to reports and studies relating to sexual practices and their relationship to HIV epidemic management. There is a large ethnographic and historical literature on homosexuality in indigenous culture and the plantations referred to above. There is also some work done in recent years under the auspices of the IMR[157] and some description of child sexual abuse of boys in the *HELP Resources Report*.[158] But although gay life in PNG informs and is informed by societal attitudes to homosexuality and current law governing homosexual behaviour across the country, there has been minimal attention paid to the everyday lives and world views of PNG males today who have sex with, or are at least attracted to, other males.

Gays and transgenders were happy to be interviewed. Through the range of contacts already established in Port Moresby, I was able to connect with a wide range, from all walks of life and all social classes. As one put it,

> In PNG, we're very privileged to have [gay] people who got very high status in different sectors of society, like lawyers, doctors, even in the police, so through our network, we can easily get help from them, there are many gay people at different levels of society, they can really help us when we go through hard times, or contributing to policy and all that (Barry).

Barry himself had tertiary education, as did many others I interviewed. Others had not even finished high school, and had never been formally employed. The solidarity of outgroups here transcended class divisions.

My interviews accorded with Herdt's and Knauft's conclusions[159] in revealing a strong disconnect between 'then' and 'now.'[160] 'In the village, I was the only one like this … I was struggling … I used to think that I was the only one in this

157 Ibid.; also *National Study*.

158 *HELP Resources Report*. This Report seems to imply that homosexuality is derived from such abuse, which does not accord with my findings.

159 Knauft, 'What ever happened to ritualized homosexuality?'

160 Tom Boellstorff points to the fallacy of western efforts to discover the origins of today's non-normative sexualities in the past, linking 'indigenous' homosexualities and transgenderisms to present-day manifestations. See *The Gay Archipelago*, 35–38.

world' (Douglas). Many gays described feminine activities or qualities displayed early in life. Feminine dress was one (Gordon, Steven, Douglas). Girls' games at school were a big attraction (Victor). Each one came to awareness in various ways, sometimes painfully:

> In sports … in the rugby team or soccer team … those who weren't selected to play would have these comments, you know, *em geligeli*, *wai putimen i go autsait* [He's *geligeli*, that's why he was eliminated].… I tried very hard [to hide the fact that I was gay] because I didn't want to be known to be what they called me, 'cause I wanted to prove to them that … in a men's game, I'm a man (Len).

> When I was in Grade 8, all the boys were dreaming about girls, and they were talking about it, and I was dreaming about boys, so I had to make up stories about dreaming about girls. That's when I knew that something was wrong with me (Henry).

Moving to town and the discovery of 'sisters' and networks helped. As Henry explained,

> [In Moresby] I met X [a 'sister'] and I began to fully understand myself and the world out there and all the opportunities I had, given the grim environment that is here in PNG. I always thought it was just 'life's going to be miserable' and when I met X it was okay, I had the network and the people I can talk to and they provided me that family place and that security (Henry).

Sometimes first sexual experiences were pleasant, sometimes not, and sometimes they took place during childhood.

> That's my first-first nightclub … that white man, he got one carton of beer and he put it in front of those five gays and me … he said: I want that little sugar-baby … he take me out for one night … maybe I was 13 years old, I stayed with him … when I was 15 years old, he was 28 … he had to go back where he belonged … we cried and cried … that seven years, very long time (Oscar).

My fieldwork confirms that today, whether in the bush or in town, it seems that homosexuality and transgenderism are often rejected, denied and condemned, and traditional practices sometimes totally disavowed.[161] Many of those reared in rural environments make their way to towns and cities, where at least others can be found and pseudo-families formed. But even in the city, discrimination is everywhere. 'They can tell you right in front of you … you're a receiver from

161 I recall being told emphatically by a Papua New Guinean UPNG law lecturer in 2001 that homosexuality was a 'foreign import,' and had never been part of 'traditional society.'

the anals, you're a sucker … I don't open my mouth … once I open my mouth, that's the time when you are worse … you try and open your mouth, then you'll be in the shark's mouth' (Timothy).

In part, it is prompted by masculine denial. 'In PNG, it's a very shameful act that we are going through.… In our society, men, they do practise it. They like sleeping with men but they don't want it to be known or being publicised … all sorts of Papua New Guinea men … like sleeping with other guys, having a relationship, but they don't want it to be publicised' (Colin). And in part it can be attributed to church doctrine. 'I grew up in a very Christian home, Catholic, and so I knew something was wrong. That was when I became reclusive … since Grade 8 till now I've never been back to church.… I refuse to do anything to do with religion' (Henry).

Coping strategies must be developed.

> Sometimes it's bad in town. Change your way of walking and talking. What we do, we try to train ourselves to carry ourselves in public … we have calling codes, hallo, *koti*, things like that … we do sign languages, things like that. If 'she' says yes, if you feel that it is okay, you can break your wrist. If it feels okay. We try to go public, but lifestyle (*Palopa*).

And sadly, Eric explains, 'I don't go out so much … I guess because … my circle of friends is very limited, I basically just manage my business, I get home, open my wine, watch TV, dinner, I'm in bed. I really don't socialise any more, around here' (Eric).

But there are advantages in bonding with others. The pseudo-kin groupings formed amongst gays develop their own moral codes. A small group whom I interviewed together were horrified when I asked if they had sex amongst themselves. Absolutely not, they replied, 'Here in PNG, us, the sisters, even straight acting ones like me too, we don't play with each other, we play the part of the woman. We don't play with each other, we go for straight guys, who will play the part of the man. Our friends treat us as their *meris* [women, girlfriends]' (Colin). I also noticed, as I talked and mingled, that gays often formed friendships sometimes described as 'sisters' (Colin, Barry) which were clearly not sexual—they prompted each other to describe sexual exploits with partners past and present.[162]

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162 See Niko Besnier, 2007, 'Language and gender research at the intersection of the global and the local,' *Gender and Language* 1(1): 67–78, 74–75 and Jackson, 'An explosion of Thai identities,' 416–17 for globalisation influences on languages of homosexuality and transgender.

Safe spaces

The stigma experienced by gays today means that they exercise care in selection of safe spaces. In Port Moresby, the drop-in centre at the Poro Sapot Project is one such place. But access is limited, and for those without family to turn to, 'safe space' often means living in the adjacent Motuan village of Hanuabada (HB), on the edge of the harbour downtown, where gays can be themselves, wearing:

> miniskirts, *meri* blouses, [hair] extensions, earrings, makeup….
>
> There's places … to act like a girl … the Centre, it's okay for us; Town, it's also a good place because it's also next to the village; HB … the Motuan villages, they're okay … mainly HB.… At HB we have all the 'girls', all the *palopas* who've already exposed, so people are exposed to us (*Palopas*).
>
> HB is the only village in Port Moresby that really accepts you. Only in HB in broad daylight that you can walk in skirts in broad daylight, they won't mind, they mind their own business … before, HB gay was in secret (Oscar).

Map 4.1. Aerial view of Hanuabada (HB), beside and in the harbour, with the Yacht Club to the upper right. Each row of houses is arranged by family and clan relationships.

Source: Google Earth V7.1.2.2041. (16 October 2013). Hanuabada Village, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. 9º 27′ 17.54″S, 147º 09′ 07.76″E, Eye alt 1.28 kilometres. DigitalGlobe 2014. http://www.earth.google.com [24 June 2014].

This is true of both Motuan and non-Motuan gays. As is customary in villages, strangers received into village life are anchored by putative family structures.

> At the village [HB], we have a house, we have a sort of *giaman* [pretend] mum and dad, they don't have kids, so they have a very big house … all the 'girls' live there … the wife … she treats us as her own. Graduations, course completions, we bring them along.… About seven girls in two houses (Oscar).

Some rural communities accept gays, others do not. For many Central Province villagers at least, it can be just as easy to stay at home.

> Some of them, they're in the village, they don't come to Moresby because it's a hard life in Moresby, so they stay in the village … Central, Hula, Aroma; Kerema, Daru as well as Motuan villages.… In the village, it's safer. They come, and not long, they're gone. They come to sell their garden produce [normally a women's activity], then after market, they go back.… Sometimes if we happen to meet them … if they come to Moresby, they know … where we live … more than 500 living in Moresby and in the village.… If they come to Moresby, they know HB … more than 500 'flowers' in Moresby and in the village. Many don't come out that often. In village, you will know that if they're gay, they get a *bilum* and a knife, you will know that 'she' is a *Palopa*. You will see if they don't walk with the ladies, that is a man.… The *Palopas*, they walk with the ladies to the garden (Oscar).

And safety can sometimes mean nightclubs, although there are no specific 'gay nightclubs' in Port Moresby (Oscar). Clubs can be good pick-up places, although as I shall describe in Chapter 5, club cruising can be dangerous. The main role of the nightclubs is to provide pre-programmed sites for the increasingly popular 'drag shows.' The shows emerged in the early 2000s from an initiative started by Moses Tau, gay pop singer and MSM rights activist. As a male sex worker (MSW) explained in a group interview:

> First show … started by Moses Tau. Twenty-two of us competing and we were competing again, and then from there we started advertising the competition. Moses put it together.… We started sending invitations out, to our 'girlfriends', telling them if you see any gays, tell them to come along, we're trying to push the gay thing out to the public … they came from everywhere! (MSW).

News spread rapidly:

> I never thought that there were any other gays in PNG. I was at home and then one time, this friend of ours … he walked in one afternoon:

> 'Girl, cook our dinner, and then I think I have a very exciting news for you.'… We had dinner, he goes: 'There's a ticket here, Club X, 50-50. They said it's for *geligelis*, it's for modelling or something.' We got into men's clothes, two of us walked all the way … it was our first time, we walked in and sat in a corner … ya, look at those ones, they're like us. My first time, to actually join the 'girls' (MSW).

It wasn't easy at first:

> There was a gay Mardi Gras bash … we were the only ones that dressed up … but it wasn't easy there, they were punching me and kicking me and I had to fight in the toilet, and I go into the ladies' toilet and the ladies are angry, and I go to the male toilet and wow … and security guards were accompanying us the whole time. The second time I went there, very recently, that was last year, one of those gay-organised things, and everyone was friendly, the security guards were helpful, they said, 'Oh, we know, you can go straight and change' (Henry).

Soon the shows became a focus for gay awareness and entertainment, a 'safe space.'

> I heard about the shows.… I thought it was real girls' show.… I thought, these are 'girls' sitting down! Not only PNG … but Filipinas and the Chinese … for Papua New Guineans, I can tell, but for Filipinos, just like a woman, the way they dress, the way they talk … when they walk into the club, no-one will know if they are girls or boys. The first time I went in, I thought, oh my God, I really wanted to be like them … even some of them, the ones that I know, they came up to me wearing those mini-skirts and dress and all those tight jeans and with their wigs and everything (Peter).

> I was also very much surprised.… I went the first time … my staff invited me, they said, that's right, there's a fifty-fifties night tonight, and I thought, oh yes, I like the '50s … I was really just floating when I got there, the *geligelis* were there! It was half-half, you know … all dressed up … this was about two years ago … it dawned on me, I just thought, this is accepted … that was the first time, I thought, this is good! (Eric).

Many clubs formerly catering only for male-female networking and commercial sex began setting aside specific nights for the drag shows, and ensured that security was tight. Some clubs even changed their names to reflect their new images. Complex programmes of competition 'categories' (sports, casual, dance, evening-wear and so on) are drawn up, heats, semi-finals and finals are held,

with cash prizes offered. All contestants, win or lose, receive some measure of payment, and for security purposes, transport home is usually arranged. Drag shows are definitely good for business, and good for the contestants too.[163]

> Now the clubs begin to know us very well, they come to accept us, once we do a show in any club, that club makes a lot of money.… Helping us not to go out and sell yourself, get the money, hang around on the street.… Keeping 'girls' occupied, not to go out, because they're receiving one or two kina from there, when they go to the village, they have money to buy what they want (Oscar).

Figure 4.12. Drag show contestant.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 30 March 2006.

163 In 2007, for example, the club hosting the current round of drag competitions paid K50 to every entrant for performing, and offered a first prize of K1,000. Security was tight at the premises, and the contestants were bussed home.

And, as I found when I was escorted to shows during fieldwork, they are a lot of fun. The second-hand clothing shops are plundered, and better-off friends (including me) are importuned to provide financial assistance towards costumes (a different one for each category). Nails are polished, hair straightened and hair-extensions painstakingly woven in, wigs and evening gowns donned, makeup carefully applied. Participants practise lip-synching to popular songs, dance routines and catwalk slinks. Even many of the audience turn up in drag, acknowledging the safety of the space. The drag shows have become a critical factor, in Port Moresby at least, for assisting in confidence-building.

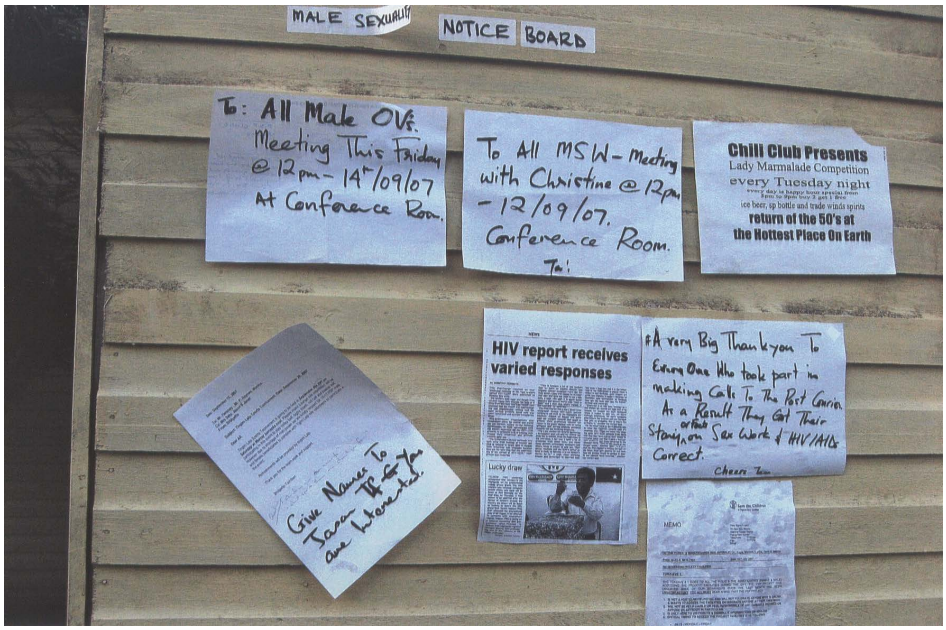

Figure 4.13. Notice of MSW meeting posted on the 'notice-board' at Poro Sapot.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 12 September 2007.

Males selling sex

In contrast to the focus on female sex selling in PNG in both popular and academic discourse today, scant attention has been paid to male sex selling as a category in itself.[164] It is usually conflated with men who have sex with men, but PNG is not unique in this regard. Cindy Patton notes this asymmetry in the world-wide HIV discourse, and argues that it derives from 'the active-

164 Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 9.

passive split that is supposed to characterize male versus female sexuality.… Whereas men sell bodies that are theirs to dispose of, women sell bodies that more properly belong to men, their families, or society as a whole.'[165]

The *Poro Sapot Evaluation Report* found evidence of the selling of sex by males in Port Moresby in 2007,[166] and Jenkins noted the activity in Lae and Daru as well in the same year,[167] but no consistent research was conducted until 2010.[168] However, there is nothing new about the selling of male sex in PNG. Examples have already been furnished in official records, such as those of *Kausigor's Case* and the *Siune Wel* cases, discussed in Chapter 3.[169] Other pre-Independence cases testify to the early identification of the purchasing of male-male sex. In 1962, for example, a drunken expatriate was convicted of an attempt to procure two 'natives' for 'acts of gross indecency' by offering them a £1 note.[170] The *National Study* includes an account of an expatriate paying village boys in the Highlands for anal sex.[171]

In 2007, I asked to meet with self-identifying male sex workers who congregate at Poro Sapot. We talked freely, no names were given, recorded or used, and as well as receiving the information they had to give, I was able to reciprocate, with information on various aspects of the law.

Some limit themselves to a few regular clients:

> At the moment, I have only one male client that I see.... I used to have … the recent ones … two expatriates, and another national male client … and I found out that they also have a lot of friends … having multiple sex partners, like clients … so when I found about that, finished.… At the moment, that national, my client … he gives good money, ranging from hundred, two hundred (MSW).

> Most of the men, they like to keep it discreet. They don't want to be discriminated.… They have our mobile numbers, so they give us a call when they're in town, and then give the room number, 'just go to reception, I already give your name.'... The standard price … one or two hundred, but with drinks (MSW).

Others trawl the higher-class establishments:

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165 Cindy Patton, 2002, *Globalising AIDS*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 92.
166 Maibani-Michie et al., *Evaluation of the Poro Sapot Project*.
167 Carol Jenkins, 2007, 'HIV/AIDS, culture, and sexuality in Papua New Guinea,' in *Cultures and Contexts Matter: Understanding and Preventing HIV in the Pacific*, Manila: Asian Development Bank, 5–69, 57.
168 Kelly et al., Askim na Save.
169 *Kausigor's Trial; Kausigor's Appeal; Siune Wel Cases*.
170 *R v. Bates* (Unreported) Supreme Court No. 255 9 October 1962.
171 *National Study*, 98.

> For my clients, Asians, Filipinos, Indians, Indonesians, a few Australians, a few topshots, parliamentarians, businessmen, I go to the big hotels, I go alone just like a man. I go with some money to cover myself, take a drink, sit down, look at people playing snooker, dancing, that's how I start off. When I'm drinking I don't move around, I sit there. I call them and they speak to me. Dealing with men, they give me money. I make about four or five hundred kina in one night (MSW).

For many, it is a case of working the beats:

> We hear stories, like we have one of our friends, 'she' walks the X Park … they walk around, just as normal. When they see clients coming up towards them, they start doing their bit … if we strut our stuff, if he gives a signal like eye contact, then we know he wants it. It's up to the 'girl' to continue, take it on from there (MSW).

Some beats are exclusively male,[172] some are open to all.

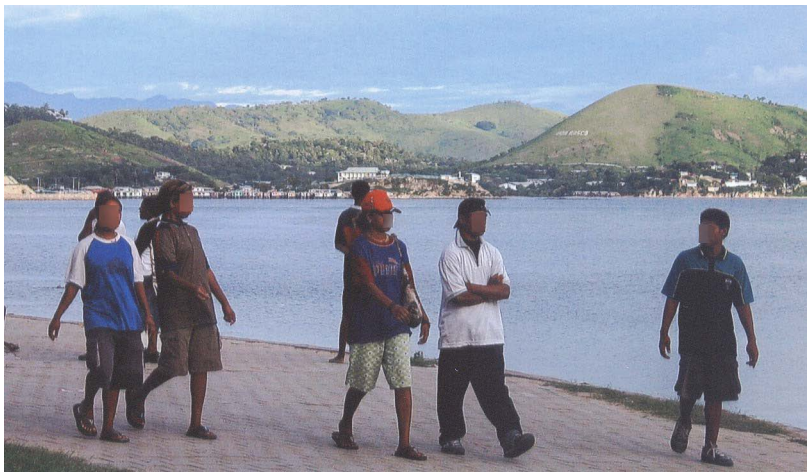

Figure 4.14. The Ela Beach beat downtown.

Source: Photo by Christine Stewart, 22 January 2006.

Mine workers working on a fly-in fly-out basis are particularly good clients, as are commercial fishermen.

> Although there are sex workers around mines, they're restricted, they have fences, they don't come out, they don't bring their families. And

172 I was told of one outside a well-known supermarket, and had not realised until then that the lads I had noticed hanging around the carpark and entrance were offering sex rather than sizing up pickable pockets and snatchable bags—or were they?

> the villagers around the mines don't come into the mines, so they are really restricted. When they come back, their pockets are really full (MSW).

I was told how many 'grew into' their profession.

> I dropped out from school, my good friend called me over and told me there's one white man, he looking for *geli*, he's going to give you money, those times I never bothered about money. He brought me over to that person's workplace, he picked me up, it was during the day, then he's trying to drop me off and he asked, do you want money. I said I don't know, he gave me K50, it was my first time to have K50, I was really happy … then I matured and knew the techniques and all that, and I started hooking men for myself, like going to the clubs … if I bump into one, and if they're good for me, then we negotiate (MSW).

> One of our sister-girls, 'she' went to Y guesthouse, now 'she' works there, bartender, they have rooms there, sometimes late in the night … men start coming in and negotiate for sex, and 'she's' got rates for wanking them or giving them a blow job or to do the full thing (MSW).

Male sex sellers contrast with their female counterparts in various ways. By and large, they are in a better negotiating position to be paid more money. This is partly due to a focus on skills-training:

> Before, when we didn't have the knowledge of approaching people and stuff, like talking in the ways, before, we just used to swing our hands.... but now we came to … the way of solving problems … they ran a workshop, training here. Communication skills, role models, stuff like that. Now I think we're more adult (MSW).

But other factors contribute to the comparative success of males in earning-power. Many have more tricks and are in a better negotiating position than most female sex sellers due to their physical strength, their ability to threaten reluctant clients with exposure, and to work *raskol* tactics such as pilfering.

> There was one time for example I was drinking in the bar, these two white people they were in the bar, they approached me and we were talking and I was already really drunk and my wrists were broken and they knew this was one *geli* and they said, do you need a lift and I said, yes please, then we went to another person's apartment, one left without giving me anything, I stayed with the other one, in the morning he only gave me K20, I was really mad, he was having his shower … looking

> around, I got his camera, and I got … he dropped me, it was Friday. Then I went straight to … and I sold them, I got I think K400. He gave me K20 only, I was expecting more (MSW).

Gays and girls in the sex trade co-exist in a world of simultaneous cooperation, competition and conflict.

> One place Y, the girls were staying permanently there. In 2003 I got a job down there, I heard about it but I never experienced it. There were two girls sharing a room, the rent was K150 a day. Girls were getting money from the clients, they paid the hotel room. Because of the kind of person I am, I got to get to know the girls very well, we had a very good relationship. I was duty manager at the time. When they were having problems paying their rent, they would come up to me, I would help them out with that (MSW).

> These are the same clubs where the women are also trying to find.… This is where arguments start. There's a competition going on, we interrupt (MSW).

> Usually ladies going with their boyfriends or husbands, if we appear, then the male client has another mentality, change their minds, the girl will get upset, say that is a male, that is a homo, 'she's' not what you think 'she' is.… But the male who has more attraction, won't even bother, he just comes straight for it, when he does that, and we want our revenge, that's when we take our revenge (MSW).

Selling sex for gays is more than a profession, more than a way of life. When I asked the group I was talking with: 'If you were offered a really good job in an office, would you give it up?' I was answered with a horrified chorus of 'No!' 'It's a game,' and 'I'm addicted.'

This contrasted strongly with the women I talked to, all of whom were seeking a way out. Jenny dreams of a sex trade centre, with a properly staffed specialist clinic, where women can do crafts as well as selling sex, and accumulate their own savings (Jenny). Angelina found a job, a good man and has borne his baby. Both or either of these alternatives is the goal of most. This illustrates a fundamental difference between males and females in the sex trade. Females in Port Moresby are engaged in a commercial activity for survival. Many of the men are enacting their sexual identities and desires—and making money at it. The selling of sex by males is a slippery concept. The kind of commercial transaction appearing in the Law Reports is understandable as male prostitution: casual encounters, the payment or the promise of money.[173] Nelson, Aldrich and Jenkins describe the

173 See *Kausigor's Trial*, *Kausigor's Appeal*, the *Siune Wel Cases*, and Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*.

colonial situations of male 'patronage,' which involve sometimes extensive and on-going cash outlay on the part of the expatriate involved.[174] But many of these expatriates[175] view such relationships as love affairs. So also do many Papua New Guineans. On the other hand, Papua New Guinean gays may regard such relationships as pleasant but ultimately commercial transactions. Sometimes, both views may be held simultaneously: some of those interviewed individually spoke of their 'husbands,' but later joined the MSW group discussion referring to the same partners as 'clients.'

The selling of sex by men to women was touched upon briefly in my interviews: 'It's easy for the male sex workers who sell sex to women and to men' (MSW). I was assured by Elizabeth Reid some time ago that this trade certainly takes place in Port Moresby.[176] I also recall a Highlands woman telling me in 1994 how some Highlands women *elites* (for example, the widow of a wealthy businessman, the sister of a Parliamentarian) would source a likely young village lad and pay 'groomprice' for him as well as financing his clothing, education and such like.[177] I have also noted occasional mention in the press of mature women in various parts of the country 'forcing' young boys to have sex with them—possibly by offering payment.[178] Recent research however has unearthed a wealth of data on the multitude of ways in which sex is traded in Port Moresby. The *Askim na Save* report revealed that three-quarters of the men serviced women clients to some extent, a quarter of them serviced only women, and a quarter of the transgenders serviced only or mostly women. A further table shows expatriate women as constituting 16 per cent of clients overall.[179]

Conclusions

My fieldwork has revealed something of the 'discrete place in the great social continuum of abnormal to normal'[180] of the criminalised sexual subjects of Port Moresby, through time and place. Commercialised sex takes on many more forms than popular rhetoric would have it. More significantly, the sex trade is just one part of the huge informal economy in Port Moresby. Large numbers of women,

174 Nelson, Taim Bilong Masta, 181; Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*; Jenkins, 'The homosexual context of heterosexual practice in Papua New Guinea.'

175 Including several of my personal acquaintances.

176 Pers. comm., Elizabeth Reid, Canberra, July 2008.

177 My informant expressed disgust at this type of behaviour. Her Highlander husband was a highly-placed professional.

178 E.g, *HELP Resources Repor*t, 48, 50, 52.

179 Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 17.

180 Golder and Fitzpatrick, *Foucault's Law*, 63.

girls, men, boys and transgenders sell and exchange sex as part of their daily lives, whether casually or on an ongoing basis, without necessarily admitting that what they do is part of what they are. As Hammar explains,

> In PNG 'sex worker' criteria are seldom met in terms of cohesion or consciousness. 'FSWs' and 'CSWs' are often clerks, betel-nut sellers, housewives, collectors of firewood, struggling widows, girls doing Grade 8, job applicants, and women seeking to marry expatriate boyfriends.[181]

The sale of sex is often combined with other small-scale vendor activities, selling *buai*, cigarettes, second-hand clothing, cooked food, fruit and vegetables, cold drinks and ice blocks, cheap imported goods and so on.

> Almost three-quarters [of participants in the *Askim na Save* survey of people who sold or exchanged sex] (74%; n=436) reported they had work other than selling or exchanging sex. Of the 417 participants who specified other work, the most common type of work was selling betel nut (79%), followed by selling store goods (12%).[182]

But whereas other informal economy activities are legal, although controlled by a variety of health and zoning regulations,[183] the sex trade is not. Street vendors have large sectors of the public on their side, and also speak up for themselves. Sex sellers cannot, without admitting that they are 'prostitutes,' and prostitutes are law-breakers.

Selling sex and sexual activity between males taking place in modern times both have antecedents, though not necessarily origins, in pre-colonial cultures. The introduction of the cash economy, Christianity, western medical beliefs and management practices, the growth of cities in a rural landscape of hunting, fishing and horticulture, the increasing divide between leaders and the led, between the haves and the have-nots, through colonial times and into the post-colonial era, have incidentally created groups of people whose sexuality and sexual behaviours contravene currently accepted norms, and their modern-day forms confound many popularly held views. It is not a simple matter of expatriates patronising young PNG men. Sex-selling is more than a matter of

181 Hammar, n.d., 'The 's' words: 'sex,' 'sex worker,' and 'stigma' in Papua New Guinea,' paper for Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research.

182 Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 14.

183 An attempt at management of PNG's informal economy, the *Informal Sector Act* 2004, succeeded mainly in giving wide powers to urban 'City Rangers' in Port Moresby, which they often exercised with exorbitant violence and disregard for the law: ref. my collection of newspaper clippings, and personal observations while in Port Moresby. The recent ban on selling *buai* inside Port Moresby has greatly exacerbated this situation.

women, whether helpless victims or independent agents,[184] exchanging sex for cash, goods or services. It also includes men selling sex to other men, and to women.[185]

But popular discourse relies on simplicity. Disciplinary power constructs these people as outclasses; while law, at work policing the boundary between normal and abnormal, declares their activities to be illicit. Although they have harmed none but themselves, they are treated as criminals, through legislative processes and in the courtroom itself, as I shall show in the next chapter.

184 Sandy, '"My blood, sweat and tears"'; Wardlow, '"Prostitution," "Sexwork," and "Passenger Women."'
185 Kelly et al., Askim na Save, 17.

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.