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Understanding Sexual Violence:
The Case of Papua New Guinea

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To Soso,
for all his love,
understanding,
endless patience,
and zest for life.

And,
in memory of
Nancy,
who shared laughter and pain

and
Benoît
who never left Papua New Guinea.

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ABSTRACT

Using feminist, post-colonial and anthropological theories, this thesis explores the understanding of sexual violence within the social, political, economical and cultural context of Papua New Guinea (PNG). A first encounter with PNG reveals a law-and-order debate in which the country is branded dangerous, both at the national and international level. Incidents of sexual violence are numerous and at certain times, social anxiety prevails. Against this popular discourse, also referred to as the macroscopic perspective, I explore incidents and understandings of sexual violence within a particular community of PNG. Within this community, I analyse sexual violence through the exploration of issues such as violence, gender and sexuality, which are central concepts related to the understanding of sexual violence. The microscopic perspective emanating from this exploration reveals complementary understandings, which challenge to a certain point, the understanding of sexual violence and the social anxiety exposed within the popular debate on law-and-order.

The study exposes a tension created by the encounter of two different life worlds; one influenced by the sensibility of Western civilisation and the other evolved from the mores of traditional PNG societies. The macroscopic perspective reflects mostly Western understandings of the issue, which are shared only to a certain extent by the members of the settlement. Within the microscopic perspective, developed at community level, a dynamic setting is discovered, characterised by the manipulation of understandings of law-and-order as expressed within the popular debate. Resistance and agency develop as important concepts within this microscopic perspective. The ambivalence emanating from this situation is reinforced by the exposure, indeed the existence, of different understandings of violence, gender and sexuality, which are all linked with sexual violence.

As the thesis further highlights, the lack of a common diagnostic paradigm, able to articulate and interpret social pathological acts at the crossroad of the two different life-worlds expressed within the two different perspectives, results in actions and concepts detrimental to establishing respect for the law and for the women who are the major targets in these sexually violent encounters.

MAP 1 – PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- — · · — · · — International boundary
- — · — · — Province boundary
- ———— Main road
- National Capital
- Province Capital
- Town, village
- Airport
- Reef

0   50   100   150   200   250 km
0   50   100   150 mi

PACIFIC OCEAN

MANUS
NEW IRELAND

Pelelun Islands
Hermit Islands
Mussau
St. Matthias Group
Lorengau
Admiralty Islands
Manus
Taskul
Kavieng
Tabar Islands
Lihir
Tanga Islands
New Ireland
Namatanai
Feni Islands

WEST SEPIK
EAST SEPIK
Vanimo
Aitape
Amanab
Lumi
Maprik
Wewak
Ambunti
Angoram
Bogia
MADANG
Karkar
Telefomin
Madang
Sepik
Chambri Lakes
ENGA
Wabag
WESTERN HIGHLANDS
Ramu
Koroba
Mt. Hagen
Kundiawa
Long
Kiunga
Tari
Mendi
Goroka
Kabwumo
SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
Okapa
Nadzab
CHIMBU
EASTERN HIGHLANDS
Lae
Finschhafen
Umboi
Marawaka
Huon Gulf
MOROBE
Lake Murray
Strickland
Kikori
Balimo
Kerema
WESTERN
Fly
Weam
Morehead
Kiwai
GULF
Gulf of Papua
Daru
Popondetta
Kokoda
Tufi
Kwikila
Port Moresby
NATIONAL CAPITAL
Kupiano
CENTRAL

Bismarck Archipelago
Bismarck Sea
Witu Islands
Rabaul
Kokopo
Talasea
Ewase
Milim
Pomio
Gloucester
Kimbe
Hoskins
New Britain
Kandrian
WEST NEW BRITAIN
EAST NEW BRITAIN
Solomon Sea

Buka
BOUGAINVILLE
Bougainville
Panguna
Arawa
Buin
Choiseul
Santa Ysabel
New Georgia Group
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Guadalcanal

Trobriand Islands
D'Entrecasteaux Islands
Goodenough
Fergusson
Woodlark
Kulumadau
Esa'ala
Normanby
Alotau
MILNE BAY
Goschen Strait
Misima
Louisiade Archipelago
Pocklington Reef
Rossel
Tagula

INDONESIA
Coral Sea
Torres Strait
AUSTRALIA

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used
on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance
by the United Nations.

144°   147°   150°   153°   156°   159°
0°   3°   6°   9°   12°
141°   144°   147°   150°   153°   156°   159°

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

people enriched my field work. I am thinking here about all 'the boys' from Morata and the neighbours in Lobu Street. Special thoughts go to Nancy and her father who in the end did not survive violence and disease. The happiness, laughter, pain and sorrow, which they willingly shared with me, are engraved in this thesis.

The logistics of writing a thesis were made possible by an ongoing group of friends whose support was undiminished. The support came in terms of editing, comments on drafts, and most of all in love and care for me and my son who, because of them, has managed to grow through this process without too much deprivation. Sherly, Neil, Dare and Blade took on Soso as their son and brother for nine months whilst I was in the 'field'. Besides all the editing work, Lina offered all a friend could wish for. Yvonne made sure I remained sane whilst also providing a critical ear for all my ideas and thoughts. Both Yvonne and Lina, over the duration of the thesis, provided my son and me with the unconditional support and love that only 'family' provides. Support and friendship also came from Caroline, Dan, Luigi, Tamara, Alan, Sheleyah, Chris, Suzy, Prue, Bob, Tim, Philipa and Hasu. Kathy Golski and Wojciech Dabrowski deserve special mention. Without their input, this thesis would have never reached its final stage. Paul Barker made sure to provide me with the few missing links from PNG. Susan Turner kindly allowed me to use a number of the pictures which she took in Morata during my fieldwork.

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I am grateful to Yolande Vandevelde, Koen Panier, Dirk Panier and Philippe Crépin for providing the 'contacts' and solutions to technical problems involved with bringing out a thesis in an environment away from the university.

Last but not least, I want to thank my parents who, for the last three months, have taken Soso and me into their home and care, and thus have allowed me to bring this thesis to an end. I also thank them for opening up the world for me.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Within the context of a national debate whereby Papua New Guinea (PNG) has been branded a dangerous society having a serious law-and-order problem, this thesis aims to expose the way in which promotion by a discourse developed on a Western-based interpretation of criminal acts can exacerbate a potentially volatile situation. This is caused by a tension created by the encounter of two different life worlds: one influenced by the sensibility of the Western civilisation and the other evolved from the mores of traditional PNG societies. The tension emanates from a situation in which experiences and understanding of criminal behaviour differ according to respective life-worlds, despite a process of appropriation, rejection and reconstruction of values by both sides at the crossroads of different life-worlds[1]. The lack of a common diagnostic paradigm capable of articulating and interpreting social pathological acts in a language intelligible to both sides produces actions and concepts detrimental to establishing a respect for the rule of law. One of the most visible and publicised area of law violation is sexual violence.

In this thesis, I explore the process of this exacerbation of the law-and-order situation through the study of sexual violence[2] within an urban settlement of Port Moresby in which my subjects live at the crossroads of the encounter between the two life-worlds. As such, their life-world is a merger – combinatoire – of the two. Therefore I first examine the construction of a state-based discourse[3] on law-and-order centred on legal definitions based on Western moralities as set out in the criminal code and which is often conveyed by media, politicians and government reports. The "West" and the associated

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[1] In referring to two different life-worlds, I mostly accentuate the differences between one marked by ideologies embedded in Western civilisation and one, which evolves from a non-Western civilisation. However, in PNG there are many different life-worlds, which, without a doubt, have also influenced the multi-ethnic environment, which characterises a number of settlements. I expand further on this issue in Chapter 3.

[2] In this thesis I mostly focus on sexual violence targeting women. This follows from the References to offences against sexual morality (Ch. No. 262, Division 2 of the Criminal Code Act) being mostly concerned with the female victim. This gender bias has been incorporated in the state-based discourse. Only recently (June 2003) has parliament gazetted emendations making the Act gender neutral. The new Act also recognizes marital rape which had been non-existent in the previous Act.

[3] The choice for the term 'state-based' discourse relates to the fact that the state/nation concept was introduced during colonisation thereby resulting in a system of governance mostly based on Western norms and practices. In relation to law-and-order, it implies that the state monopolises the use of violence and legitimises its use through legislation based on Western norms. Of course, as this thesis will show this condition is ambivalent with many rhetorical but also concrete challenges to the promotion of state and its modus operandi along Western notions. There are other groups and individuals who promote Western notions of governance and social structures. However, my research subjects mostly relate to the State through its representatives such as the politicians, government members and law enforcement agencies.

state-based discourse as such cannot be understood in monolithic terms. However, as the thesis will show the way non-Westerners, and more specifically my research subjects who live in the settlement, perceive and interpret this discourse is mostly monolithic and reinforces the 'civilising'[4] character of Western understanding of violence and associated law-and-order issues. The references made to the state-based discourse mostly represent the way state-based notions and its principles surrounding the issue of law-and-order are understood by my research subjects. As such, the discourse as represented here is not exhausted. Then, against this particular discourse, I explore the logic which informs the life-world of the people living in the settlement and which affects the way community members, offenders and victims among them, view and experience incidents of sexual violence. I have chosen to label this discourse as the local discourse. Thus the state-based discourse, as seen by my research subjects, departs from an introduced government system that differentiates itself from the local discourse. The local discourse evolves from a 'way of life' that does not align itself to the practices and values introduced by a Western-based government system.

This study portrays not only two varied discourses containing different understandings and experiences of violence, but also how users of those different discourses manipulate the premises of each for their own sake. This thesis concentrates on the Morata settlement and shows how this community deploys the state-based discourse and in doing so benefits from it. The acquisition of this discourse reflects the way members of the settlement 'understand' and 'interpret' it. This strategy requires flexibility and produces moral and conceptual ambivalence, as the selective use of the state-based discourse does not imply a rejection of the community's attitudes in favour of the values embedded within a Western epistemology. Nevertheless, the settlement community embraces the state-based discourse to broaden and enhance its own rhetoric on violence. This capacity to articulate and justify the use of violence has enhanced the local people's agency and empowerment on the national scene. Crime and the acquired correlated skills derived from its articulation, places people without the legitimate political and economic influence into the category to be reckoned with by the resourceful state. Hence, the state-based discourse on crime does not simply articulate the fears and concerns of the general public but also supplies the tools of empowerment to the potential criminogenic elements in the community by providing it with language which

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[4] 'Civilising' refers to the shift of a 'wild and savage' society where violence seems to be the norm to a more 'controlled' society where the use of violence is only legitimate when carried out by state law enforcement agencies and under very specific circumstances.

dramatises and glorifies the criminal exploits. Rather than diminishing the crime, the massive concentration on the issue by the state, international agencies and the churches fuels it.

Within the general public, the official discourse stressing the high level and indiscriminate nature of violence feeds into a sense of anxiety, which calls for increased policing and decisive actions. Such calls result in the rise of power bestowed on law-and-order institutions and leads to the increase of ill-informed punitive actions and further radicalisation of state-led discourse[5]. However, as will be shown, this anti-crime mobilisation has no ground in the life-world of people in the settlement, making efforts to deal with crime a self-serving, self-indulgent endeavour, which perpetuates rather than solves the problems that they address.

In Chapter 2, I present the development of my methodology. The first part of this chapter focuses on the way I have carried out my fieldwork in Morata settlement. In the second part I engage with epistemological concerns in relation to conducting fieldwork in a different cultural setting than my own. It is whilst thinking through the methodological questions raised within anthropological, feminist and post-colonial epistemologies that issues of agency, resistance, difference and manipulation are brought forward. These concepts have proven crucial in the development of my understanding of the life-world of the people in Morata. Engaging with issues such as positioning, communication, relationship and representations have helped me to address more clearly the nature of the relationships between myself and the people I have worked with. It has raised the importance of emphasising the voice and agency of the people I engaged with. At the same time it reinforced my awareness of how misconceptions created within a Eurocentric framework of analysis can indeed distort experiences of events and emotions taking place in a different cultural context. Hence, this chapter establishes very much the framework in which analysis of issues important to this thesis will take place.

The focus in Chapter 3 is on the historical overview of the law-and-order debate in PNG. The first section of the chapter brings an overall review of issues that have been raised within that debate followed by the second section, which exclusively engages with the

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[5] This does not prevent the state also supporting non-Western modes of punishment such as; for instance, the proposal to tattoo criminal's forehead. (*Post Courier*, 1991). Representatives of law enforcement agencies are also known to use force exceeding the ones bestowed upon them by law suggesting that they use the means which are being understood by people in PNG.

historical development of sexual violence in PNG. In this chapter, I focus on the debate as informed by state-based understandings of the law-and-order problems. Concepts and their understandings brought forward are mostly informed by legal and moral values as they are influenced by Western sensibilities. This particular rhetoric on law-and-order has, as will be shown throughout the ensuing chapters, a particular meaning for the people in the settlement even though not necessarily the one anticipated by the state authorities.

Chapter 4 intends to bring the reader closer to the life-world of the people living in Morata. Firstly, it revisits issues within the Western-based discourse as they relate back to the socio-economic description of the settlement and its related image of dirt, poverty and crime. This particular image of the settlement has been spread by political rhetoric reinforcing the justification by law enforcement agencies to focus on settlements as prime areas for strategic interventions such as raids and evictions. Against this backdrop, the reader is then taken into the settlement as presented and experienced by the people living there. A life-world opens up which reveals a different stance on this Western-based discourse of the settlements. Many of the characteristics of the settlement as presented in the discourse are challenged. As such, already the first established understanding of crime linked in with a so-called disorganised, underdeveloped and overpopulated environment loses its credibility.

In view of the belief that sexual violence cannot be understood apart from the overall violence in a particular society, Chapter 5 aims to explore the context and experience of violence in the settlement. To facilitate this process I first highlight the issues which so far have made it almost impossible to view incidents of violence outside a framework fed by Western sensibilities. It is a viewpoint which gauges the degree of civilisation of a society against the amount of violence deployed by its people. This particular perception of violence has without a doubt infiltrated the Western-based discourse on law-and-order. This process has led to labelling the settlements where violent incidents occur as areas where 'traditional' social control mechanisms are not operating. This labelling process emanating from the Western-based discourse sets the basis for a legitimate intrusion of the area by law enforcement agents. At the same time the case studies and accounts from the settlement reveal that members of the settlement also label violent incidents in the same way. Nevertheless, the appropriation of the viewpoint as embedded in the Western-based rhetoric does not result in an internalisation of the values but rather

facilitates a process of successful resistance to the imposed stance on the matter. This ambiguous situation covers up the different take on issues of violence which exists in the settlement. The case studies and accounts emanating from the settlement do reveal contexts in which the use of violence is permitted, do reveal that 'culture' is at work, do reveal problems with the image of the victimised woman and do challenge the monopoly of violence by law enforcement agents. The ongoing attempts by the state-based agencies to deploy strategies fed by Western sensibilities in order to curtail violence in the settlements, only fuels an already tense situation. That particular situation without a doubt has an impact on the extent and understanding of incidents of sexual violence.

To investigate further a more culturally appropriate understanding of sexual violence Chapter 6 engages with questions related to values and experiences of gender and sexuality, which are integral to the understanding of incidents of sexual violence. The image of the passive female victim, which permeates the Western-based debate on law-and-order, and more specifically the issue of sexual violence, do not present very clearly. Despite the manipulation of this specific understanding by people in the settlement along the same line as with the issue of violence, the image of the vulnerable woman vanishes in the settlement environment. Case studies and accounts from the settlement expose an image of a woman with agency in terms of economics, sexuality and violence. The different take on gender and sexuality does not imply a downplay of the gravity of incidents of sexual violence which foremost victimises women. However, a closer scrutiny of the tension generated by different understandings, one generated by a state-based discourse, the other by the values embedded in the life-world of the members of the settlement, does offer an insight as to how, by insisting on an understanding fed by Western sensibilities, women can be set up for an even more traumatic experience of sexual violence.

Chapter 7 brings together the discussion of the impact of the above issues on settlement-life, violence, gender and sexuality in order to achieve a more comprehensive interpretation of sexual violence. Dynamics and experiences within the socio-economic context of the settlement, the different take on gender construction, different experiences of sexuality and violence all contribute to an alternative understanding and evaluation of sexual violence. The historical analysis also contributes to a broadening of the context to include issues of racism, ethnicity and unequal development 'victimising' both men and women. The examination of case studies involving incidents of sexual violence reinforces

that settlement communities have a complementary stance in terms of understanding and experiencing incidents of sexual violence in the settlement. Nevertheless, the people from the settlement do manipulate their knowledge and understanding of the way sexual violence is being perceived in the Western-based discourse. In certain instances, that knowledge is put to use as a political tool in which the threat of sexual violence is utilised to demand services and funding for the people in the settlement. The above findings also highlight that an insistence on resolving the law-and-order problems, including incidents of sexual violence, along the state-based understanding embedded in Western moral and legal values, will only exacerbate the already problematic situation of law-and-order, including sexual violence.

In the conclusion, I reiterate the importance of recognising the existence of more than just one viewpoint on the issues of sexual violence. The failure to do so only exacerbates an existing problematic situation which is characterised by an increased number of incidents and more violent attacks. Social anxiety[6], as a characteristic emanating from the formal law-and-order debate, is put in perspective drawing on the evidence provided in the previous chapter. In doing so attention is given to the alternative position of women in PNG, to the contextualisation of violence and to the political meaning it can carry. As such, the study of sexual violence within PNG also highlights the failure of the state of being in touch with its own broader community. It thereby re-emphasises the need to place incidents of violence, and more so incidents of sexual violence, within the historical, social and cultural context of the place.

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[6] Social anxiety here refers to the ongoing attention paid to the law-and-order issues, including incidents of sexual violence. The debate is being carried out in the newspapers, both national and international. It is also a topic commonly raised within conversations. This social anxiety has translated itself in the way consecutive governments have made law-and-order their priority in policy and fund allocation. In those terms, the issue has overshadowed ever other possible shortfall in the running of the country. As we will see, though there are different stances towards that social anxiety.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As part of this thesis project, I undertook 9 months of fieldwork in an urban settlement of Port Moresby. The fieldwork for this thesis followed a period of 7 years working as a archaeologist in Papua New Guinea (PNG), first attached to the University of Papua New

Picture 1

Chapter One
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As part of this thesis project, I undertook 9 months of fieldwork in an urban settlement of Port Moresby. The fieldwork for this thesis followed a period of 7 years working as a criminologist in Papua New Guinea (PNG), first attached to the University of Papua New Guinea and then working for the National Research Institute. During those 7 years, I conducted research amongst the *raskols*[7] who had been identified by the state-based discourse as the major culprits contributing to the precarious law-and-order situation in the country. They were labelled as robbers and rapists of the country and identified as gangs of mostly men operating in urban areas and along the highways. The research conducted amongst the *raskols* brought me to their communities, in which they had established strong links with other community members and in which they were part of kin relations. It was in these communities that I first discussed issues of sexual violence with both men and women, with both victims and offenders. It was also in this environment that a discrepancy became evident between the representation of sexual offences from the legalistic perspective, influenced by the sensibility of Western civilisation and the community-based (alias local) perspective evolved from the mores of so-called traditional perceptions.

These initial discussions were followed by two research projects on which I will draw upon in other chapters. The first one was a pilot project aimed at establishing an appropriate methodology to investigate further the issue of sexual violence (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). The project revealed a number of issues. On the one hand, the high rate of incidents of sexual violence depicted in formal statistics and through regular reporting in the media contributed to a situation of social anxiety. On the other hand, members of the communities, including offenders and victims, discussed incidents of sexual violence with a casual, matter-of-fact attitude. Both perpetrators and victims offered a broad range of explanations for the acts of sexual violence, showing little

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[7] *Raskols* have been portrayed as operating along the same lines as Western gangs and are described as uneducated, unemployed and mostly urban-based youths. Recent research has challenged these ideas (Borrey, 1995a; Goddard, 1992). Nevertheless they are still commonly used by politicians as scapegoats in times of political inefficiency and instability, and targeted in the context of property and personal crime, including sexual violence.

remorse or anguish, as if excuses such as 'we can't afford bride-price these days' were sufficient reason to placate any sense of moral outrage. The statistics and media reports both were generated by investigations based on a legalistic definition of incidents of sexual violence and therefore emanated from a Eurocentric analytical framework. Qualitative data collected through personal interviews permitted, to a certain extent, development of a different understanding of these incidents.

This different understanding was also reproduced during a second research project in which I was involved. The project aimed to identify what women perceived as most problematic in terms of law-and-order in their communities (ACIL, 1997). There was an expectation, based on statistical information, state-based discourse and previous research (Toft, 1985), that women would prioritise incidents of domestic and sexual violence. Yet, despite agreeing that domestic violence rated highest in terms of its daily occurrence, the women considered adultery to be the most important issue. It appeared then, that ideas of wrong behaviour, in terms of sexual activities, focused on adultery, rather than on personal sexual assault.

The disjunction, between the relatively high rate of sexually violent incidents as presented in the statistics and the lack of 'lived' anxiety as presented through interviews and group discussions, might therefore suggest a difference in meaning and interpretation of sexual violence among Papua New Guineans. However, a different perception of the matter does not automatically imply that sexual violence is not a problem.

A more comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding sexual violence therefore requires us to investigate the different possible meanings and experiences exposed during the research project. The primary step in this endeavour relates to methodology. It was obvious that the methods used in the examples given above revealed only a limited perspective on the problems related to sexual violence. Ways had to be found to open up other perspectives that might also be valuable. Not only was the former methodology constructed around legal definitions, formal debates and statistical information embedded within a Western epistemological framework, but also the interaction with my subjects took place in a 'space' where we could come to a mutual understanding without disturbing that framework. It seemed, at that time, a desirable position. We were somehow engaging with each other on a terrain that was wrongly

perceived as neutral, avoiding intrusion into each other's world. My questions were being answered, but this occurred only within the framework I had established. It was only during later discussions and less formally structured fieldwork that questions of interpretation arose and issues were raised, which the established framework had not allowed to come to light.

Meanwhile, one cannot overlook the impact of the state-based discourse on law-and-order, which included incidents of sexual violence. My extended living and working experience in PNG was definitely influenced by this particular understanding of the law-and-order issues in the country. To be able to understand the possible misconstruction or influence of this particular state-based discourse, it is important to establish its development especially in the area of interest: law-and-order. Therefore, part of the methodology contains an extensive literature review of both formal and informal writings on law-and-order. Furthermore, ongoing scrutiny of the issues debated on the national television and radio station highlighted further elements important to the understanding of the construction and impact of the state-based discourse. Chapter 2 presents an overview of this particular aspect of the research.

My Fieldwork

To broaden my research I turned to the ethnographic fieldwork techniques championed in Melanesia by Malinowski, Mead, Berndt, Meggitt, Strathern and Mimica, to name just a few anthropologists who conducted intensive researches into the rural and urban cultures of PNG. In my work, this ethnographic fieldwork consisted of carrying out participant observation and interviews in the settlement of Morata, an environment culturally different than mine. I have however, complemented the ethnographic fieldwork by including the use of diaries and visual material such as a painting. The fieldwork method, used by anthropologists, has also received extensive attention within the feminist debate in which my thesis is located. This latter scholarly tradition places emphasis on the process of understanding, which derives from the participation-observation situation of the fieldwork. Since this thesis is constructed within the conceptual tools of gender studies, the ensuing theoretical discussion to a large degree engages the meta-discourse of ethnographic work. I will elaborate on some of those issues in the following section of this chapter.

For the purpose of this research I decided to live in two communities, one rural and one urban, in order to provide a broader and more balanced insight into issues regarding law-and-order. I chose Morata, an urban settlement in the National Capital District and Mu, a rural village in the Sina Sina district of Simbu province. Over the years, I had established contacts with community members of both those localities through my work with the *raskol* groups in these areas. Unfortunately, my plans could not be realised. The violence associated with the by-election in the Sina Sina district, followed immediately by a landslide affecting Mu, forced me to cancel my stay there altogether. Due to the limited time (9 months) and the nature of the research topic, there was no possibility to establish contacts with a new rural village in the Highlands. Therefore, I was left only with the option of conducting the research within Morata. This situation curtailed my initial project to explore the understanding and experience of sexual violence in both rural and urban areas thereby also including ethnic differentiation and the possible differential influence of state agencies and its associated state-based discourse in the two localities. In a society such as PNG, the cultural diversity and the impact of state agencies are important factors in understanding social developments, including law-and-order issues. However, as elaborated further in Chapter 3, Morata, with its multiple ethnic population representing both highland and coastal societies, offered some opportunities to reflect upon the cultural variation of the country.

My initial contact in the settlement was Patrick,[8] a man who had been a key informant[9] on previous projects on *raskolism*[10]. I got to know his second wife, Kathy, and their children. We developed a friendship whereby regular visits into each other's home became the norm. Therefore, when I decided to become immersed in settlement life they were the obvious choice as mediators in my entry into the community.

However, despite Patrick's patronage my life in the settlement was not easy. There was the issue of my security. I could stay overnight only if Patrick was around. Since he worked half the time at night, this meant that I had to arrange alternative accommodation. Patrick often spent his weekends and days off in drinking brawls

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[8] Patrick is from Goilala, the mountainous area of Central Province. Due to their relative proximity (though there is no functional road) to the capital city, the Goilalas represent a large ethnic group within Port Moresby. They are often blamed for the criminal activities within Port Moresby.

[9] All names in the thesis are fictional in order to protect the anonymity of my informants and research subjects.

[10] See Chapter 2 for more information on the definition and development of *raskolism.*

frequently associated with violent scenes. The wife and children would on many occasions decide to run off and seek refuge with relatives outside the settlement. In the end, this left me with few opportunities to stay the night. Still, Patrick and Kathy would have not appreciated me attempting to stay with other people in the settlement. It would have been a public denouncement of their capacity to be good hosts ensuring loss of their social prestige.

Morata, a planned settlement,[11] is divided into four areas, Morata 1 to 4. Each area consists of a number of streets, which are all divided into 'blocks'. People can apply to buy a block through the Lands Department, which manages state-leased land. People in the settlement carve out their daily life very much within the confines of a few streets, with the block offering personal security for a particular household. Venturing outside the parameters of the block on which Patrick and Kathy lived happened slowly for me. It took several months before people invited me to their block and shared more intimate time with me. However, I soon became accepted as part of the 'street scene' and people interacted easily on a casual basis with me. It was certainly my connection with the different *raskol* members that brought me to areas outside 'the street'. My weekly attendance at the Village Courts also allowed me to be seen and initiated a level of curiosity that again brought me into contact with people other than Patrick, Kathy, their relatives and other acquaintances.

My strategy deployed during the field research consisted of (a) observing and, where possible, participating in people's daily chores; (b) attending the Village Court sessions; (c) using diaries written by some community members; and (d) clarifying people's perception of particular issues through individual and group discussions. During all my engagements in the field, I used no questions that would guide community members into a particular framework of analysis. This approach established what people were interested in sharing with each other and with me. At the same time, it also allowed me to find out about how people discussed or did not discuss certain issues or events. This perception proved very useful in relation to the narration of violent incidents within or outside the community. This particular process also gave me the opportunity to establish what the culturally salient domains were in this specific community (Kulick, 1995: 7). My observations were noted down on a daily basis and in certain instances, such as during

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[11] For a more detailed account of settlement establishment see Oram (1976) and Wrondimi (1994).

Village Court sessions and compensation meetings, I used a tape recorder and sometimes a camera.

Observation and Participation

Conducting fieldwork in the settlement took me on many occasions outside the settlement. As will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3, during the day the place would be desolate besides a few children and their care-takers. In the early morning, late afternoon and evening, life in the settlement bustles. I was most often in the settlement during those busy periods. During the daytime, I would accompany my informant, her relatives, but also other neighbours and settlement dwellers to community meetings, the hospital, the prison, the police college, the police station, the markets, government offices, conferences, and to other settlement areas and close-by villages where relatives or friends would be living. People also felt comfortable visiting me at my place outside the settlement where on several occasions they would stay over for the night. I also visited the settlement every weekend. During my time on the 'block', I would partake in the daily chores and social activities of the household.

Village Court

The Village Court took place once a week on Wednesday, starting in the morning and finishing the latest around 2pm. On average, the court would deal with 3 to 5 cases during their weekly session, which I attended for 6 consecutive months. The Village Court exposed grievances that people had not managed to settle amongst themselves or with the help of peace officers. Thus, I obtained an indication of what was considered problematic or unacceptable behaviour. Furthermore, I developed an insight into how culturally specific issues were dealt with in a multi-ethnic environment. Another interesting aspect was the possibility of capturing the way the outside public, observing through wired openings in the building, reacted to statements and decisions made during the court hearings. The site for Village Court hearings also became a place where disagreements could turn into violent interactions. Over a period of time, I established personal contacts with the different magistrates and peace officers. These contacts opened up new avenues in the settlement, increasing the scope of my research field. They also revealed the dynamics between magistrates coming from different ethnic groups within the country.

Diaries

Over time, I managed to develop more personal relationships with a number of the community members. As a result, I felt more at ease requesting them to spend more time with me talking about the issues of my interest. I asked the people I had in mind if they would care to share with me, in the form of a diary, events and thoughts that had taken place on a daily basis. I did not really specify what kind of information I wanted. Six people were approached - three men and three women representing coastal and highland regions. The fact that they were all rather young (late teens to early 30s) was related to my need for them to be literate. Also, the people who were approached had shown themselves to be quite assertive, not hesitating to ask personal questions. This was an important factor as I did not want to create too much of an imbalance in their personal relationships with me.

Two women and one man returned the diaries. The other three talked directly to me rather than writing a diary. The advantage of the diaries was that they managed to capture some of the individual experience of people who were possibly inhibited by talking to me while others looked on, or by the nature of the issue they wanted to share with me. The material revealed through the diaries was mostly related to sexual experiences, violent interactions or general feelings about relationships, life situation, and possible desires and aspirations that would not necessarily sit comfortably within conceptual frameworks such as the traditional or imposed one. Furthermore, all the diaries contained expressions of an emotional nature that were not easy to capture in the daily interactions we had. Restraints imposed in the public arena by cultural barriers disappeared in certain instances, allowing for the expression of various views on particular incidents. The diaries also allowed me to compare the public debates around certain incidents or events with the individual experience or interpretation. Furthermore, they limited my influence in terms of establishing restrictions bound by my own framework. Thus, a source of information was created, constructed in a space away from me but at the same time made available to me. This is not to say that there were no personally imposed restrictions. And in line with Hallpike's reflections on the way people answer questions presented by ethnographers (1977:34), I bore in mind the possibility

that stories and reflections were given to please me with the truth becoming a secondary consideration[12].

Interviews and visual aid

I also convened groups and personal discussions that allowed me to investigate issues related to my field of interest in greater depth. I organised these sessions intentionally at the end of my stay. Time was needed for me to reassess my framework and its limitations through the lens of my daily exposure to issues in the community. This could only happen after I had been submerged in the community for an extended period. Also, by then my subjects would have had the time to develop a more than casual relationship with me where they would feel comfortable challenging some of my statements and analysis. During group discussions, as a tool to further encourage discussion, I would present a painting produced by a local artist (see Introduction-cover), depicting a woman dressed in both traditional and Western style. This process led to many interesting comments that were not initiated by the use of particular concepts or meanings produced by myself.

In all this, I was aiming to grasp, as much as possible, the differences between values and meanings captured by the state-based discourse, familiar to myself, and the values and meanings expressed by members of the community. This would then give me the opportunity to establish if such differences, pertaining to the issue of sexual violence, could imply a different understanding and experience of these incidents. If so, it would be necessary to investigate links between the various understandings and practices that constituted the meanings of sexual violence in both the state-based and local discourses.

The process of conducting research in a different cultural setting and the ensuing analysis and reporting of the findings has been debated for some time within the epistemological fields of anthropology, post-colonial studies and feminism. A number of these issues are relevant to my own research and will be raised in the following section.

Thinking through a number of the issues raised within that particular debate has allowed me to investigate the issue of sexual violence beyond the analytical framework fed by

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[12] I do not engage at this point in time with the existence or non-existence of such a 'truth'. What I am implying is that people may have been writing along the line of what they thought I was interested in.

Western sensibilities. Issues of positioning, communication and representation within those specific epistemologies have highlighted the limitations of my own cultural and social reference system in grasping the understanding and experience of incidents of sexual violence, within a different cultural setting such as the settlement. This awareness has pushed me to look further into the life-world of the people living in the settlement in a way that reflects in more depth, the understanding and experience of these incidents by the people themselves.

Some epistemological concerns related to fieldwork in a different cultural setting

Fieldwork conducted in a different cultural setting gives rise to a set of questions such as, "Could I research in an environment in which I did not 'belong'?" "Would I misrepresent the issues when translating fieldwork into analysis and writing?" "Was I imposing myself on the family, community?" "Was I a neo-colonial visitor using my subjects to increase my own knowledge or promote a Western project?" "Was I being blind to an unequal power relation between my subjects and myself?" And the list goes on... In what follows I address a number of these issues where they relate to my own field work experiences.

All the above questions are related to issues of representation, authority, positioning, partiality, relationships, communication, and of course, methodology. Attempts to resolve some of the questions have created over the years, debate among linguists, feminists, historians and anthropologists with a number of contested alternatives emerging. Despite being regarded as extremely critical of Western anthropologists, Spivak has challenged the assertions of Foucault and Deleuze that "only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf" (Foucault, 1977: 209; Spivak, 1988). Whilst she challenges Western anthropologists to acknowledge themselves as historical products of the West and to assess their motivation for conducting research, their position within the power nexus and the possible outcome of their representation of the voices of the 'other' (Spivak, 1990), Spivak does not suggest a dissociation from issues related to the 'other'. Rather, she urges researchers to acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge and to attempt to move away from a Eurocentric vantagepoint. She suggests (Spivak, 1990: 62):

"... if you make it your task not only to learn what is going on there through language, through specific programs of study, but also at the same time through a historical critique of your position as the investigating person, then you will see that you have earned the right to criticise, and you will be heard".

Taussig (1989) and Scheper-Hughes (1992) for their part emphasise a moral aspiration, as they feel compelled to use their privileged position as anthropologists to expose injustices they encounter. McClintock (1994) supplements Spivak's suggestion to step outside of eurocentricity by emphasising the necessity to step outside of an analytical framework constructed around dualism. She draws attention to the limitations established through a Eurocentric position, which has spread greatly throughout the world through the process of imperialism, and argues that more complex terms and analyses, from alternative times, histories and causalities, are required to deal with complexities that cannot be served under the single rubric 'post-colonialism' (ibid.). Along the same line of thinking, Narayan (1997) also points to the unproductiveness of establishing a categorical distinction between native and foreign anthropologists whereby the native one would be seen as providing an authentic insider's view to the profession (ibid.: 36-37, cf. Spivak, 1990). Through her experience as a native anthropologist Narayan recognises "how the issue of who is an insider and who is an outsider is secondary to the need for dismantling objective distance to acknowledge our shared presence in the cultural worlds that we describe" (Narayan, 1997: 34).

It is evident that the issue of conducting research in a cultural environment vastly different than one's own raises complex issues. Whilst the above mentioned academics such as Spivak, Narayan, McClintock and Scheper-Hughes present conditions under which research could be conducted, others have explicitly condemned that process suggesting that one can only research, talk and write from one's own position and history thereby challenging not only the ethnographic enterprise but also the study of marginal groups in one's own society (Foucault, 1977; Hooks, 1991; Pettman, 1992a). Anthropologists have been some of the first to admit shortfalls and limitations in their work (Rosaldo, 1980; Counts, 1984:72,93; Stathern, M., 1984:30-31). The standpoint that will be presented here is the outcome of a systematic reflection upon my own methodological understandings and development gained over many years of working and living in PNG. Hence, the engagement with theoretical understandings in regard to

the raised issues should be seen as a clarification of my understanding of the matter. This however, does not exclude the validity of other observations which may well contradict my own experiences and ensuing understandings of representation, authority, positioning, partiality, relationships and communication.

In an attempt to clarify my position in regard to the epistemological debate surrounding ethnographic work in different cultures, I now develop some of these issues in more detail. Despite the interrelations between the following issues, I have decided to focus separately on matters related to positioning, relationship, communication and representation. I am addressing these epistemological issues a) as a way of establishing more clearly the nature of the relationships between myself and the people I have worked with, (b) to emphasise the voice and agency of these subjects and (c) to highlight how misconceptions created within a Eurocentric framework of analysis can indeed distort experiences of events and emotions taking place in a different cultural context.

Positioning

Many anthropologists have embraced the issue of positioning by pointing out the importance of recognising the limitations set by our own historicity, political, cultural and social standing in understanding particular research issues (e.g., Rosaldo, 1980; Strathern, 1991; Burbank, 1994; Scheper-Hughes, 1992). This kind of self-reflexivity, in certain cases, has been pushed to the point of suggesting that researchers discuss their sexuality within their work (Kulick and Wilson, 1995). This type of analysis can easily lead to 'navel-gazing' (Sangren, 1988: 428 cited in Kulick, 1995: 2) and writings which are self-centred and sterile (Probyn, 1993: 80). However, as Probyn points out, the problem does not lie in the process of being reflexive about one's research practices but results from the conception of the self at work within this reflexivity. It is wrong to think, "that problems of power, privilege, and perspective can be defused simply by inserting the self into one's accounts and proclaiming that dialogue has occurred" (Kulick, 1995: 15-16). One needs to reflect on a self understood as "a *combinatoire*, a discursive arrangement that holds together in tension the different lines of race and sexuality that form and re-form our senses of self" (Probyn, 1991: 1-2). A continuous acknowledgment is needed not only of one's historicity, of one's political standing, of one's cultural and social construction but also of the different knowledges arising from the changing connections between the self of both the researcher and the subjects. Consequently,

different 'combinatoires' (Probyn, 1993) can be produced, allowing the creation of avenues for increased empathy and participation in the feelings and ideas of others (Kulick, 1995: 21). Considering all these issues one can then conclude that it is the process and the capacity of positioning which will establish the parameters for one's analytical framework and its related knowledge.

Every position, every combinatoire, has led to different partial knowledges bound up in specific relationships at a particular time. Within those relationships, I see the self as "constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another" (Haraway, 1991:193). Fluidity and connection are central concepts in this perception of the self. This dynamic conception of the self allows for "the creation of an extension of a position, one that will yield different capacities" (Strathern, 1991:38-9). In my field sites, I developed as the same person, different positions with different capacities. These different positions were either consciously taken or, more often, imposed by the nature of the relationship with particular subjects. As an example, when I first entered Morata I was introduced as Patrick's 'mother'. I had acquired this status after many months of work with Patrick outside his family environment. By calling me his mother, he gave me a status that evoked respect from other community members. At the same time, it also established the limitations of our relationship. In an environment characterised by strong sexual jealousy, Patrick had established the nature of our relationship for his two wives. At the same time, as my 'son' he acquired certain responsibilities, such as guaranteeing my well-being and safety. My status in this context also opened doors to other prominent *raskol* leaders and their group members. However, this did not automatically lead to a position of respect or trust. That respect and trust had to be earned. In the company of his colleagues, Patrick was clearly in the position of authority, while at home he felt somehow intimidated by my association with the women present in the household.

This brings me to the topic of gender. Our position is indeed 'marked' by gender (cf. Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1993; Spivak, 1994; etc...). There is no doubt that being a woman affected the nature of my fieldwork, the relationships I was able to establish and therefore the information I could retrieve. In this respect any position has its benefits and shortfalls. Possibly being a 'white' female gave me some advantage in having both genders engaging with me. The initial engagement by both men and women in a relationship with me was without doubt driven by a curiosity about difference. While

women then further interacted on the basis of an assumption of sameness at a particular level, men on the other hand engaged with me more for what they perceived as my understanding of, and access to offices and services that might benefit them. In that regard I was not differently positioned than a 'white man' or a Papua New Guinean person with the same possibility of accessing useful services. At the same time, being from Belgium, I did not fit the representation of the coloniser as a white Australian man or a white missionary woman who has a reputation of being socially distant while imposing changes on the community. Despite the fact that gender might be perceived as an important factor in my access to community members, I believe that gender is just one of the elements which established my particular understanding of my positioning and of my relationship with my subjects.

Nevertheless, being a woman created limitations in terms of physical safety in an environment where women's movements are restricted to particular areas and at particular times. This restriction limited my possibilities of moving into the settlement on a full-time base. Frequently I could not be around when events related to my field of interest occurred. I never experienced my absence as a limitation to a full 'authentic' experience, but it accentuated my privilege in the sense that I had an option out of the violence whenever I wanted. Despite the relevance of my gender in terms of my being or not being in the settlement, I believe that some of the writings on violence overstate the importance of gender (Kelly, 1988). A person's gender is part of the combinatoire and its relevance will vary according the different positions in which the person moves.

A similar research experience to mine would probably amount to the same level of difference whether undergone by a male or female researcher. That is not to deny that women, given the social and cultural constructions of the place, would probably feel more comfortable relating to a woman than a man. But, this again depends on the research topic and the way men and women relate to it. The question could be asked whether women and men debate similar issues in a different way. This is rather hard to establish since it did not come out strongly during my research. This particular concern might actually tell us more about our own perception of gender relations. As will be explored in later chapters gender constructions along binary oppositions do not necessarily apply outside a framework fed by Eurocentric sensibilities and values.

My 'whiteness' was a clear marker, especially in the settlement where few 'expatriates', except for some missionaries, venture. The marker was a visible indication of 'difference'

for both my subjects and myself. Many may view this particular marker as a further emphasis of incompatibility, but it can also be viewed as an advantage in certain areas of research. As a visible marker, my whiteness reminded me constantly that I was an 'outsider' forcing me to review my position on a continuous basis[13]. Being an outsider also meant that I had no vested interest strongly forged by kin relations with obligations and reciprocities, making it easier for people to share ideas and emotions which may not be appropriate to share among 'their own people'. Nevertheless, my familiarity with the area and some members of the community facilitated at certain points the erasure of that difference. Issues were discussed in a very open way with questions asked by all parties involved.

Within the community, I was relating not only to perpetrators and victims of violence but also to law enforcers. This could certainly create ambiguities around my position in the eyes of different groups within the community. However, my capacity for moving between different individuals and groups within the community was accepted at the time the nature of my research project was established. This advantage was clearly attached to my position as a researcher.

However, my position as a researcher sometimes seemed inappropriate, especially in cases of extreme trauma associated with incidents of violence. I often felt guilty about being interested in the pain and the trauma. That guilt was associated with the knowledge that there was little I could do to alleviate the pain. Under these circumstances, Robben and Nordstrom (1995:18) suggest that:

> "We should be careful in asking victims of violence to tell their story when
> we are unable to relieve the reliving of their traumas. We may give a voice
> to the victims of violence, but we can never restore their lives."

Such incidents brought to my attention the limits associated with the development of different positions and their related capacities. On the other hand, it may be the position of researcher that can help formulate problematic areas that so far have been veiled. The restoration of the victim's life is ultimately in his/her hands. It is also important to

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[13] The racial marker can and did move to the background on many occasions. A long-term involvement with the people I worked with led to sharing of daily chores and often mutual problems. The seemingly similar issues affecting all of our lives did dissipate previously established boundaries. However, it is exactly at that moment that as a researcher one can not lose sight of one's historicity.

acknowledge the fact that the violence that is being perceived as painful and disturbing by the researcher does not necessarily translate as such, in a different life-world. I will further expand on this issue in Chapter 3 and 4.

It has been suggested that my previous association with government institutions (National Research Institute and University) might have given me a position of power and as such, facilitated my initial entry to the communities. No doubt, this would be the case if one departed from a Eurocentric understanding of knowledge as power and more so knowledge, as appreciated in a Western context. However, my movement in an environment not solely driven by Eurocentric values, brought to light the limitation of the superiority of a white educated person in a post-colonial setting, as well as the lack of respect for the introduced state institutions and their representatives. I remember clearly a previous research assignment where I was using a government vehicle and got stuck on the muddy road. I could not get any help from the surrounding community members to free the trapped vehicle. Driving a government vehicle (identifiable by its number plate), I had automatically been identified as a government worker. Feeling left out of the development process by the government, the community members did not feel obliged to help me with the vehicle. It took extensive negotiations to convince them to do so. This situation is only one example of how state representatives and state institutions do not necessarily have power over people's decisions. This particular issue is further highlighted in the coming chapters. Overall, there is little respect for a government system that is experienced as totally dysfunctional. I believe that the most important factor leading to my acceptance in the community was related to the hope that with my help some, issues of concern could be brought to the attention of responsible authorities. I could fulfil a function within their aspirations.

Being a 'mother', a woman, a white person, a researcher, a person associating with representatives of the formal justice system, with victims and with perpetrators of violence, put me in different positions leading to different ways of relating to my subjects. Different positions revealed different knowledges, each contributing to a partial knowledge of researched issues. As Haraway (1991) and Strathern (1991) argue, positioned selves are accountable selves; partial knowledge "promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions, i.e. of views from somewhere" (Haraway, 1991: 196). The above 'positions' are at the same time a reflection from the constructed self as analysed from a Western referential

framework. These different perceived positions do not necessarily correlate with the way my research subjects may view, experience or understand those different 'categories'. Hence, the lived experience of lived interactions and exchanges has to be part of the way one objectifies about one's 'combinatoire'.

Communication

Communication is related to the capacity to give meaning to signs and symbols within a particular context. Consequently, the capacity to capture the meanings will establish the possibility of an engagement where exchange of thought can take place. It is also the only way to capture the active participation of the subjects and initiate the process of 'thinking through the other'. This process is important, since meanings of words are contextualised by the relative positioning of the communicator and the listener who are using arbitrary signs to represent the world (Derrida, 1976). I recall an incident where I was listening to a story told by a woman who had come to visit Kathy, Patrick's second wife, which shows the possible confusion surrounding language. Even though the storyteller used no words unknown to me in *Tokpisin*, the lingua franca, I was unable to make sense of the story she was sharing with Kathy and myself. As soon as she left I asked Kathy if she could clarify the story. To my surprise she replied that she also had not fully understood the meaning of the story. Both of us had a sound knowledge of the language used and still we had not managed to make sense of the story. I discern two issues at work here. Tokpisin is a lingua franca that has developed as the major language in urban areas of PNG, areas which are inhabited by people from different ethnic and language groups. This adopted language cannot always capture the translation of concepts that are contextualised in a particular cultural environment and which are often voiced idiomatically. The storyteller, a woman from a different ethnic group than Kathy, might have contributed to the confusion about the story. On the other hand, confusion might have occurred in the mind of the storyteller at the time of translation, as there is an extended use of *tok bokis* [Tokpisin: metaphors] in Melanesian languages and lingua francas. This incident was a reminder of the importance of understanding the cultural and personal situatedness of the communicator. Further, Kathy had shown no interest in making an attempt to understand the story by asking her friend to repeat it. This highlighted, then, the fact that our knowledge is bound not only by understanding but also by the interest of our informants. Therefore, that part of my knowledge achieved through verbal communication is restricted partly by my own points

of interest but also by the points of interest of my subjects and their desire or lack of desire to engage with me.

Over time, the ethnographic research process suggested different understandings and had made me a different 'other' in the eyes of my subjects. I was still another, but this time was included within their operational world of obligations and reciprocity. There was no differential treatment *between* family members and me. A flexible balance had been found around the difference, allowing for constructive interactions. The balance in terms of the ethical issue is that everyone involved felt they had been given the choice whether or not to participate in the project. Their voices and silences were taken for what they were. In contrast with Spivak (1990) and Visweswaran (1994), I did not make any interpretations of the silences. Silences were produced by both genders. I did not see them as signs of inarticulateness or powerlessness but rather as resulting from a cultural attitude towards certain raised issues such as, for example, violence including sexual violence. I took them to be a choice for no voice. Further, the silence of a few subjects does not necessarily reflect a state of mind of that particular gender. Homogenisation should be avoided at all times; otherwise, as Spivak (1990: 63) has pointed out, we construct the other simply as an object of knowledge. Nevertheless, I bore in mind the possibility of discovering veiled genres and muted 'words' as possible signposts for a differentiation between both genders' voices. As Gal (1991: 178) points out "the interactional practices of communication could reveal a possible power construction embedded in the broader political and economic context of the community". Here Gal draws our attention to the fact that the way people communicate with each other is not 'natural', but flows from a specific construction of power between genders. Despite the importance of her statement, I do not want to assume difference to be automatically based on power. Communication between genders is more likely constructed along culturally appropriate lines. The values attached to the possible different styles of communication cannot be captured within our Eurocentric framework. The application of values can be done only within that particular cultural context. Power issues, for that matter, might be assessed on totally different terms from what we in the West are used to.

Attempts were made, however, to break silences. To instigate an exchange of information I would prompt people into asking me questions. Sharing my personal experience on the issues often led to a flow of information from my subjects. This

process is obviously not in line with the suggestions made by Wolfe who, in his work with Aborigines, enjoined all non-Aborigines to "speak [only] when you're spoken to" (Wolfe, 1992:338 in Hollinsworth,1995: 91). According to Wolfe, this 'epistemological no-go zone' is essential, "since without it the space where the other might speak will always be already filled" (ibid.). What one wants to avoid here is to control the way the exchange of information goes. There has to be space where assumptions can be challenged and where appropriate cultural understandings can be unveiled. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to assume that there is space which has not yet been permeated by a degree of Eurocentricity, especially when working in postcolonial environments. Questions, however, did abound. People wanted to satisfy their curiosity on many different levels. The same rule applied to my questions, which entailed an unconditional choice to answer or not. The nature of their questions would give me insights into what they thought was interesting or reveal some of their conceptions of my world and thereby accentuate something that I might have overlooked. The same process was initiated during the reporting of violent events which I had not witnessed personally. The way I found out about such incidents and the way they were then retold, gave me another perspective on the way violent incidents were experienced and evaluated.

During my fieldwork in the settlement, I sensed an urge amongst my subjects to share their experiences and knowledge with me (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). In an environment characterised by a level of isolation and misrepresentation as will be highlighted in Chapter 3, this should not come as a surprise. People in the settlement wanted their stories to be heard for many different reasons. In one particular situation I was allowed to record the conversations I had with one informant on the condition that he would be given a copy of the tapes. His plan was eventually to convert this information into a book. It was his chance to establish his position of worth for future generations. Others thought I might be able to bring to the outside world their concerns about current political and social development in the country in the hope of instigating changes in the way the country was governed. In most instances though, I had become another member of the community with whom thoughts of pleasure and pain were shared.

Diaries, as mentioned earlier, were introduced as a non-intrusive form of communication. This might be the closest one can come to Wolfe's suggestion of creating an epistemological no-go zone. The information shared in the diaries was created away

from my presence and my questions. Nevertheless, I am sure I must have influenced the contents since I was to be the recipient of this information in my subjects' minds.

To avoid the explicit image of the intrusive researcher, I made it a habit not to take notes during any unplanned storytelling time. Issues of interest to me would emerge not as a departure point of conversation, but often in the process of exchanging ideas. Bringing out the notebook or tape recorder would have disrupted the evolution of the story. Notes were made when the session ended, with the intention of filling out the full story subsequently. The situation was different when certain people were approached for an interview. Note taking was then part of the setting, together with the overall explanation as to how the information would be used.

It is clear that different forms of retrieving information will lead to different vantage points and vice versa. The whole process of developing different ways of communicating is attached to a conscious process of finding out ways to challenge my boundaries and at the same time, retrieve valuable thoughts of my subjects, understood and experienced as much as possible in their cultural and social construction.

Relationships

I never ceased to be amazed that the people I lived with allowed me daily to look into their lives and ask questions. Their openness and willingness to share with me was incredible. I remember, on the other hand, that visits into my space by my subjects left me feeling invaded and lacking total privacy. But, there had to be reciprocity, so this privacy that means so much to us in the West had to go, and it was hard to let go. I had no choice in this if I wanted to engage in the reciprocity that determines every relationship in PNG. It all became part of the experience. If one accepts Foucault's notion of power as constituted by knowledge, then it is clear that power was not the prerogative of just one party in this relationship, between the subjects I interacted with and me. As much as I used their knowledge, at the same time I was also expected to put my knowledge to their use. There was somehow a positive exploitation by all parties involved.

Burbank (1994: 12-13) challenges Stacey's comments related to the issue of using one's subject. Stacey (1988: 23) pointed to the exploitative aspect of ethnography, giving the

example of her grieving over the death of a key informant to whom she had related as a friend. In that situation, Stacey became aware that "the funeral and family grieving process [would] serve as further research opportunity" (ibid.:12). However, as Burbank (1994: 12) points out, the matter is not just unique to fieldworkers but is part of every human relation. Is not every relationship marked by a certain expectation? The encounter is part of a life experience that in this case can have multiple outcomes. It is the combinatoire at work. This particular incident can be used to understand other people's grieving in future incidents, providing the capacity for more appropriate support; at the same time, it can be incorporated into the analysis of the research project. The fact that the incident is thus incorporated and analysed is part of the understanding and acceptance of one's fieldwork by the subjects. Burbank (1994) suggests that the payment of research subjects can somehow alleviate that issue of 'use' by the researcher. However, there is a need to re-evaluate the issues of both use and payment. Relationships are central in the ethnographic experience. In this context, it is important to establish that the presence of the researcher can also be used by the subjects. I emphasise this point not in a derogatory manner but rather to establish the fact that subjects have agency and often use the researcher's lack of particular knowledge to engage them in a situation of obligation that plays to their own advantage, as the following example shows.

I had organised to provide fortnightly payment to Kathy, my main informant during the period of research for the thesis. Kathy had worked with me on previous research projects and had been happy with that arrangement. These previous projects had been within a definite time and subject framework. This time things were different. I was now spending extended periods with her, working around a particular issue and wanting to stay for a long time in her house. To my surprise, she refused to be engaged in a financial relationship. She expressed her desire for me to contribute as a family member. I was asked to buy a bag of rice every fortnight and when issues arose in regard to bride-price or funerals, I was to contribute my share. Before realising it, I had been pulled into a situation of reciprocity that was part of that community's way of being in control. Opting out would have put me in an awkward position and would have probably made my research project much more difficult. This situation extended itself to other contacts who insisted on not being paid for their support. I was in a position of having access to money, which is seen as powerful within a capitalist mode of functioning, but this power was soon taken away. My access to contacts was now to take place on their terms.

Thus, I had lost any control of relationship of, 'I provide the money if you provide me the goods'. What might have made me different and powerful had been removed. In this regard, I have to disagree with Burbank's statement suggesting that there is no exploitation of subjects if payments are made to them (1994:12). Engagement on a monetary basis often incites an obligation, especially in a situation where there are limited opportunities to acquire needed funds, and establishes the meaning of 'used' and 'not used' within our cultural framework. Nevertheless, whichever way one looks at the issue there is no control over the value of the shared content. In the end, it is the quality of the relationship that will reflect upon the quality of the information.

Too often within an ethnographic encounter, power has been seen as an issue playing to the researcher's advantage. The subjects of research are perceived to be placed in a situation of exploitation. The researcher becomes the person who sets out to use the subjects in an attempt to increase his/her knowledge (Stacey, 1988; Burbank, 1994). This viewpoint also assumes that the inequality established during colonisation and transposed into the post-colonial situation, is extended into the research situation. As Burbank (1994: 13) clearly states:

> "There is no doubt that a legacy of colonialism and continuing relations of inequality characterise many of the communities in which we do fieldwork. But do these inequalities of prior experience translate into unequal relationships in the field? Are ethnographic subjects really without power?"

Resistance and power of the subject have always been minimised even in historical accounts dealing with colonisation. Stories of resistance abound in PNG, and if need be this resistance also extends towards a researcher and his or her project. There is nothing that can force the participation of people within a research project. All subjects have knowledge and agency. I can only support Scheper-Hughes' (1992:25) statement "anthropological knowledge may be seen as something produced in human interaction, not merely 'extracted' from naive informants who are unaware of the hidden agendas coming from the outsider". For that matter, researchers are very much aware of the importance to the researcher of access to informants and information. Without that access there would be no gain and no status for the researcher. If dissatisfied with the researcher, subjects can decide to disengage from the project. At that stage, there would be no point for the researcher to remain in the community.

For example, after an unfortunate incident where an exhausted photographer had shown irritability and impatience towards possible accompanying passengers in her car, she was warned that further access to their community would be stopped if she did not refrain from a patronising attitude. As my key informant said, "we know of her kind of people ... we don't need them here". A reconciliation meeting had to be arranged before she could resume her activities in the community.

Of course, this is not to deny that one should not be aware of possible power imbalances. The ethnographic enterprise in the past has been known to be part and partial of the colonial enterprise. However, in this context insufficient recognition is given to the resistance and agency of the targeted population. During my research it became obvious that participating subjects can create power imbalances as much as the researcher. Also, possible gains attached to the power of the researcher can be identified and used to the subjects' advantage. My understanding of the functioning of funding agencies (government and non-government) and my ability to assist filling in application forms, turned me into a 'community secretary' (cf. Clerk of the Records (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 26)). I was also considered a credible witness in court cases and was therefore asked several times to attend them. But, as detailed later, the issue becomes more problematic when one transfers from the fieldwork situation to the field of writing. In the latter context, I am the sole decision-maker as to what and how events are transferred onto paper.

Representation

One's major task as a researcher is the responsible translation of one's fieldwork and experiences into a text. In the light of feminist, anthropological and post-colonial epistemologies, it is important to acknowledge one's partiality. In the writing process, this translates into the importance of the researcher making his/her presence explicit in the scholarly texts (Hastrup, 1985: 315; Narayan, 1997: 35).

Besides the concern about how we are to place ourselves in our writings, there is a significant debate surrounding the issue of how we can give voice to our subjects without taking on the role of speaking for them (e.g., Foucault, 1977; Moore, 1988; Spivak, 1988; Trinh, 1989; Bhabha, 1990; hooks, 1991; Pettman, 1992; Ram, 1993; Yeatman, 1993;

Robinson, 1994; Narayan, 1997; Said, 1997). Henriette Moore (1988) throws light on a possible different way of writing by pointing out the experiments undertaken by the radical movement within anthropology:

> "The current radicalism in anthropology experiments with forms of ethnographic writing in order to try to find some way of letting the people who are being studied speak for themselves. The aim is to produce an ethnography which would be based on the multiple authorship of anthropological texts, and which would represent both the interlocutory process of fieldwork, and the collaboration between anthropologist and informant of which the practice of social anthropology depends." (ibid.: 193)

Authors criticising this approach draw attention to the factual inequality in contribution and analysis of the writing (e.g., Pettman, 1992). It is suggested that the author in such case, uses the informant/co-writer as a token instead of as a real contributor. Spivak points out "tokenisation goes with ghettoisation" (1999: 61). She suggests that the only way of writing representatively is to be aware continuously of the problems associated with that particular endeavour. She asserts that "there has to be a persistent critique of what one is up to, so that it doesn't get all bogged down in this homogenisation; constructing the Other simply as an object of knowledge" (ibid.: 63).

Considering the nature of academic writing and bearing in mind the difficulties associated with representation, I believe that Narayan (1997) might present us with the most feasible way of presenting our field experiences. Narayan attracts our attention to the development of two poles of anthropological writing: "at one end stand accessible ethnographies laden with stories, and at the other end stand refereed journal articles, dense with theoretical analyses" (1997: 23). She argues for an anthropological writing in which each can seep into the other. She calls it the *enactment of hybridity*, emphasising that the *specificity* of experience is not opposed to theory; it *enacts* and *embodies* theory (ibid.) In this context, Narayan advocates the use of a narrative voice that she claims, "involves an ethical stance that neither effaces ourselves as hybrid (cf. Combinatoires) nor defaces the vivid humanity of the people with whom we work" (ibid.: 36). The 'double vision' created by integrating narratives and social analysis reinforces the multifaceted character of positioning and representation. The use of narratives should at the same

time, help the translation of professional jargon into 'the language of everyday life' (cf. Narayan, 1997:36; Abu-Lughod, 1990:151), making the acquired knowledge more accessible to a wider and increasingly multinational public.

In this context, narratives take on a double role, as they are "not transparent representations of what actually happened, but are told for particular purposes, from particular points of view: they are thus incipiently analytical, enacting theory" (Narayan, 1997: 36). The text becomes an extension of our own situated selves - as individuals with a particular life-experience and motivated by specific professional concerns (ibid.: 37). In this context, we recognise that subjectivity and situatedness characterise all research. However, it is important to emphasise that the production of text does not emanate from one's imagination but from one's interpretation of an experienced reality created around social interactions with one's subjects.

Meanwhile, the translation of a lived reality into text can also be problematic. Distortions are inevitable at the time of mediating text and event (Nordstrom and Robben, 1995). This distortion should not be viewed as an intentional act of misrepresenting the reality but follows from the very nature of translating the lived reality into text. On the one hand, the nature of research already necessitates a focusing on a particular issue, which often leads, as will be expanded upon later on, to the exaggeration of the matter. On the other hand, 'fixing down' in texts very dynamic realities such as violence often leads to the loss of their particularity (ibid.:12). Furthermore, bearing in mind the previous example of the storyteller, another restriction is set by the need to recognise the limits of understanding the meaning exchanged through communication that eventually will have to be translated into text. For those of us who conduct research in a neo-colonial nation, Fanon adds another dimension to this issue by drawing our attention to the fact that meanings are distorted as they are veiled by a colonial discourse (Fanon, 1967: 134). As will be pointed out in the coming chapters, this particular awareness will be shown to be crucial in making it possible to unveil the meanings associated to the life-world of people living in the settlement. Thus, text, aiming to reproduce a lived reality within a comprehensive framework, mediates continuously between theory and practice (Eriksen, 1995: 10, 18).

The researcher/writer and also a reader/audience are involved in the production of knowledge. Meanings are therefore, also produced through the interaction of reader and text. Texts, as such, are created within a particular social context using the language of

the time and embedded in specific meanings and sensibilities. Over time, language, meanings and sensibilities can change implying that the reading of a scholarly text at a later time, might not take place within the same context in which it was created. Hence, the meaning of a text may change (Van Maanen, 1995:71; Layton, 1997:201). Having said this, one should never overlook the fact that texts are also a critical reproduction of a social reality that existed at a particular time. Scholarly texts do not just emanate from the researcher's imagination. They are linked with real facts that cannot be loosely interpreted. The correct interpretation can therefore happen when the reader/audience makes it its task to acknowledge the historicity of the text as much as his/her/its own positioning in the process of reading or listening.

As hinted to earlier on, in writing the representation of the 'other' often results in the exaggeration of difference. Some researchers even suggest, "a 'culture' can materialise only in counter-distinction to another culture" (Boon cited in Hastrup, 1985:314). Through my own methodological development, I have come to realise "that not everything can be dissolved into the vapor of absolute cultural difference and radical otherness. There are ways, for example, in which we are not so indefinable 'other' to one another" (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 29). This insight is the outcome of an understanding of my own position and the ensuing decision to consider an alternative analytical framework in order to understand people in their own life-world.

Conclusion

In writing and reading we must constantly be aware that "The *world* is out there, to be sure, and deep within us too, *but not the truth*" (Richard Rorty, 1986: 3, cited in Nordstrom & Robben, 1995: 13). The important thing is that we are concerned with the production of meaning, that distinctly human capacity complementing the material production and the social reproduction and elevating both to the realm of culture.

Despite all the constraints attached to researching and writing about a different culture, the reality is that our own Eurocentricity might never been broken through if it were not for the ethnographic enterprise. Anthropological writing did not precede the colonial enterprise but was a contingency of colonialism. A revisiting of the anthropological enterprise can only deconstruct the 'mis'-writing of these colonial histories. Therefore, abstinence would perpetuate the misconstructions and misunderstandings of a different

world. Furthermore, as Scheper-Hughes (1992: 26) rightly puts it, "Western imperialism has extracted from the bodies and the communities of the peoples that anthropologists study". In this context anthropological writing can be a site of resistance and become, as suggested by Taussig (1989), "writing against terror" (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 25). However, in the revisiting, space and voice needs to be given to those who were misrepresented or silenced. At the same time, we have to recognise the fact that indigenous people have been producing knowledge of their own culture and of cultures different from theirs. Wolfe's (1992, cited in Hollinsworth, 1995: 95) statement makes this clear: "Those Aboriginal people who choose to engage in academic production and political discourse are quite capable of demanding space and venues regardless of the actions of the reluctant invaders". Some of these Aboriginal intellectuals will want to engage in fields far distant from "Aboriginal people and things" (Langton, 1993, cited in Hollinsworth, 1995:95). Could such work be condemned as inauthentic on the basis of the identity of their authors? Would their efforts be questioned as abandoning the struggle? (ibid.: 95)

Despite the challenges to conducting ethnographic studies in a culture different from one's own, it has not seemed to diminish the undertaking of it. For me, the ethnographic undertaking was the outcome of a long interaction with members of a community who allowed me into their world to show me their lives, tell me their stories and to engage me in a way that might help them and me. The engagement brought us into positions of dialogue and sometimes into conflicts and disagreements, "challenging them just as they challenge me on my definitions of the reality in which I live" (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 25). As a consequence, my presence, turned into engagement, did not turn into a hostile gaze[14]. Through this engagement boundaries could now be moved, creating space for a different understanding for my questions and concerns. The choice of my questions and concerns, despite being situated in my own historicity and understanding of being in the world, resulted from a long-term engagement with the people I have lived and worked with over the last 14 years. They could therefore be considered as partly their questions and their concerns. Within this new 'synthesis', the space between them and myself created on *their ground,* I intend, in line with Burbanks' undertaking (1994), to capture parts of Papua New Guinean culture and experience that both address my questions and

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[14] There is no denying that a gaze exists. However, integration in the community diffused 'difference' to a certain extent. Nevertheless, there could never be a denial of difference from me to them and vice versa. It is this difference that somehow maintains the gaze, but that gaze does not need to be experienced as hostile.

concerns and at the same time open up the complexity of the society in which the people of Morata settlement live.

These insights, gained from fieldwork, are reconnected with the state-based discourse as a way of capturing the tensions created through the acceptance, rejection or creation of certain meanings/concepts generated by both frameworks or at the crossroad of different 'takes' on life.

CHAPTER TWO

Picture 2

Chapter Two
LAW-AND-ORDER

Introduction

"Law-and-order" in PNG has been a major topic of debate for more than two decades. This debate has occurred at the international, national and provincial levels and has been translated into continuous statements of urgency within the national and sometimes international media. The ongoing interest in the debate has led to multiple academic and non-academic publications, with some related to policy and legislative recommendations. As such, I will not attempt to give an in-depth overview of the history of law-and-order. Rather the purpose of this chapter is to establish the existence and character of the law-and-order discourse in PNG, a discourse that dominates the perception of sexual violence. I will, therefore, revisit this debate in order to trace its history over the last 20 years as a state-based discourse fed by Western sensibilities and mostly carried by Western and PNG-based bureaucracies, government and non-government agencies and last but not least, international donor agencies. This state-based discourse carries a lot of weight as it is seen as part of the civilisation process. The presentation of the law-and-order debate within the state-based discourse will be referred to as the macroscopic perspective. 'Macro' does not refer to the importance of this perspective but to the fact that it is projected by both national and international commentators, but also by my research subjects[15], as the most desirable and therefore in need of being carried by the state and its representatives. At the same time, it is also the one more indebted to Western sensibilities and with a stronger following in circles outside PNG. It is within this particular discourse that sexual violence has attained a position of priority and urgency.

In the 'reading' of this thesis it is important to note that references made in relation to the state-based discourse mostly reflect the views strongly held by my research participants. One should not confuse the state-based discourse, however, with the local discourse. The state-based discourse presented here is still a discourse regarded as different from

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[15] My research subjects in Morata referred to the state-based discourse as the one carrying the 'proper' values. It was a perception they easily conveyed in discussions but which they did not necessarily adhere. This process is not much different than the one portrayed by state representatives who often propagate Western-based values but do not apply them. Attempts to pass legislation criminalising rape within marriage have still not been successful and the same goes for the issue of polygamy.

the local discourse even though references to it are formulated by my research subjects living in the settlement. Hence, the state-based discourse seen through the eyes of my research subjects does not necessarily coincide with the 'real' state-based discourse, possibly overlooking the complexities of PNG social reality. For example, many politicians pay lip service to the state-based discourse without being concerned about its application. Voices have been heard within the ranks of state representatives challenging the adherence to Western based values and asking for a promotion of the 'Melanesian' way. The same goes for what stands for the 'West'. The category 'West' is characterised by internal heterogeneity for instance in the West, within certain circles crime has a positive value. However, the research subjects living in Morata are not recognising this part of the 'West'. Hence, the state-based discourse in the eye of people living in Morata does presents itself in a more monolithic form contrasting 'civilisation' against 'kanaka' [Tokpisin: uncivilised], the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. At the same time though, as it will become clear in the next chapter, people do not dissociate themselves from the world outside the settlement[16].

The lived reality of the law-and-order issues, taking incidents of sexual violence as a point of departure, is presented in the following chapters, through the analysis of incidents in the settlement. I refer to this lived reality as the microscopic perspective. This microscopic perspective is less indebted to Western ideas and has been overlooked in many ways and for different reasons, which will be highlighted in the following chapters.

The development of a micro and macro perspective is, as will be shown in this chapter, supported by a critical examination of the historical presentation of violent incidents and the emphasis on researching particular social and cultural issues for example, in relation to sexual violence. These concerns raised within the state-based discourse, were not necessarily informed by the sociality of the indigenous communities but by an ongoing desire to secure a civilising process which facilitates economic development. It was a process advantageous first to the colonisers and later to a governing body indebted to international monetary institutions and their perception of governance fed by Western sensibilities. The persistent focusing on issues seen as problematic in Western society,

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[16] Every day people from the settlement stream out to mingle with the inhabitants of the wider urban environment. They do not isolate themselves from the urban elite nor do they hesitate to approach members of the so-called middle class or elite in PNG. Nevertheless, the settlement people are acutely aware of the disparity in wealth and available opportunities and therefore encroach in a quite unproblematic way on the wealth of other family, clan or tribal members. This particular phenomenon is referred to as wantok system (Monsell-Davis, 1993) and applies at all level of society.

such as for example domestic and sexual violence, reflects the inability to evaluate PNG society in its own cultural and social terms. However, to give credit to anthropological and social researchers, whilst the interest of researching a specific phenomenon might have been influenced by concerns raised within a Western framework of thought, attempts were made to consider the cultural and social context of PNG's vast differentiation. The use of terms associated with the specific problems defined within a Western framework may have limited the scope of the understanding of issues such as violence, including domestic and sexual violence. Furthermore, the awareness of the limitation of Western analytical frameworks did not come at once (Guiart, 1993). Hence, certain misconstrued perceptions and explanations may have already entered the world of discourses.

At the beginning of this study, it was anticipated that major differences would occur in the meaning and the experience of incidents of sexual violence, depending on the viewpoint taken. This hypothesis was made on the premises that, on the one hand, the construction and associated meanings of issues regarding law-and-order are very much influenced by an introduced notion of these issues which has resulted from a process of colonisation and has been further maintained in the post-colonial era by a Western construction of development. On the other hand, it was assumed that the microscopic view of issues related to law-and-order would be more closely associated with local perceptions of wrongdoing, which are less indebted to Western ideas and moral values. Scrutiny of the relativity of the concepts and meanings used within the law-and-order debate should allow engagement with a more rigorous assessment of the issue. Despite this explicit division for the purpose of the development of the hypothesis, there is no denying the fact that the understanding and experiencing of law-and-order issues, as set out in the macroscopic perspective and expressed within the state-based discourse, has infiltrated the microscopic level and vice versa. It is my intention to focus on the tension inherent in the local cultural construction to achieve an understanding of sexual violence. Following this line of thinking, I used earlier the term "non-Western" rather than "traditional" construction, to emphasise the possible reconstruction of tradition resulting from the tension in the local cultural construction[17].

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[17] It is an issue that has been raised by other academics (e.g., Sahlins, 1999 and Knauft, 1991:91). Culture is an evolving entity thereby making it more difficult to talk about tradition with tradition being viewed as a more static entity. In addition, settlements such as Morata are characterised by a multi-ethnic population. Those different groups may have carried over some of their traditions within their new urban environment. I will further elaborate on this issue in Chapter 2.

Although this thesis is concerned with the discourse exposed within the settlement of Morata, the broader framework of PNG society will be introduced as the context. As mentioned earlier, discourses affect the way people value and engage with particular issues, including incidents of sexual violence. In Morata, an urban settlement, it will become clear how the interaction of different discourses can re-emphasise or for that matter, reject particular values and understandings related to sexual violence. Incidents of sexual violence taking place or discussed in Morata cannot be understood solely within the local context, because the historical, social and political development of the place has taken place within a broader framework, which has resonance in the state-based discourse.

Overall debate from the macroscopic perspective

It is important first to investigate the development of the overall law-and-order debate, as it will highlight several issues, which will facilitate a better understanding of the way sexual violence has reached its current position within the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order situation. Furthermore, this process will reinforce my position that sexual violence must be viewed within the broader framework of social and cultural development of the society, in which law-and-order has taken a primary position in the state-based discourse of PNG. By following the chronological order of the law-and-order debate, one can discern a concern with certain patterns of behaviour which, according to Western norms, are unacceptable and which are disclosed as disturbing the development of the nation state. This development of problematics has evolved despite the recognition, at certain times that particular behavioural patterns considered as problematic are not necessarily conceived along those lines by the indigenous population (e.g. justifications for tribal warfare and certain incidents of sexual violence). A chronological development is presented in four stages, highlighting the evolution of issues of rape and warfare, initially seen as part of traditional folklore, to a final situation dealing with a multitude of issues leading to apparent total chaos fed by a perception of a society submerged in violence.

Rape and Warfare – traditional folklore

Papua New Guinea, as it is now known, gained independence from Australia in 1975. Previously the geographical area in question was divided into German New Guinea in the North and British New Guinea in the South. The British protectorate of Papua became an Australian territory in 1906. Papua and New Guinea continued to be administered separately until after the outbreak of the Pacific War. The pacification and civilisation of these parts did not go without resistance. Indigenous acts of violence as reported by German government officials were then viewed "from the political rather than the legal point of view", as "acts of war" rather than as "criminal offences" (Sack, 1973: 112). Where co-operation was given, it was viewed as a way of securing powerful alliances in the fight against traditional enemies or as a means for developing trade opportunities and acquiring new forms of wealth (Reed, 1943). During that time the "armed constabulary was not formed for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime but rather took on a major role as an instrument of native administration" (Downs, 1947:29). From 1942, the Australian military administration jointly administered areas not under the control of the Japanese. In 1949, the United Nations formally agreed to a joint administration. The two separate territories were brought under a single administration after World War II and called the territory of PNG. Less than 30 years later, the territory became the independent nation of PNG.

Anthropological studies dating from the early colonial days did not directly address law-and-order as an issue in itself; rather they were concerned with the internal functioning of each society in its own terms and with identifying mechanisms for restoring peace. References to disturbances such as tribal warfare and violence within research communities appeared in conjunction with the wider study of social organisation, political structure (Read, 1959) and other social institutions like cargo cults (Lawrence, 1964). Furthermore, many anthropologists examined tribal warfare as an institution along with systems of dispute settlement (Williams, 1930; Pospisil, 1958; Berndt, 1962). At the same time, Berndt made a clear reference to the relatively common use of sexual violence or collective copulation as a way of punishment, stating that these acts had become increasingly the concern of the informal court (Berndt, 1962: 163).

Even though issues of rape and tribal warfare were raised at this point in history, their resonance as a criminal matter within an analytical framework fed by Western legal and

moral values, to which I will be referring to throughout this thesis as the euro centric framework, is non-existent. They were raised as issues related to a society which needed to develop to a more civilised state, but which at that time did not seem in a position to challenge the colonial forces with its own moral values or ways of thinking. Nevertheless, a few issues gave indications of particular moral concerns. It was during the early 1960s, after alcohol prohibition was lifted for PNG nationals, that the first records occurred of disorderly behaviour and crime related to alcohol consumption (e.g. Marshall, 1981; Ogan, 1982). In 1926 the white women's Protection Ordinance was passed. This happened despite the fact that sexual advances by Papuan men towards white women had been few and no white woman had been raped in Papua. On the other hand, many cases of Papuan men attacking Papuan women or girls did come before the central court (Inglis, 1974). It was also in the 1950s and 1960s that urbanisation set in, leading to urban migration, the development of settlements and dependency on a wage and cash economy. It is against this background that the phenomenon of *raskols* arose (Harris, 1988; Nibbrig, 1992; Browning and Borrey, 1995). *Raskols* at this stage were seen only as gangs of youths who engaged in small property crime without the use of violence (Clifford, 1976: 3).

Despite the rising concern about particular behaviours, the situation did not give rise to major concerns, as the behaviours did not threaten the legitimacy of the newly formed state. These incidents were seen as part of a different culture that was still adapting to new ways; they were not perceived as blatantly challenging the authority of the state.

State interference as a way of justifying its existence

Just prior to Independence, the then Chief Minister of PNG, Mr. Michael Somare, made a request to the Australian Attorney General, seeking an evaluation of the efforts to prevent and control crime. Mr. Somare described a "serious and mounting concern ... particularly in the urban areas of the apparent lack of a co-ordinated government plan to deal with the control and prevention of crime" (Clifford cited in Biles, 1976: 4). It is at this point that reference was made to a "public outcry" in relation to the breakdown of law-and-order in PNG. Despite the fact that according to Clifford (ibid.: 10), "for all its crime then, Port Moresby does not have the problems of many other cities, even in countries at similar levels of economic and social development", there was "a sense of anxiety and insecurity engendered by the state of crime and the inadequacy of the measures to deal

with it..." (ibid.: 11). The visit of the Australian Attorney General led to a brief study based on consultations with government institutions and interested parties, culminating in a list of perceived causes and recommendations for action. Irrelevant education, poverty, breakdown in and abuse of traditional values, excessive alcohol consumption, increased gang activities, distasteful literature and films and inefficient policing were some of the issues cited as causes of crime (Biles, 1976). Improving the existing criminal justice system, reviewing laws and procedures to bring them in line with local traditions and expectations and introducing a curfew were some of the recommendations made (ibid.). The findings formed the broad basis for the "Report of the Ministerial Committee on Law-and-order". This was the first of many such committees, which continue to be constituted until the present time. Through the outcry, the State had managed, with the help of the Australian government, to strengthen its grip on the businesses and behaviour of its citizens.

This process was further exacerbated by branding a particular group within society, the *raskols*, as the culprits who needed to be dealt with swiftly. Harris (1988), through his research on gangs and the emerging sub-culture known as "*raskolism*" in Port Moresby, succeeded in bringing *raskols* further to the forefront of public attention. There was much apprehension over this emerging trend in urban lawlessness, which appeared to be expanding into new situations and threatening to get out of hand[18]. Harris' (ibid.) work consolidated the idea of *raskolism* as being part of the development of urban sites. His analysis showed extensive similarities with Western-based work on gang formation in metropolitan areas. In this particular context, urban settlements become dissociated from rural settings in terms of disconnecting them from notions of wrongdoing and existing social control mechanisms, which do not necessarily emanate from Western legal and moral values. The culmination of the State's urge to exert control over the urban centres, particularly in Port Moresby, led to the imposition in 1985 of an overnight curfew for Port Moresby. A series of pack-rapes resulting in death and several violent armed robberies that received wide and detailed coverage in the media prompted the curfew. Bars on windows and barbed wire fences around homes became commonplace and security guards and guard dogs were commonly employed to watch over apartment buildings and

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[18] Harris' (1988) work does elaborate on the network existing between politicians, prominent community members and the *raskols*. Nevertheless, it is the focus on *raskols* that has dominated the state-based discourse as perceived by the settlement population and as reacted upon by the formal law enforcement agencies. The focus on *raskols* as the main culprits keeps permeating current publications on law-and-order (Hukula, 1999; Sikani, 2000).

business houses (Schiltz, 1985:141). Despite the focus on Port Moresby, other urban centres were also dealing with pack-rapes in their localities. Within the state-based discourse, gang rapes were discussed under the label of pack-rapes. This use of the term "pack" reveals a connection with the animal world, where herds of wolves are referred to as a pack (cf. Schiltz, 1985). The bestial character of this reference fits into the state-based discourse whereby only the State can take control in order to achieve a civil society. It justifies the request by the State for further financial and logistic support for its law enforcement agencies.

Further interference by the State in the 1970s arose in relation to incidents of alcohol-related crime and tribal warfare, leading to the establishment of two committees. The Committee of Inquiry into alcoholic drinking produced a report which confirmed the rising levels of alcohol-related crimes (Territory of Papua and New Guinea, Commission of Inquiry 1972). In 1973 a committee investigating tribal fighting in the Highlands confirmed the increased rate of fights and also pointed to the fact that contending sides were now attacking authorities. This committee produced a report containing recommendations which resulted in the creation of the Inter-Group Fighting Act (Paney, 1973). The effect of this Act was to reverse the burden of proof. The act had limited application because it contradicted the constitution and the basis of the common law which PNG had adopted. The committee also recommended the recognition of sorcery as a real concern of the people. It also contained a proposal to provide for group penalties for fighting or its consequences (Clifford, 1976). Nevertheless, after the apparent emasculation of the Inter-Group Fighting Act, tribal fights increased in the Highlands.

At this stage, it became clear that the attempts of the State to regulate the activities of its citizens encountered serious resistance. The legitimisation of the State would be further challenged by increased tension between ethnic groups in PNG. These tensions, leading to violent incidents, were extended to secessionist threats between Papua and New Guinea (*Post Courier*, 23 July 1973). However, the threats did not impede the move towards Independence. Nevertheless, the different challenges to State intervention were translated into a more extensive bureaucracy, supported and informed by its Western counterparts and further legitimised through legislation and policy development.

The moral enterprise fed by Western sensibilities

More than simply as a justification to establish itself as the only legitimate governing body in the country, the State, through its institutions and representatives, aimed to control particular behaviours that in the realm of Western sensibilities were regarded as unacceptable. Thus, over the years particular matters that might have lain dormant in PNG society were problematised even to the point of criminalising them. On the other hand, it became clear that PNG society had entered the global community of crime with its trade in illegal guns and drugs. Therefore, the State had to deal not only with an expansion of the criminal definition but also with the introduction of new areas of concern. Against this backdrop, State representatives engaged more Western experts to advise them on dealing with law-and-order issues in the country. Two major studies dominated the thinking of the period: the Morgan (1983) and Clifford (1984) reports. The Morgan report reviewed policy and administration relating to crime, law-and-order, while the Clifford report focused on law-and-order in general, producing a comprehensive list of recommendations. In these reports, issues of law-and-order were dealt with as developmental issues and recommendations were made for an integrated approach at policy and legislative levels. At the same time, they also engendered local responsibility for law-and-order.

One of these local responsibilities translated itself into the Law Reform Commission[19] carrying out research on violence against women (Toft, 1985; Toft and Bonnell, 1985). These reports led to the formation of the Women and Law Committee (WLC) in 1986. The WLC embarked on a major public awareness campaign, bringing the issue of domestic violence to national attention. Domestic violence was identified as the most common form of violence against women (Toft, 1985). The most common causes for domestic violence were identified as related to alcohol and money problems, sexual jealousy, dislike of spouse and the woman's failure to fulfill obligations. Obligations in this context refer to predetermined social roles, ranging from having the meal ready when the husband arrives, not raising one's voice, not expressing opinions contrary to those of the husband's and always accepting men's advances for sex (ibid.). According to Toft's

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[19] The Law Reform Commission was established by The Law Reform Commission Act in 1975. In 1982 the then Minister for Justice required the Law Reform Commission to inquire into and report to him on the nature and extent of domestic violence as a social problem, the legal remedies available for complaints of domestic violence, any changes to the law which may be necessary or desirable to achieve the protection of women from domestic violence and the steps which should be taken to bring the problem of domestic violence to the public notice.

(1986a) findings, crimes resulting from domestic conflict were more common in urban areas. She claimed that in the more complex social and economic environment of urban living, the traditional restraints and controls of village life no longer operated. Women lacked the strong support of kin groups and were much more at the mercy of men. Toft further asserted that domestic violence had always been a feature of traditional village life, but incidents of domestic violence were generally less critical than those that now commonly occurred in urban areas. Furthermore, women who had achieved a higher education and who succeeded in developing a professional career often paid a high price for their public success. The increased violence in this context was seen as the result of husbands feeling threatened by the wife's potential economic independence and access to a wider circle of contacts (ibid.). In the coming chapters the contexualisation of incidents of domestic violence, such as the lack of support of kin and the departure from the "traditional" role of women, will be challenged on several levels within the local discourse. Furthermore, one should bear in mind that the use of the term "domestic" violence without a doubt reflects a Western societal construction which is embedded in the notion of a public and private domain, with an emphasis on a nuclear household in which the patriarch rules[20]. As such, the concept might be alien in an environment organised along different gender and interpersonal relationships, societal structures and values. Identifying domestic violence could be seen as the domestication of PNG's society.

It was also during the 1980s that the first mention occurred of violence against children. This concern was clearly informed by that expressed in Western societies. Chao (1985), reporting from the Nine settlement[21] in Port Moresby, suggested that violence against children resulted from a new economic order affecting social and cultural institutions. She referred to the deteriorating living conditions, population pressure and restricted access to education. There was a further suggestion on her part that increasing generational conflicts and confusion created by a lack of proper parental guidance in a rapidly changing society made the future look bleak for the children of PNG (Chao, 1989). Townsend (1985) referred to broken families and re-marriage as contributing to a traumatic childhood. In this context she mentioned stepchildren being often considered secondary, possibly resulting in their missing out on education, sometimes being deprived of adequate nutrition. In addition, urbanisation and greater mobility have led to an increase in the number of mixed marriages. Different customary obligations and

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[20] Anthropologists such as for example Biersack (1984) and Ortner & Whitehead (1981) have highlighted the shortcomings of this approach.

[21] Settlements are often named after the number of miles it takes to get to the centre of the city.

expectations can contribute to disruptive situations for which there are no easy solutions (ibid.). For example, the necessity and amount of bride price payments can differ greatly amongst different tribal groups. In cases of mixed marriages, this situation can indeed create tension when involved parties have different expectations informed by their respective customs. Custom, within this context, is presented as an unnecessary burden. With references being made to family structures, education and new economic order it becomes evident that issues triggering a concern about the well-being of PNG children are cast against a set of Western sensibilities constructed around the notion of a conservative middle-class nuclear family setting[22]. Children have now definitely been set up as a group for which relevant State bodies are urged to take responsibility. In this case, urgency about children has been pointed out by expatriate researchers, noting the shortcomings of the State in preventing the above-mentioned deteriorating conditions. In March 1993, the government became a co-signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was followed by the establishment of an advocacy group in 1994, initiated by an expatriate lecturer at the University *The sentence would be clearer if the name of the University is given in full?*. Dr. Boorer called the group Concern Over Child Abuse (COCA). Its aim was to focus on research, educational programs and counselling. Meanwhile, the Department of Welfare called for a review of the Child Welfare Act[23] and the legal system to allow more effective handling of cases of child abuse (*Post Courier*, 29 December 1999).

Both women and children are now being portrayed as possible "victims" of aggression against which they need to be protected. The law-and-order debate has now extended to issues relating to these two groups in society, accommodating them according to Western notions of womanhood and childhood (*Post Courier*, 13 October 1999)[24]. With women now at the front of the law-and-order debate, incidents of sexual violence have also attracted more attention. *Raskols*, viewed as the main perpetrators, have to be dealt with seriously. At the same time, these *raskols'* urban hideouts, the settlements, have become dangerous places often targeted by major police raids.

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[22] This process was already set in place by missionaries. (Gustafsson, 1999; Ralstone, 1989)

[23] Following the example of Western-based legislation in regard to this issue, the age limit for childhood had now been pushed from 16 to 18 years. Having established that, relevant authorities were also aware of the limitation in implementing this rule, since most people would not possess any form of identity allowing formal identification of their age. This is one of the areas where the conflict between different life worlds reveals itself on a very pragmatic level. A definite age is not necessarily a central issue in the establishment of one's identity or position in PNG society.

[24] http://www.postcourier.com.pg/19991014/news09.htm.

Challenging the State and its law-and-order demons

In 1985, the annual conference on PNG at the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University focused on the law-and-order situation. Rather than looking only at the government institutions formally concerned with law-and-order matters, the speakers were at this time focusing on the changing character of PNG society. Issues were raised relating to the economic environment, the political context, relations between people and the state, social inequality and the international context within which PNG was situated (Morauta, 1986:1).

In reiterating the failures of the State the academic literature points to factors in the declining law-and-order situation, such as uneven development, the growing gap between "haves" and "have nots", the breakdown of traditional measures of control, the growing acceptance of violence at all levels of society and the inability of the state to fulfil rising expectations for all kinds of services (e.g. Morauta, 1987; Chao, 1989; Dinnen, 1992; Standish, 1993). Against this background, I raise a number of related issues such as a) the weak state, b) human rights, c) economic issues and d) corruption.

The Weak State

Whilst there has been a clear attempt by the State to establish itself as the authority in moral values and as the only legitimate user of violence, attempts to increase its control over the individual person and society as a whole has failed to a large extend.

By the mid-1980s law-and-order issues were being viewed within the context of economic decline and with the perception of a State as being weak and incapable of dealing with problems arising at all levels of society (Migdal, 1988; Standish, 1994). Gordon and Meggitt (1985) reported that in Enga it became common for warring groups to attack police and *kiaps* while they were trying to perform their duties or to retaliate against the police afterwards. After the murder of a the policeman, a state of emergency was called in five highlands provinces which lasted for 6 months (Gordon and Meggitt, 1985: 34). The incapacity of the State to establish itself as an entity to be reckoned with became even more prominent with the Bougainville crisis.

The incapacity of the government to negotiate in 1980 a workable agreement between itself, Bougainville landowners and the foreign mining company, led to the close-down of

the copper mine bringing to an end the largest revenue for the country (Regan, 1996). The Bougainville conflict later developed into a civil war marked by atrocities committed by all parties involved and overall economic decline for the country[25]. In 1997, the Bougainville secessionist movement culminated in the Sandline crisis[26], which led to the downfall of the existing government. The crisis resulted from a revolt by a section of the military protesting against the use of Sandline mercenaries to prosecute the Bougainville war (Standish, 1999). Non-government organisations played an important role in the way the conflict was played out (e.g. O'Callaghan, 1999; Standish, 1999). Members of *raskol* gangs often reiterated their support for the rebels who challenged the State in its endeavour to impose its authority and economic priorities.

On a different level, the lack of confidence in the ability of the government to deal with the law-and-order situation has contributed to a boom industry of private security firms. Their operations have not gone without problems as they move to take the law into their own hands. In a horrendous payback killing, four youths were murdered by security guards (*Post Courier*, 4 November 1996). A national curfew was imposed in the wake of these violent incidents. Allegations have been made regarding the involvement of security firms in criminal activities. The security business has been a favourite of the surrendered *raskol* groups (Dinnen, 1994). Attempts were made on the part of the Police Department to have Parliament enact laws to curb the activities of security firms (personal communication with the Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Operations, November 1996).

Human Rights

Attempts to focus on the problems created by *raskols*, often labelled as the main perpetrators of incidents of sexual violence, turned out to be short lived. Amongst members of both the national and international community there was a growing awareness that the law-and-order problem had a lot larger basis than presented so far in the state-based discourse. The excessive use of violence by members of the law enforcement agencies, reinforcing extra judicial practices, contributed to the resentment of both the larger population and the judiciary against these formal institutions (*National*, 8 February 2000; *Post Courier*, 19 January 2000). Non-government organisations started

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[25] For more information see Dorney 1998 and Filer 1999.

[26] The Sandline crisis has been extensively documented by Sean Dorney 1998 and Mary-Louise O'Callaghan 1999.

conducting awareness campaigns amongst the grassroots (ACIL, 1997). As a result, human rights violations have been taken to court successfully, resulting in large compensation payments by the State to the aggrieved parties (*National,* 27 October 1998). Human rights issues have therefore attracted the attention of the authorities if not on humanitarian grounds, definitely on economic grounds (*National,* 26 November 1998). Besides the establishment of a Public Complaint Section within the Police Department, there has been mounting pressure for the establishment of the Human Rights Commission within the Attorney Generals Department. This proposal has not gone without criticism. It was pointed out by a government member that a Human Rights Commission would have to adopt the Melanesian concept. There was, however, no elaboration as to the meaning of that concept (*National,* 19 August 1997). Nevertheless, it was a clear symbolic indication that some people had become weary of Western sensibilities. So far, the proposal for a Human Rights Desk still needs to be gazetted.

Economic Issues

Meanwhile, economic decline, leading to increasing cost of living, allegedly led more women and young girls to engage in prostitution to earn an income (e.g., *National,* 27 January 2000)[27]. Some were actively encouraged or forced by their husband, brother or other family members to become prostitutes (Hammar, 1992; Jenkins, 1996b). Some also partook in the cultivation and sale of marijuana and were known to participate to a certain extent in the activities of *raskol* groups (field notes 1992–1999). In the Highlands region, during the depression in coffee prices, people from all walks of life engaged in the cultivation of marijuana, as it became a more lucrative and less labour-intensive crop to grow.

Where economic development did take place the situation did not seem better in terms of law-and-order. The negative impact to date of large development projects of non-renewable resources on the well-being of the local populace has been amply documented by several social impact studies (cf. Bonnell, 1994; *National,* 15 January 1998). The same applies to plantation sites where the influx of people from other regions has contributed to the weakening of traditional control mechanisms and growing population pressure (World Bank, 1991). In this case, changed social conditions are said to have contributed to an increase in law-and-order problems in the areas concerned. The problems range from incidents of domestic violence to street crime and corruption.

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[27] http.//www.wr.com.au/national/000129a9.htm

Corruption

Further decline of the State's credibility has come with the exposure of extensive corruption. Initially increased success in the prosecution of corrupt leaders was attributed to the review of the Ombudsman Commission's powers combined with the establishment of the special fraud squad within the Police Department. Nevertheless, corruption thrived (*National*, 27 November 1996) and budget allocation for the Ombudsman Commission was reduced, possibly indicating a lack of political will to tackle the issue of corruption (NRI, 1995). Despite a few notable successes in dealing with corruption, people generally believed that they were victims of a legal system operating with double standards, which protected the elite at the expense of the powerless grassroots (personal communication with the Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum (ICRAF) members and community members, 1995). Meanwhile, it became clear that links formed between prominent individuals and politicians with so-called *raskol* gangs. Through these linkages, criminals were being recruited for a variety of purposes, such as robbery, intimidation and extortion (Goddard, 1992; Borrey, 1995a; Standish, 1999). In 1997, a number of scandals at government level were exposed with the use of video recording. In one of them the then Prime Minister and Police Minister were seen to discuss political bribes. Another video showed a minister having sexual intercourse with an under-age girl (Standish, 1999). The first inquiry was brushed aside; the second case was taken to court but later dismissed on the basis of insufficient evidence. The implication of highly placed government members participating in criminal matters might partly explain the fact that, despite the law-and-order debate becoming a prime issue on the government's agenda in 1997, not a single policy suggesting a coordinated effort towards a possible solution could be detected in the relevant government departments (ACIL, 1997).

At the time of a new state of emergency (1996), members of parliament generally agreed that widespread youth unemployment underlay many law-and-order problems. For a substantial number of politicians, the cause was attributed to a general lack of discipline and the lack of respect for authority. Some politicians did concede that the greater level of violence could be related to the increased cost of living and the imposition of a minimum wage. Blame was also cast on the foreign ownership of businesses and the unequal distribution of resources. However, there was a consensus that the answer lay with the courts imposing tougher measures on lawbreakers as a deterrent to crime. It

was contended that lawbreakers constituted a small minority – hence the curfew title, "Protecting the Peaceful Majority" (*The Independent*, 15 November 1996).

Expansion of the problems – violence and social anxiety

In the 1990s, all the afore-mentioned issues of law-and-order regarded as being problematic had evolved for the worse. The decade was characterised by growing industrial unrest, increasing tribal fighting, student and community protests, electoral violence, regular incidents of violent payback, *raskols* resorting to violent measures and continued incidents of police brutality. At this stage, white-collar crime and drug issues also emerged as serious areas of concern. The areas of concern extended beyond the city boundaries, also involving rural sites. Furthermore, the continuing Bougainville crisis engendered national insecurity (Standish, 1994; Regan 1996). Reporting and discussion of crime increasingly emphasised its violent character. Electoral campaigns were run on the issue of law-and-order. Parkop, a prominent PNG human rights lawyer, spoke of a "culture of violence" when addressing the Conference of Against Violence Against Women, 25 November 1996, Port Moresby. He was referring not only to indiscriminate violence used against women but also to the use of violence to settle all kinds of issues at all levels of society and not only amongst criminal elements. Around the same time a group of surgeons at the general hospital of Port Moresby related that most of their time was spent attending casualties from fights. The violence was depleting all their valuable resources (personal communication, 1998). The feeling of a State losing control over its monopoly on violence translated itself in two states of emergency being declared (1991, 1996).

Along the same line, a review of the campaign against domestic violence, developed by the WLC at the end of the 1980s, showed a mixed outcome. Apparently, it had a marked public impact and achieved much in terms of advocacy and public awareness. However, there had been no change in the level of violence against women (Cox, 1992).

With continuing focus on victimised women, several women's refuge centres were established by non-government agencies in a number of provinces around the country (ACIL, 1997). These centres were mostly funded by overseas non-government organisations. In an attempt to counter the downfall of the WLC campaign, other organisations (e.g. ICRAF, YWCA) started providing free legal advice to women in distress, at the same time conducting workshops in different provinces to increase

awareness amongst women about their rights. The success rate of the use and the continuity of these services has so far been minimal.

Increasing concerns about incidents of sexual violence are expressed in an upsurge of academic publications (cf. Beben, 1990; Elias, Gillet, Karlin, Pyakalyia & Turner, 1990; Zimmer, 1990; Josephides, 1993; Borrey and Kombako, 1997; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997) and continuous reporting in the newspapers[28]. The concerns seem to be related to the increasingly young age of victims, the amount of violence exerted and the increased possibility of contracting the HIV virus (Hukula, 2000; Jenkins, 1996a).

As for the children, recent research has indicated that the situation might have changed drastically for the worse. Boorer (1994) indicated that child abuse was perceived to be a much greater problem in PNG than was previously acknowledged. A government-sponsored study, undertaken with the assistance of UNICEF, attempted to identify conditions under which child abuse was most likely to occur (Lepani, 1996). The conditions implicated were unstable relationships in the family, inter-marriages, inter-clan adoption, differences in customary behaviour and traditions, urban migration leading to economic constraints, breakdown of the extended family support network and involvement of children in labour and prostitution (ibid.:188). A number of studies have highlighted the problem of sexual violence perpetrated on children under 12 years of age (McClelland and Polume, 1990; Vince, 1990; Sathyanathan, 1995; Salatiel, 1996). It was further reported that incidents of child abuse were not only confined to the family arena but were also identified in educational (Boorer, 1994) and law enforcement institutions (*Post Courier*, 10 June 1996) where cases of harassment and physical abuse including sexual assault had been reported.

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[28] The following references were found in the Post Courier for 1996: 12 Jan/p4:Three pack-raped in Western Highlands; 18 Jan/p10:Give true picture on sex crimes; 23 Jan/p3:Police in hunt for bus crew rapists; 13 Feb/p4:City police looking into rape incidents; 21 Feb/p4: Sexually-related crimes rising in ENBP; 02 Apr/p3:Three pack rapes in Moresby; 22 Apr/p3:Man held over sex claim; 16 May/p4:Police charge two men for carnal knowledge; 19 June/p4: Pack rape ordeal at City Hall; 25 June/p4:Rise in sex crimes worries police in Gazelle Peninsula; 05 Jul/p4:City police after gang of rapists; 25 Jul/p4:Youths assault, rape a woman; 14 Aug/p4:Man held for rape, murder of woman; 20 Aug/p1: Police under cloud in cells sex case; 20 Aug/p4:Elderly woman raped at Sabama; 21 Aug/p4:Rape ordeal for pregnant mum; 21 Aug/p4:Police hunting man who raped 10-year-old girl; 11 Sept/p4:Soldier abducted girl for sex, police allege; 17 Sept/ p3:Rape horror for Highlands nurses; 24 Sept/p4:Woman suspect in Moresby rape case; 21 Oct/ p1:Castrate rapists; 22 Oct/p1:Goldminer slain by gang at rape scene; 01 Nov/p10:Castration not enough; 21 Nov/p4:Cop's son linked to rape case (Port Moresby); 27 Nov/p4:Youth raped girl, then 'gave' her to mate; 27 Nov/p4:Woman drugged and raped, police allege; 31 Dec/p4:Student claims teacher raped her.

Upsurge of differences in the understanding of law-and-order issues

Within discussions of the increase in law-and-order problems, especially in relation to the use of violence, the position of women and children is without a doubt associated with Western concepts, which relate back to problems identified within Western society. The use of terms such as *family, divorce, remarriage and victim* are a reflection of the influence of Western sensibilities. Here and there, however, one can discern certain points of resistance to that particular law-and-order debate. Anthropologists and sociologists, despite taking on issues known to be a focal point in Western societies, attempt to review the issues within the cultural, social and economic specifics of the group studied (Counts, 1993; Errington and Gewertz, 1993; Marksbury, 1993; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1998; O'Collins, 2000). Hence, O'Collins makes the following statement:

> "The unexpected and the unwelcome reality that violence is a common and accepted (if sometimes deplored) event may make it difficult for outside observers to maintain a balance when analysing the impact of such violence on individuals and family life. They may reject any possibility that some forms of violent behaviour are perceived by individuals (including the victim) as part of life and in some sense at least, 'acceptable' and encourage responses, which exacerbate a violent situation." (ibid.: 26)

The term "culture of violence" as used by Parkop also emphasised the negative impact of violence used by law enforcement agencies (*Post Courier*, 5 October 1995, 12-14 April 1996). Parkop established a differentiation within the category of violence; one being the violence which has always had a function within "traditional" lifestyle,[29] and the violence used by the State and experienced as a violation.

Whilst at this point in time the 'victim' image of women had become entrenched in the state-based discourse[30], there were increasingly reports about women using violence on other women (*Post Courier*, 16/26 April 1996[31]; Borrey, 1992). However, blaming

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[29] See O'Collins' statement (O'Collins, 2000: 26).

[30] The victim image permeates despite increasing publications on the 'strength' of women that possibly evolves from a further research on the issue of victimised women raised within the state-based discourse. (e.g. Counts 1993, Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997, 1998)

[31] *Post Courier*, 16 Apr/p4: Woman kills co-wife; 26 Apr/p4: Wakon: Blame polygamy deaths on husbands.

polygamy as the source of this violence reinstates the victim image. It is being claimed that within the context of polygamous marriages there is a greater likelihood of tensions between the sets of spouses and among the women. An additional argument for breaking the bastion of polygamy was made on the basis that polygamy at this stage had been taken out of its traditional realm where the wives of one man are to be treated equally. Men were seen to engage in extramarital relationships based on their right to polygamy but without entertaining the obligations attached to that engagement. The debate on polygamy in recent years has focused on possible legal ground for abolishing men's rights to multiple wives (*Post Courier*, 20 September 1995; *National*, 27 November 1996). In this way, there has been an attempt to diminish the violence in which women are regarded as the main recipients. A report (ACIL, 1997) focusing on law-and-order issues affecting women indicated that women indeed consider incidents of adultery to be most serious, even outside the context of polygamous relationships. Domestic and sexual violence were never mentioned unless probed for (ibid.)[32]. The manipulation of the understandings of law-and-order problems as presented within the macroscopic perception will be clarified in the coming chapters.

The interest in the wellbeing of children suffered a blow when organisers of the first Papua New Guinea National Convention on Child Sexual Abuse – Paedophilia and Child Sex Tourism expressed their disappointment over poor registration turn-up (*National*, 4 June 1998). Nevertheless the Convention led to the formation of a group known as PACE-PNG (People Against Child Exploitation-PNG) with the aim of lobbying the government to educate the public and raise awareness of and sensitivity to the problems of child abuse (Post Courier, 15 September 1998).

Attempts were made by a number of scholars and concerned citizens to elaborate on the cultural differentiation and the need to conceptualise law-and-order problems. Nevertheless, the overall focus was marred by a tendency to overlook evidence of different understandings of issues raised within the state-based discourse on law-and-order. The result was that within the state-based discourse misplaced concepts remained unchallenged with organisations and services being established without community support. Consequently, the law-and-order problems remained the major setback for the overall economic and social development of the country.

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[32] Domestic violence is indeed often the outcome of adultery but not necessarily the cause for it. As will become clear from the following chapters adultery rather than the violence is perceived as being the problem.

The macroscopic perspective on sexual violence

Incidents of sexual violence cannot be seen as isolated from the overall law-and-order debate. As will become clear from the ensuing discussion, the way sexual violence has been dealt with shows similarities to the overall law-and-order debate. Like other issues raised in relation to law-and-order, initially recorded incidents of sexual violence were not really acknowledged because they were regarded as part of a different societal organisation. However, as will be pointed out, perceptions of this issue changed when the Western bureaucracy and its expatriate community felt threatened by indigenous men viewed as having a ferocious sexual appetite (Inglis, 1975). The PNG bureaucracy established with Independence adopted legislation designed with Western sensibilities as the yardstick. Over the last few decades, sexual violence has attracted attention mostly on an ad-hoc basis, followed in the same manner by ad hoc retributions and treatment for both victims and offenders. Over time, with a growing number of incidents of sexual violence, which re-established a social anxiety around the issue, commentators and academics were now increasingly looking at social, cultural and economic changes as a way of developing a better understanding of the incidents. The current general feeling is that incidents of sexual violence have increased and have become characterised by a certain degree of sadism, a view extended to the overall law-and-order situation of the country.

In an attempt to overview the developments surrounding the issue of sexual violence, I have chosen to use the definition as set out in the criminal code[33], which is based on the Western conception of sexual violence. Therefore when discussing sexual violence I mostly refer to cases of rape, attempted rape, incest and carnal knowledge. This choice is also related to the fact that most material within the state-based discourse, which covers the issue of sexual violence, has been approached with that particular perception in mind.

Rape as part of "tradition"

Many current popular explanations of sexual violence ignore 'the pervasiveness of sexual exploitation in traditional PNG societies' (Zimmer, 1990:256) despite the fact that

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[33] Criminal Code of PNG -Ch.No.262, Division 2: Offences Against Sexual Morality; Division 7: Assaults on females: Abduction)

there are multiple anthropological references to that regard. (Meggitt, 1964:204; Newman, 1964:266; Read, 1952:866). For example Berndt (1962), writing in a study based on his fieldwork in a region of the Eastern Highlands between 1951 and 1953, exposed incidents of sexual violence amidst an atmosphere of erotic adventures which were socially encouraged through explicit displays and performances within the community. Promiscuous behaviour was attributed to both men and women. However, a woman who had been abducted from another political unit, had eloped, or had been caught in the course of fighting, would often be subjected to plural copulation which in this case would be regarded as a "legal" procedure. The same legality extended to incidents where plural copulation was carried out within the district to punish a woman for promiscuous behaviour, for attempting to run away, for failing to comply with the wishes or demands of her husband and so on (Berndt, 1962: 172-173). He further pointed out that plural copulation, by implicating a number of persons, represented an endeavour to establish or move toward a legalisation of the act. According to Berndt, aggressiveness was encouraged and sponsored in the processes of socialisation. He demonstrated this through the description of values imposed during the upbringing and initiation of male children. This process included continuing emphasis on strength, aggressive action in sexual relations, indulging in risk and attempting through forceful action to subvert the rights of those offended, to override the legitimate procedure which may be adopted as a result of the offence[34].

Rape at this point in time was referred to as either "multiple copulation" or "legal punishment". Berndt (ibid.) pointed out, however, that particular cases, as described earlier on where a legal punishment was being inflicted, were being taken over and elaborated by the informal courts.

Controlling sexual behaviour = controlling the indigenous men = protecting white women

Patrol reports refer to incidents of rape and indecent assault which were dealt with at the Central Court. For the year ending on 30th June 1924, 12 cases of rape and two cases of indecent assault were dealt with. However, as pointed out by Reed (1997) in his study of early colonial sexual politics in the Massim, concerns of a sexual nature were mostly related to fear of de-population. According to his analysis, "the Europeans perceived sex

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[34] More historical information regarding the above issues can be found in Knauft, 1999.

as being at the center of the problem of depopulation" (ibid.: 49). Both missionaries and administrators perceived the need to define the sexual body in order to be able to develop strategies for needed intervention. Despite the lack of consensus amongst the involved interveners, in regard to sexual image, there was a shared interest in matters such as abortion, monogamy, venereal disease and adultery. The belief that adultery was a common activity amongst the natives contributed to adultery becoming an offence within the Native Regulations[35]. It featured strongly in conviction statistics of that time (*Papua* 1909: 68). The only possible offenders were married women and their lovers and the maximum sentence was six months imprisonment (Reed, 1997:58). Missionaries opposed adultery because it was a sin, colonial officials because it disrupted the social fabric. The ultimate aim was to control the sexual body in order to allow the preservation of indigenous life (ibid.: 55). The concerns about adultery have persisted up to the present, with indigenous women identifying it as the most disturbing event in their lives (ACIL, 1997).

The sexual promiscuity/excesses reported by Berndt were also mentioned in the writings of Inglis (1974). Inglis quoted Murray believing that Papuans had commonly less sexual restraint than white men. She further wrote that the sexual freedom allowed to unmarried youth in some Papuan societies caused much concern among the missionaries. Moreover, the sexual proclivities of the inhabitants of the Western Divisions, especially the Gulf and the Delta, seemed to missionaries peculiarly distasteful. The author described how in Port Moresby there was an increasing resentment as the Papuans came to impinge more on the white residents as they came into town to work, to shop, to trade, or to visit friends and relations and see the sights (Inglis, 1974: 55). The increasing presence of black people combined with the perception of the danger of sexual overtures by black men to white women led to fear amongst the expatriate community. Three incidents described and published in the local newspaper included an attack on a white woman, an assault on a white man and a serious offence against a young female European child, all perpetrated by coloured men, created a panic. These developments in the 1920s, which obviously revealed more about the colonials' concern with power, racism and purity rather than the preservation of indigenous life, led to the passing in 1926 of the White Women's Protection Ordinance. At that time there had been no report of a rape in Papua of a white woman (Inglis, 1974). However, the ordinance introduced

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[35] The colonial government first constituted the Native Regulations in 1890 as a set of rules designed to bear upon native custom justice and welfare (Great Britain 1891: 12)

the death penalty for Papuan men found guilty of rape or attempted rape of European women (*Papua* 1927: 9). Missionaries, on the other hand, were also concerned with white violation of black women, but their concerns fell on deaf ears (Wetherell, 1977: 268).

The PNG bureaucracy and its Western sensibilities

With Independence, the Queensland Criminal Code that was introduced during colonisation was adopted within PNG legislation. References to offences against sexual morality can be found in Ch. No. 262, Division 2 of the Criminal Code. Despite the adoption of this Western legislation there was a strong urge by young PNG intellectuals to adopt a "Melanesian way" (Narokobi, 1983b)[36]. It is this concern that might have incited the Attorney General office to commission a report on the Questionnaire Relation to Sexual Offences as Defined in the Criminal Code (Strathern, 1975).

The aim was to review the Criminal Code and include provisions that would reflect the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of PNG communities. Strathern's findings are important, as they were the first attempt to establish a meaning of sexual violence outside the Western framework. A major difference relates to the issue of consent. In contrast with the Western understanding of rape, where consent is a central concept, Melanesians seem to be most concerned with the "correctness of the social relationships between the couple" (Strathern, 1975: 35). Consent, as such, becomes an issue only in the evaluation of who is to blame. Another contrast lies in the Melanesian perception that "no moral or physical damage is held to result from the simple act of intercourse even if the act is done against the will of the involved individuals (except in special circumstances, e.g. the woman is sexually immature)" (Strathern, 1975: 37). Women are not automatically perceived as victims unless they are injured during the attack (ibid.). Strathern further pointed out that in societies where acts of rape were said not to occur, these "acts which could be defined as forcible intercourse are usually treated under other rubrics e.g. adultery, incest or intercourse with an unmarried girl, with the component of physical assault adding a ludicrous or distressing dimension" (ibid.: 34). The use of force is thus considered evidence of the man's intention to have intercourse and points to the innocence of the woman. In line with the writings of Berndt (1962), Strathern (1975)

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[36] This particular 'Melanesian Way' does somewhat develop as a counter discourse to Western influence rather than form the basis of a *real 'Melanesian Way'* known for its diversity.

further referred to the use of rape as a tool in warfare and as a form of retaliation. However, she indicated that there was a decrease in this form of rape, describing a different form which she labelled "physical assault by outsiders" and which occurred mostly in urban and semi-urban areas with the offenders often under the influence of alcohol (ibid.:35). Community members, demanding severe penalties, apparently regarded this particular form of rape as very serious. As we will see, it is this form of rape that later drew the attention of other academics.

Strathern's observations in relation to the social, political and cultural context of incidents of sexual violence did not find their way into legislation or policy. Despite indications of the State adopting Western norms in relation to sexual violence, its concern did not translate in practical matters. In the mid-1980s, a dramatic increase in the incidence of reported rape and other acts of sexual violence in the National Capital District prompted some concerned medical doctors to convene a workshop with the aim of assessing the magnitude of the incidents and developing strategies to deal with sexual violence. Three important factors were identified as lacking in providing proper therapeutic services to victims of sexual violence. The first was that the problem of caring for victims was difficult in the PNG context (it was not stated clearly why this was so); secondly, there were no specialised medical officers available to handle victims who were significantly traumatised; and thirdly, there was no standard procedure nor expert on stand-by to assist victims to pursue their cases in the formal justice system (Wolfhart et. al., 1985). During previous research on sexual violence, an interview conducted by a student participating in the project with a member of the Sexual Offence Squad (SOS) revealed that the establishment of a separate police division to deal with victims of sexual violence, was the outcome of the initiative of a police officer. The officer referred to had attended a course in Australia and upon his return managed to convince the Police Department of the importance of a special unit. It was formally established in 1984 (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). No doubt this initiative was marked by Western sensibilities, which reinforced state responsibility in cases of sexual violence. However, there was no political will to translate the recommendations from the Law Reform Commission into tangible policies and legislation. Western sensibilities had obviously only a limited impact in this area of governance. The state-based discourse in this context can be viewed as a propaganda tool, which does not necessarily translate into implementation. Hence, the social complexities of reality do not always get translated into discourses as will become evident from the following chapters. The way people in

Morata present and understand the state-based discourse does not often reflect the subtleties of its construction.

In response to a Reference in 1985 from the Minister for Justice, the Law Reform Commission[37] investigated the problem of domestic violence, referring to a Western understanding of violence amongst spouses, in PNG. The Reference came at a time when PNG had reached international notoriety in relation to its law-and-order situation. The investigation was an attempt to understand more fully the social situation surrounding the incidence of domestic violence, particularly wife beating. Mention was made of incidents of sexual violence, especially rape. Andrew Strathern (1985) documented the emerging phenomenon of sadistic acts of sexual violence perpetrated on recalcitrant women. He pointed out that in his case studies, the war-related or moralistic justifications, which previously existed, were totally absent. Previously, as he pointed out, rapes and abductions were part of the general demonstration of victory and dominance. The actions were violent and forcible but they were uncomplicated by torture, mutilation or other forms of sadistic behaviour. There was, as such, little emphasis on or elaboration of the type of violence. In addition, these actions had legal and political consequences (ibid.: 135). Recorded case studies, however, showed an increasing trend of sadism towards women, which Strathern referred to as pathological. Chowning (1985: 85) referred to the previous existence of casual rape and sanctioned rape (ibid.: 86). A report by Scaglion and Whittingham (1985), using a "random" sampling of village disputes in PNG, indicated that 21.8% of incidents leading to conflict were related to sexual jealousies. Incest accounted for 2.9% and rape for 0.8%. Besides the Law Reform Commission report, other anthropologist and sociologist contributed to an investigation of both domestic and sexual violence giving more prominence to the cultural framework, which does not necessarily refer to the Western framework that underlies the state-based discourse on law-and-order (e.g. Mellam, 1985; Morauta, 1985).

Over the last two decades sexual violence seem to have developed as one of the most common offences against a person in PNG. Incidents of rape are widely reported in the media (nationally[38] and internationally) and are part of the state-based discourse on law-

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[37] The Law Reform Commission Reports receive special attention as they became the basis of a large awareness campaign regarding domestic violence. Awareness material and videos were produced to support the campaign. Hence, its particular importance in relation to the discussion of discourses.

[38] References to national newspapers are made by Zimmer (1990:253-254)

and-order. Pack rapes committed by gangs of 3 to 40 men are a phenomenon that (re-)appeared in the early 1980s and allegedly increased dramatically since then (Borrey and Kombako, 1997:4). According to some medical doctors, figures on sexual violence collected by Port Moresby's General Hospital during the first 3 months of 1985 showed that nearly half the victims (47%) were under 16 years of age; 22% were between 12 and 15; 12% were aged between 8 and 11 years, while an alarming 13% were under 8 years (Wolfhart et al. 1985). Cases of child abuse have been mentioned and documented (e.g. Vince, 1990; McClelland and Polume, 1990).

It is also within the last 20 years that there was renewed panic surrounding incidents of sexual violence. In 1984, the pack rape of a New Zealand woman and her daughter in Port Moresby gave rise to a public outcry and demonstrations (Morauta, 1986). Despite the fact that indigenous women had been victims of sexual assault, it was the reporting of expatriate victims that raised the alarm in the media and consequently the government. That same year the National Executive Council passed a package of 49 measures to combat the breakdown of law-and-order. It was a mixed package in which hard-line measures were prominent. The measures included mandatory corporal punishment for rape and violent crimes, reactivation of the police squad to be used in community raids, boom gates outside all towns of more than 10,000 people, a review of the Vagrancy Act and a rejection of any reduction in the minimum penalties for less serious offences (Morauta, 1986).

Within their own judicial power, judges conferred to establish a guideline for judgements on cases involving rape. There was a consensus that harsher punishment should be meted out in most cases. The possible sentence ranged from 5 years up to a life sentence (John Aubuku v The State, Supreme Court of Justice, 28, 29 July 1987).

In 1991 the racial concerns related to incidents of sexual violence gave way to a public demonstration initiated by PNG women and organised by a group of young men in the capital city. The initiative followed a period of continuous criminal activity by *raskol* gangs. Here a group of women reacted to continuous incidents of *raskol* crimes victimising women. In this particular case a car had been hijacked by a group of young men at the market place. Two passengers, a mother and her infant, had no time to escape. However, the mother managed to throw her child out of the car to be caught by a member of the public. In the ensuing car chase the mother was pushed out of the car but got caught in the seatbelt. She died while being dragged by the speeding car hanging

from the seatbelt. People along the roadside observed the incident, which outraged the community. Despite the fact that the panic was mostly associated with the cruel way in which the woman had died and the involvement of a child, during this demonstration women were requesting the death penalty and castration of rapists (sign boards showed during the demonstration – witnesses and participants, 1991). The public outcry was represented by a group of approximately 300 persons who followed a call by 92 women public servants who had signed and submitted a letter to the newspaper requesting a mass demonstration and a curfew for Port Moresby (*Post Courier*, 29 October & 15 November 1991). This incident occurred at a time when measures had been installed to re-invoke the death penalty for murder and pack rape.

In 1995 the only female judge, who was an expatriate, ordered the death penalty of a young man who had killed the retaliating father whose daughter had previously been raped by that young man. The decision encountered mixed reception, with a mostly positive reaction among women but a negative one among representatives of human rights organisations such as Amnesty International. The decision was squashed by the Supreme Court on the grounds that the law did not permit the joining of a charge of willful murder with a charge of "any other offence" (*Post Courier*, 3 April 1996: 1). A retrial was ordered at which the offender was acquitted of the willful murder but left to appear in court on the charge of rape (*Post Courier*, 7 January 1997: 2).

In 1996, the person in charge of the SOS confirmed a steady increase in incidents of sexual violence defined as rape, carnal knowledge, incest and sodomy (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). Despite the increasing rate, officers confirmed that the reporting of these incidents was minimal and in some cases, victims were withdrawing their complaints for a number of reasons, such as the payment of compensation or the fear of retaliation by the offending party (ibid.). The under-reporting became even clearer when a study of sexual violence in Port Moresby (Borrey and Kombako, 1997) revealed that among all cases requiring hospitalisation (therefore involving victims who had suffered severe physical injuries) only 10% reported the incident to the police[39]. Other features related to sexual violence in the 1997 study were the high number of offenders involved in assaulting one victim and the high rate of violence used during the incidents. The report also indicated that support mechanisms, such as the SOS provided by the Police

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[39] The low reporting rate could also be an outcome of mistrust in the police. On the other hand, the increased rate of incidents could be the outcome of better reporting on the part of the concerned parties and/or better recording facilities.

Department and refuge centres for women provided by government and non-government agencies, were not used to their fullest potential. This could be because in many cases the focus for incidents switches away from the victim to the wider group of secondary victims who feel the need to be compensated for the incident, which has shaken the social-economic balance in which the victim, usually a female, has a "productive" value. Victims are not necessarily considered as individuals but more as an entity to which economic and political value can be attached; in other words as property or subjects of negotiation over payment and compensation. Attacks on this valuable entity can create serious tensions between the clans, tribes or communities involved, possibly leading to retaliatory actions by the aggrieved party. The aggrieved party in this context refers to the group of people in which the woman takes on a specific productive and therefore valuable position (Borrey, 2000:116). It is in this context that I speak of "secondary" victims. It has been further pointed out that due to a continuing economic, political and social crisis, low political priority was given to the growing problem of violence, including sexual violence. Recommendations made in the final report produced by the Law Reform Commission in 1992 which also includes the proposal to include marital rape in the criminal code, has still to be passed by parliament (*Post Courier*, 13 October 1999)[40]. A recent resubmission attempt by the only female member of parliament is currently before the National Executive Council awaiting its approval (Personal communication with Herman Bomugo, Director of the Law Reform Commission, 2001).

Explanations for the law-and-order issues

The following section gives an overview of the different explanatory models developed over the years hoping to shed some light in the origin of the deteriorating situation of law-and-order. These overall explanations have also had an influence on the way sexual violence has been analysed. As will become clear there is an increasing awareness of the need to move away from causal explanations informed by the changing interests of Western concerns. Meanwhile it seems difficult to move away from explanations pervaded with sensibilities and concepts created in the West and plastered upon PNG society. O' Brien (1993) is very critical of that process and is hereby supported by a number of other anthropologists and sociologists (e.g. Errington and Gewertz, 1993:234; Strathern, 1984: Counts, 1984). There is, as such, a growing recognition of the need to

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[40] http://www.postcourier.com.pg/19991014/news13.htm

approach the matter from a different angle with clear calls for culturally appropriate analytical frameworks.

In relation to the overall debate on law-and-order

Over the years attempts have been made to expose the causal factors in the development of this law-and-order situation in PNG. Initially reference was made to the institutional ineffectiveness in dealing with the issues. Suggestions were later made about the possible inappropriateness of the criminal justice system to deal with the law-and-order issues developing in PNG. In this way some attention was drawn to the cultural dimensions of the issue (Narokobi, 1983b)[41]. In later work there is greater focus on the changing character of the society, especially on the economic, social, political and cultural contexts. Theories of modernisation and dependency dominate most of the published work in PNG. The shortcomings of the modernisation and dependency theories were already pointed out in the work of Gordon and Meggitt (1985). They identified the formulistic reductionism of these theories as problematic, as "they force on particular cases identities that can be expressed only in terms provided by the general categories assumed by their models" (ibid.: 5), which were created in the West and mostly associated with urban crime. Furthermore, the authors point to the primary focus on the official agencies of social control, which neglects existing informal mechanisms. The urban origin of both theoretical developments is also conducive to the romanticising of traditional society. Resulting from these observations is a decision to conduct more detailed studies at the local level with a focus on the social processes that might be at work (ibid.: 7). Knauft (1999) in his review of the academic writings on warfare in Melanesia, noted a similar trend in the development of causal explanations. He considered the changing interests and representations of Western scholarship and the way they reflect and inform the colonial and postcolonial history of Melanesia. He discerned several trends, representing different levels of functional and structural approaches. These have culminated in a recent development where the study of Melanesian violence now increasingly focuses on the agency of the actors, the larger contexts of politico-economic and cultural relationships, temporal change, and the relationship between collective and individual violence which also considers gender relations (ibid.: 155).

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[41] This matter is also raised during the judiciary conferences where calls for a more Melanesian approach to law is necessary. References are hereby made to for example restitution and conflict resolution mechanisms.(judiciary conference 1997)

In an attempt to shed some light on the development of these law-and-order issues, Dinnen (1996b) developed a triangular analytical tool whereby he scrutinised issues of *raskolism*, electoral violence and conflict around mining. His explanatory framework consisted of the materialist, culturalist and institutionalists models which he used to illuminate particular aspects of the social phenomena under examination and which stem from an assumption that "one cannot understand current crises without studying longer-term patterns of socio-cultural, political and economic change" (Dinnen, 1996b: 4). Within the materialist model, Dinnen focused on rational choice and political economy to achieve a partial understanding of the phenomena under examination. The rational choice was based on the assumption that most individual behaviour is governed by rationality and that people engage in activities that maximise benefits and minimise costs. The political economy component within the model concentrated "on macro-level structures and forces that are believed to generate conditions favourable to criminal behaviour among certain social groups, or that are seen as affecting the operations of crime control systems" (ibid.: 44). In this context, crime is regarded as an integral part of the overall pathology of development. The focus within the culturalist model lies upon social continuities, thereby emphasising the importance of understanding the social foundations of human behaviour. The model is used to explain crime as resulting from the breakdown of traditional social controls in the face of introduced forces of modernity and to link certain aspects of the behaviour of political, business and criminal leaders to pre-capitalist models of leadership and relations of exchange. The institutional model covers issues of law-and-order associated with the inefficiency of state agencies charged with maintaining law-and-order. Militaristic state responses in turn aggravate problems of order and thereby not only raise the issue of legitimacy of introduced institutions but also draw attention to the overall weakness of the PNG state and how this manifests itself in the law-and-order arena.

Despite the development of a layered tool of analysis which somewhat succeeds in moving away from simplistic causal factors, Dinnen still predominantly discusses issues of law-and-order within the state-based discourse. This discourse is mostly constructed around Western concepts and associated meanings. As such, it does not always account for the way these concepts and their meanings are manipulated or rejected by people whose life-world, as we will see in the coming chapters, is constructed around a different set of subjectivity and therefore "being in" the world.

In relation to sexual violence

More recent anthropological analyses of sexual violence in the PNG context largely focus on the phenomena of rape and other sexual offences as they relate to the subjugation of women (e.g. Zimmer, 1990; Josephides, 1993; Nihill, 1994). In these analyses, issues of gender relations, sexuality, sexual behaviour and attitudes and autonomy are reviewed. As a complex culture, created out of the intermingling of the traditional and the modern lifestyle and value systems, contemporary PNG culture is largely characterised by "contradictions arising from the complex politics of sexuality" (Zimmer, 1994: 16). Zimmer argued that the underlying theses concerning sexual violence are twofold: the first is that men use rape or the threat of rape to control women's behaviour; the second is that women's increased opportunities for self-expression and economic independence (or conversely the absence of such opportunities for many men) threaten men's sense of personal power and their relations with and dominance over other men (ibid.: 2).

In his study of the changing sexual practice and gender relations of the Anganen (Southern Highlands), Nihill (1994: 54) argued from a different angle that rape was the outcome of soured male-dominated politics. This souring may be the result of past fighting, death of a big man or bad wealth exchange. Soured relations between agnates or male co-residents may even result in sexual attacks on the wives of clan brothers and those of non-agnatic co-residents, with the sisters or daughters of non-agnates also being possible targets. Such rapes had political implications, being precipitated by politics and having political repercussions. Nihill further argued that it was the interrelation of gender, politics and social relations that rendered women as victims. Rape was thus an expression of the lack of autonomy these women possessed.

Bradley (1992) stated that sexual violence was not a modern phenomenon in PNG, but it had been exacerbated by modern conditions. She identified wife beating and the increased incidences of sexual violence as an effect of development. Marilyn Strathern (1985) attributed the violent nature of men in contemporary PNG to the fact that men were disoriented because what had previously been "clear structures" were now dissolving. Thus, men resorted to violence to reassert and reaffirm their domination threatened by modern changes. Josephides (1993: 145) similarly argued that the power base, which enabled men to impose certain understandings, was diminishing. These understandings were that women must submit to men in all areas of life. Josephides

(ibid.: 196) further argued that violence against women was not caused by men's disorientation as a result of modern changes, but more specifically, had developed out of their fears that these changes would remove women from their control and give them independence.

The explanatory models have to be regarded as partial as they evolve from complex interactions and understandings of gender violence and more specifically sexual violence. Zimmer in other writing does concentrate on the strength of women (Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997, 1998). Her endeavour to portray women in non-subjugated positions is supported by other anthropologists. (Weiner, 1976; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; Counts, 1984:72; O'Brien & Tiffany, 1984; Strathern, 1984; Guiart, 1993; Gustafsson, 1999) As Counts (1984) puts it:

"anthropological studies have traditionally emphasised the flamboyant role of Melanesian life while ignoring more subtle aspects of decision making and policy making that occur behind the scenes. Many studies have dismissed women as uninterested in or unable to generalise about the public arena, where the attentions of men and of anthropologists have been focused. Yet, although they are ignored by social scientists, Melanesian women are not stupid, downtrodden, subjugated lot who suffer abuse in silence; they play a vital part in social life." (ibid.:1984:93)

As such, there is a push to re-evaluate the position of women within parameters relevant to the cultural and social context of the place.

In the wake of the upsurge of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, sexual violence attracted renewed attention from medical anthropologists and community health workers. The Institute of Medical Research, in its national study on sexual knowledge and behaviour in rural and peri-urban areas, revealed a high proportion of forced sex. This study suggested that the processes of modernisation had altered traditional values and practices throughout the nation. The effects included a direct alteration of people's sexual behaviour (Jenkins, 1994). Jenkins (1996a, b) reported on the socio-cultural evolution of sexual promiscuity (with resulting sexually transmitted diseases) and documented the phenomenon of group sex. The publication of Jenkins' (1994) report, depicting different sexual behavioural patterns through the presentation of case studies,

encountered fierce resentment from members of the National Council of Women, who felt that the information contained in the book was not accurate. After attempts to ban the publication, an agreement was reached resulting in controlled distribution of the book. Thus, students wanting to borrow the book from the library can only do so after obtaining an official letter of authority from a lecturer (personal communication with Dr. Jenkins 1994 and Bello Kombako 1996)[42]. From other work, it is clear that Jenkins findings are not solely the outcome of modernisation and development. Meggitt (1964), Newman (1964) and Read (1952) along with others have pointed out the existence of group sex and promiscuity in traditional cultures. There is a need to place the findings of the above-mentioned issues within the appropriate historical context. Despite the fact that there seem to be a 'public' shyness around raising issues about sex and sexuality there are many other examples where this is not the case. Hammar who carried extensive studies into the issue of prostitution in Daru received many comments on his work, which highlight both sides of the debate (Research in Melanesia 17: 183-190, 1993 – No Sex please).

Banks (2000) highlighted the fact that sexual violence by men in PNG may not be explained within a Western analytical framework constructed around a particular understanding of societal organisation and values. She advocated an analysis of the "historical, colonial, political, economic, social and cultural forces which individually and collectively have formed the context in which that sexual violence has occurred in the past and continues in the present day" (Banks, 2000: 101). On the basis of her case studies, Banks provided a classification for rape in three categories: as punishment against the victim or others; as a response to spurning; and opportunistic rape. She thus derived elements based in the specific social and cultural environment, with adaptations through its evolvement in today's society emerging from a Western influence.

Amongst a section of the contemporary PNG community, sexual violence is often discussed as a recent phenomenon that did not exist during taim bipo (referring to either colonial or pre-colonial time). As pointed out earlier on this perception contradicts early anthropological and patrol reports. Acts of sexual violence have been practised in traditional contexts, within defined norms and acceptable standards (e.g. Strathern, 1985; Knauft, 1993; Bradley, 1994). These included homosexual rituals and the

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[42] See also Post Courier, 25 November 1998: 'A woman leader has called on the Censorship Board to see that the carved poles put up along some streets in Port Moresby, depicting obscene figures, be pulled down.

employment of sexual violence on women who were deemed recalcitrant. The legality of certain incidents of sexual violence is further described in the work of example Berndt (1962). The denial of the existence of sexual violence by certain members of the PNG community could be understood as the outcome of a familiarity with the Eurocentric perception of these incidents as barbaric. On the other hand, considering some of the above explanations, incidents of sexual violence within a traditional setting might have had a totally different meaning. The exercise of denial could also be viewed as the outcome of a process whereby the past and tradition are idealised.

Conclusion

Bearing all the above issues in mind, I propose, in accordance with the analyses of Strathern (1975), Gordon and Meggitt (1985), Josephides (1993), Bradley (1994), Nihill (1994), and Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1997), Knauft (1999), Banks (2000) to revisit notions of crime and more specifically issues surrounding sexual violence, in their historical, social, cultural and political context. Indeed in relation to the importance of the historical context, there is consensus about the fact that present-day incidents cannot be understood without considering the influence of the past. As Jean Mitchell recently demonstrated, we need to re-evaluate the continuum between past and present. In her discussion of violence in an urban settlement in Vanuatu, Mitchell (2000: 205) argued that violence must be understood within a context of the complex and specific intersections of the local and the global, emphasising the resulting tensions in local cultural production. The global cannot be seen as a coherent, encompassing experience that fully explains or accounts for contemporary violence. And *kastom* cannot be seen untouched by the global (ibid.). There is obviously a dialectic process at work, which requires an analytical framework that focuses on the dynamics surrounding the engagement of two cultures often operating around different concepts and meanings. I therefore propose a) to examine the occurrence of sexual violence within an environment strongly influenced by two worlds: one informed mostly by Western sensibilities and one informed more so by indigenous mores and practices; and b) within that ambivalent environment I want to explore the construction and meanings of incidents of sexual violence as presented through the agency, reaction and representation of the community members in a particular settlement in Port Moresby.

I entertain the possibility of discovering new meanings that could reflect either a conjunction or a possible disjunction with both "traditional" and "Western" meanings. Due to an extensive exposure to legal and moral values fuelled by Western sensibilities in an environment characterised by an amalgamation of people from different ethnic groups, socialisation in the settlement is expected to contain new structures and values which follow from a particular way of being and experiencing the world. As we will see, that life-world is mostly constructed through either a reinvention or extension of "tradition" and a manipulation of values represented in the state-based discourse, a state-based discourse as understood and experienced by them[43]. It is in that specific environment in which I want to place incidents of sexual violence and explore how and if possible why, certain incidents occur and how they are being experienced and understood.

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[43] It is important to point out this distinction. As such, one will notice a tendency to overlook the subtleties of the state-based discourse as it includes many other understandings of social, economic, political and cultural issues in PNG. The choice to focus on this limited state-based discourse emphasises how information is being understood and taken on board. Certain issues have definitely entered the mind of people in such a strong way that it often overlooks the intricacies of the raised concerns.

CHAPTER THREE

Picture 3

Chapter Three
ENTERING THE 'BLOCK'

Introduction

The roads into Port Moresby's settlements are often remnants of formerly sealed surfaces. The buses that serve as transportation into and out of the settlements are mostly decrepit. When approaching the settlement one notices 'contract' groups of people of all ages cleaning up the drains and the premises alongside the roads. Sometimes one can see small groups of children collecting litter from the roads, which they can turn into saleable items. The houses are a mixture of permanent buildings and makeshift places, with old cars scattered around. In Morata, the settlement where I was based, one of the buses had been appropriated by local youths that converted a broken-down vehicle into a sleeping place. During the rainy season people, cars and buses splash through mud pools, whilst on the hills surrounding the settlement traces of gardens become visible. During the dry season, the roads become production sites for clouds of dust. Houses, trees and children are often covered with a layer of that dust.

During early morning and late afternoon hours, people dressed-up ready to go to work or just returning from work in the city congregate around the small trade stores or local *buai* [Tokpisin: betelnut] markets. Some people engage in gambling sitting along the fences of the 'blocks,' whilst some disappear in the local *banis* [Tokpisin: fenced area] where the TV and pool table provide entertainment. There are numerous little groups along the street selling home-baked scones; fried fish caught at the swamp and *buai*. Groups of children of all ages run around in the street, crying for food or for a few coins to buy a small treat. Others play with toys constructed out of scrap material. Here and there, radios can be heard playing. In the morning, people can be seen washing by the outside tap. Screams can be heard as parents try to send their children off to school and kick scruffy-looking dogs away from food leftovers. Once in a while, a group of youngsters can be seen who have obviously spent the night getting high on marihuana and are now looking for a place where they might get something to eat. Between early morning and late afternoon, the settlement has a desolate feeling, created by the minimal movement of people and limited activity. The only places with some action are the village court place and the larger local market that is situated in the middle of Morata settlement.

The above description of the settlement evokes a clear physical alienation from the rest of the general urban setting of Port Moresby. In many ways this image feeds into a representation of settlements in the state-based discourse, led by media and shared by many capital town-dwellers. This discourse sees the settlements as mostly characterised by poverty, unemployment, dirt, crime and violence (Mylius, 1970; Chao, 1989; *Post Courier*, 20 April 2000 - Viewpoint). Over the years problems of urban violence, including sexual violence, have often been regarded as arising from conditions in settlements and have been analysed within the framework of state-based opinion about them (Hukula, 2000; Sikani, 2000). Despite the fact that sexual violence has been reported as occurring outside the settlements and in rural areas (Reay, 1982; Borrey, 1995b), accounts featured within the state-based discourse commonly imply that offenders are settlement dwellers and that their victims come mostly from areas outside the settlements. Associated settlements are then also portrayed as undeveloped places resembling dysfunctional rural settings, in which traditional control mechanisms have lost their effectiveness. Imagining settlements as enclaves of misfits has the effect of contextualising violence within wider issues of the economic pressure and the collapse of traditional structures based on kin networks rather than land territory. The more nuanced analysis provided by social scientists does not seem to have had a sufficient impact to alter the overall perception of settlements as presented within the state-based discourse. (e.g. Bradley, 1992; Josephides, 1993; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997a)[44]. Their focus on violence and more so on domestic violence, as an issue affecting the whole of PNG society, including the 'haves'[45] who mostly are urban dwellers living outside the settlements and the rural population, does not seem to diminish the emphasis on settlements. This may be partially related to the fact that domestic violence may not be perceived as a very problematic issue, at least not within the state-based discourse despite the fact, as we saw in the previous chapter, it was the state that ordered its law reform commission to investigate the issue of domestic violence at a national level. The seemingly incapacity to take on board the findings which do challenge the settlement as the sole site of violence reinforces a situation of ambivalence which, as will be exposed in other chapters, also permeates people's life-world in the settlement. On the one hand, as we saw in the previous chapter, it was the state that ordered its law reform

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[44] Explanations given are the dismantling of traditional control systems, the challenge to male identity by the 'upcoming' emancipated women and the difficulty for men of establishing a valid position in a changing society, have been cited as contributing to an increased rate of sexual violence (see also Chapter 2).

[45] I deliberately use the term 'haves' as it reflects the way my research subjects discuss their perception of the society around them. As such there was never any reference to either low middle or high class.

commission to investigate the issue of domestic violence whilst on the other hand there is little capacity to put the issue in its overall perspective. As we will see from the fabric of human experience which forms the living reality out of which the criminal behaviour directly stems, broad categories pertaining to violence as presented within the state-based discourse will prove to be unsustainable. As Connell and Lea (1994: 285–286) put it:

> "Culture and identity are not direct products of new, increasingly global economic (and perhaps political) arrangement – and their socio-spatial impact on the material form and social structure of cities – but are shaped by the everyday practices of ordinary people and their feelings and understanding of their conditions of existence."

Indeed this and the following chapters will highlight that criminal behaviour as it is being understood and experienced within the settlement does not link directly with notions such as for example poverty, dirt, unemployment, crime and violence. Those concepts are fuelled by Western sensibilities which do not always reflect the people's personal feelings and understandings of their living conditions in the settlement.

Throughout my stay and ongoing engagement with people in the settlement, I discovered the existence of a social reality[46] which is interwoven with the state-based representation but which does not reflect it. The microscopic perspective engages with the macroscopic perspective but does not embrace it. As such settlers, as we will see, appropriate certain elements of the state-based representation of law-and-order, alias the macroscopic perspective, as a way to reinforce and maintain their own pursuits according to values and meanings cherished within their own life-world, the microscopic perspective. The appropriation of understandings from the state-based discourse by the people living in the settlement in this way resonates with the concept of resistance as presented in post-colonial writings[47]. My aim in this chapter is to discuss the limitations of the state-based discourse on settlements, described as being mostly characterised by poverty, unemployment, dirt, crime and violence as the context in which to assess incidents of violence, including sexual violence. Within the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order debate, these characteristics are linked with issues of rapid social change marked

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[46] By 'social reality' I refer to practices and experiences which shape one's life.
[47] See, for example, Fanon 1963, Bhabha 1994, Barker, Hulme & Iversen 1996.

by unequal development, loss of traditional social control and changed family and gender structures (see Chapter 2). By revisiting these particular issues from the microscopic perspective of the settlements it will become clear that the above concepts do not necessarily carry the same value or meaning for people living in the settlement. Failure to recognise this leads to misunderstanding of social life and issues in the settlements.

In the previous chapter I focused on the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order debate which encapsulates perceptions of settlement life as a breeding ground for many of the law-and-order problems (see Chapter 2). In this chapter I will focus on the micro perspective of key concepts in this discourse as they are understood and experienced in Morata. In that regard I have chosen to identify the differences between the state-based (macroscopic perspective) and local (microscopic perspective) understandings and experiences as they develop around specific issues related to settlement life such as violence, crime, unemployment, dirt and violence. As mentioned previously these characteristics are linked with issues of rapid social change, change in tribe, clan, family and gender structures but it is not all about social processes. Within the process of identifying differences between the macroscopic and microscopic perspective in regards to the above issues I will be focussing on the agency of the people, resistance to and manipulation of concepts emanating from the state-based discourse on law-and-order. The manipulation of elements from the state-based discourse contributes to a certain degree to the continuation of a derogatory image of the settlement as presented within the macroscopic perspective. It is not an image though, which reflects the values and experiences existing in the settlement.

My references to the *street* and the *block* in the settlement reflect in many ways the manner by which people define their familiar space. As pointed out in Chapter 1, a particular settlement consists of a number of areas. Each area in turn consists of a number of streets which are all divided into blocks or pieces of land on which people build their house(s) or shelter(s). People in the settlement carve out their daily life very much within the confines of a few streets, with the block offering personal security for a particular household. It is the place where values and meanings are developed, appropriated, molded and sometimes rejected. It is the site where a local discourse has emerged. The acknowledgement of this local discourse makes it possible to develop an understanding of issues emanating from or attributed to the settlement area. In this respect, I propose to expose, mostly through examining aspects of settlement life, a part

of that social practice and experience. This particular reality is the outcome of the way people perceive themselves and interact with each other in this environment.

First I present (a) a short history of the development of settlements and of state-based representations of them. I then in (b) the section on 'settlement talk' scrutinise a number of the characteristics of the macroscopic perspective on settlements such as violence, crime and unemployment, along with other related issues such as ethnicity and social change that relates to the new life-world. This section provides a few examples showing how the state-based discourse of settlements is reinforced despite the many misconceptions it contains. It shows how settlers can appropriate elements of the state-based discourse when they think it is to their benefit or as a way of self-protection. It will become clear from the material presented that this process of appropriation not only reinforces the state-based discourse but also at the same time succeeds in maintaining a deceptive view of the social practices and experiences of settlers. In (c) an attempt to unveil at least some aspects of their practice I present some parts of a local discourse through the life story of people on 'the block,' in Morata settlement. I hereby focus on family structure, gender and sexuality as these issues inform understandings and experiences of violence, crime and unemployment.

History of the settlement

The first settlements in Port Moresby date from around the end of the Second World War and are associated with the development of urban areas and the urban drift generated by the attraction of employment and government services such as health and education (Salisbury, R. and Salisbury, M., 1972; Oram, 1976; Connell and Lea, 1994; Wrondimi, 1994). The planned settlements were initially organised by the colonial state, which had negotiated the use of customary land to that purpose. These days there are also unplanned settlements, which are the outcome of personal initiative. When built on customary land such settlements are often the outcome of negotiations with the traditional landowners. Others are built on unused state leased land[48]. These are often referred to as squatter settlements. These areas often lack the most basic amenities such as water, sewerage or electricity. Initial interest in the settlements by city authorities

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[48] For more information and history on settlements in PNG see Oram, 1976; Jackson, 1977; Vele, 1978; Robuni and Norwood, 1980; Wrondimi 1994; Chao, 1985,1989; Sikani, 2000; Goddard, 2001.

was mostly related to the provision of proper housing for mostly unskilled labourers. The focus was on the integration of these areas within the broader development of the city and on the provision of basic amenities. Several projects were undertaken to upgrade settlements in the hope of preventing the development of shanty areas. However, genuine interest in the proper development of these areas has ceased and in recent years, the government has shown increased concern about the uncontrolled expansion of these settlements. The concern is mostly related to the association of these places with crime, unemployment and a growing population (Connell and Lea, 1994; Levantis, 1998). Over the years attempts have been made, and in some places successfully, to evict people from these unplanned settlements (Wrondimi, 1994; *National,* 2 March 98). In 1996, the National Capital District administration built boom gates around the city in an attempt to control the movement of people into the city. It was also hoped that with a vagrancy law in place, unemployed people could be sent back to their rural areas. The boom gates were never manned.

Morata settlement[49] (see map 2) was first established as a planned settlement on customary land belonging to the people of Baruni. At the time, it was considered quite a long way from the centre of the city. Roads and public transportation did not reach that area of town for many years. As one of my informants put it, the area, beginning in the 1970s, was still regarded as bush. Today the settlement has grown extensively and the National Capital District Commission, in its study of the different suburbs of Port Moresby, has estimated the total population of Morata suburb to be over 16,000 (Census 1990)[50]. Morata borders the premises of the University of PNG. Road links and public transport services have made Morata more accessible. Major public offices situated at Waigani and other commercial centres nearby can be accessed easily by Morata's population. Via the back road, Morata is linked with an exploding suburb, Gerehu, which has been labelled as the up-and-coming middle class area of the city. The settlement also has a golf course on its outskirts as well as a large swamp, which can give the area a sense of isolation. Morata settlement is subdivided into four sections, which effectively operate as different mini-suburbs. The areas are clearly demarcated, to such a degree that inhabitants from any given section refrain from moving freely, especially at night, into

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[49] Morata is in fact a suburb of the National Capital City which contains both planned and unplanned settlements. Nevertheless, there is almost an automatic association between Morata and settlement in the popular discourse. Reference to Morata in this discussion therefore encapsulates the settlement.

[50] The 2000 census shows a figure of 28.315 persons for Waigani/University section which includes Morata. (PNG 2000 Census Final Figures, March 2002). The current population for Morata could therefore be allot higher as it is the more populated area within the Waigani/ University section.

a section other than the one they inhabit. The settlement has its own Village Court, community police service, several churches, primary school, market places and up until 1998, it also had its own health centre[51].

Morata, as a planned settlement, began with designated blocks for self-help housing which were equipped with a water tap for every two blocks and with the possibility to connect to electricity. However, there was no sewerage system in place. Sealed roads were built connecting the different parts of the suburb and securing an easy connection outside the settlement. Over the years, nothing has changed in terms of amenities except that their condition together with that of the roads has deteriorated considerably. Unplanned sections have developed on the border of the area where no services exist at all. Here people retrieve water from the nearby swamp, which at times is also used as a toilet. Where consecutive governments in the 70s and early 80s showed concern for the proper development of these different settlements, little of that concern has been translated into tangible and lasting results. Indeed, over the years more attention has been paid to how to evict the unemployed and squatters from these areas in an attempt to relieve the population pressure and to remove the putative source of criminal activities. A report produced by final-year Social Work students at the University of PNG in 1995 highlighted numerous socio-economic problems in Morata; continuous water shortage, outdated garbage and sewage disposal systems, scanty housing, deficient public utilities, a large number of unemployed people and continuous criminal activity. Only a recent interest in 'community development' has renewed interest in the settlements, mostly by overseas agencies (*Post Courier,* 4 August 2000)[52].

The population of Morata has grown extensively over the last decades. Certain government officials claim a current population of 25000 inhabitants[53]. Many unplanned houses have been built on the periphery of the settlement extending onto the edge of the swamp on both the East and West side of the area. They are mostly the outcome of expanding families who cannot manage anymore on their block. Children marry and sometimes are joined by other members of the in-law family. On the other hand, one sees a growing number of little make-shift constructions appearing on one block where

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[51] The health centre has been closed indefinitely since being vandalised in 1998.

[52] http://www.postcourier.com.pg/20000804/news15.htm.
    http://www.postcourier.com.pg/20000128/news19.htm.

[53] The latest census figures show a population of 28 315 for the area of Waigani and the University which includes Morata . (PNG 2000 - Census Final Figures, March 2002)

previously there would have been only one house. The initial basis for a housing application in the settlement has disappeared. Hence, there are many clusters of 'family' expanding through one particular street or area; often of the same ethnicity but also from mixed ethnicity. Some people have also developed a 'real estate' business in the settlement by renting out their own or part of their premise. The most 'visible' ethnicity is the 'Highlanders' with the Western Highlands being the largest group. The composition of the Village Court officers is a good reflection of that situation with the majority of the village magistrates coming from the Highlands region (Simbu, Eastern Highlands, Western Highlands, Southern Highlands and with one each from the Central and Gulf Provinces). The chief magistrate is Goilala (Central Province). One of the clerical court officers is a woman from Moitu Koitabu. As Village Court magistrates are chosen by the community and knowing that people do prefer voting for those of their own ethnicity, one can conclude that the Highland's population is in the majority in Morata[54]. As will be seen, the presence of different ethnic groups can lead to major frictions with very negative outcomes for the settlement community. Morata also counts members of two known gang groups: *Bomai* and *585*. Members do not necessarily live together and do not necessarily represent one particular ethnic group. Young people also hang around with these gangs but do not necessarily label themselves as members of the gang. Many of these young men, some employed, some unemployed hang around in small groups but are also part of families whom they join at regular times. In one case, a group of young men built a house along the swamp. It is known as the 'boys' house', possibly as a comparison with the '*hausman*' [Tokpisin: the men's house] in the villages. This time though the particular house-members are from different ethnic background, in this case people are from 'Goroko, Simbu, Morobe, Goilala, Kerema, Samarai and Sepik'[55]. They are young men trying to establish themselves away from the pressure of clan, tribe or family.

Other markers of identity in Morata, but in some ways more subtle, are the churches. In Morata itself, there are many different church denominations. Some of them are the Catholic, the Lutheran, the Seventh Day Adventist, the Baptist, Four Square, Revival Church, Assembly of God, the Revival Church, etc. Some '*hauslain*' have there own

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[54] Highlanders have also started moving into settlements which traditionally are known to be populated only by coastal people (Western and Gulf Province).

[55] When referring to ethnicity people in the settlement often refer to the provincial capital from the province (e.g. Goroko, Kerema), a particular area (e.g. Goilala, Samarai), or a whole province (e.g. Simbu), or a whole area (e.g. Sepik) of descendant.

'*Iotu*', mostly fundamentalist churches, which they conduct on their own premises. The churches' influence, even though perceived as strong, is challenged in different ways. There are indications that the situation may not be that much different to that described by Hallpike (1977) who stated that: "The Fathers are well aware that for many of their converts Christianity is very superficial" (ibid.:18).

Settlement 'talk'

In general, settlements have been talked about in terms of dirt and crime, which also carry associations with disorder and violence. Both settlement insiders and outsiders use those particular images for different purposes. This process has helped to set up the settlement as an exclusive environment. Its exclusive nature can be used, as it is within the state-based discourse on law-and-order, to label a particular area as the source of all evil. But, as I will try to show, this seemingly contained area can also be seen as a prominent site in which the prevailing state-based discourse on settlement life can be contested. As Connell and Lea (1994: 286) wrote, "all Melanesian cultures are products of a history of appropriation, resistance and accommodation". Throughout their existence the inhabitants of those areas have used their reputation for dirt and crime to demand more attention in terms of developmental and employment issues. At the same time they have succeeded in operating in terms of values and meanings embedded in their life-world, which, in the eyes of the establishment, might be considered unacceptable or criminal. As a way of developing a better insight, I propose to investigate, within the microscopic perspective constructed by people living in the settlement, a number of issues such as crime, violence and unemployment, which are part of the macroscopic perspective on settlement and law-and-order. I complement these characteristics by scrutinising the issues of ethnicity and social change which arose strongly in the investigation of the image of settlement and which impinge on understandings and experiences of violence and crime.

Danger, violence and crime

The settlements are regarded in the state-based discourse as dangerous and therefore inhospitable environments into which no one in his or her right mind should venture. This negative reputation discourages investigation and therefore contributes to the difficulty of

ever challenging it. My research shows that, as I detail later, insiders who often use the bad reputation to their advantage are reinforcing this negative portrayal. The discouragement of outsiders, including representatives of state institutions, from venturing into the settlement has allowed the settlement population to construct an environment, which is, to a certain extent, organised in a way they feel comfortable with. It is also a space where people can achieve a status involving respect and power, based on values such as violence and crime, which would not be considered respectable in the state-based framework. This does not imply that violence and crime are not part of the group of people supporting the state-based representation of the settlement, but they would not acknowledge it in public (cf. Saffu tapes in Standish, 1999). Entry to the settlement by an outsider is in itself a challenge to the dangerous image and is often questioned by both insiders and outsiders. For example, on several occasions I used public transport to travel from a 'respectable' area to the settlement. Since the routes were not always clearly indicated, I often had to ask bystanders which bus would take me to Morata. The question was always followed by a query as to what I was going to do there and accompanied by the suggestion that I should reconsider my decision in terms of personal safety. I was also approached in town by people who had recognised me from the settlement and who obviously lived there themselves. Without exception, they were quick to ask what I was doing in the settlement, at the same time warning me about the danger. It was evident that both insiders and outsiders set up the place as an exclusive environment.

My host family and informants were familiar with the settlement's reputation and possibly with the experience of danger associated with settlements and did not really want to be responsible for my safety. That safety could not be guaranteed on my way in and out of the settlement and outside the few streets in which everybody felt 'at home'. This, however, does not imply that they felt insecure in their own environment. Although they were familiar with the dynamics of the place, I obviously was not; that made me an easy target to a certain degree. I will expand on this matter when raising the issue of violence. Possibly the threat of violence gave my hosts, informants and research subjects a level of control over me. There is no doubt that the security issue restricted my capacity to expand my boundaries, especially within a comparatively short stay. The time factor indeed played an important part, as certain forms of violence, such as sexual violence and hold-ups are often targeted at people unfamiliar to the area 'Unfamiliar' faces are

easier targets as they presumably would have not forged any strong network within the community implicating obligations and reciprocity.

Violence and crime have often been considered the prerogative of settlements and to some extent of urban life. Goddard (2001) traced the history of this state-based representation back to colonial times, where settlements were seen as the sites of poverty, unemployed and criminal elements, in contrast to the well-off Europeans. This discourse, which, as Goddard rightly pointed out, could not be substantiated by empirical evidence, survived through the years. Other research publications have indicated that crime and violence were also present in rural settings (e.g. Reay, 1982; Borrey, 1995b) and that criminals operated from suburban areas other than settlements (e.g. Harris, 1988; Wrondimi, 1994; Goddard, 2001). Uneasiness about moving around in unknown territory at any time of day is therefore not limited to settlement areas. However, as Goddard (2001) pointed out, the demarcation of the settlement as a source of criminal activity has allowed for grand intervention schemes by police through their raids and by the state through their eviction plans (*Post Courier*, 15 October, 1999)[56].

At the same time, the settlers have conveniently used these interventions as a way to develop a new version of the state-based discourse on settlements. This different construction is based on the development of the 'haves'[57] who have slowly moved into the high convenant housing area previously solely occupied by the expatriate community whilst at the same time also developing growing areas of medium convenant housing. The demarcation of the settlement based on its image of crime and violence has been changed by the members of the settlement into a more economically and politically based argument. Thus, settlement people have established themselves as the have not's or more popularly referred to as the 'grassroots'[58], in contrast to the 'haves' whose social ascendancy has been attributed to nepotism. Hence, the local discourse has somehow managed to turn the state-based discourse into a tool justifying their criminal acts. In this

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[56] http://www.postcourier.com.pg/19991015/news05.htm

[57] It is important to note that my research subjects never talked about lower, middle or high-class people. As such there is no class-consciousness yet as known in the Western discourse. Some of my research subjects have regular contacts with the 'haves' but those are than considered to be the good ones because they share; '*Ol olsem mipela, ol ino antapim ol yet*' [Tokpisin: They put themselves on the same level as us]. Subtleties are obviously lost when presenting the overall picture captured within the discourse.

[58] The term 'grassroots' in PNG was first introduced through the work and programs conducted by non-government agencies who wanted to reinforce the fact that the target group is the basis of society. Without their development and their input there could be no sustainable development. They wanted to empower and assist those that the government had 'forgotten' in the overall development process.

context, crime and violence are no longer the prerogative of settlements. It is the economic disparity created through misappropriation and nepotism of the 'haves' that has contributed to the increased rate of crime and violence.

Despite the development of this new perspective on society, the state-based narrative has managed to maintain its dominance. Settlements are still considered the inhospitable areas of town. The sustainability of the negative image of settlements might well be associated with the need to create scapegoats to be the bearer of the sins of the community as a whole. But, it also becomes clear that the inhabitants of the settlements have no desire to break down state-based discourse in its totality. Appropriation of elements of the state-based discourse has become a tool, which, as mentioned previously, can be used to the advantage of settlers. It allows them to create a space where life can be developed according to values which might be considered, or which are for that matter artificially labelled, unacceptable outside the confines of the settlement area. They are norms, which do not adhere to Western sensibilities.

Employment/Unemployment

The negative image of the settlement is further emphasised by its apparent high rate of unemployment, which links in with the high rate of criminals allegedly originating from these areas (Barber, 1993; Levantis, 1998). This viewpoint has persisted despite the publication of research highlighting the way people have managed to support themselves successfully through the informal economy. 'Households' or, collectives of people associated with a given dwelling, are constructed around the financial contributions of one or several income earners working within the formal employment sector. However, many of the other members of the household contribute with their own earnings provided through self-employment and subsistence activities such as fishing and gardening (Barber, 1993). Nevertheless, it is common for people to represent themselves as employed only if they are regularly receiving a fortnight payment. Often my informant made a statement that a particular person was not working. She would then later say that the person was running a trade store or doing some contract work[59]. This way of viewing employment could contribute to the false assumption of high unemployment levels. All the families living in the street in which I was based in Morata had some sort of income,

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[59] The National Capital District Commission regularly hands out contract work to small local companies for basic maintenance of public places in the city. These local contractors in turn engage community members to do the work in their neighbourhood.

but the amount varied greatly. There were households who struggled to make ends meet. On the other hand, there were households producing sufficient surplus to afford new electrical appliances such as a fridge, washing machine, stereo, television and in some cases even a car. The diverse range in earnings also reflected the varied range of income-generating activities. Besides labourers, subsistence farmers and criminals, the community also counted a number of people who worked as public servants or who ran lucrative businesses[60], the most successful being owners of public motor vehicles, trade-stores and entertainment places. Some had well-established houses; others took shelter in makeshift places.

The participation of the settlement population in the overall urban life style becomes very visible during daytime. The settlement, which is marked by incredible levels of activity in the early mornings and evenings, often during the day turns into a ghost town with hardly anybody around. Most people would have left the settlement to engage with the urban economy outside of it. Nevertheless, more and more small businesses developing within the settlement itself are becoming quite successful. Their success is not so much dependent on the overall urban economy but is supported by a growing settlement population who are looking for more accessible and affordable services. In most instances, there is not much to show for the amount of money, which circulates in the settlement. Money is often redirected or redistributed into activities that are not part of the conventional capitalist economic system, such as bride price, death parties[61] and compensation payments.

It is important to point out that criminal activities form part of the informal economy and contribute to a certain degree to the maintenance of households. The state-based association of crime with settlements has led settlement members, especially women, to demand an entry into formal employment to reduce the participation of their children in criminal activities. This discourse runs alongside the acknowledgment that crime is not committed just by members of the settlement but is widespread at all levels of society (Harris, 1988; Borrey, 1995c; Goddard, 2001). Also, as subsequent accounts will attest,

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[60] According to my research subjects the people from *Hagen* (meaning coming from the Western Province) were the most successful business people. They would own 3 to 4 adjoining 'blocks' which at night would fill up with returning PMV's.

[61] It keeps amazing me how sick people find it often very difficult to receive financial assistance from *wantoks* or relatives. Sometimes efforts will be made to request money or money will be volunteered when the situation becomes grave which is often too late. However, when the person comes to die large amounts of money are gathered at the death party emphasising the group's powerful standing in the community. At this point in time it does not concern one individual but a whole tribe, clan or family.

criminals are not always considered a nuisance. Some have managed to integrate successfully within their community and have, through their outside network, established a reputation of reliability and efficiency. Successful criminals are often sought by members of formal state institutions to organise sufficient support for particular events such as elections (Dinnen, 1996a; Standish, 1996). In this context, the negative image associated with criminal activities that exists in the state-based representation of settlements is not reflected in the life-world of the people in the settlement. However, when useful, the much-publicised connection between crime and settlement is used to obtain increased opportunities and services for the community. It is interesting to note that people who are seen to be representing the values established in the state-based discourse often use the knowledge of criminals to advance their own positions in society. As such, their support of the state-based representation of settlements can in turn be viewed as a way to use Western values to access international support and funding to ensure their own betterment in a life that does not necessarily support many values and insights derived from Western sensibilities. This matter cannot be further expanded upon, however, within the parameters of this thesis.

Ethnicity

The earliest of Port Moresby's settlements often consisted of a single ethnic group (e.g. Oram, 1976), but in later times there has been a growing ethnic mix of people in the different settlements. The initial difficulty in accessing customary land by migrants who were not traditional trading partners of Port Moresby's indigenous landholders (Goddard, 2001) has been overcome to a certain degree, through the establishment of settlement areas by the State and by a growing dependence of local landowners on cash. Morata is a good example of a multi-ethnic environment. Having been established as a resettlement area in the early 1970s, it contains people from many different ethnic backgrounds. Further, the initial procedures set in place initially to acquire a block of land in such resettlement areas ensured that only employed people could apply for them. One could not just move into Morata on the basis of being a resident's wantok[62] [Tokpisin: related by language]. This has contributed to the multi-ethnic character of the place, which is played out in many different ways. There is a standing joke in the area that Highlanders have become such good fishing people. It was the first thing that was pointed out to me when I took a walk into the vast swamp area that fringes the West Side

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[62] For more information on the system of *wantoks* see Monsell-Davis (1993).

of the settlement. A few shelters had been built along the water that were home to a number of Simbu families who had managed to negotiate a deal with the customary coastal landowners. Over the years, they have developed a lucrative fishing business. People from the settlement would come in the early hours of the morning or afternoon to buy fish that they would fry to sell on the markets. In return for access to the natural resource of the swamp, the Simbus are expected to contribute in one way or another to occasions such as compensation payments, bride price and funerals.

The multi-ethnic character of the settlement is further reflected at the local level of settlement life. The street in which Kathy, my informant, lives has a mixture of people from Goilala, a rugged mountainous area of the central province, Enga, Eastern Highlands, Simbu, Madang, Central Province, Gulf, New Ireland, Milne Bay and a high number of people of mixed ethnicity[63]. As mentioned previously some young men, all coming from different ethnic backgrounds, decided to live together leaving their family home and somehow revive the tradition of *hausman* sustaining themselves mostly through criminal activities. People in this area relate across these ethnic borders in a casual way, using Tokpisin as the lingua franca. However, people normally use their own vernacular within the family. This practice though is sometimes hard to maintain when families are ethnically mixed. Also, there are people who identify Morata as their place of origin. For example, Martin, a highly respected citizen from Morata always refers to himself as being from Morata. Martin is the only son of a father who comes from Simbu and of a mother who is from Madang. Martin's father had gone to Madang to work and got involved with Martin's mother. The family of Martin's mother did not approve of the relationship and threatened his father to the point that he 'kidnapped' Martin's mother taking her to Port Moresby. His 'Morata' identity translates itself in huge efforts to improve the economic and social conditions of the settlement. For him Morata is not a transitional place but the place in which his children will grow up. Martin does not speak the vernacular language; he only converses in *Tokpisin*. Even though there is also dissociation from his ethnic background, there is no acceptance of an urban image. Martin obviously sees himself as part of a smaller locality that has its own set of values and societal mechanisms in place, some, which may be considered, as part of 'tradition'. It is in this small place that he is also thinking about initiating his own spiritual group to which he want to attract many young men as one of the ways, besides the need to create

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[63] Extensive anthropological work has been conducted amongst these different ethnic groups. For further information see: Pospisil (1958), Brown (1959), Hide (n.d.), Meggitt (1974), Hallpike (1977).

income generating projects, to distract them from criminal activities. The word of God has given many men a position of power[64]. The issue of Christianity will be touched upon later on in this chapter.

Ethnic labels are constructed and used in multiple ways. They become visible during special events like bride price ceremonies, funerals and also whenever the city organises events, which use ethnic markers. During the 'national women's day celebration' women, young girls and children were dressed in their traditional gear. One young girl from the Highlands looked stunning in her colourful adornments. She was, for that matter, praising the fact that she had the best traditional decorations. Knowing her from Morata, I asked her when she had been to the highland village. She had never been to the village and did not speak the vernacular language. Nevertheless, she was proud of having one of the nicest traditional outfits, which had been assembled over the years by her mother. The same ethnic pride was exposed to me by a young Goilala man who was proud of his distinctively shaped nose that had shown up clearly in a photograph I had taken of him. "Lukim Goilala nus ... top ia!" [Tokpisin: Look at the Goilala nose! The best!][65]. It was not just his nose, but a nose representative of the Goilalas. These are clear signs of an ethnic recognition, which goes well beyond the casual interactions that exist amongst multi-ethnic people living in a particular area. Small organisations such as women's groups and business groups are often established along ethnic lines. Accentuation of ethnic particularities also takes place in relation to behavioural patterns, such as one's violent character and its attached value.

The ultimate ethnic association occurs through conflicts, which can have long-standing repercussions. The particular ambivalence involved in the living out of ethnicity translates in practice into a precarious equilibrium[66] which, when disturbed, can have far-reaching consequences for the community. Violence often emanates from the disturbance of that

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[64] Religious people have taken senior public servants positions even to the point of becoming governor of the province (e.g. Father Lak). Their association with God often earns them extra credit points even though they may end up disappointing their electorate in a big way. In the documentary based on the anthropological publication of Ongka we see an elder in the highlands attempting to revive its status by joining the Church.

[65] Goilala are popularly stereotyped in Port Moresby as ugly. Here a Goilala is appropriating and reversing a stereotypic feature, transforming it into a positive attribute.

[66] The equilibrium I refer to here shows lots of similarity with the way Hallpike (1977) talks about 'harmony'. In his work among the Tauade he defines 'harmony' as consisting in the balance of opposing forces. He further elaborates that within this context violence has a very different significance (ibid.:V). He states that "Wild is not merely the destructive alternative to social order, but is the source of life and of creativity in general".(ibid.:254)

equilibrium; it is generated not only by ethnic issues but also by different dynamic processes between individuals, groups and their articulation with external social forms. The following incident is an example of how, despite an initial mutual trust amongst people from different ethnic groups, very violent confrontations can occur dividing the community along ethnic lines. Karen is Koiari and was married to a man from the Sepik. This is the story she told me:

My husband was from the Sepik. We got a child from a woman. The child belonged to my brother-in-law and his wife. He was married to a woman from Kerema. He is a teacher. The woman was going around too much. So he told my husband and me to take the child and look after it. Then one day the mother came by and said she would take the child for a walk and bring it back later. But she never brought the child back. Than one Saturday there was a party at a place where Engans [a highland group] live. One boy saw the child there with the mother and came to inform me. I called my husband at work. He arrived and together we went to the party place to inquire. When we arrived at the Engans' place, we found all the men drunk. My husband asked about the mother and child. Guys just got up and hit him with a log. He fell down. We asked them again and they hit him again. He fell unconscious. I threw water over him and he regained consciousness. We then returned to the house, went to sleep and then early morning some Engans came to the house. I opened the door and they asked for my husband. When he got to the door, the Engans dragged him outside and speared him in the left side of his chest. All the rest of us got scared and ran away. He died from his injuries but that was not sufficient. They got a pig's head and put it behind his head [a symbolic gesture] and they ran off. A Simbu man drove by in his car and gave us a lift to the hospital. However, he died on the way to the hospital. As a result, all the guys [across ethnic boundaries] from here got together and started destroying and rampaging through all the properties belonging to Engans including the small trade stores. There was lots of violence in Morata. Police had to be called in and roadblocks were set up around Morata. It stopped the violence. My husband's body was taken to Wewak for the funeral. He was a government worker so the government organised everything. There was an investigation and witnesses were called. The relatives of my husband (his younger brother and Bernard Narokobi – current Speaker of parliament), refused compensation payment. Two men were convicted but I am not too sure for how long they were sentenced. The child was about 2-3 yrs old. We had only been looking after it for a couple of months. The Kerema woman had remarried with a man from Enga. The

Kerema woman was never taken to court. She must be hiding somewhere, I never saw her again. When my brother-in-law came to pick up some of his belongings, my family and I chased him away. I saw him once in Boroko. I wanted to inform the police to pick him up but he ran away. He is the one who left the child with us and caused all the problems.

Despite the fact that Karen blames her Sepik brother-in-law for the tragic incident, she could not prevent a violent reaction towards the Engans by other people from the community. Her family problem had been translated into a community dispute along ethnic association. According to other sources, Morata's borders were manned by community men with bows and arrows to make sure no Engans would re-enter Morata. After four years, the Engans are now slowly re-entering the area. There are clearly other forces at work which override the individual's choice regarding whether to engage or encourage violence and which result from enduring inter-subjectivity within specific ethnic groups. The involvement of the formal justice system could not stop community initiatives such as the reprisal against Engans in general. Only the Engans directly involved in the killing were taken through the formal justice system. Where the community sees the formal justice system as insufficient, it will take whatever complementary actions are necessary to obtain a satisfactory outcome. The ongoing importance, attached to ethnicity and associated cultural values, is also reflected in the choice of the burial site for the victim.

From the example above it also becomes clear that certain moral values have been adopted across ethnic borders, leading to cooperation between members of different ethnic backgrounds against the ethnic group that they perceive to have perpetrated the offence. This reflects a consensus on what is regarded as appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. There seems also to be an agreement between the different ethnic groups about the method deployed to rectify a volatile situation. Hence, social control is at work within the settlement using retaliatory mechanisms as they exist within some tribal societies (e.g. Hallpike, 1977) but now extending to include alliances with different ethnic groups. The multi-ethnic character of the place has contributed to an increase in 'marriages'[67] across ethnic borders. Frictions arising in this particular environment, where

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[67] The term 'marriage' does not necessarily refer to the conventional understanding of it meaning as a relationship between a man and a woman formalised either by the church, the state or custom. Increasingly a man and woman are considered to be married when their sexual relationship is not hidden from close relatives or family.

individualisation is still secondary to ethnic and group association, do instigate more rapidly ethnic based arguments. Alcohol consumption often becomes the trigger for those violent interactions. To the people living outside the settlement dynamics but more specifically away from ethnic dynamics, the occurrence of violence is perceived as the outcome of ethnic friction in an environment where traditional control mechanisms have given way to anarchy.

However, these above issues are not the outcome of diminished social control within the settlement. As will be pointed out in Chapter 4 the perceived lack of control expressed through excessive use of violence, rather reflects the working of a social control system, which is based on restorative and retaliatory justice. (e.g. Hallpike, 1977; Knauft, 1985)

Despite the fact that a large group of settlers have grown up away from their 'traditional' cultural environment, multi-ethnic association has led to the development by different groups of particular markers of contemporary ethnicity (e.g. Clark, 1997). In the examples above, there is the 'Goilala nose' and the 'violent Engan man'. These markers do not necessarily connect with a trait, which was regarded as typical in the area of origin. They are signs that have developed as a result of 'othering' in a multi-ethnic environment, affecting to a certain degree people's subjective and inter-subjective identity construction. Under certain circumstances, a particular marker will affect the way assessments and decisions are made. The outcome of incidents and disputes brought to the Village Court was clearly influenced by communal acknowledgement of particular traits attributed to members of a specific ethnic group. For example, the marker of 'fighters' for Engans had obviously influenced a decision by Village Court magistrates for one of the cases, which in my opinion seemed to be unjust. When I expressed my surprise at the decision reached, all magistrates involved were adamant that this was the only way to deal with the issue as any stronger judgement could have led to a violent uproar. This belief was based on an assumption that one of the parties involved belonged to a particular ethnic group renown for its volatile and often violent behaviour. Reference was also made to the fact that things would be worked out further outside the court.

This account reinforces the earlier observation that people from Morata utilise the formal justice system selectively according to its perceived and partial efficiency to resolve specific local issues. It also shows that the justice system applies its own sense of justice selectively. The stigmatisation of particular ethnic groups is further reinforced by the

recognition among members of those groups of the stigmatic representation and therefore possibly leading to the reinforcement of that trait in the further development of their own cultural identity. As one of my Engan friends used to say, "We Engans are very friendly but if something comes our way and we are not happy with it we will get very violent. This is just the way we are".

The multi-ethnic character of the settlement can, as seen in the previous example, contribute to an unsettling atmosphere within it. People are always apprehensive of the possibility of confrontation despite their daily interactions across ethnicity. But, this is not necessarily an unknown phenomenon and can therefore not solely be attributed to settlement life (Hallpike, 1977:199). Having said this, economic and land pressure can make things a lot more tense for people living in the settlements. As in the example of the Engans, such ethnic confrontations do not necessarily result from the motives of individuals but are often a spillover from personal conflicts, which rapidly turn into an ethnic issue affecting a larger area. Settlement life, and for that matter urban life, is still strongly marked by inter-subjective ethnic characterisations which can be aggravated dialectically by manifestations of growing individualisation, such as the events described above, which do not always anticipate consequences on a wider scale.

Children from mixed parentage and children who have never visited their place of origin, still take on an ethnic subjectivity whenever it is considered useful or is imposed through local circumstances (see also Connell and Lea, 1994). However, it is important to recognise one possible reason that people use these ethnic references in discussions with outsiders: researchers often frame questions in terms of ethnicity, creating a discursively handy categorical context that may not accurately reflect social reality. In daily life people associate across ethnic borders and strong relationships are established which transcend ethnic identities. The raskols have been successful in developing this process. Settlement life cannot be considered a replica of rural settings and dynamics. Morata, despite its inhabitants' differentiable histories, has evolved into a space with its own historicity and dynamics. Elements of urban development affected by global processes have also been appropriated and adapted to suit its Morata's particular dynamics. At the same time, certain dynamics are definitely more a continuation of processes and passions, which can be seen as part of the cultural heritage. The applications of the cultural heritage are played out in broader fields such as the settlement and the urban environment.

New life-world

The volatile character of the place has been attributed by some writers to the primary importance given to the village of origin and people's declared intention to return to and settle in the area of origin (Salisbury and Salisbury, 1972; Vele, 1978). In Morata, however, it is clear that many people have no intention to return to the village and there are a number of reasons for this. For some, Port Moresby has become home; there are no incentives to return to the village. This is certainly so for people who are second or third generation Port Moresby dwellers. Others find village life too uncomfortable and lacking in services for their children. In certain cases, people have left their villages under threat of death through poisoning or black magic. In a number of instances people have consciously cut themselves off from their kin who, they claim, had become too dependant on them for financial and other material support. There are many other reasons arising from having been away from home villages for many years.

On the other hand, many people in the settlement have maintained close contact with relatives back 'home'. Some of them travel regularly between town and village. Thus the settlements are, as Goddard (2001) pointed out, not isolated entities. Their seeming isolation stems from a discourse, which is closely attached to the state-based law-and-order debate that presents the settlement as a dangerous place, infested with violence and crime and where social control mechanisms are dysfunctional.

Nevertheless, the village is not necessarily seen as the site for eventual settlement in later life. More and more people are establishing themselves in the city whilst still maintaining contacts in the village, but not necessarily with the aim of returning there. Despite the fact that certain people in the settlement would accept any opportunity to leave their settlement life behind, there are many others who have established themselves securely and who have made a definite choice to be in that space, even though opportunities to leave the area have been presented to them. The security comes not necessarily from economic stability as known in the West, but from engagement with a network of people who allow one to participate in a society that has shared values and meanings.

The ambivalent experience of settlement life is closely related to the way life is organised and how people manage to survive in an environment that is not prosperous. Despite the

fact that many people have found economic gain within the formal and informal sectors (Barber, 1993), there is no denying that a number of people struggle at certain times in the settlement (Chao, 1985). In spite of these struggles, large amounts of money always seem to be in circulation. The origin of that money is in many ways still a mystery, although large amounts are generated by different local businesses. Also, Highlanders share in revenues collected from the coffee harvest in their place of origin. Some of that money is used to generate new businesses in the urban areas, while some gets recycled into other networks of obligation or compensation.

Settlements are an area of constant mediation. They can be regarded as a new life-world, negotiated through the communication and clashing between different ethnicities, different languages and different cultures. Also in this new life-world, there is negotiation between the global and the local and constant movement between a growing individualisation and the still persistent communal and ethnic obligations. It is a space of ambivalence that translates itself into the personal life of the individual who engages across ethnicity and particular customary boundaries but who at the same time is entangled within those ethnic and customary issues. The existing balance, in an environment where very little is settled, is very precarious. This does not imply, however, that settlement communities seek balance or 'harmony'. Tension does not necessarily equate to negativity. Hallpike (1977), who for several years studied the Tauade, people from a rugged mountain interior of the Central Province (often commonly referred to as the Goilalas), already came to that conclusion by stating that:

> "... 'harmony' will consist in the balance of opposing forces, and in this
> context the passions will not be seen as destructive, but on the contrary,
> as providing the basis of all interaction." (ibid.:v)

The settlement is a space in movement, where people not only reassess customary and Western sensibilities but also resist them, where individuality is explored and also challenged. As a way of clarifying the above, I now take a closer look at the lives of people with whom I shared the block in Morata.

The 'block' on the street

The central characters on the block are Patrick and Kathy. Their life is a good representation of that of other households in the settlement, especially in terms of economic and family values. I hope to show through the exploration of some of the characters living on this block how elements of the state-based discourse related to employment, crime, violence and dirt in the settlement can easily misrepresent the reality of settlement life. To clarify that construction, clearly influenced by a Western understanding of the life-world, I will focus on family structure, gender and sexuality as these issues inform understandings and experiences of violence, crime and unemployment. These issues, as the analysis will further clarify, are also linked with understandings and experiences of the 'white man', poverty, agency and Christianity. At the same time these issues can not be dissociated from the historicity of the places where my research subjects originate from or are associated with. Patrick and Kathy, within the daily urban language used, would be referred to as Goilala. As set out earlier on Goilala refers to people from the highlands from the Central Province. Kathy is a Tauade, a group of people that has been extensively studied by Hallpike (1977). As for Patrick, he is from Garaina, Morobe province. Marriage exchanges have long taken place between the Garainas and Tauade and according to Patrick their 'customs' have lots in common. Patrick identifies himself as being a 'Goilala'. Since colonisation the Goilalas have developed a reputation as being among the most violent people in PNG. In 1940 the government considered abandoning the area and declaring it an uncontrolled area. They also invited the mission to withdraw. The end of the 1940s early 1950s achieved comparative peace after men were sent to Port Moresby as labourers. (ibid.:14) The violence, however, seemed to have then transferred to Port Moresby and still today the Goilalas are often being blamed for the *raskols* activities taking place in the capital city. This labelling has taken place despite the fact that aggression is an obsession shared by many societies in New Guinea (ibid.:vii). For the case of Morata it seems that the Goilalas in their reputation of aggression have indeed been joined by the Engans (see incident at the Village Court).

Both Patrick and Kathy did not grow up in their area of descent but both have been back to their places on several occasions, both still speak the vernacular language and both do make reference to *kastom* once in a while. In their daily lives they have an extensive network of people who are both Goilala and non-Goilala. Their 4 children do not speak

the vernacular language but converse solely in *Tokpisin*. At school, whenever they manage to attend classes, they are taught in English.

Patrick – issues of family and individual values, the perception of crime

It took me a while initially to move away from my own understanding of family, characterised by a nuclear family living together in a physically delineated environment. Already the core of the family, mother and father, could not be associated with the particular block that I somehow considered as the centre of the household. The block of land belongs to one of Kathy's uncles, who purchased it in the early 70s. Thus the normal practice of virolocality upon marriage, characteristic of Patrick's and Kathy's custom, did not take place in this relationship.

Patrick, in the early 1970s came to live in Port Moresby, when his mother could not afford to pay his school fees back in the village. His father had married a second wife. The second marriage raised lots of controversy with the result that his father, who was than the chief, escaped to Port Moresby under the threat of sorcery. He started working at the Bomana cemetery and married a third time with a woman from Goilala. Patrick did not come to stay with his father but joined the family of his maternal uncle who at that time was living at Ela Beach. The uncle, however, did not manage to put Patrick through school. Patrick then started hanging around with the boys and ended up building a reputable position as a gang member of 585. In 1978, he returned with his maternal grandmother, who had come for a short visit, back to his mother's village. Two weeks upon his return, he went on to his father's village to attend to the funeral of his paternal grandmother. He than left with other *mangis* [Tokpisin: boys] to Wau and than to Lae where he set up a sub branch of the Port Moresby 585 gang. He was eventually apprehended by the police and served a three-year sentence at Buimo jail in Lae. Having other pending cases against him, he decided to return to Port Moresby in 1985. He brought his wife along whom he had first met in Wau where his mother was then living after remarrying a man from Wau. They went to stay with his wife's sister in Morata. Patrick took up his activities again as a gang member. As Kathy put it: Morata got really hot when Patrick came to live in Morata implying that there were lots of gang activities with ensuing police raids. Soon Patrick became the leader of 585. Together with his first wife, he adopted the daughter of this wife's sister who had a difficult relationship with her

partner from Goroka. Later on Patrick would get involved with Kathy. This move did not come without any problems. This will become clear from Kathy's story.

Currently, Patrick moves between three different households: that of his first wife, also in Morata 1, Kathy's block and his father's block at nine-mile. In conventional[68] terms, having no land to his name, this would leave Patrick in a social position of inferiority. However, Patrick has been able to achieve a prestigious position through his unconventional activities which in the state-based discourse are referred to as criminal, . but which are often considered part of normal business in the eyes of the benefactors. Those benefactors are mostly relatives, family and other community members who benefit directly or buy stolen goods for a reduced price. It is important, however, to clarify that it is not the activities as such which give him this position, but rather his ongoing capacity to distribute his gains and provide necessary support to members of his group. His loyalty, his oratory skills, and probably the fact that he has not accumulated personal wealth[69] during his criminal career, has somehow made him a hero (contrary to what one would expect within a capitalist mode of production)[70]. At the same time, as a criminal he has also managed on multiple occasions to avoid identification, arrest and imprisonment. Thus, he has made a mockery of the state criminal justice system, which by now is regarded by most community members as irrelevant and inefficient. Patrick's reputation has spread outside the boundaries of Morata, ensuring a status of respect in other parts of the city and the country. His overall status somehow overrides the conventional value attached to being a landowner. This was clearly reflected in the way my arrival on the block was negotiated foremost through Patrick's support and approval. His decision did not necessarily entail automatic approval from other members of the block, but my presence could have never been an option without his initial approval. The fact that his father was a chief may also prove an asset to Patrick who admits to have inherited some of the needed skills. After his father had left, the village Patrick's older brother had been left to be the *mausman* [Tokpisin: spokesperson]. However, as the situation turns out,

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[68] I use the term 'conventional' here to refer to customs which are described as neo-custom. However, I find it difficult to use this term as it somehow suggests that individuals to accommodate their desire and perceptions can change custom. By 'convention' I refer to a set of values and meanings which are not necessarily derived from Western constructions but which obviously have evolved through time and place as a consequence of Western influence. These conventions are part of the social and cultural framework in which people construct their life-world.

[69] This characteristic may however, not be so crucial. Hallpike (1977) remarks that the norms and constraints of Goilalas' society works against the accumulation of property by one man. (ibid.:24) Nevertheless, in the context of political developments whereby politicians are seen to accumulate wealth at the expense of the development of the people this characteristic does gain special value.

[70] See also Whiteman, 1973:4.

Patrick has been left to take that role from his brother who is a rather quiet person. After leaving the active criminal life Patrick, with his oratory skills and critical perception of the 'world out there', is often asked to take on the lead on many occasions, from youth, family and clan gatherings.

Despite the fact that Patrick does not own the block, it has been a centre stage for a major part of his life. Relatives, friends and acquaintances stroll in and out of the place, some staying for longer periods of time, others bringing contributions in kind or cash. The arrangements between people seem flexible but clearly follow certain rules, mostly based on mutual obligations and economic survival. Relationships are not restricted to the conventional bond between kin but take place increasingly with people who share similar living conditions and aspirations and who do not necessarily have kinship relationships. This, however, does not imply a disregard for the conventional expectations and obligations within a setting of relationships. In many regards they have been adopted in a way that makes intersubjective bonding possible on a basis beyond ethnicity. This particular process challenges issues raised within the macroscopic perspective of law-and-order which sees the problems of crime and violence resulting from a lack of social control, rapid social changes which somehow affect the very fabric of kinship relationships. What can be observed is an extension of these relationships outside kinship relations reinforcing a network of obligation and reciprocity in a multi-ethnic environment. It does not offer full guarantee for a trouble free environment but challenges the perception that settlements are an environment out of control due to a lack of social cohesion and control. Furthermore, stability is not necessarily an aim in itself.

Already this brief contact with Patrick and the block brings out a different perception of issues assumed in the state-based debate on settlements. Patrick's life-style evokes the ongoing negotiation that takes place in an environment created away from the conventional rural life-world; yet participants do not necessarily submerge themselves totally in a new life-world introduced as part of the colonial legacy and further influenced by the global economy. This new life-world however, can in turn reinforce particular ethnic markers and values with certain cultural practices being tailored to accommodate the multi-ethnic environment.

Despite the fact that the life of people on the block touches on issues of poverty, crime, violence and lack of development, it cannot in any way be embraced by the understanding of these issues as presented and understood in the state-based discourse. For example, crime does not have the same negative connotation as it does in the state-based representation, which carries Western understandings of criminal behaviour[71]. Patrick, despite his involvement with criminal activities, is seen not primarily as a criminal but rather as a person with authority. His involvement in criminal activities has also allowed him to overcome the conventional association of land possession and productivity with authority and prestige. Nevertheless, it could be assumed that Patrick would not be able to reproduce his acquired status in his village of origin and would therefore have little incentive for returning to his ancestral lands. This may be partially the case considering the increasing importance of cash and goods at times of ceremonies and compensation. The gains from criminal activities would have mostly benefited Patrick's gang members and immediate family and not necessarily his traditional network. On the other hand, at the height of his criminal career Patrick ensured ongoing contributions for his own relatives and families whilst at the same time entertaining the same obligations within his gang world, which counted members from other ethnic groups. It is clear that Patrick's engagement with crime has not pushed him to the margin of society, as would be the case in Western societies. It has helped Patrick to obtain a respectable position in the community, and to a certain degree outside the community, because he had excelled as a contributing individual in an environment that still evolves around values of obligation and reciprocity. As such he does not differ much from the 'big man' (Goddard, 1992) or 'chief' (Hallpike, 1977) in the village renown for his generosity and capacity to negotiate the wellbeing of the community members.

Kathy – issues of gender, sexuality, employment, crime and violence

Kathy, who is Patrick' second wife, arrived in Port Moresby aged one. Her father had come from Goilala to Port Moresby about two years earlier. He was then working as a labourer and lived at the Taurama barracks attached to the military base in Port Moresby. Kathy's mother left her village when word got to her that her husband had work. She moved to the district station at Tapini, where she stayed with her elder sister and her brother-in-law. Kathy was born at the station and stayed there until her father

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[71] As mentioned in Chapter 2 crime can also be viewed in positive terms within the Western framework. However, the West as perceived by my research subjects is perceived as the civilised part of the world while crime, but also violence is perceived as part of a savage world.

provided plane tickets for her and her mother to join him in Port Moresby. The family stayed in Vadavada settlement with a cousin of Kathy's mother because there was no water at Taurama. They were given a small block on which they built a house. Kathy's mother had then left her husband for a new man and given birth to their first child, Sofie, Kathy's stepsister. Two boys followed. In 1972 Kathy's mother, together with her children and new husband, left Vadavada and moved onto a new block in Morata, which Kathy's uncle had purchased. Meanwhile the uncle had started a private motor vehicle (PMV)[72] business and also opened a 'mobile store'. Until a few years ago, the block consisted of one house (with two bedrooms) and a trade store made of weatherboard. A shed was built at the back of the house and used as a kitchen. Also at the back, there was a water tap and a 'travelling' pit toilet that was moved to a new site every time it filled up. As Kathy said, this was a lot more comfortable than back in the village[73]. "At least we do not have to walk long distances to access water. It just flows in, or almost, whenever we need it". In 1994 the house was burned down following an argument between Patrick and some Highlanders, leaving Kathy and her children, to shelter in the trade-store; and Sofie with her children, to move into a section of the kitchen.

Family and finance

Currently the core people, meaning those who are considered as residing fulltime on the block, are Kathy, her half-sister Sofie, Jean (who has been adopted by Kathy and Patrick), Kathy's and Sofie's children and Kathy's grandfather. The way people move together on a block and the way they all contribute to the household gives some idea of the loyalties and priorities in the life of people living in the settlement. Sofie left the father of her children after he started seeing another woman. She did not want to be in a polygamous relationship. Sofie contributes to the household expenses through occasional contract work and the selling of donuts at the street market. Sofie dropped out of school in grade 8. She is known as the most industrious person on the block who can also be trusted with money, meaning that money will not be spent in an unproductive manner. Her religious devotion has, at this particular point in time, deterred her from entering a new relationship. As she and Jean, a teenager sharing the block, suggested in one of our conversations at a time nearing the new millennium: *"Mipela nogat taim long tingting long narpela man. Wanpela man tasol mipela inap tingim. Sapos mipela ino*

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[72] PMVs are the privately owned buses, mostly 25-seaters but also trucks, used as public transport.

[73] Kathy has returned several times to her native village.

wokim olsem bai mipela kisim bikpela bagarap". [Tokpisin: "We don't have time to think about other men. We can only devote ourselves to one man. If we don't we'll get in big trouble".]. At the time of writing, a year later, both women were involved with men. The influence of religion is rather ad-hoc, often directed by daily circumstances one find oneself in. Also over time, it became clear that religion was associated with a level of civility; it was a sign of moving away from savagery. The first inquiry often made by a research subject of a white person concerns their religious affiliation. A negative response often leaves the research subject in a state of confusion, not really clear what to think about a white person who is not member of an official denomination.

Jean is another permanent resident of the block. Jean, who is about 18 years old (she does not really know her age), moved in with Kathy and Patrick several years ago. Jean was sent down from her village in Goilala[74] when she was approximately 11 years old to help her sister who had been deserted with child by one of Patrick's cousin-brothers. Jean ended up doing all the hard work whilst her sister spent her nights at discos and providing no assistance. Jean decided she had had enough of this situation and with her sister's child moved onto Kathy and Patrick' block. The mother retrieved the child but Jean did not leave the block again. Jean is often the one looking after the place and the children whilst others go about their various businesses. She is slowly moving into her own business of selling cold drinks. She sometimes gets pocket money from Patrick or Sofie. She has adopted Patrick and Kathy as her 'parents'.

Kathy's grandfather came to the block after the death of his wife two years ago in the village. He could not tolerate being in the environment which reminded him of his life with her. *Bubu* [Tokpisin: grandfather] does not speak Tokpisin. Every day he walks to the Waigani market and collects bottles and cans that he sells.

Besides the core residents on the block, many other people come either for a visit or for a more extended period. A regular visitor is Kathy's mother, who has now left her third husband. She moves between Kathy's home and her oldest son's place – he is headmaster of a village school about two hours' drive out of Port Moresby. She often expects her four children to provide her with money but she also makes cash by selling garden produce that she brings from the village where her older son works. The police

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[74] She is a Fuyuga who are an ethnic group within the Goilala region that intermarries with the Tauade. (Hallpike, 1977)

killed one son whilst Gabriel, the youngest in the family, moves between the block in Morata and his cousin's family in Madang. Gabriel was initially sent over to Madang to remove him from gang activities. He has been enrolled in school in Madang but requested to be allowed to return to Port Moresby.

Despite the fact that Kathy does not contribute in a regular way with income she is clearly regarded as the central woman figure. Her higher educational level[75] and her access to influential people working in government and non-government agencies have brought her a level of prestige. Her active participation in the community[76] and the women's council has brought occasional financial rewards. She also manages to be accepted on courses and congresses, which take her and Sofie (when she can organise it) to different parts of the country. Her network amongst kin and people engaged in state-based institutions is tremendous. Her capacity to read and write, which exceeds in certain areas the knowledge of her husband Patrick (who dropped out of school at grade 6), has partly contributed to her personal status. Nevertheless, as her story will show, it is mostly her capacity to negotiate between different life-worlds that has brought her the status she now enjoys in the settlement. Her association with renowned criminals (not just Patrick, as her account will highlight) and her often successful use of that association has also contributed to her respectable position. Despite Kathy's extensive contacts with an environment built on Eurocentric values and meanings, the negative association with crime and violence strongly represented in the state-based discourse loses its value in the local discussions and experiences of people like her living on the block.

Gender and sexuality

I would like to highlight some of the issues in regard to gender and sexuality by sharing Kathy's life story as she conveyed it to me. This story in many ways challenges elements of the state-based discourse on settlements. In the state-based representation, settlements are often described as underdeveloped areas, in which women are frequently portrayed as the inferior gender with no agency, resulting in becoming a

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[75] Kathy succeeded in getting through high school and finished grade 10. She than successfully entered university for a creative arts degree. However, after becoming involved with the father of her children she did not further her education.

[76] Her interests in arts have led her to set up a local theatre group consisting mostly of children. Whenever the occasion presents itself she organises performances which are mostly related to health and gender awareness issues, clearly tapping into a popular discourse of emancipation and development. The performances are sometimes conducted in the settlement but more often they are presented at particular events organised by government and non-government organisations.

frequent victim of violence. In many academic discussions regarding domestic and sexual violence it is assumed that the unsuccessful adaptation of men to the new social and economic order set by global influences has led to men working out their frustration on women, instilling fear and further subjugation (Bradley, 1992; Josephides, 1993; Nihill, 1994; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997a). Meanwhile, the victimised image of women has been further promoted through an intense domestic violence campaign using posters depicting women being beaten up by men. Hence, despite the fact that there has been some criticism of Eurocentric analysis of gender in non-Western environments (e.g. Weiner, 1976; O'Brien and Tiffany, 1984; Pettman, 1992b), that discourse of victimised women has gained considerable attention. This development goes well beyond the boundaries of the settlements. Nevertheless, the worst victims are said to be in the settlements, needing to be defended by their 'sisters' outside the settlements. In this regard, we relive the universal sisterhood effect occurring on a national and international basis. I expand further on this issue in later chapters, but it is important to establish how a Eurocentric analysis of gender roles and the associated position of women might miss the point in the overall context of a different social and cultural sociality.

Kathy's story is a story of movement, choices and desires but also limitations. At the same time, it highlights in certain instances a clear difference in values and meanings as experienced in the Eurocentric environment, which underpins the state-based discourse on settlements. Some association could be made with Western women living at the margin of society. However, her story is not exceptional. Many women share a similar history and therefore her story cannot be considered as that of one who lives on the margin. It is important to bear in mind that values, which are regarded as marginal in the West, are not necessarily viewed in that way in a different cultural setting. Nevertheless, Kathy's story could easily be that of a woman in a Western environment, a woman who would probably be considered as living at the periphery of society. However, her story is not exceptional. Many women in the settlement share a similar history and therefore her story cannot be considered as that of one who lives on the margin. It is important to bear in mind that values, which are regarded as marginal in the West, are not necessarily viewed in that way in a different cultural setting.

Despite the fact that Kathy's life story deals with many different issues, which cannot all be discussed here, I have decided to share the whole story as it gives an idea of the issues that are important to her. It also provides the context for the issues that I

eventually will extract, at the same time reminding us that issues of gender, sexuality and violence cannot be assessed through our own conceptual framework but need to be seen within the broader cultural and social context.

Kathy's story:

"I married a man from the same village but who is based in Kaugere. The man is second to Faebo [renowned gang leader from Koboni, a gang based in Kaugere and mostly originating from the Gulf province]. I lived in Kaugere from 1985 to 1989. I had no child so the man chased me out. He was not a jealous man; he would let me dance and drink. He had finished grade 6. I met him when he would visit his auntie in Morata. He seemed like a nice man. His little sister was asked to tell me that he liked me. We were both first (marriage) partners. The man was going out with lots of other women. He had lots of money from the robberies. Women would want him. Also, he could be shot any day. Our death is just around the corner, there is need for replacement. He would go to Pink Pussy (a local bar renowned for its prostitutes) and I would follow him and pick up fights with him. His friends would get upset so he got rid of me. I did not have any bad feelings. I then started running around with my cousin sister who is a disco-meri. We had a fight and ended up in jail. In 1985, I went to the village for Xmas and then came back. I then joined all girls and we would go to the star dance disco-club. For one year, I was frustrated. I was going out with other men and drank lots of beer. This was from February 89 until December 1989. I got into a fight with another woman over a man. He was from the taskforce. A police came and held me from the back. I thought it was some man holding me. I struggled and hit off the hat. I had hit the medal of the Queen. I was sent to prison. The bail was K30. I spent one week in Bomana jail (16 September 1989). We always had to answer with 'yes boss'. On payday we got loose soap and wheat flour. My sister bailed me out but I found it hard to go back to the house. At Gordon's market, I tricked my mother and sister who had come to pick me up. I told them that my cargo was at the police station. I went to find my friends. All other girls were happy to see me. They bought me beer and I got drunk. I slept at one of the girls' house. For a while, I went out with a white man. He is now the director of Antom security. My friend married Walter Jones and is now married and living in England. When the man goes out, he brings in other girls. Because I was afraid of catching a disease, I left him. He would still come and find me here in Morata. I told him that I would get my brothers on him if he did not leave me alone. Later on, I went to the village. There was no beer there. One bottle costs K3. I started smoking marijuana with other women. We used to smoke the whole day. After a

while, I stopped talking, or talk nonsense or get angry for no reason. My family told me to go back to Morata. They thought I was behaving that way because I had left my man (Kaugere man). Got on the back of a car to return but when we got on the top of the mountain I jumped out of the car. I broke my arm and hand very badly. Look here at the scar. I fell on a cliff. I had started smoking from the morning. It gave me a different feeling. When jumping off the car my leg got trapped in my shirt and I fell on my arm. I held my hand and ran back to the station. One pilot, David, from Douglas airways took me on his plane with the sister. At the airport, the ambulance picked me up. I was in the hospital for 3 months (November 1989 – January 1990). I got discharged with the cement (plaster) still on my arm. Kaugere man used to visit me and give money to my relatives".

After being discharged, Kathy did not return to Kaugere but went to stay with her mother. Whilst in hospital a small cousin brother had visited her. He had brought her pamphlets of CLC (Christian Life Center). *"He said that my next step would be death. 'You need to change your life', he told me. I thought by myself I would not go to church but I will leave my bad habits and will just stay at home".* When she returned to Morata the white man would come and visit her. Kathy did not like it. *"At that time the street was full of 'stealmangis'* [Tokpisin: thieves]*. Also, Patrick had escaped from Buimo and had come down to Port Moresby. At that time children did not really know how to steal. Outsiders would come, get them and teach them. There was Bomai, 007 and JJQ (Junior Japs Quality)[77]. They were from Hanuabada mixed with Sepik. They now own a security company. When Patrick came, he started 585, a gang group which had been established in Lae and Wau. When he came the street got really hot. We had the police and CIB* [criminal investigation brigade] *here every day. Stolen cars were parked in the street. All the women were following the guys. They'd come and give them money – 'ol laik businessman save wokim'* [just the way businessmen behave]*. At the time however, I was going out with the leader of 007 (Mickey Mouse). Mickey Mouse had lots of girlfriends. We had lots of fights. I left him because I did not want a repetition of the first problem. At the same time, I allowed my cousin sister and Patrick to sleep in the house. I would just go around. Patrick was coming regularly to the house. He told me he had left his wife in Lae. However, his wife came and stayed with her older sister here in Morata. Patrick was in full business then. He gave me money and I would provide him with women. When his wife arrived, I did not see him anymore. I thought the police might*

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[77] Names of renowned gangs in Port Moresby.

have picked him up. But then the boys told me he was staying at Kibori Street [also Morata 1] *where his wife was living. Once in a while, he would come and visit but he never asked for girls any more. Once in a while, he would come on Fridays. He would bring some women but would not stay until daybreak as he used to do. The house had two rooms. Patrick and his friends would stay in one of them. I would stay with another girl in the other room. I would ask for him in the morning but the girls said he had already gone. One Saturday I went to the playground with one of Patrick's girlfriends. I was sitting on the bridge and Patrick's wife arrived with knife. I did not know that she was his wife. Some people had told her that I was running with Patrick. She came and stabbed the knife into my hand. With a broken beer bottle, she damaged my bilum* [Tokpisin: stringbag]. *One highlands girlfriend stopped her – Dorothy is her name* [Patrick' wife]. *My cousin sisters came and fought back after hearing the story. They stripped Dorothy. First I told Dorothy I was not Patrick's' girlfriend. I thought if my hand gets better, I will find Patrick's girlfriend and together we will fix her* [Dorothy] *up. Patrick was informed. He came and hit Dorothy with a log on her chest – she fainted. A man stopped him and Patrick fought back. Then a police car was stopped. Together with Dorothy, I was taken to the police station to 'stretim toktok'* [Tokpisin: talk things over]. *Dorothy then told me 'yu wanwan kain fish bai swim long yu? Yu bai yu kisim sik nogut. Kala kala fish save swim insait yu. Yu ting Patrick bai maritim yu?'* [Tokpisin: What kind of fish will swim inside of you? You will get STDs. All different coloured fishes swim inside of you. Do you really think Patrick will marry you?]. *I was fast to reply 'now nait bai mi putim yu long cel na Patrick bai kam istap wantaim me na em bai ino inap go bek long yu.'* [Now tonight you will sleep in the police cell and Patrick will come and spend the night with me. He will not return to you.] *Dorothy spent the night in the police cell. I went to look for Patrick. I told him that his wife 'troim kranki toktok long mi na yumi bai go long haus now'.* [Tokpisin: your wife spoke badly to me. The two of us will go to my house now.] *Patrick too was confused.*

I put her four times in jail. Dorothy shames me in public. After I gave birth to Tom [second child] *we stopped fighting. Dorothy joined CLC and took me along later on.*

Once Patrick went out with another woman. We both [Dorothy and Kathy] *fought the woman and we both ended up in jail. Patrick bailed us out. Jeff* [Kathy's first child] *thinks that Dorothy is his mother. Dorothy looks well after him. From me he gets beatings. 'Jeff save antopim mi'* [Jeff does not obey me]. *One day Patrick broke Jeff's nose. He told his*

father that when he is old he will kill him. He has a short temper. The father does not discipline him. He does not want to hurt his first son. I do all the beating and now Jeff hates me.

I am now thinking of leaving the family because I am afraid of getting diseases. But I am thinking of the children. Another man would not look after them. I tell Patrick that the women are no good. They just want his money. You end up with less money – 'moni long puspus' [Tokpisin: money to fuck]. *Patrick laughs his head off when I tell him these things. I told him he would get AIDS. He has midnight cowboys*[78] *in his pocket now.*

Dorothy only comes here for money. If there is no money she goes to Baruni and waits for next pay fortnight. She can't read or write, she just finished grade 2 or may be 3. She can't have children. All her tubes are blocked. 'Taim em istap long Wau em save painim man' [Tokpisin: when she is in Wau she goes out looking for men]. *She got it from STDs. Dorothy used to come and pick fights with me. Patrick' brothers would fight her. Patrick steals so he is bound to die. We will see his face when we look at his children. I never leave my children with Dorothy. She is good from the outside but you never know what goes on inside. Also there is 'kastom'* [Tokpisin: tradition]. *When they are big they can stay with her for little time.*

You know Jeff calls his daddy 'spak man' [Tokpisin: drunkard]. *I don't want money from Patrick I just want him to bring us food. We don't have bride price in our custom. The man has to look after the wife's relatives.*

I sometimes run away and go and stay with my cousin brother. Before Patrick used to come and find me there. Now he doesn't do this anymore. When I return he will say 'are you looking for me?' 'Mi save les tru long dispela toktok' [Tokpisin: I really hate that kind of talk].

Sometimes I wish I had married a white man. I love their beautiful children. I dream of other places and of being able to drive."'

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[78] Brandname for condoms.

Settlement life, the white man and poverty

Kathy's story challenges a number of issues, which are often associated with settlement life, gender and sexuality. In terms of settlement life, it is clear that people do not view it as a desolated place of dirt and crime. It is a place where people talk about *'kastom*[79] but live a life that is not submerged in it, at least not to the same extent as in the village. I have previously pointed out the problems related to the use of *'kastom'* or 'tradition', as it somehow implies that culture is static. People talk about *'kastom'* but have extended their life-world to include discos, beer drinking, marihuana consumption, police and church influence, to give just a few examples. This extension of the life-world also translates itself into the sexual relationship with a white man. The relationship cannot be compared to the relationships in colonial times when women engaged with white men in the hope of improving their opportunities or as a result of a power relationship in which there would have been little choice for the indigenous person. Kathy did not engage with white men on any of these levels. For that matter, Kathy made a clear choice away from the 'other of the West', even though she might have some regrets. Her reference to her friend being married to a white man and living somewhere overseas did not seem to be said with envy, rather as a way of pointing out that she knew about the ways outside her world and the one I live in. This somehow implied that her world would be different and that therefore her life and mine are very different. Despite Kathy's exposure to a certain degree of affluence during her stays outside the settlements, she never raised the issue of hardship or poverty in relation to living conditions in the settlement. Poverty as such is not understood in terms of material comfort. This again shows us that concepts emanating from a state-based discourse embedded in a Eurocentric history cannot be readily carried over into a different cultural setting. Kathy would probably have felt really poor if she had remained childless, despite the fact that her children sometimes miss a meal because of a shortage of money.

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[79] For example Kathy informed me that it was inappropriate for her to be left alone in the company of her brothers in law. Patrick declined holding his baby daughter in case her faeces would soil him. If that happened he would lose his powers. However, having said this I caught him several times on his own playing with his daughter and cuddling her. *'Kastom'* as many other aspects of the life-world are used whenever it is convenient.

Independence, agency and position

What emerges strongly from Kathy's story and the further organisation of Kathy's block is the quasi-independence of women. Over the years, there has been an increasing depiction of women as victims in terms of increased economic dependence on men and violence perpetrated by men (Josephides, 1994; Toft, 1995; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997a) (I elaborate on this issue in the following chapters). However, Kathy's life, together with that of other women surrounding her, indicates that the experience of victimisation might be totally different. There might be structural violence[80] victimising her, but this is not necessarily a gender problem. As in relation to violence Kathy conveys stories of violence without presenting herself as a victim, even after being knifed by Patrick' first wife. She is rather proud to let the listener know how she managed to 'get back' at her. Violence is clearly a tool that is being used by everybody across gender, ethnicity and all levels of socio- economic status.

Furthermore, it is clear that there is room for agency for women. Kathy, her mother, Sofie and Jean have made a number of choices throughout their lives. The choices might be limited to a certain point but they are made. The multiple sexual encounters and change of partners of Kathy and other women somehow presents a different side of the story known in the main discourse of women as victims of polygamy (*Post Courier,* 16, 26 April 1966). The complexity of the issues has to be recognised instead of being crystallised in statements that are formed by a Eurocentric understanding of polygamous relationships and sexual relations in general which in the end inform understandings of sexual violence. The clear absence of a supportive husband might on the other hand be seen as a regrettable situation. However, as described earlier, the organisation of their life unit is surely not arranged along the Western conception of nuclear families and the expectations of a man might also be totally different.

Kathy's association with criminals, alcohol, drugs and multiple partners might in both traditional and Western contexts have contributed to a diminished position in her social environment. This did not happen. On the contrary, Kathy has developed a remarkable

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[80] With structural violence I refer to the promotion and/or imposition of an economic, government and bureaucratic system that instead of attending to people's need often exacerbates already difficult living conditions. They are as such not intended to be gender-biased even though its application can lead to such a situation. One of the most visible example is the almost non-existence of female politicians at both the Provincial and National level of governance.

reputation in and outside of the settlement. Over the years, opportunities have presented themselves for her to move out of the settlement. Even with Patrick holding a job at the university as the head of security, she had the opportunity to move into a house on the university grounds but she declined. She enjoys her life in Morata despite the negative image associated with settlement life. Obviously economic hardship, crime and violence are not considered the only aspect of settlement life, nor for that matter are they the major issues for people living in the settlement. This is without a doubt connected to a differentiation in meanings and values associated to concepts which underpin the state-based narrative and which carry a Eurocentric historicity. For Kathy, as for the majority of my research subjects', relationships are the most important component in their lives. This may be reinforced by the lack of other elements that may replace its importance, especially in terms of surviving under economic hardship. For Kathy, Morata has become the place from which many relationships grew and which sustains many other relationships. Having said this, people do move extensively but the moves do take place following a line of 'relationships'. People do not operate in a 'void' as is often insinuated in the state-based discourse with references to a lack of kin, tribe and/or clan support.

Christianity

Christianity, a Western construction introduced long ago, touches upon people's lives in many different ways. It plays an important role in so far as it is accessible by people for whom spirituality and supernatural power are part of their daily existence. Nevertheless, its application, as Kathy's story shows, depends on its capacity to provide the necessary answers and opportunities at a particular time in life. Thus, Kathy has changed churches on many occasions along with all the other members living on the block[81]. The moral values Christianity preaches are appropriated and adapted only when they are expected to bring personal or social advantages. This is even more apparent in the following incident.

Kathy, Sofie (her stepsister) and Sofie's son, called 'papa Patrick' had come back from Gerehu, a neighbouring suburb where they had done some shopping. The first thing I noticed were the sparkling white runners on papa Patrick' feet. He was very happy, showing them off to me proudly. Sofie was also pleased with the purchase. Kathy,

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[81] At the time of my fieldwork, Sofie and Jean both attended the Baptist church in Morata as Kathy was member of the Christian Life Center. At the time of finishing the thesis none of them were attending church. Sofie 'had now her own church' by reading her Bible at home.

however, did not share in their excitement. When we had a minute to ourselves, she was quick to let me know how they got the runners for papa Patrick. They had gone to Gerehu to buy some food and kitchen utensils. Whilst walking around the place they ran into Elizabeth, their cousin's sister who lives next door to them. Elizabeth had not been home yet after a whole night out on 'business'. She had obviously been lucky during the night, meaning that she had found a customer for the night who had compensated her very well for spending the entire night with him. Elizabeth, who was still slightly under the influence of alcohol, had given Sofie K20. With that money Sofie paid for papa Patrick' shoes. Kathy could not believe that Sofie had bought her son's shoes with *'pamuk moni"* [Tokpisin: prostitution money]. She found it totally inappropriate. Sofie, on the other hand, known to be the most pious person on the block, had apparently no such concerns. Considering Kathy's background, her resentment might have related to the fact that she did not receive some of Elizabeth's earnings. The moral value attached to her reaction did not extend to the occasions where Elizabeth would provide Kathy with money for bus fares or *buai* [Tokpisin: betelnut].

PNG's representation within the constitution and at formal public forums as a Christian country has exaggerated the way Eurocentric values have been adopted in an undifferentiated way. Hallpike (1977:18) points out that in spite of the length of time for which the mission has been established it has not had what might be called a great success in religious terms. He goes on by stating that: "Fathers are well aware that for many of their converts Christianity is very superficial, though they assure me that in some cases the faith of individuals is extremely deep and sincere". The perception of Christianity and its influence somehow epitomises the way issues of violence have been constructed within a discourse, which is unrelated to a social reality marked by constant changes and choices.

Conclusion

There is no denying that the imposition of a global economy, marked by increasing economic hardship through imposition of capitalist modes of functioning and the associated development of class differentiation (Gewertz and Errington, 1999), has exacerbated the problems associated with life in the settlements. Further emphasis on Western sensibilities has somehow accentuated the difference between settlement and

adjacent urban expansion. It is also the process of differentiation, first instated by the duality between the coloniser and the colonised that then evolved into a difference between the grassroots and the affluent citizens of the country that has contributed to the expansion and sustainability of the state-based discourse on the settlements.

In this chapter, I have tried to expose the limitations of the state-based representations of settlements as the context in which to assess incidents of violence, including sexual violence. State-based descriptions of the settlement as a poor, uneducated, violent and uncontrolled environment clearly overlook important issues associated with an environment characterised by a dynamic interaction between different ethnicities, different languages but similar aspirations to pursue life in this challenging environment. The discussion has also highlighted the importance of recognising the capacity of resistance and agency in the development of subjectivity and inter-subjective relationships. This resistance, as Bourgois (1996: 8) puts it, is "not necessarily a coherent conscious universe of political opposition but rather a spontaneous set of rebellious practices that in the long term have emerged as an oppositional style". Furthermore, I have pointed out to the need to review the dynamics of settlement life outside the Eurocentric constructions of self, gender, poverty and violence that underpin the state-based discourse of settlements. It is with this particular awareness that I propose to scrutinise incidents of violence and of sexual violence in the following chapters.
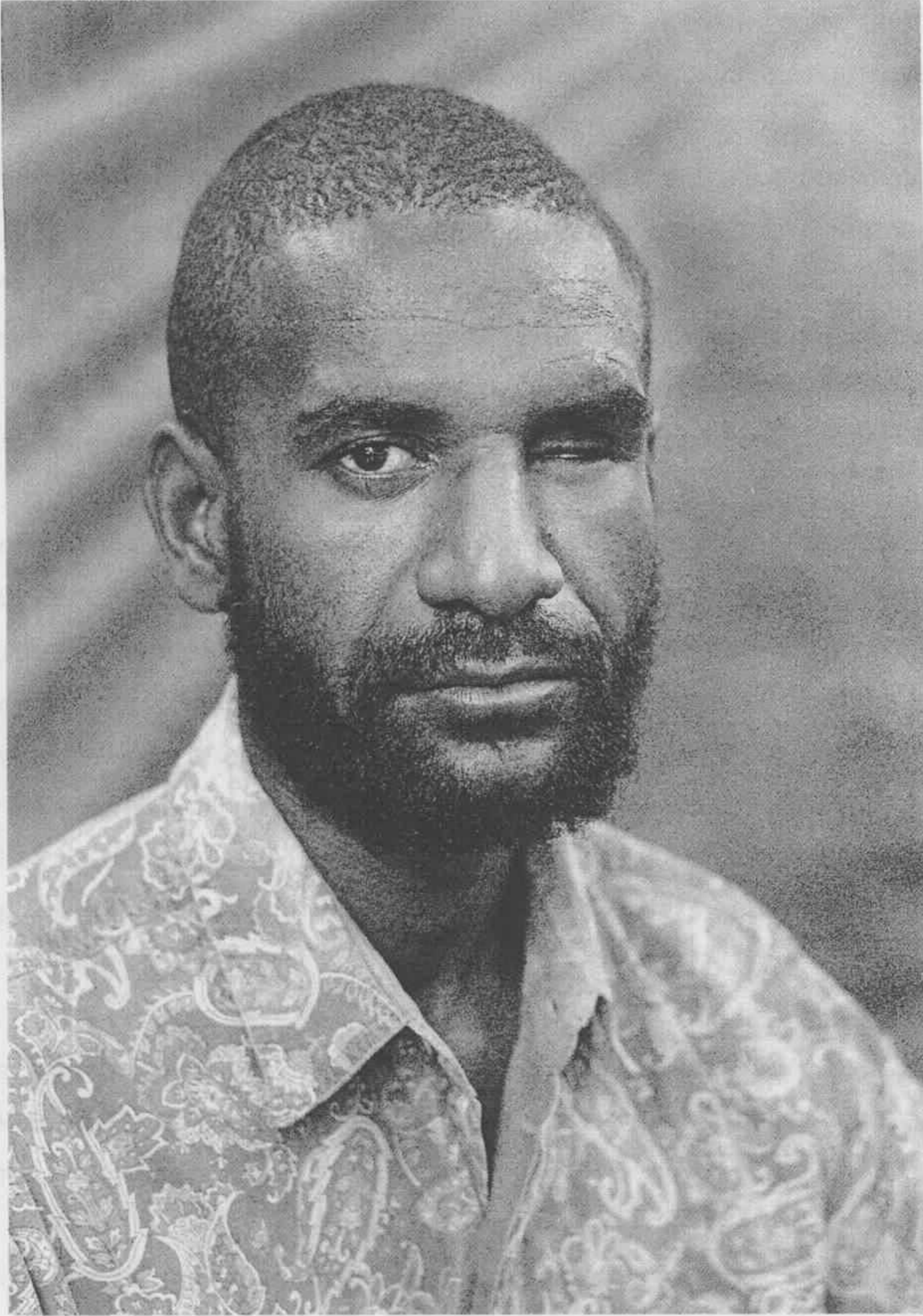
MAP 2 – PORT MORESBY (Morata)
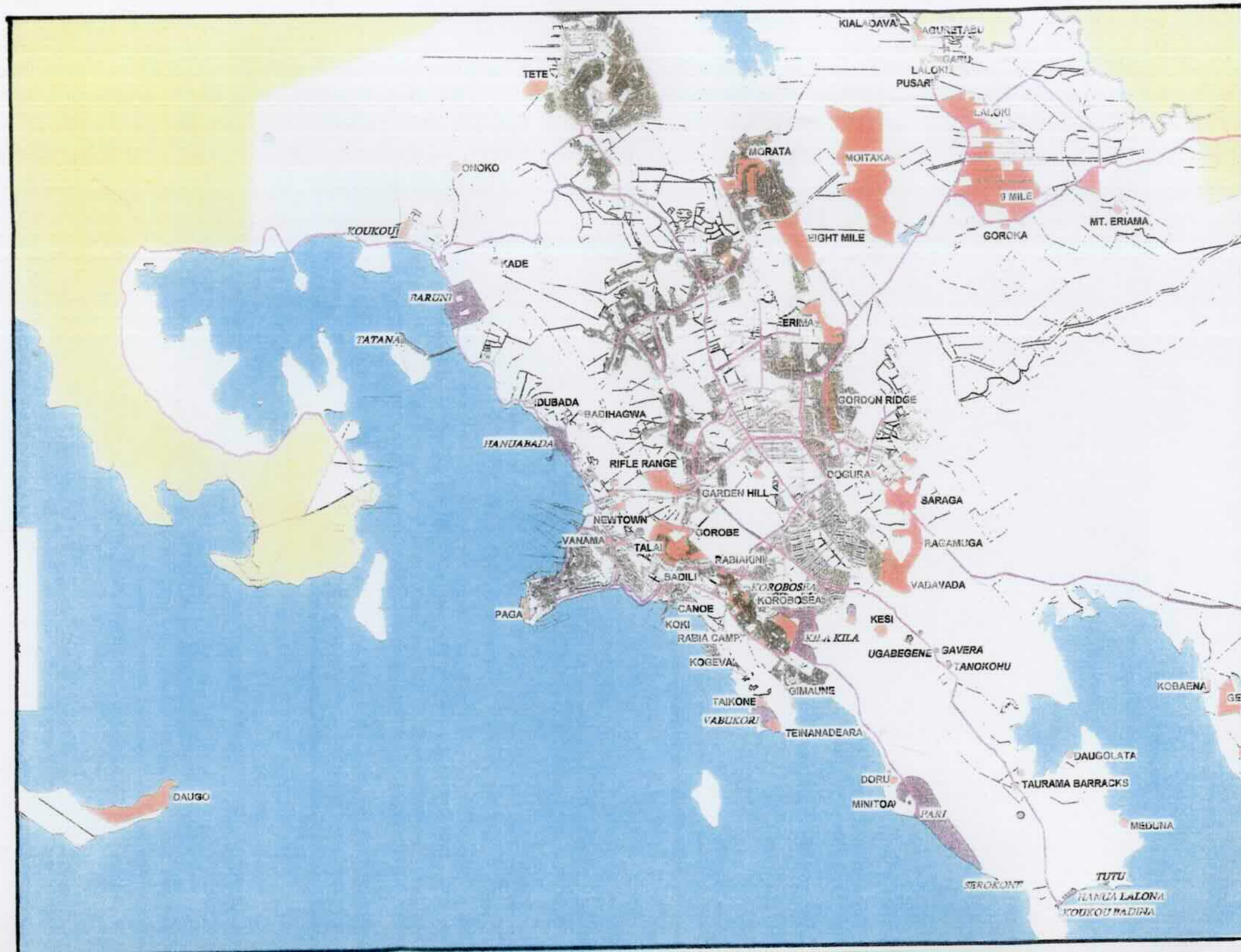
CHAPTER FOUR

Picture 4

Chapter Four
VIOLENCE

Introduction

PNG has had the label of violence attached to it for many decades, culminating in a statistic showing PNG to have the second highest rate of sexual violence in the world (Banks, 2000). Violent behaviour, highly reported in the media, is apparent everywhere in PNG. It is not limited to one particular economic stratum, ethnic group or particular area in PNG society. It is apparent not only because violent actions actually take place in public, but also because numerous people bear the scars, in all forms, of violent encounters. People are without limbs, have horrendous scars from knife or bullet wounds, even have eyes missing, to give a few of the obvious signs of the effects of violence. These 'incomplete' and 'marked' bodies are even more visible when in the settlement, as bodies are often partially uncovered in these places.

The notion of a 'culture of violence' has been voiced more than once in reference to PNG society (Borrey, 2000; *Post Courier,* 27 September 2000 – Viewpoint). Even though the 'violent culture' discourse is omnipresent in the media, reports rarely locate it within the specific socio-cultural framework of the place. It is mostly reported from the macroscopic perspective, which, as shown in previous chapters, is fuelled by legal and moral values driven by Western sensibilities. The universal presence of violence makes it easy to assume that violence is perceived and experienced in the same way universally, despite theoretical acknowledgement that this is not the case. It is important to be mindful of Cotta's (1985: 49) statement that:

> "In the completeness of violence's presence, in fact, one loses every sense and awareness of the specificity of the various phenomena: in the dark all cows look black, in Hegel's words".

It could very well be that this perception of a 'culture of violence' in PNG might be more the outcome of an ongoing characterisation in the media of that violence along the lines of the macroscopic perspective. Also, government responses may have misconstrued and misdirected the violence.

In spite of the omnipresence of violence in PNG, I debate in this chapter that there is a definite difference in the understanding and experience of incidents of violence, depending on the angle from which one decides to approach the issue. The media, government officials and non-government agencies present the most publicised viewpoint on this matter. It is mostly fed by Western sensibilities embedded in legal and ethical views; it is the macroscopic perspective as it applies to violence specifically. Living in the settlement has revealed, however, a different perspective on the issue of violence. Some of the differences within the microscopic perspective point to a certain level of desensitisation and acceptance of certain violent actions. This, however, does not imply that violence happens on an ad hoc basis or that there is no form of control.

Despite the fact that people in the settlement have a different understanding and experience of violence, they have managed, as this chapter will reveal, to manipulate the macroscopic perspective of the issue of violence, to channel funds and support to their community. In this way media pronouncements, which mostly represent the state-based discourse, often seem to resonate in the settlement despite the fact that social reality produces a different picture of the situation.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the microscopic perspective on violence, as it exists within the settlement, I propose to delineate (a) the process of defining violence, (b) barriers to a non-Eurocentric understanding of violence which reinforce the Eurocentric perceptions of violence which emphases the random and disorderly character of violence and and (c) experiences and understandings of violence in Morata settlement which suggest a more ordered, normalised phenomenon.

A more detailed understanding of violence as it is perceived and experienced from the microscopic point of view should also throw some light on the way incidents of sexual violence are understood and experienced within the settlement. Even though the emphasis in regard to incidents of sexual violence is on the sexual character of the incident, it is still very much a violent incident. Through history, sexual violence accompanies other forms of violence. In the case of PNG, it has often been part of tribal warfare.

My emphasis on the need to look at incidents of violence from the microscopic perspective characterised by a specific historical, social and cultural context, should,

however, in no way be seen as an attempt to justify or downplay the seriousness of violent incidents. My aim is to establish the 'mood' in which incidents of violence, including sexual violence, take place.

Defining violence

The question of what violence stands for has been debated through history by social scientists and philosophers alike (e.g. Sorel, n.d.; Nietzsche, 1937; Simmel, 1955; Fanon, 1966; Sartre, 1966; Arendt, 1972; Cotta, 1985). The problem is three-fold. The first aspect is raised by Hoffman and McKendrik (1990: 3), referring to the social–cultural and political meaning attached to particular actions:

"What constitutes violence is always a social construction. Acts of violence deemed as legitimate in one society or in one cultural group in society may be considered illegitimate or culturally unacceptable in another".(ibid.)

The second issue relates not only to inter-societal differences but also to reassessing the intra-societal historical meaning of violence through time. The construct of violence in the West has been substantially extended over time to include behaviour that previously would not have been considered violent. The category of violence is therefore not a constant one, even within a particular society (Cotta, 1985).

Thirdly, changes in the perception of violence can also result from the introduction of new concepts, such as 'domestic violence' and 'human rights', which label certain behaviour and incidents within a particular mode of understanding that were previously not considered problematic, at least within a particular setting. It is a process that has been identified within the development of the debate on law-and-order in PNG (see Chapter 2).

Social scientists and philosophers writing about violence agree, however, that violence is as old as humanity, and that it implies the use of force to harm, injure, or abuse others and occurs on an interpersonal and, or an inter-group level (Cotta, 1985). Cotta further points out how incidents of neglect described as acts of omission are covered by the

term 'harm' (ibid.). However, what one considers harmful or abusive behaviour, as the multiple accounts of violence in this chapter attest, must be established in social-cultural terms.

Bearing in mind possible different approaches to defining what constitutes violence in a particular social-cultural setting, it would be easy to assume that it is impossible to devise an objective measure or definition that could be applied cross-culturally (Burbank, 1999: 47-53). However, Burbank concedes that acts may be described as violent with the permission of participants. The concept of violence, as such, might not exist in a given culture, but actions resembling this concept could be identified even though labelled differently.

In the lingua franca of PNG, Tokpisin, which is the most common language used within the settlement, there is no direct translation for the word 'violence'. No one would ever be described as a violent person. Instead, a person would be referred to as, for example, *'man/meri bilong kros, man/meri bilong pait, man/meri bilong belhat hariap'* [Tokpisin: man/woman who argues, fights or gets angry fast]. This mostly refers to a temperamental person but does not necessarily evoke the negative reaction that is characteristic of the Eurocentric understanding of violence. Nevertheless, as Burbank suggests, there is no great difficulty in achieving an agreement as to what is to be considered violent. The consensus on what is considered as violent in Morata was confirmed during a survey conducted in previous research on sexual violence (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). Participants, both victims and offenders, agreed on the level of violence that had been used during the incidents. Incidents were mostly considered violent when bleeding resulted, or when one was threatened by more than one person or by a potentially dangerous tool. It must be noted, however, that there are other ways of affecting people in PNG that are not recognised in the West but which have a large impact on the notion of personal safety and are therefore associated with the issue of violence. I refer to the use of *sanguma* [Tokpisin: black magic – witchcraft]. It is a violent activity which does not necessarily engage people against each other, at least not in a visible way, but which often instills more fear than possible direct physical confrontation (e.g., Burbank, 1999: 173). Threatening language and words of shame expressed in public are also taken seriously but are not necessarily categorised as violent. These particular incidents are often raised in court and settled through minimal compensation payment.

Thus, there are indeed ways that allow one to identify acts considered as violent in a different social-cultural setting such as Morata. Nevertheless, as we will see there are a number of issues that over time have made it difficult to cross the barrier of an understanding of violence fed by Western constructs and sensibilities.

Barriers to a non-Eurocentric understanding of violence: violence as disorder

The yardstick for the level of 'civilisation'

In Western thinking, violence is often used as a barometer to measure the degree of civilisation of a society. Such opinion is the legacy of the Enlightenment, which leads us to believe that violence is an attribute of primitive men, of barbarians of the dark age (Cotta, 1985:3). This perception has sustained itself despite the fact that violence both on a personal level and in large-scale political disputes has not been eradicated. In matters of interpersonal violence, violent actions have merely been masked by 'good manners' (ibid.) or kept away from the public eye. Simultaneously the use of violence has been relegated to law enforcement agents – specialised and centralised institutions. This particular development has contributed to a sense of having violence under control.

In Western history, the value attributed to violence has changed continuously, moving between the extremes of total rejection and instances where justifications were formulated, as was the case for certain revolutions. Today the use of violence is mostly valued negatively. Recent developments have clearly demonstrated a perception that all violence, or even forceful actions, should be considered unacceptable. It is epitomised in the perception that violence is not functional and certainly not tolerable (Nordstrom & Robben, 1995: 3).

The negative value derived from this perception of violence alongside the false sense of security derived from a centralised control of its use, has often been used as a point of departure to criticise high levels of visible violence, especially in third world countries. Violence in those places not only seems to occur in a very visible way but its use is also not solely limited to specialised institutions. The automatic association of violence with under-development becomes even more evident when considering the rising concern with political correctness when debating violence outside one's own cultural context.

Increasingly, non-indigenous researchers find it inappropriate to raise issues that are conventionally seen as part of a more barbaric nature and therefore mostly associated with a primitive state of being. References to and examples of the acceptance of a certain level of violence in some non-Western societies can in no way be considered reliable information. Acknowledging that violence can be accepted in non-Western societies only reinforces a vision of inferiority and primitiveness for that particular place. This situation is not a new phenomenon. Knauft (1999), in his review on warfare in Melanesia, clearly demonstrates the development of such understandings of violence as presented through accounts of missionaries, ethnographers, traders and government representatives of the colonial power. From one such set of material he concludes that "Irrespective of whether armed conflict between Melanesians and whites was caused by one side or the other, the nineteenth-century Western attitude was generally that Melanesians were dangerous and bloodthirsty savages" (ibid.: 97). The author exposes the other side of the polar divide, stating "Missionaries argued vehemently that Melanesians were not intrinsically hostile but undertook punitive revenge on Europeans after having themselves been subject to violent attack" (ibid.:98).

Extending the field considered as violent

In both historical and contemporary situations there is little attempt to recognise the "differences in European and Melanesian cultural orientations to violence" (Knauft, 1999:105). Besides overlooking possible cultural differences in the meaning and experience of violence, a number of historical events have further complicated the way violence should be understood cross-culturally. Cotta's (1985) elaboration on the evolution of a Eurocentric understanding of violence attracts our attention to the fact that now "violence is seen in every unjust act or instance of wrong behaviour, and even in acts and behaviour once deemed to be dutiful... The attribute of violence, once limited to the acts (and only certain acts), is now also extended to situations in life and to institutions" (ibid.:12). The concept of structural violence is a good example of that process. This kind of violence refers to the negative impact of the imposition of particular economic orders on the quality of life for people living in the affected places. Activist groups refer to this situation as a violation of people's life and environment.

The process has not taken place just inter-culturally. Colonisation and globalisation have insured the imposition of new values and mores on non-Western cultures and, in certain

cases even expanded the parameters of the introduced 'violence-field' to secure an increased control over the behaviour of indigenous people. For example, missionaries were known to extend their authority over behaviour that was sometimes not unlawful even according to white Australian law (Burbank, 1999:28). In PNG the colonial government established specific regulations concerning the behaviour of the indigenous people, curtailing their freedom of movement. Moral rules were also stricter for the indigenous population. For example, in PNG during colonisation an indigenous man touching a white woman would be viewed as an attempt to rape (Inglis, 1974). In addition, the consumption of alcohol was punishable (Commission of Inquiry into Alcoholic Drink, 1971). This extended control over social life by Western institutions and their representatives could only undermine the values and autonomy of indigenous social practices (Burbank, 1999:28).

Rapid changes

Another element that has prevented the acknowledgement of a different perception of violence is related to a tendency to blame the increased incidence of violence in developing countries on rapid social and economic changes. This forced imposition of societal and cultural change has often been regarded as being at the base of extreme social disruption leading to a situation of increased violence (see Chapter 2). It is a model developed in an attempt to explain the perception of increased violence in the Western world around the mid-20th century. Cotta (1985:7) refers to this explanatory model as the optimistic-activistic viewpoint:

> "According to this principle, today's violence is greater than that of the past, but in substance the violence boils down to a crisis of transformation. Every period of profound change in the social setup brings about intensive and distressing upheavals in customs, feelings, consolidated ways of thinking, acceptance of ethical and social values. The old points of reference have vanished; the new are not yet generally understood and accepted. The result is a psychological and behavioural imbalance and, above all, that disorientation aptly defined by Emile Durkheim as anomie, that leaves ample room for the impulsiveness of violence". (ibid.)

Nowadays the increased level of violence in PNG is often explained by the rapid social and economic changes, which allegedly have contributed to the disintegration of culture and its associated social control mechanisms (see Chapter 2). It becomes easy to explain violence by describing the situation thus: "a people trapped in a socio-cultural setting that exacerbates conflict, frustrations unknown in the past" (Burbank, 1999:41). But as will be highlighted, aggressive acts in Morata "are not examples of cultural disintegration but rather examples of culture at work" (ibid.).

Acceptance that violence results from social transformation implies a transitory character. It is the price to pay for future progress. Cotta points out that this particular perception "reduces violence to mere reaction (by clumsy old fogies or fragile, unbalanced elements) to a self-confident progress that is sure of its 'magnificent destiny' and that discards or denies fideistically the possibility of failures, deviations, or regressions in the human adventure". (Cotta, 1985: 8). It also reinforces the negative perception associated with the use of violence, especially on an interpersonal basis. Furthermore, the above statement establishes again the importance of historicity and agency. It emphasises the fact that people do not necessarily view change and novelty as an improvement to their lives and that people therefore can resist them. The ongoing use of violence in a retributive fashion can be viewed as a resistance to the monopolisation of violence by government agencies which grassroots mostly consider as irrelevant. Despite the fact that it could be suggested that social changes contribute to an increased level of violence, one should be careful about assertions that the violence results from diminished community control. As will be pointed out in the section on retaliation, this particular interpretation overlooks the fact that the use of violence is a reflection of culture at work. Violence is an outcome of the way people accept and perceive particular actions. Hence, it is important to remain aware of a possible different interpretation and experience attributed to incidents of violence.

Violence as the prerogative of men

An increasingly popular perception in Western and feminist understandings of violence is its gendered character, with women being at the receiving end of the violence. In Eurocentric circles violence is often represented as the prerogative of men, with theories of victimisation mostly being associated with the female gender. In particular, circles in PNG women and men have taken up that Western notion of victimisation hence

demanding substantial support from government and non-government institutions to provide funding and programs to alleviate the problems (*Post Courier & The National,* 17 November 2000). Non-government and government agencies have focused on the victimisation issue in many different ways but so far with little effectiveness[82]. That particular male association with violence, fuelling the state-based discourse on law-and-order, has also influenced the way attempts are made to curb incidents of violent crime. In an attempt to curb criminal activities in Morata, young boys and men were encouraged to join a training program organised by the police force. This line of action surely follows a certain conceptualisation of gender roles along Eurocentric lines, where violence and unruly behaviour are mostly associated with the male gender. The events in the settlement, however, revealed a more ambivalent situation. Nevertheless, so far the focus has been on female victims[83].

Manipulation of Western sensibilities

People in Morata also know about the derogatory value given to violent behaviour. When expressing disbelief at certain violent action people would often label themselves as *kanaka* [Tokpisin: backwards/uneducated]. However, this statement was often presented with a smile, somehow insinuating that this was indeed a fact but not necessarily a regrettable fact. At the same time, the representation of oneself towards outsiders as uneducated or backwards could lead to further financial and logistic help from government agencies, but mostly from overseas donors. Inevitably, this particular process of manipulation of understandings of the macroscopic perspective on violence further reinforces the Eurocentric understanding of violence as it is shared by the community members of the settlement. Hence, the acknowledgement of a different understanding and experience of violence is made more difficult. For a better understanding of the dynamics at work, I raise a number of situations as they presented themselves in the settlement.

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[82] For example, the refuge centre in Port Moresby was closed down during my fieldwork period. The Individual Community Rights Advocacy Forum with a women's desk was finding it difficult to secure funds to finance the relevant activities.

[83] Despite the fact that there have been publications on violence of women against men and other women, (Toft, 1985; Dickerson-Putman, 1992) the main focus for preventive programs and campaigns relates to violence inflicted upon women. O'Collins (2000) describes a poster of the Law Reform Commission aimed at eradicating the violence in PNG society: "[it] depicts a large well-built man with his fist raised, standing over a terrified cowering woman who is trying to fend off his blows. ..... There is also no doubt as to who is the victim and who is the victimiser" (ibid.:19).

Kathy would gladly take on assignments from government agencies to conduct awareness programs with her theatre group around issues of domestic violence, drug-abuse and rape. Her involvement at this level, however, did not diminish the regular use of violence in her own life. Outsiders could easily interpret her engagement in these awareness activities as a commitment to move away from violent behaviour and an agreement to attach a negative label to that violence. However, from her life story (see Chapter 3) it is clear that she did not shun violence and did not regard it as useless.

The manipulation of the negative value attached to the use of violence as exposed in the state-based discourse on law-and-order was also evident in a situation that evolved in Morata. As will be shown, the emphasis by community members on the excessive use of violence by law enforcement agents turned out to be a cover-up for a different issue that had nothing to do with painful experiences or wrongful use of violence by the police. There are many other issues emanating from this situation, however, at this point in time I highlight only those relevant to the topic of manipulation of the macroscopic perspective on violence. (I return to the same situation in Chapter 6 as it raises a number of issues relevant to the understanding of the contextualisation of sexual violence in the settlement.)

Morata had been chosen by the police commissioner, Mr. Haofa as a site for special public relations efforts by members of the State control agencies. Thus, community policing[84] was introduced alongside the establishment of a housing estate for police at the fringe of the settlement. As part of an attempt to re-establish a good relationship with the community, the police had undertaken the task of providing disciplinary programs and sports training for unemployed youth of the settlement. After 6 weeks of training at the police college, some of the young men from the settlement were asked to stay on for a 2-week training period to become members of the auxiliary police. This particular exercise received criticism from other members of the police force, on the basis that it was not recommended to employ gang members. This demonstrates an assumption that all unemployed youth must be involved in criminal activities. In fact, the majority of these youth were not part of any criminal group. Gang members also challenged the idea within their own circle. Why should they support an institution that had been the major

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[84] It is not clear if this particular emphasis on community policing was an initiative of the police force itself or if it was a prerequisite to benefit from further funding by the Australian government.

contributor to their physical pain, incarceration and in many instances the deaths of their 'brothers'? At the same time they were eager to be provided with a more secure future.

The negotiations for and implementation of the police program took place during most of my stay in the settlement. Community members noticed the difference. There was a general peace, which was not normally associated with the place. The Village Court still had its multiple cases of disputes and violence to deal with but people felt more relaxed in a situation with no continuous confrontations with the police. In terms of incidents of sexual violence during that period, there was only one, involving a young girl who lived on the same street as Patrick and Kathy. The incident however took place in a neighbouring suburb.

The situation changed quite dramatically with the instatement of a new police commissioner, Mr. Kaia who was nominated by the newly elected government. Commissioner Kaia had been the police commissioner preceding Mr. Haofa. The nomination was followed by several protest meetings by members of two settlement communities, including Morata, in which the commissioner Haofa had invested extensively in terms of community policing. The protest was related to the fact that commissioner Kaia had been the one who had declared open war on the settlements at the time when he had been in charge as a commissioner, resulting in the death of many young men in the settlement. Despite reassurance by the police at these protest meetings that community policing would remain the major policy, it was hardly convincing. Two days after the inauguration of police commissioner, Mr. Kaia, Morata was invaded by a police squad driving high speed Ford Falcons, instilling a state of panic amongst the community members but especially in mothers concerned about the safety of their children. Shortly after their entry, officers from the special task force held up a young man, known as Jeff, who than was pushed in the trunk of the car. The action was witnessed by a large group of the community including myself. The behaviour was strongly condemned by the community members and the community police based at Morata, who felt that the invasion by the special squad members was totally uncalled for. Even the Catholic priest became involved in the incident. The priest went to the police station to inquire about the young man who had been pushed in the trunk. He questioned the police about the whereabouts of the 'pig', referring to the young man who had been pushed in the trunk as only animals are transported in such a way. This particular 'pig' story became a popular one in the days to follow. It was a lawyer, solicited and paid by

the former police commissioner, Mr. Haofa, who managed to bail out the young man in the early hours of the next day. Jeff had been charged with being in possession of cartridges. According to the community members it was a false accusation.

I met Jeff in the early hours of the morning. He was limping along with the support of a stick. The police had seriously beaten him up. However, Jeff did not utter any complaints. He had been a victim of police brutality before and did not notice any abnormality in the way he had been treated. He had been badly kicked in the knees and his face was swollen because of the beatings he had received. It was clear that he needed medical attention. Like Jeff, nobody in the community seemed concerned about his physical condition. It was an expected outcome of police intervention, which they had learned to accommodate within their community. However, at the same time it could be argued that the use of violence against Jeff was not the real issue, as it was not seen as the prerogative of the police. As other case studies have shown, physical disability resulting from violence can also be the outcome of acceptance and use of violence.

Despite the fact that the focus of the community protest was on the use of violence it was more a political territorial issue than an issue of violence. Over the months that the former commissioner, Mr. Haofa, had been active within the settlement, he had not only contributed financially to a number of burial ceremonies but had also become a regular attendant at the Sunday ceremony at the Catholic Church based in Morata. He had become a highly respected person in certain parts of the community. His presence and personal engagement with members of the community also made it more feasible for people in the community to enjoy certain economic and political benefits. He was seen as a person who had sufficient political power to help them access services and funding provided by the government. The strong reactions of the community following the inauguration of the new commissioner, Mr. Kaia, should not solely be connected to the fear of increased violence upon young men in Morata, but should also be linked to the important (if not more important) issue of losing the link with possible economic and political support. At the same time, despite the people's acceptance of violence they were aware of its negative value within the established state-based discourse on violence. Hence, members of the community were quick to make the statement that the *mangis* [Tokpisin: young boys] would take up their bad habits of robbery and rape as a response to renewed police retaliation. This particular statement reveals how the state-based discourse on violence was used by the *mangis* to put increased pressure on State

authorities to reinstate their 'golden cow', in this case the demoted police commissioner, Mr. Haofa.

One cannot overlook the underlying political situation in this case. However, this particular aspect of the issue is veiled by the manipulation of the understanding of violence within a state-based discourse on law-and-order by the community members. The use of violence by the task force was immediately taken as the impetus for protest by the community members. Even though the concept of human rights, an integral part of the state-based discourse on law-and-order, was not used by the settlers, it was clear that they were using an understanding of violence as barbaric. Thus, there was a link to the macroscopic perspective of violence and law-and-order in general. The assertion that it was indeed a manipulation, rather then an adherence to a negative perception of violent actions, stems from the casual attitude, if not total lack of interest, towards the physical harm inflicted upon the person who sustained injuries from the actions of the task force members. Even the victim did not seem to take issue over the harm sustained. Hence, the threat to renew criminal activities by members of the community should be seen in light of the loss of the relationship with an influential person rather then an attempt to challenge the actions of the police officers who picked up and beat one of their community members.

Conclusion

The focus of violence within a discourse fed by Western sensibilities highlights a concern with barbarism, underdevelopment and a focus on violence as the prerogative of men. This particular perspective makes it difficult to discover different ways of experiencing and understanding violence. Furthermore, discussing violence in negative terms makes it politically difficult if not incorrect, to raise the issue outside one's cultural framework, because it might be seen as an attempt to further emphasise the superiority of Western views on this issue (see also Chapter 1). The manipulation of Western sensibilities surrounding the issue of violence by the local population can easily perpetuate a distorted image of the experience of violence as spelled out in the settlement. But, as we will see, this characterisation of violence indeed remains a manipulation, as the social reality within the settlement discloses a different understanding and experience of violent incidents.

The way people interpret and experience particular incidents evolves from particular socio-psychological and socio-cultural factors. As McKendrick and Hoffmann (1990: 16) further elaborate:

> "Personal and group standards dictate much of behaviour, which confirms the assumption that acts and episodes of violence are located in the interactions between persons, and other people in their human environment, based on the values and attitudes generated by them".

The combination of the importance of both individual agency and socio-cultural influences in understanding or evaluating violent incidents has been expressed by Breines and Gordon (1983: 530) in their work on domestic violence.

> "No act of violence is simply the pitting of one individual against another; each contains deep cultural and psychological meanings. At the same time, no act of violence is merely the expression of a social problem (or a culture) such as poverty or unemployment or male dominance; each is also the personal act of a unique individual". (ibid.)

It is indeed important to recognise the limitations of understanding violence as a process evolving only from the interactions between individuals. Moreover, it is important to realise that social, cultural and political circumstances do not totally dictate the behaviour of individuals. There is a need to consider the force of individual agency, but an agency taking place within a particular social, cultural and political setting which evolves over time. To understand better the way people in the settlement relate to violence, including sexual violence, it is necessary to investigate these incidents from the microscopic perspective whilst giving due attention to agency and possibly its translation into resistance against the understanding of violence as presented within the state-based discourse. In this context, one must also consider the history of the place. Bearing these issues in mind, I propose to investigate some aspects which are connected or which reflect the experiences, presentation and understanding of violent incidents in Morata.

Understandings and experiences of violence in Morata: violence as order

Despite the manipulation which takes place and which somehow reinforces the macroscopic perspective on violence, there is indeed a difference in perception, experience and presentation of that violence within the settlement. These differences are related to issues of order, control and normalcy. As we will see, violence in no way is seen as taking place in an ad hoc manner. In many ways, violence could be perceived as reinstating order. However, 'order' in this sense does not imply acceptance of harmony as the point of departure within society. Conflict and tension exist at many levels within settlement life, but are not necessarily seen as disturbing. Another substantial difference with regard to the macroscopic perspective on violence is related to the control and use of violence. Within the settlement, there is no single authority that is in charge of the legitimate use of violence, as for a state organisation. In contrast to the perception within the state-based discourse, in many situations violence is put to use by people as an acceptable way of dealing with grievances or as a way of redressing an unfortunate situation (e.g. Strathern, M., 1993:214). Violence is not regarded as abnormal or barbaric but rather as normal and an acceptable way of acting. This does not imply that indiscriminate use of violence is allowed and that there is no control whatsoever. However, violence does not carry a negative stigmatisation as seen within the state-based debate on law-and-order. Scrutinising the following issues: (a) awareness of difference, (b) violence as force, (c) retribution, (d) women and violence and (e) desensitisation and normalisation, is part of a process which can bring meaning to the incidents of violence which take place within the settlement. This analysis will confirm the different view of violent behaviour and actions.

Awareness of difference

The fact that people in the community, but also outside of the settlement, understand violent incidents differently presented itself on many occasions.

It was clearly spelt out by Kathy during one of the police raids in Morata. Following the sound of gunshots in the settlement many people converged to the scene of action. People had gathered around the 'block' looking at the eight policemen who were raiding the house. At the same time, an apprehended youth was being pushed and kicked around violently. Police were not disturbed at all by the presence of the onlookers. The

situation changed slightly, however, when they noticed me. I was probably a reminder that brutality and especially brutality inflicted by state authorities, was unacceptable. As Kathy commented: *"Ol save ol wait lain ol ino save wokim dispela passim..."* [Tokpisin: They (and obviously Kathy too) know that white people do not behave in this fashion]. None of the surrounding community members made an issue of the brutal treatment of the young man. There is again a discontinuity between the state discourse on law-and-order promoting non-violence and its representatives breaching that promotion. In the case of the police, one could argue that their handling of the cases is a historical legacy from the colonial era when police trained as a paramilitary force[85].

The fact that there is a difference in perception of violent incidents was made clear in a discussion of sexual violence with indigenous academics. Even though there was an acknowledgement of rape in today's PNG society, there was a refusal to label incidents described as rape by anthropologists in early colonial times. Western sensibilities with regard to violence were from their point of view applicable to current incidents of violence only. Although I will not further expand on this, I want to point out that the judgment of violent incidents along Western sensibilities would often be applied in a limited context only, such as during a discussion with non-indigenous academics. Different sensibilities operate under different circumstances.

Not violence but force

Behaviour that one might view as harsh and painful does not necessarily link with notions of violence and destruction but could easily be allocated to the dimension of force. My concern here, as established earlier in this chapter, is that over time there has been a tendency to expand the field of violence to include actions that initially were considered forceful but not necessarily violent. Indeed, a few decades ago the use of physical punishment by a teacher against a pupil would have been considered an acceptable action towards instilling discipline. Today this same behaviour is considered violent and hence intolerable. Entering the philosophical debate[86] on the differentiation between the two concepts would take me outside the framework of this thesis. However, the recognition of a process whereby the two concepts, violence and force, are now viewed

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[85] Excessive use of force by the police is a known phenomenon across the world. Nevertheless, my research subject's perspective suggested that this behaviour was not considered as part of the Western police culture.

[86] For more information see Cotta, 1985:49-67.

as synonymous might help us understand the following case studies as situations where a collapse of the two meanings does not occur.

Case 1: The dislocated shoulder

After giving birth to her fourth child, Kathy seldom brought out the child for other people to view it. Without my asking about her seemingly reclusive behaviour she told me about her experience with her first-born child. Kathy had gone back to the village to give birth. Having been left childless from a previous 5-year relationship, she was overjoyed at the birth of her first son, as were her friends and family. Everybody tried to hold the child whenever possible, a reaction I had observed on many other occasions. However, because everyone wanted a turn at holding the new baby there was continuous yanking of the child away from one person to another and the baby's arm was dislocated.

This particular behaviour taught Kathy not to expose her next newborn baby to outsiders until it had become stronger. Despite the fact that the incident might be considered an accident, it was clear by the way Kathy recounted the events that it was the repetitive, quite rough handling that had resulted in this accident. The fact that she shielded her other children from such action indicated her understanding of this behaviour as predictable. There is indeed a certain roughness associated with the expression of emotions, including emotions of excitement, happiness or love. Often people would strongly pinch a baby's cheeks as a sign of affection, or even raise a fist in the baby's face. None of these actions was considered violent and my horror at this behaviour became a source of teasing. Whenever I had Kathy's baby in my arm, one of the women would walk up to me attempting to raise her fist at the baby's face, pull its arm or leg harshly even to the point that the child would start crying. They thought my reaction towards their behaviour was funny. They did not think anything was wrong with this rough treatment of the baby. I was clearly the one who either overreacted or misunderstood the behaviour.

Case 2: The vaginal tears

When analysing the hospital records at the General Hospital in Port Moresby I noted a high rate of vaginal tears. As I was focusing on incidents of sexual violence, I became suspicious of these references to vaginal tears. Were we really dealing with just vaginal

tears or was the injury the result of forced sexual intercourse? The question was put to a gynaecologist at the hospital, who confirmed that these incidents were not related to forced sexual intercourse. They were indeed a common *outcome* of sexual intercourse. This statement was supported by a medical anthropologist who had conducted extensive studies of sexual behaviour in PNG and who asserted that both women and men enjoyed a certain amount of rough sex (personal conversation with Dr. Jenkins, 1996). Rough and seemingly forceful behaviour that one might consider a basis for the acceptance of a certain level of violence is not only the demonstration of ill feeling but is also an accepted mode of interaction even at an affectionate level. The accumulation of these different behavioural patterns could easily lead to the formation of a perception of a rather violent society, especially to the outsider. On the other hand, the exposure to a range of 'forceful' possibly violent incidents and behaviours might be conducive to the internalisation and acceptance of a certain level or particular mode of violence. This raises the issue of normalisation to which I return later.

Retribution

Violence is a pervasive characteristic of retributive actions in PNG. The situation is no different in Morata. Violence in this context is often regarded as the only acceptable and effective way of righting any form of 'damage' done to a particular party. Incidents involving individuals will often incite reactions of other family, community or ethnic members. The nature and intensity of the retribution will often be in accordance with the relationship existing amongst the involved parties. When the dispute occurs between family members or within one particular ethnic group the repercussions might be mild. In many instances, disputes will be settled through compensation payment, which in the worst case scenario will have been established by the court. Where physical retribution takes place this will often occur in the public arena, where a certain amount of control can be exercised by onlookers who in one way or another are associated to one of the involved individuals. As Burbank points out in her study on fighting between women, when such incidents take place the chance of these violent interactions to turn bad is often limited. They are more often seen as an opportunity for people to vent frustration and anger in a controlled environment. However, as the following case studies show, particular incidents can lead to extremely violent retribution.

<u>Case 1: The bomb</u>

The following is an extract from a letter I received from Michael, the neighbour of the family I lived with in the settlement. The writer is a young man who finished high school and had further education at the marine college.

Just last Friday night (06/10/2000) at about 9 p.m. a <u>Hand Grenade Bomb</u> (underlined by the writer) was thrown into my neighbour's house from Wag by some Goilala and Goroka drunkards and criminals. A big man from Wabag was blown to dead and another Wabag woman that lived in the same house was badly injured. In return and on the same night, Wabag got up and killed four man: two Goroka, one Goilala and one Morobe. After all that, the Goilala houses on our street and Morata were all burned down. Kathy's house (Kathy is Goilala) was the second house to be burned and the rest followed. The Wabags chased all Goilala men, women and kids to chop them down but somehow all escaped safely and now there are no more Goilala's in our street and Morata as a whole. I miss my best mate Kathy and her playful baby Anna and I don't know where they are now.

Further, Goroka and Wabag are shooting at each other now and police has declared Morata a fighting zone. But Goilalas have gone and are gone for good. Our street is totally empty now and the Wabags are ready to occupy the empty blocks belonging to the Goilalas. We Wabags are still fighting with the Gorokas and it looks like it will take some time to solve the problem. Even though the Wabags killed four men, the police is still supporting them by all means because the high powered bomb was thrown into a very innocent Wabag's house.

Another Wabag man highlighted in his letter to me that *"Kathy, Patrick with the girls and other neighbour Goilala's were saved by my boys ... Friends advised them to run away quickly so it was good saving their lives, only the houses burned down!"*

The newspaper reports (*Post Courier & National*, 7-8 August 2000) on the incident and the writers of the letters did not elaborate as to why the bomb was thrown onto the specific premises. The story that circulated is that drunkards (according to the second writer they were young men living in the street) were retaliating against the Wabag person who apparently had failed to reimburse borrowed money. The bomb became the

central issue and the justification for the ensuing violence. Michael in no way challenges the intense and bloody retribution orchestrated by the Wabags; neither does the second writer. The legitimisation of the retaliation is further reinforced by the lack of condemnation by police, despite the fact that four people died at the hands of the Wabags. There is no doubt that the use of a bomb fuelled the extra violent reaction of a particular group of the community. On the other hand, the reaction is no different to the tribal retribution characteristic of many areas in PNG. What is more amazing is the lack of attempt by the police to stop the vindictive actions of the Wabags. In the eyes of the community members, the police were seen to support the Wabags in their endeavour[87]. Thus, even the agencies of law enforcement do not adhere to a notion of central control over the use of violence. The police force merely translated itself into a third party in this conflict, without much authority.

Another element that is strongly related to a feature of tribal societies is the importance given to ethnic association. As Michael's letter indicates, individuals are identified through their ethnic association. Ethnic association overrules every possible pre-existing personal relationship. Morata clearly transformed into a war-zone where a fight was taking place between several ethnic groups. Michael shows some pain regarding the loss of his Goilala friends but he in no way challenges the retribution that has taken place.

Despite the fact that the setting (the settlement) and the use of a bomb might be outcomes of societal change, the actions as such result from acceptable ways of dealing with conflict. The fact that the majority of the targeted ethnic population managed to escape reinforces Burbank's analysis that these violent actions are predictable because of the existing cultural concept of retaliation.

Societal changes as such, cannot be seen as contributing to the disintegration of cultural values, but merely as a catalyst to reinforcement of cultural values. In fact, none of the involved parties (retributing and defending) attempted to settle the issue within the formal court system. Even the police supported the retaliatory actions. Indeed, people living in the settlement are, especially in the context of law-and-order, turning their back on

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[87] The conclusion based on the statement of one community member may be seen precarious. However, the failure of the police to take action is not a new phenomenon. Also, the Goilala's within the state-based discourse have often been perceived as the troublemakers. A 'good riddance' attitude should not be a surprise. As such, it is the understanding of the overall situation that allowed me to come to make the above statement.

societal and institutional changes and preserving their own ways of dealing with issues, especially when it comes to dispute settlement. But, as noted earlier, the change of setting, from rural to urban, the multi-ethnic character of the place, the drunken behaviour and the use of a bomb, all of which resulted from societal change, can easily overshadow the cultural parameters feeding the actions, such as the importance of ethnic identity[88] and the acceptance of violence as a way to restore perceived injustices by aggrieved parties.

Case 2: Ricky's eye

Ricky is a young man from the southern highlands. He lives with his parents and current wife on a block not too far from Kathy and Patrick' place. Over the years he has developed a reputation as a fearless man not afraid of using violence when necessary. During a particular dispute occurring between members of his group and another community member from a different ethnicity, Ricky fired a warning gunshot that hit the tin roof of the house. The bullet bounced off the tin surface and hit the eye of a bystander. The victim had to be evacuated to the hospital and eventually lost his eye. Over a year later, Ricky was found unconscious in the ditch across from the police station. Apparently, he had been left for dead and without an eye. Further accounts from community members who witnessed the incident, Ricky had been drinking with friends. When he left them in a drunken state, he was attacked by people related to the man who had lost his eye because of Ricky's stray bullet. My informants were quick to describe the incident and had allegedly seen one of the men tearing out Ricky's eye. This was obviously an overstatement: Ricky still had both eyes despite one of them being severely damaged and rendered useless. After the attack Ricky did not reveal any intentions of retribution. He had been anticipating the incident and was off his guard when drunk. As the victim himself acknowledged, this incident was not without reason and order. It was expected, if not by other community members at least by Ricky himself. What is 'orderless' to a certain degree is the time lapse between the incident and the moment of revenge. It is often the anticipation of retribution that creates tangible tension within the community, which in turn can be translated into a volatile environment.

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[88] As pointed out in Chapter 3, ethnic identity has become a major marker within the development of urban centers and even more so in areas where multi-ethnic groups live in close vicinity of each other, such as in particular settlements. The presence of 'others' has created a process of 'othering' among different ethnic groups.

As the above case studies have shown, the use of violence is often seen as the only way to settle grievances effectively in an arena where punishments handed out by the formal court system are often regarded as slow and ineffective. In many circumstances, the involvement of the formal court will be regarded as only partially dealing with the issue. Even in the most extreme circumstances people like to deal with conflict in their own way. Although Robben and Nordstorm (1995) have assumed that violence is reasonless and orderless, that assumption does not hold within the context of retribution. It is an accepted way of dealing with conflict and is reflected in the fact that minimal recourse takes place to the formal justice system to challenge that particular action (ibid.:8).

Women and violence

In contrast with a more general perception that exists within the state-based discourse on law-and-order in PNG, violence is not the sole prerogative of men[89]. Women in Morata did not shun the use of violence and were not shy about sharing their stories of violent actions. As pointed out in Kathy's case, one may easily move between worlds characterised by different values and meanings. As detailed in the Chapter 3 (in Kathy's life story), Kathy not only actively engaged in violent behaviour but she was also the recipient of it, her body bearing the marks of multiple physical assaults.

Women talk amongst themselves about violence in many different ways. It is often regarded as exciting. I recall the report in the newspaper of allegations that a woman had participated in a major robbery at the airport in Lae (Morobe Province – *Post Courier & National,* 18 May 1999). It was not so much the woman's participation that caused her to be labelled *'fit meri'* [Tokpisin: 'great woman'] but the fact that she had been holding a high-powered gun. To the women discussing the incident, this was amazing. In relation to this story, one of the women showed me her tattoo of '585'. It was her way of giving support to the renowned gang. The participation of women and girls in gang-related activities might not be covered extensively in the literature but it does take place in many different ways[90]. Both men and women attribute positive characteristics to the use of violence and do not shun its use.

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[89] Despite the fact that the 'victimised' woman is a legacy of Western feminism, in the state-based discourse in PNG, several authors have noted that women are not always passive victims (e.g. Burbank, 1999:190).
[90] During my fieldwork (1991-1999) I came across multiple accounts of women and girls providing help for, or actively engaging in gang activities. Women gained special recognition and status amongst both men and women in the community on that basis.

At the annual election of the National Council of Women, a fight broke out between different factions when one group's candidate lost the presidency election. The dismay was too great to be demonstrated vocally. Before the end of the meeting, women had started attacking each other physically. Kathy, who had been present the whole time, witnessed the stabbing of a woman. As Kathy was telling me the event she described how the woman suddenly became aware that something was stuck in her back. She soon found out it was a knife but had no idea who had stabbed her. The morning after the meeting Kathy, who had supported the winning candidate, was fiercely beaten by a group of women supporting the losing candidate. The bruises on her face and back were signs of a very aggressive attack. Surprisingly, she did not mention revenge or compensation. She had somehow expected something like this to happen. After the election, she told me: *"Bai yu lukim tomorrow wanpela pait bai kam ap long strit"* [Tokpisin: You will see tomorrow there will be a fight here in the street]. Not only did Kathy anticipate and accept the violent reaction, but later the winning candidate was quick to make a gift to the losing candidate. It took Kathy only a week to re-establish a friendly relationship with the women who had attacked her.

Not only do women engage in violent actions amongst themselves, but men have also been subject to violent attacks by women and, as the following account will testify, this violent behaviour can be fatal in certain cases.

Kathy and I were driving back from the market when Patrick, Kathy's husband, stopped us. He informed us without expressing any emotional distress that Kathy's cousin brother had been killed. Whilst driving to the hospital Kathy gave me the following account, which I have translated from Tokpisin to English.

"Tupela meri bilong cousin Jemi ol kilim em [Tokpisin: Both women have killed cousin Jemi]. *The number one wife is from Goilala and the number two is Tolai. They killed him at the house of his new girlfriend who is from Popodentta ... Both him and his girlfriend are dead. The girlfriend got stabbed by the Tolai. Jemi and her brothers got on the back of a pickup together with the body and were driven to the hospital. On the way though she died and the brothers avenged her death by stabbing Jemi to death. I would have done the same thing. Death has to be avenged ... even though I believe in God".*

When we arrived at the hospital, Kathy went straight to the morgue and joined a group of people who were crying and wailing, first outside the morgue and then inside. Kathy was deeply distressed and it took her a while before she rejoined me in front of the hospital where all the family members were gathered. There I finally heard the other version of what had taken place that night. Jemi himself had been killed by both his first and second wives. As Kathy reported:

"Poor cousin, but it's also his own behaviour that led to this incident. A real womaniser. A handsome man. Lots of women were crazy about him. He never beat his wives. That is probably why he died ... He did not resist the two women when they attacked him. Apparently the Goilala hit him with a stone on the head and then the Tolai stabbed the knife through his heart. If I had been there I would have stabbed the two women".

The same afternoon Kathy, Sofie (her stepsister) and I went to look for the two women who were held in police custody. We found the two of them crying and holding their young babies, both under 3 months. Kathy, accompanied by her stepsister, assured the two women that they were not angry about what had happened ... *"We just want you to hand us over the two babies ..."*

The next morning Kathy talked again about Jemi: *"I liked Jemi. He was a very open guy. He would run towards me at 9 mile market and take my last toeas [Tokpisin : cents]. It didn't bother me. He used to say 'askim ol man na ol bai givim yu' [Tokpisin: ask all the men they will give you some]. He would clean out the snot from my nose, ... he would finish the food of the children with their snot in it. I last saw him in May. The guy worked for a security firm. The company vehicle had dropped him off at the house of his girlfriend ... The first wife he separated from is now married to a guy from Simbu. I found her together with the Tolai 'fit meri'. The old Goilala is an old frog! The Tolai is fit because she is open and also she can fight. I once supported her in court when both she and the Goilala wife got into trouble because the Goilala was jealous of the Tolai. When the Goilala's sister attacked the Tolai woman I handed my baby, Jeff, to a bystander and helped the Tolai woman against the Goilala. All three of us ended up in jail each with an infant in our arms. The police interviewed us and we were later released after we promised we would not fight again".*

The above account demonstrates not only the use of violence but also its accepted value in particular circumstances. It clearly illustrates that women use violence and that its use can have a positive connotation. As Kathy stated, she had respect for the Tolai women not only because she was open but also because she could be violent. There was no direct resentment against the two women who had been involved in the killing of her cousin brother Jemi. Attempting to hold on to part of Jemi, through the children, was at that particular time the most important issue for Kathy and the other family members.

It is clear from the above examples that women are not just passive victims and that both men and women use violence, which under most circumstances is considered just. Women not only take an 'aggressive stance', which implies the threat of violence in a way of self-protection (Burbank, 1999:189) but are also initiators of violent interactions outside the arena of self-protection. For the women in PNG, the use of violent actions is not only compliance with acceptable cultural modes of punishment or social control; it is also a way of venting anger. The exclusion of violent women, and an emphasis on their presentation as victims in the state-based debate on violence, can in no way lead to an appropriate understanding of the violence occurring in Morata and in PNG in general.

Desensitisation and normalisation

To suggest that violence is the norm in the settlement would overlook a certain level of ambivalence. By 'ambivalence' I refer to the fact that normalisation is not just the outcome of increased acceptance, exposure to and therefore ensuing internalisation of violent behaviour. The 'violent culture' perception is also the outcome of a Eurocentric perspective on incidents of violence, decontextualising them and hereby portraying them as meaningless and unpredictable. This state-based understanding of violence does find its way to the settlement and brings a reinforcement of the label 'violent'. In a situation marked by a certain level of animosity between members of the settlement community and the more civilised external world, people living in the settlement turn this rhetoric on violence into a weapon. As detailed in the chapter on law-and-order, people gladly use this discourse to empower themselves and alienate outsiders from their own environment. This situation is often achieved through exaggerated accounts of violent incidents towards outsiders.

One morning, whilst I was in conversation with the local priest, a boy aged about 10, who had been listening to our conversation, volunteered information about an incident that

had taken place the previous day. He was telling us how a young man from the Highlands had tried to steal electronic goods from a house along the road to school. According to his story, the thief had been apprehended by local community members and chopped into pieces with an axe. The boy then described how this 'bloody bag' with the body parts was dragged along the street, leaving traces of blood behind. Apparently, this was witnessed by schoolchildren who were walking home after school. Amazingly, during the following week not a single person within the community was able to confirm the incident, nor even exactly where it had occurred.

There are many reasons why the young boy would have chosen to tell me this story. It might have been a way for him to attract my attention, to contribute to a conversation, but it could also have been an attempt to create an image of the fearless PNG person. One can easily see how the telling of such a story, which had obviously been improvised, could further contribute to a violent picture of PNG. An outsider could have taken this story out of the settlement and, by telling it to others, reinforced the violent image associated with a place such as Morata. As is the case for many violent representations published in the media, incomplete or inaccurate coverage of incidents can also create the impression that violence occurs randomly, suggesting a situation of chaos and disorder. This is exactly the perception created by the state-based discourse in relation to law-and-order issues.

The exposure to violent incidents, which without doubt are numerous, and the acceptance of them by the local population under certain circumstances, has nevertheless contributed to a normalisation of the presence and use of violence. In Morata the presence of violent actions is tangible not just through its public display (e.g. actions, marked bodies, cars and individuals) but also through the absence of especially young men. Most of these youngsters have been lost as a result of police intervention. Kathy and Patrick alone know of 36 boys and young men who have died in Morata over the last 7 years. Often in memory of the loss of one of the boys, a newborn child would be given the name of the deceased person. Due to the high rate of casualties Kathy's last boy's name was formed by the first two letters of three young men killed by police during a hold-up. Many car chases and fatalities occur within the settlement, exposing the community at regular interval to what one could describe as a high rate of violence. There is no doubt that these incidents have created a certain level of desensitisation amongst members of the community. One of the effects seems to be immunity to the

outcome of violent actions. Kathy shared with me the following account when I asked her about the different young men who had been killed in the recent past.

"R. was 24 years old. He was from Goilala and lived with me. He was not related to me, I looked after him as an adopted son. In 1997 April 14th on Saturday, M. and his gang mates from Morata 585 Lobu street, went and held up the betting shop at the Islander around 4 o'clock. The boys were ready to take off when they were disturbed by a civilian policeman. R. was the gunman and he shot at the policeman and he shot him in the hand. Then the getaway car came, he went to get into the car and as he was getting in, he was shot at from the back. The bullet went through his left eye taking the eye out. He died instantly and was brought to the morgue. We went back to the scene to look for his eye but it must have been eaten by the dogs".

This account reveals how accustomed people living in the settlement have become to violence and death – a direct outcome of frequent and close contact with them. The continuous high death rate, within the arena of violence and crime, has made death an integral part of the community. However, considering the deaths as an outcome of violent intervention by law enforcers also shows a level of ambivalence. Many of these killings will be presented as unlawful, unjustified within the community's perception of acceptable use of violence, leading to a push by relatives or friends for a coronal inquest. In certain instances, the case will be taken up in court with the possible outcome of compensation payment by the state to the aggrieved party (*National*, 27 October 1998). These particular cases have increased within the realm of human rights, an introduced concept that obviously has proven to be useful under certain circumstances within the settlement. This brings us back to the issue of manipulation discussed earlier in this chapter.

Despite the viewing of these killings as cases of human rights abuse, gang members are also known to socialise with members of the police force who were involved in the killings of fellow gang members. While there are many accounts of settlements being raided by the police, there are an equal amount of accounts describing drinking parties attended by both gang members and police officers, allowing the possibility of an amicable relationship after the occurrence of violent incidents. This particular situation then relates to an understanding of retribution for wrongdoing. As shown earlier, violence used within the context of retribution is acceptable but within certain limits. In such cases, the police force is considered another party, similar to those formed by clan and ethnic association.

Cultural control mechanisms such as violent retribution have thus not vanished; they have only been expanded to incorporate new groupings. In this context, there is not necessarily a delineation of a police force established within a Western bureaucracy and supported by legislation fed by Western sensibilities, against criminal elements living in the settlement. The same situation was evident when the police force as a 'third party' supported the Wabags in their retributive actions by not attempting to stop them. Thus, it might be indeed more valuable to view the issue of normalisation as the outcome of an extension of 'culture at work' into introduced state institutions. One might even speak about 'order at work'.

Conclusion

The 'normalisation' and 'valorisation' of violence in the settlement, despite being closely interconnected, also carry an intrinsic contradiction. Notwithstanding a positive value attached to the use of violence, it cannot be viewed as the norm. Its use is justified only under very specific circumstances, which emanate from particular situations of tension. The value of violence is very much embedded in its capacity to redress situations of conflict and as such, it is not regarded as orderless or meaningless. In this context, victimised and offending parties often resume amicable relationships (see Chapter 3). Thus, it should not come as a surprise that women do not shun the use of violence. Violence is clearly not the prerogative of men but a tool used by both men and women. "Women's bodies are no less aggressive and no more vulnerable than men's" (Helliwell, 2001:807). In this context, women do not perceive themselves as passive victims of violence inflicted by men.

The increased use of violence may well be the outcome of societal and economic changes that, as others have suggested, have taxed the previous societal organisations of PNG tribes (see Chapter 2). It has been stated that these new situations of conflict arise from a growing gap between the rich and the poor (Gewertz & Errington, 1999), dysfunctionality of the economy, the ineffectiveness of the state and its agencies (Thompson, 1994) and possibly power struggle between the genders (see Chapter 5). There is no denying that violence has in many ways expanded through the development of new living situations and ensuing new forms of conflict. The multi-ethnic environment of Morata can vouch for some of these processes; the existence of multi-ethnic groups in a confined area exacerbate the chances of violent retributions in cases of wrongdoing.

This multi-ethnic environment also succeeds in accentuating ethnic markers, such as one's violent character, that are then easily adopted to reinforce that singularity of a particular ethnic group. Having said this, the situation cannot be analysed as the outcome of a dysfunctional society in search of new values and mores as suggested by the state-based discourse. On the contrary, the increased rate of violence is related to its accepted use in situations of tension, new and old ones, which need redress.

The recognition by people in the settlement of the fear of violence as expressed within the state-based discourse has given them a new tool to hold the state ransom concerning issues of developmental discrimination. Therefore, a more ready answer to the current situation may then be found if this perceived chaotic and disorderly situation were seen in light of a mounting resistance to the way a small percentage of the population attempts to remould society along concepts and meanings which can benefit them in monetary ways. In a context where the State and its institutions could be represented as another 'party' within PNG society, incapable of fulfilling its obligations whilst advantaging a very small percentage of its cronies, the increased threat of use of violence by disadvantaged community members should not come as a surprise. This 'awareness' is not yet fully associated with a class-consciousness and its subtleties. The issues are mostly presented in a dualistic manner (e.g. 'haves' and 'have-nots') despite the settlers' capacity to easily move, and to a certain extent benefit from the 'haves', and despite the fact that settlers themselves sometimes earn a better income than people living outside of its perimeters.

As has been noted, the settlement community aligns itself not along a consciousness of nationhood but along ethnic, tribal or clan loyalties. In that context the aggrieved party, and not just the victimised individual, will not hesitate to use violence as it fits in the context of retribution and resistance. Hence, the state control agencies do not have the monopoly over the use of violence. Furthermore, the increased violent interventions by law enforcement agents within settlements negate the dynamics of retribution despite their own participation within that cycle. In a situation where a weak state refuses to attend to its obligations and where communities still exercise their understanding of violent retribution, one can only expect a spiralling increase of violent reactions. The increased violence can but further fuel an already existing desensitisation process in relation to violence. Thus, the mood is set for an increase of other incidents such as sexual violence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Picture 5

Chapter Five
GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Introduction

Understanding incidents of sexual violence necessitates not only a closer scrutiny of violence but even more, an interrogation of gender relations and sexuality within the particular culture. It is the sexual nature of the violent offence that mostly leads to its intensified impact. As Helliwell (2001: 791) puts it: "While any form of violent attack may have severe emotional consequences for its victims, the *sexualisation* of violence in rape greatly intensifies those consequences for its women in Western societies" (emphasis in original). Helliwell points out how the intermeshing of sexuality and personal identity in contemporary Western societies adds to the horror of rape incidents, involving a violation of personhood itself. In this context, the way one understands not only sexuality but also gender construction becomes a prime issue in terms of bringing us closer to a possible understanding of the experience of rape in a particular community in PNG. To understand rape in Western terms, it is important to appreciate the development of a personal identity built on the divide of two different bodies, a male and female one, on which particular societal values have been attached. In this context, the differentiation in personal identity construction between men and women refers first and foremost, to qualities of superiority and inferiority. It is that difference which forms the basis for power struggles that resonate in the understanding of sexual violence. Using Helliwell's (2001) terms, "inequality between men and women is linked to men's desire to possess, subjugate and control women, with rape constituting a central means by which the freedom of women is limited and their continued submission to men ensured" (ibid.:794). Given the importance of the specific association of gendered bodies and sexuality with incidents of rape (see also Scully, 1990; Warshaw, 1994), I propose to scrutinise the experience and understanding of gender and sexuality in the different cultural setting of Morata settlement. Here I am arguing that different experiences and understandings of gender and sexuality will imply different experiences and understandings of incidents of sexual violence.

Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to present a layered exploration of that dimension. To that end, I (a) establish the perceptions and understandings of gender and sexuality as presented through incidents of sexual violence within the state-based law-and-order

debate (as raised earlier in Chapter 2). As part of the macroscopic perspective, these perceptions and understandings around issues of gender, sexuality and sexual violence have a basis in Western sensibilities. (b) Bearing those understandings in mind, I engage with related issues raised within the general debate on gender and sexuality as presented by Western academics. Some of the issues already problematise the concepts of gender and sexuality as portrayed within the state-based law-and-order debate. In this context, attention is given to manipulation, resistance and agency. (c) Having established a different perception of gender and sexuality, I use that framework to investigate possible alternative understandings and perceptions of gender and sexuality within the broader community of Morata. Court cases are used to highlight the different dynamics at work. These different dynamics are further explored at the level of households, gender relations within these households, and the specific relation between 'husband' and 'wife'. The layered analysis of gender and sexuality in a community in PNG brings to light the contention that gender constructed on a hierarchical basis cannot be seen as the only major component in the analysis of incidents of sexual violence, and that other issues need to be considered.

Gender and sexuality as portrayed within the state-based law-and-order debate

As presented in Chapter 2, the increased rate of incidents of sexual violence in PNG has partially been attributed to a changing society characterised by weak state governance with local/traditional agents robbed of their authority. In this changing environment, women are described as individuals wanting to escape their position of subordination, while men, using all means including sexual violence, strive to maintain their superiority over women. It is also suggested that within a capitalist economic system organised around access to cash, women, mostly in urban areas, increasingly become dependent on men participating in the cash economy (Toft, 1985). In this context many young unemployed men argue that they have to turn to sexual violence to gratify their sexual desires (Browning and Borrey, 1995).

Another element associated with the increased incidence of sexual violence is the assumption that young men, who are considered to be the major perpetrators of sexual violence, engage in this offence because they have limited opportunity to fulfill their sexual desires within the normal marital set-up. In this context polygamy is considered

one of the contributing evils, with older men marrying several women and favoring younger ones. This argument is then further expanded by suggesting that the demand of bride wealth also favours 'big men', leaving limited opportunities for young men to acquire a wife. This particular suggestion emanates mostly from the Highland regions but applies to a certain degree in the settlement, where young men suggested that young women do not consider them to be viable partners because of their low status within a capitalist-driven economy.

These particular arguments on the one hand show signs of the well known previous universal assumption of common oppression of all women of this world, which in turn depends upon a dichotomous gender perception based on particular conceptions of gendered bodies. It implies that women are economically dependent on their male partners and that sexual gratification can be obtained only within a marital context. Overall change is viewed as the outcome of external forces, with apparently little attempt to analyse particular actions and situations informed by historically and culturally constituted interpretations of the circumstances in which people live (Lederman, 1990:65). As the following section shows, there are indeed different ways of perceiving and understanding gender and sexual relations through perspectives argued by feminist and anthropological writers.

General debate

The debate on gender and sexuality has been more than extensive over the last decades, engaging academics, professionals and activists alike. It is not my intention to reiterate this whole debate, which has been covered by other researchers[91]. Several issues will be highlighted in the hope of facilitating a critical analysis of the way gender and sexuality, as they underpin an understanding of sexual violence, are currently perceived and presented in PNG and more specifically in Morata. Some of the issues that are raised such as, (a) universality and complexities, (b) culture and biology, (c) superiority and inferiority, and (d) internalising and resisting Western sensibilities, have already been challenged within the current gender debate. However, within PNG they

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[91] For more information see e.g. Edwards 1989, Gatens 1991, Pettman 1992, Philipps 1992, Grosz 1994, Wearing, 1996.

are still part of the state-based debate surrounding the issues of gender, sexuality and sexual violence.

Universality and complexities

Within feminist and anthropological writing, the assumption of universal oppression of women has been widely challenged. If the universal oppression of women is still claimed, there is now an emphasis on women's varied and complex social reality (Hooks, 1991). Feminists generally recognise that "explanations of how gender and gender relations are constituted, and how they relate to other systems of domination vary widely" (Pettman, 1992a:92). Moore (1994:3) expresses this clearly in stating that: "the experience of being a woman or being black or being a Muslim can never be a singular one, and will always be dependent on a multiplicity of locations and positions that are constructed socially, that is, intersubjectively". Lederman extrapolates the inter-cultural variation on the intra-cultural level by suggesting that gender constructions amongst the Southern Highlanders in PNG also contrast kinds of men (or women), give meaning and value to relations among men, and define kinds of social responsibility and other qualities of *persons* generally (Lederman, 1990:64). Thus, values of worth are not applied solely along gender lines but are also associated with a whole range of other issues. It is a perception supported by Moore's (1994) understanding of gender. Moore emphasises that gender identity is given as much by the performance of appropriate activities as it is by the possession of the appropriate genitalia. This particular understanding of gender relations, as we will see, resonates in the urban settlement of Morata, where persons are indeed valued not just according to their gender position. Gender is not necessarily a prime element in establishing one's worth within a particular cultural, social, economic and political environment.

A good example of the above argument is given by Meigs's (1991) observation of the Hua in the Southern Highlands of PNG. Meigs argues that individuals are classified by both external anatomical features and according to the amount of certain male and female substances they have in their bodies. Through her analysis of symbolic ideas about food, sexual activity, and the relationship between the sexes, she exposes how gender is embodied in a complex series of rules. The central component linking these different elements is the 'vital essence' (called *nu*) of a person or even a thing, which can be increased or depleted with corresponding physical reactions. Thus, a person's gender

does not lie locked in his or her genitals but can flow and change with contact as substances seep into and out of the body. Gender is not an immutable state but a dynamic flow. Such a view permits most persons to experience both genders before they die (Meigs, 1991:72). Meigs see this fluctuating capacity as a form of release from dual confinement, set up by a patrilineal society that pervades the Hua conception of the internal structure of all people including themselves. Despite this perception, Meigs points out how on the other hand a patriarchal image can easily be portrayed to the outside world. This manipulation can then be used to enforce a perception of a society dominated by male supremacy, thus reinforcing the dualistic character of gender representation. Based on her analysis of the social value attributed to food, Meigs highlights the process of reversal of functions normally attributed to the sexual and feeding acts. By making sex a feeding act and feeding a sexual act, males reverse the values normally associated with each act, at least within the men's house context. In the process, they make it possible, in this context, to allocate to themselves the role of moral superiority. Thus, body acts and relationships are made to mirror the preferred male conception of social acts and relationships. The physical or natural order has been reversed to bring it in line with the social order (or the preferred male conception of that order) and thus to strengthen this particular male conception or theory about social relations. But, Meigs documents that such a conception is neither fully believed by the males nor fully accepted by the females. It exists as one of several ways of thinking about male-female relations. It is one in a set of competing ideologies, the expression of which is appropriate in some contexts but not in others (ibid.:43-44).

Culture and biology

Moore (1994) points out how the shift in methods of gender analysis towards a specificity that would account for a plurality of experiences and contexts, overlooks the fixed position of the division between sex and gender. As she points out, gender, despite being seen as socially constructed and thus undetermined by biology, "*was* the social elaboration in specific contexts of the obvious facts of biological sex difference" (ibid.:5). This separation implied by Moore is part of a Western folk model that dominates anthropological theorising, though it has been challenged by Western feminists (cf. Gatens, 1991). In line with Foucault's analysis, Moore (1994:13) asserts, "the construction of fixed binary sexes, with fixed categorical differences, is the effect of a specific discourse. What is more, if binary sex is an effect of discourse, then it cannot be

considered as a unitary essentialism and, more importantly, it cannot be recognised as invariant or natural" (see also Del Valle, 1993; Helliwell, 2001).

Gatens (1991) agrees with Moore that the sex/gender divide is based on a binary opposition of body/consciousness, which cannot be upheld. Nonetheless, Gatens maintains the binary sex divide but emphasises the interplay between body and sex and the ensuing importance of the social and historical context. According to Gatens, we are historically and culturally situated in a society that is divided and organised in terms of sex. She points towards the extreme resilience of expressions of sexual difference, and the network of language and other systems of signification that both constitute and perpetuate this difference (Gatens, 1991:142-147). Thus, she stresses the fact that:

"...(M)asculine and feminine forms of behaviour are not arbitrary inscriptions on an indifferent consciousness which is joined to an indifferent body. To speak of 'acquiring' a particular gender is to be mistaken about the significance of gender and its intimate relation to biology-as-lived in a social and historical context". (ibid.:150)

Her argument, developed through her use of the concept of the imaginary body, presents us with a body that is developed, learnt and connected to the body image of others. It is therefore socially and historically specific in that it is constructed by a shared language, the shared psychic significance and privileging of various zones of the body, and common institutional practices and discourses on and through the body (ibid.:148-149).

But, as Moore (1994) rightly points out, if we turn to look at non-Western views of gender difference and the role such differences play in framing or determining personal identity, we see that gender is often held to have an ontological status but that its relationship to the question of embodiment is thought to be rather different. This obviously raises the question of whether gender identity can be seen as the essence at the core of personal identity (ibid.:38-39). Moore's belief is shared by Helliwell (2001) who, based on her research amongst the Dyaks in Indonesia Borneo, demonstrates that Western beliefs in the 'sexed' character of bodies are not 'natural' in basis, but rather are a component of specifically Western gendering and sexual regimes.

Superiority and inferiority

A main issue related to the matter of gender and sexual violence is the common acceptance of another binary issue, that of superiority and inferiority.(Helliwell, 2001) But, as Gatens (1991:152) suggests, "The problem is not the socialisation of women to femininity and men to masculinity but the place of these behaviours in the network of social meaning and the valorising of one (the male) over the other (the female) and the resultant mischaracterisation of relations of difference as relations of superiority and inferiority". Nevertheless, Strathern (1987) points out that notions such as 'inequality' and 'domination' cannot necessarily be applied in societies with very different conceptions of agency and personhood. Anthropological work conducted in PNG certainly reveals the existence of a different conception of personhood and associated gender relations. Helliwell (2001:790-796) too, on the basis of her work on rape in Borneo, Indonesia, challenges the concept of universal oppression of women by men, reinforcing the understanding that the existence of differences in role and space between men and women does not imply inequality in terms of values, status and power.

Perceptions, representations and control

Further, consideration should also be given to the possible uncritical imposition within developing nations of this Eurocentric vision onto existing local ideologies. This process could possibly lead to the production of distorted images of gender relations and sexuality within the different cultural context. This does not imply that changes to local understandings of gender do not occur, but these changes do not happen in a unilateral way with total domination by one particular understanding of particular issues. Lederman (1990), in her study of a Highlands community, points out how both male and female roles and the very ways in which gender is used rhetorically, are changing throughout the Highlands. But, she emphasises that these changes are not simply the products of external forces:

> "Highlands people have also been making a difference, and their actions have been informed by historically constituted interpretations of their circumstances. In Mendi and elsewhere, people argue about exactly how the cultural reworking of new situations ought to be accomplished" (ibid.:65).

Nevertheless, there are major discourses that clearly cloud a social reality, since they are constructed on particular perceptions of social arrangements that have been imported through missionisation and colonisation. An example of this is the debate surrounding sexuality in PNG. In an environment such as the settlement, where different life-worlds seem to have a stronger interaction, ambivalence and confusion are bound to exist. Under those circumstances, where new concepts are also introduced, one needs to be aware of both manipulated and different interpretations and/or translations of these concepts and related incidents (see Chapter 4).

The issue of sexuality has always preoccupied anthropologists wishing to investigate sexual behaviour within primitive societies. The eagerness of wanting to know was often related to the sexually exuberant character given to the people living in these places. As Hammar (1996:215) presents it:

"No less than in many other Pacific island communities, real and imagined sexualities help represent Papua New Guineans by and to Westerners. They are (in)famous for the alleged 'sexual excesses' of their 'cargo' cults, for their (sexually) 'flamboyant cultures' in the south coastal region, and for their 'ritualised homosexual' cultures north, west, and east... Sex pulls people to the Pacific, though, be they painters such as Gauguin, novelists such as Stevenson, idealists such as Mead, would-be scientists such as Malinowski, or loyal readers of National Geographic, a media source remarkably culpable for its depictions of firm-breasted native women and penis-gourd-wearing native men"[92].

Indeed, during colonisation it became the task of missionaries and the colonial administration to exert a certain degree of control over these apparently over-sexed people. There was a need to gear them towards a more functional use, that is, economic exploitation within a capitalist economy. Under the churches' influence, the over-sexed body became an enemy, a site for sin that could not be trusted. Naked bodies had to be covered and the practices of ritualised homosexuality and polygamy had to be eradicated in the name of higher moral values. People were also encouraged to establish

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[92] Of course, one could ask, "what is wrong with penis gourds and firm breasts?" By suggesting culpability of the media for representing these markers, Hammar indirectly implies a negative association for these penis gourds and firm-breasted women. His reference to the coverage by the media is a reflection of his own perception embedded in Western values imposed on these kinds of images.

themselves as nuclear households, in an attempt to exert control over production and reproduction. However, as we will further see, the moulding of people into these new formats was not very successful. The imposition of a nuclear household was also reinforced by a medical policy insisting on consent given by the husband for tubal ligation if requested by the woman. Thus, there seemed to be a denial of sexual encounters and reproduction outside the framework of the nuclear family.

The insistence on the Western perception of family construction and its associated Victorian values was once more evoked at the time of publication of a research paper by Jenkins (1994). Its explicit presentation of Papuan New Guineans sexual experiences and behaviour, in an attempt to design appropriate prevention programs against the spread of HIV, was regarded by the then members of National Council of Women as a total misconstruction of PNG's mores. The fact that the stories challenged many Christian values especially that of sexual interactions within the framework of marriage and monogamy, made the report totally unacceptable; it was branded as not representative of the majority of the population. Consequently, the research paper is now catalogued in the University library and students may borrow it only on submission of a letter of authorisation from a lecturer. Attempting to exert such a degree of control surely acknowledges that other forces are at work that resist the imposition of particular values and associated practices.

There is no denying that the discourse on purity and moderation in relation to sexual matters has influenced part of the population. However, it co-exists with another discourse in which the exotic image of sexual exuberance has made room for multiple accounts of violent rape stories, captured by both the international and national media. The change has brought on the one hand social anxiety related to the law-and-order debate, and on the other hand an image of women as victims of violent and suppressing men with no control over their sexuality. Women are presented as prey to men's bestial desires. The question remains: how far are these discourses an attempt to assert control over bodies who have shown resistance to imposed values and operational modes?

Internalising and resisting Western sensibilities: the ambivalent story

There is no such reality as a pristine cultural or social environment, only a societal arrangement undergoing continuous movement through space and time. Hence, there is

no doubt that the PNG person has been marked by missionisation and colonialism, which are part of the history and which are closely associated with Eurocentric values. The twin forces of missionisation and colonisation have opened the possibility for the Eurocentric gendered body, meaning sexually controlled and conditioned to function within patriarchal dominance, to have found its way to PNG people.

This Western perception of the gendered and sexual body makes it easier to analyse the problems raised within this model. I refer here to notions of submissive, dependent and therefore often abused women. Mass media show multiple examples of dependent and apparently abused women. Thus, the universal image of the oppressed woman is evidenced in statements such as "For 10,000 years we have discriminated against women..." (*Post Courier*, 9-11 March 2001). That image is reiterated by a group of people, especially educated women, within PNG society. That particular understanding of women has been further reinforced by a number of factors such as specific funding programs, discourse and understanding of the living environment, especially within settlements, of women. As an outcome of the representation of women as oppressed and deprived, foreign aid and projects aimed at improving the position of women have been introduced by both national and international governments and non-government agencies (e.g. *Post Courier*, 24 May 2000)[93]. Portraying oneself as an oppressed woman allows easier access to opportunities and funding provided by the relevant agencies in charge of improving the position of PNG women. Furthermore, as mentioned in previous chapters, Eurocentric values are often re-emphasised by the way the local community manages to use the discourse appropriate to a Western point of view. Women talk about being beaten up, about being economically destituted and about being physically confined. These representations can be interpreted as the outcome of living in a settlement, which in the state-based law-and-order debate is presented as being dysfunctional and dangerous.

The breakdown of settlements has been attributed to the incapacity of traditional social control mechanisms to operate in these particular environments. In this context, it is easy to assume that values attached to a non-Western life world would have vanished, including the meanings and experiences related to gender and sexuality. Also, the multi-ethnic image of the place has often been considered as contributing to the disintegration of 'traditional' values that normally would be at the basis of a strong cohesive community.

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[93] http://www.postcourier.com.pg/20000524/news14.htm.

The assumed social disintegration has been identified as a common cause for the high rate of crime in urban areas and more specifically in settlements[94].

It would no doubt be easy to believe that traditional values have indeed, if not vanished, at least diminished in this particular urban centre. Not only are there drastic societal and economical changes, but also the close vicinity of the place to the institutions that represent the imposed colonial government structure, alongside the establishment of different church centres within the community, make it easy to assume an overriding impact of Western values. The increased opportunity to tune in to local radio and TV stations, which often propagate Christian values, is another factor that could partially explain an acceptance of Western values in these urban centres. There is also the fact that many people who have moved to the urban centres have already undergone a desensitisation, often through missionisation, which saw fit to abolish specific customs that missionaries considered aberrant or primitive to their own culture of origin. Also, in the case of Morata, which is part of the urban setting permeated by a cash economy, cars, banks and people dressed in Western-style clothes, it is easy to overlook the possible perpetuation of life-values, including gender and sexual values more closely related to a traditional life-world.

Yet, assuming an overall internalisation of outside values and practices would, as suggested by Lederman (1990), and in previous chapters, negate the agency of a people who over centuries have developed their own ideologies and values within possibly a totally different framework from that known to us in the West. Indeed, the imposition of particular values and norms does not necessarily implicate a duplication of those values by embodied (sexed or not) subjects who have agency. The embodied subjects of PNG have a history and the input of new norms and understandings will interact with an existing network of social meanings. In terms of gender relations and associated understandings of power, differences between the feminine and the masculine, if recognised as such, should not be automatically translated into a relation of superiority and inferiority. As Strathern (1987a) suggests, it is not up to the researcher to decide, on behalf of the people referred to, whether men or women have power. Rather, it is helpful to describe how they make known to themselves that this or that category is powerful, that these persons are unequal and so on. This gives some insight into how people construct relations (ibid.:6). In terms of issues of power there is a need to examine

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[94] There is a constant reiteration in the stated-based discourse, often reflected in the media, of the need to evict unemployed people living in the planned and un-planned settlements.

previously existing structures of power and possibly new structures that may or may not reinforce or dismantle those existing power sites, or possibly create new ones (Abu-Lughod, 1990). "Studying the various forms of resistance should allow us to access the ways intersecting and often conflicting structures of power work together in communities that are gradually becoming more tied in with multiple and often non-local systems" (ibid.:14).

Morata's social reality is indeed a very ambivalent one, mostly characterised by chaos, violence and relative poverty. Yet, as detailed in the previous chapter, people in the settlement do have clear patterns of engagement. The above assumptions regarding chaos and violence have been clouded by a Eurocentric discourse that has failed to understand the importance of agency and the fact that issues of violence, chaos and possibly gender and sexuality, could be experienced and valued in a different way.

Gender and sexuality in Morata

Having raised and in certain cases problematised the perception and understanding of gender and sexuality, I now engage in a layered analysis of these concepts within the community of Morata. The purpose is to address some of the issues emanating from Morata's life-world, which are not adequately encompassed by a Western feminist understanding of gender and sexuality. Firstly, I scrutinise the manipulation of state-based understandings of gender and sexuality through investigation of the local discourse within the community. The dynamics surrounding court cases are useful for this purpose. Even though on many occasions incidents and comments might be seen as reinforcing a Western understanding of gender relations and sexuality, there are sufficient indications of other meanings and understandings which are a legacy of the past and at the same time result from a new way of living in a multi-ethnic environment. In the second layer of this analysis, where I focus on relationships within households, these alternative perspectives re-emerge, adding more strength to the position taken in the analysis of the court cases. The complexity surrounding the issue of gender and sexuality is further acknowledged at the level of relations between men and women in Morata, and more specifically between Kathy and Patrick as husband and wife. What emerges is an understanding of gender and sexuality that cannot be contained within a presentation of gender along a powerful–powerless axis.

The manipulation of values

Now and then one sees and one hears in Morata about a woman being beaten or having her belongings destroyed or damaged. However, these sights and stories are part of a bigger picture in which both men and women can be seen to engage in violent actions, affecting both men and women and adults and children. Within particular limits this violence is considered legitimate by the community in Morata and as an appropriate way to air grievances (see Chapter 4). Despite this situation the state-based discourse on law-and-order portrays women as being oppressed and highly victimised by men who cannot control their violent behaviour. There is a general understanding in the state-based discourse that the situation for women has deteriorated as a result of rapid social and economic changes in the country. Against this backdrop, women living in urban areas are considered to have less support of kin due to physical separation. Urban living seems associated with economic hardship resulting from the growing importance of cash in an environment that does not provide sufficient sources of income. Under these circumstances women are considered to be more dependent on their men. Furthermore, increased alcohol consumption by men is understood to increase economic hardship and to fuel incidents of violence, often victimising women (Toft, 1985).

In this context the battered woman phenomenon is an issue mainly raised within government institutions, non-government agencies funded by overseas agents, and, last but not least, the churches. The pervasiveness of this victimised image of women within the state-based rhetoric has without doubt found its way into the settlement, influencing community arrangements and individual development. However, as we will see, the above representation of women does not resonate entirely in the discourse represented by people in Morata. It has, however, created a strong reaction in local men, who challenge Western feminist supporters to keep their emancipation away from their 'traditional' women. In a way this eagerness to emancipate has created an emphasis on a submissive characteristic of traditional women, which might not have been experienced or understood as such before the introduction of the victimised image and with it, the emancipatory undertaking. Thus, one could conclude that the outcome of feminist influence in this particular environment has led to the construction of passive and submissive PNG women.

Before looking at how people's lives in the settlement are shaped by their everyday practices, understandings of their conditions of existence and feelings (Connell and Lea, 1994:285), I would like to highlight how elements emanating from the state-based discourse related to gender relations and sexuality, are brought into the settlement and how they are perceived by the group of people which they target or affect.

The most strongly emphasised values regarding gender relations and sexuality are brought to the communities through the multiple churches and some government representatives established within the settlement. The idea of nuclear households, with the male patriarch and an obedient woman, is disseminated through preaching but has also become part of the rhetoric of government agencies which operate within the framework of a Christian country. One of the most obvious sites where this occurs is at the Village Court. Within the Village Court there is an amalgamation of government policies and Christian values encouraging a submissive position of women. It is in this setting that court magistrates make statements of the order 'man igat powa' [Tokpisin: man have the power], thereby targeting women as secondary citizens.

In a context where the focus is on establishing good order and faith, these statements could be seen as influential. Village magistrates, as the closest link with the overall legal system in the country, feel bestowed with a certain responsibility to maintain order and guide community members towards being responsible and well-behaved citizens. Wearing a uniform and shoes further emphasises their position and authority. With a rather extensive weekly audience their impact could be regarded as important. The magistrates of these courts are empowered to deal with both civil and criminal cases but only within certain parameters (see Village Court Act – Section 41). In their assessments and judgments magistrates have to consider, according to the Act, the customary values of the people involved in the disputes. Attempts are made to represent different ethnic groups present in the settlement by selecting magistrates from different ethnic backgrounds[95]. During hearings, many opportunities exist for magistrates to issue statements on how one should conduct oneself and what gender relations ought to be. In the process of this, the intermeshing of both so-called traditional meanings and Christian values is noticeable. As one magistrate emphasised during a hearing on adultery: 'Yu brukim lo bilong yumi. Em istap long bible tu' [Tokpisin: You broke our law which is

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[95] However, in an environment characterised by multi-ethnicity, inter-ethnic gender relations, and with several generations distance from the area of origin, it becomes increasingly difficult to define customs, especially as customs are known to be part of an oral tradition without any written references.

similar as the one set out in the bible]. On many occasions the magistrate, in the case of marital dispute within a polygamous situation, would make sure to identify the husband as 'master' and the first wife as the one chosen by God as his partner. In this way there is a discourse reinforcing the nuclear family set-up, with the husband having the power. The term 'master' emanates from the colonial period where the white man established himself as master of the indigenous people[96]. Nevertheless, as the following case study shows, the situation is not straightforward.

Court Case 1

In this case, the complainant is Mrs. Jenny with Mr. Jenny and his girlfriend being the defendants. Mrs. Jenny is from Wabag (Enga Province) and has been married for 12 years to Mr. Jenny who is from Mount Hagen (Western Highlands). They have two children and the husband paid a bride price (K 3000, a pig and cassowary). Mrs. Jenny returned to the village three years ago whilst her husband stayed in town to work. The first year and half he would send money to his wife. However, for the last 18 months he failed to do so. During the past three years Mrs. Jenny stayed with her husband's relatives in his village, gardening, minding the children and caring for his parents. Having received no money from her husband Mrs. Jenny decided to travel to Port Moresby where she found her husband with another woman. Mr. Jenny confirmed in court that he had already paid part of a bride price for his new wife. Despite considering the first wife as the most important woman, the magistrate then asked him if he would like to be married to two women, to which Mr. Jenny responded positively. Mrs. Jenny then said; *'man laik controlim mi tupela em orait Tupela, Mr. Jenny na niupela meri, mas wokim compensation long mi.'* [Tokpisin: the man wants to control both of us, that is fine. However, both will have to recompense me]. Meanwhile, taking into consideration Mr. Jenny's age, the magistrate concluded that the young girlfriend must have known that the man was married. Thus, both Mr. Jenny and his girlfriend, soon to be his second wife were ordered to pay compensation (K300 each) to Mrs. Jenny for committing adultery. At the same time, since the man was considered the master and he desired two women, the magistrate gave Mr. Jenny his approval to marry the second woman.

In this situation the concept of 'boss', emanating from the Western construction of a patriarchal nuclear family, found its way into the language used by the Village Court

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[96] Sometimes the term 'master' is replaced by the word 'boss'. Both carry the same value.

magistrate. However, use of the term does not automatically imply application of its meaning as known within the Western patriarchal discourse. Despite the magistrate's approval of the second marriage, there was also recognition of the position of the first wife. Considering the fact that the husband earned approximately K 100 a fortnight as a bus driver, the payment of K 600 to the first wife was quite a substantial amount of money. It reveals the importance attached to the marital relationship for the economic and social value it generates for the families involved. The first wife could have requested a divorce but did not mention that option. On the contrary, there was no substantial resistance to the development of a polygamous relationship by the three parties involved. The girlfriend, despite strong disapproval of her kin, did not seem disturbed by the fact that she would be a second wife. With the support of her family, it would have been easy to leave the relationship.

There is no doubt that both women could be viewed as victims of the man's behaviour. After the court case, the first wife did not hide her frustration. She approached her husband and physically attacked him, whilst the girlfriend was being booed by her own relatives. But, could the husband be considered to be in a better position and more powerful? His endeavour to acquire a second wife did not go unchallenged. Also, he would now have to provide for two households instead of one. The impact on a man's status of having more than one wife becomes insignificant when it cannot be translated into economic gain. Mr Jenny may have thought that he could avoid his marital obligations because he was far away from his village. Extended networks of kin and *wantoks* make this almost impossible.

Support was obviously also provided for Mrs. Jenny when she decided to come to Port Moresby to check up on her husband. She would have needed funds to purchase a plane ticket and her in-laws looked after the children during her absence. What then considered powerful; the fact that the husband has sexual access to more than one woman or the fact that both wives have locked the man into financial obligations towards each of them and their respective relatives? Despite the village magistrate making reference to the Bible and in doing so apparently advantaging the nuclear household, the handling of the case reinforces the acceptability of polygamous relationships. Under those circumstances women are not viewed as individuals without rights or totally submissive to men. At the same time, the case also reveals the economic value attached

to those marriages which are bound up in a larger picture of obligations and reciprocities. In this situation neither the man nor either of the women can be considered the winner.

Court Case 2

James returned to the village whilst his wife, Suzy, remained in town with their two children. She had a job and therefore decided not to accompany him. James left for four years and during that time remarried and adopted the two children of his second wife. According to Suzy he did not send her anything. Now James returned to the city to take her back to the village. Suzy herself was involved with another man, justifying her action by stating that she needed support to maintain her family with school fees and school uniforms. Suzy had no desire to return with her first husband. However, James insisted that since he paid bride price for her, *'em stap long propreti bilong mi'* [Tokpisin: she is part of my belongings], to which the magistrate retorted

M (Magistrate) Yu (addressing the husband) *long wanem misson?* [Tokpisin: what church do you belong to?]:

Man *Mi Catholic.* [Tokpisin: I am a Catholic]

M *Lo bilong Catholic itok wanpela meri tasol. Mi tu mi Catholic. Mi gat wanpela meri klos tu em bai dai. Tasol mi fret long man antap. Tupela meri yu kisim long rongpela man. Ino lo bilong ol wait man – em lo bilong yumi.* [Tokpisin: Catholic law tells us there is only one wife. Myself I am also a Catholic. I have one wife and she will soon die. But I am afraid of the man up there. Yu got two women from the wrong man. This is not white men's law. It is our law.]

The magistrate then ordered K500 to be paid by both Suzy and her new man to James for the act of adultery. This particular judgment could easily be assessed as favouring the husband. However, further investigation revealed a different understanding of the case. According to the magistrate the first wife could herself take the husband to court for adultery. This would then offset her expenses set by this court. He also implied that the husband's family members had urged the husband to take his wife to court and rekindle their previous relationship within a polygamous setup. Their interest was motivated by possible financial gain from a reunion of the partners. In the past the first-born child had been left brain-damaged after serious police beatings. The child had been sent to

Australia for medical treatment but never totally recovered. As a result of this incident a compensation payment for the amount between K 200,000 and K 300,000 seemed to be in the pipeline. If the magistrate had considered the man to be more powerful he would have directed Suzy to rejoin her husband and that would have also guaranteed James' access to the compensation money. But, he did not do so.

Thus, women are not necessarily victims of polygamous relationships or of the Village Court system. Suzy, after remaining in the city, made the choice to move on and enter a new relationship. Of course, having had to pay the adultery fee she could be considered the victim but, as the magistrate later pointed out, she was also in a position to take her former husband to court for adultery. Also, the amount (within the context of a huge compensation payment) seemed minimal. Again this case was primarily concerned with economic matters rather than with power issues between genders.

Discussion

At first sight, both cases could easily be seen as situations reflecting an inferior position of women, with the person of authority making clear statements to that regard. Christian values translated into so-called traditional values reinforce judgments which could be considered to discriminate against women. However, statements to that regard seem to be disconnected from what was really taking place during the hearing in terms of its effect on real life situations, the reaction of the people involved and the judgment. There are sufficient elements in both cases to suggest that women are not necessarily the victims in these cases. The dynamics of the above 'gender conflicts' emanate from a 'traditional' economic and social basis which prioritises obligations and reciprocity amongst extended family relations and which does not favour one gender above the other (see especially Case 2). As the first case shows, multi-ethnic marriages do not alter that situation.

Within the state-based understandings of gender relations, polygamy is seen as repressing women's position, if not by its format then by the fact that within this setting, feelings of sexual jealousy are easy to instigate. These situations of sexual jealousy can

turn women within a polygamous setting against each other[97]. There is no doubt that these relationships have their problems. Sharing a small amount of income would also increase economic pressure. But, as Case 2 shows, women are not necessarily dependent on their husband's income; they may also make choices to move into a different relationship. Case 1 highlights the fact that men are not free to do as they wish within the context of polygamous relationships. The wife can even gain support from her husband's family when he does not fulfill his marital obligations.

Of interest also is the way the magistrate uses reference to Christianity as a way of distancing PNG people from the white man's way of life. In this instance white people are no longer portrayed as the superior race, especially with regard to moral values. Christianity is seen not as an imposed system, but rather as a system constructed through the community's own moral evolution. The magistrate, attempting to establish himself as a figure of authority on his own merits by somehow assimilating and dissociating Christian morality from the white people, seems to have a very restrictive influence. Many judgments are challenged at the end of the court case. I cannot remember a single instance in which all judgments passed on a particular court day proceeded without further discussions and arguments outside the court.

The imposition of a certain degree of respect in court happens often by a request for people to stand or talk in a certain way. Old peace officers often use the occasion to dress up in their colonial kiap uniform, saluting as in the colonial days. In the absence of the white colonial master, they thus aim to appropriate colonial authority. However, bystanders often respond to these presentations and actions with howls of laughter. This turns the Village Court setting into something rather laconic and often theatrical, diminishing the importance of the values on which judgments are based. This situation reinforces the point that despite the presence of multiple references to Western and Christian values, these values are either not perceived as part of the Western construction or are challenged, as in the case of the peace officers.

There are clear images presented by men in Morata as to how women are viewed, or at least what gender relations should entail. However, these presentations do not always reflect social reality, not even of the person presenting the issues. Different values arise

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[97] The issue of polygamous relationships has been adopted as a political issue by women leaders who have challenged the leaders of the nation to legally abolish the practice. (*Postcourier*, 9-11 March 2001, Viewpoint)

depending on the context in which they are cast (cf. Meigs, 1991:43-44). The following account, obtained from Ricky, a young man of Morata, exposes how perceptions and understandings in relation to gender and sexuality, as presented within the state-based discourse on law-and-order, can be raised without really altering the existing meanings and understandings within the life-world of the person presenting the raised issues.

During one of our conversations, Ricky asserted that he would never want to be a woman. Being a man is much better. As man, one is free. Women on the contrary are the 'wokboi bilong man' [Tokpisin: a man's servant]. He further claimed that 'taim bilong tumbuna ol meri nogat stron, nogat pawa but now equal system – yu bai yu kamap tool bilong em – givim han na sapot'. [Tokpisin: In the olden days, women were powerless but now there is equality, as a man you will become the woman's tool having to help her out].

In this context, one must ask whether women were really powerless in pre-colonial times or whether Ricky is taking up a previously introduced discourse, which, as in the case of the magistrate, has been reconstructed as the customary one. The fact that in tribal societies women and men often engaged in separate activities and slept in different houses would have made it easy to apply binary gender values from within an existing Western discourse. Since Ricky is a member of Morata community who has never lived in a rural environment or amongst his own tribe's people, it is easy to assume that this particular discourse would have emanated from his own cultural background. The allusion to the equal position of women to men would then come from the feminist debate introduced more recently, and which is seen as a challenge to men's position of power.

Life in the settlement does not offer the easiest solutions to some of these young men's problems. An image of higher self-esteem for men could be negotiated through the inferior position of the other - the female gender. In this context, there is a clear duality in terms of gender and its associated power value. However, the following incident shows that this particular understanding of gender relations might represent part of the state-based discourse on this matter without really describing the social reality of the place. Some time after the above conversation, I met Ricky again. His body carried the marks of several recent beatings. The previous evening his wife had found him fornicating with his former girlfriend on one of the hillsides surrounding Morata. Ricky was quite subdued on this particular occasion. In many ways, he felt ashamed by the incident. At the same

time he did not air any intention of getting back at his wife, as he acknowledged being in the wrong. As Kathy, my informant, said, "him and his girlfriend will have to compensate his wife for their wrongdoing". This incident challenges Ricky's previous statement alluding to the superiority of men. His previous presentation of gender relations did not entirely resonate in his own daily life experiences, nor as we will further see, in the life of the people of Morata.

I therefore propose to examine more closely the experiences of gender and sexuality by scrutinising the basic social unit in the settlement, which is the household on the 'block'[98]. Within this context, I raise issues that throughout my fieldwork were evident as either recurrent or important factors in daily life. I refer here to networks, economics, general relationships between people and more specifically between men and women, understandings of Christianity and racial differences. It is at those different levels that I seek to unveil the understandings, meanings and perceptions surrounding gender relations and sexuality within the households of Morata. To further ground the issues raised within this particular section and within the general debate, I present the case study of Kathy and Patrick, a couple living in Morata.

Household construction

Networks

Within the macroscopic and state-based perspective of law-and-order, one point of view is that incidents of sexual violence have dramatically increased as a result of women attempting to escape the autocratic attitude of men. In this formulation women, especially in the urban context, are seen as totally dependent and submissive to men. Women are mostly portrayed as voiceless and deprived of any capacity to make decisions for themselves. It is an image that depends on an understanding of societal organisation based around a nuclear family construction. In Morata, however, the majority of the people on Lobu Street do not live as nuclear families, despite the fact that certain 'traditional' living arrangements have changed (see Chapter 3). The living arrangements reflect a society where kinship relations still matter. The 'blocks' on which the households develop are in many ways a miniature of a village (see Chapter 3). Most people have

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[11] There are in certain cases more then one household on a particular 'block'. With household, I am referring to people who do share finance, food and shelter.

relatives, real or adopted, sharing the premises. Some of them share food and others do not. Some share sleeping quarters, others do not. In certain cases, a man with his multiple wives shares a 'block' with other relatives, or in some cases, other *wantoks*. On these 'blocks', men and women engage in different kinds of relationships, without necessarily the focus on the *couple*, which often exists in nuclear households. There is also constant movement of people on these 'blocks'. People come and go, some moving between village and town, others moving between different suburbs or different 'blocks'. In this way, financial support is minimally diminished and women are rarely solely dependent on their husbands. In times of hardship, people help each other, feeding children across 'block' boundaries. There is also a continuous exchange of small coins as an ongoing process of reciprocity among people living on the same 'block' but also in the same area. Some people do fall through this safety net but they are an exception.

It should be recognised that people overall, including women, have developed networks that provide them with basic support. These networks have expanded beyond that of kinship but have not necessarily moved away from it. In this particular settlement, the kinship model has been moulded in a way that also meets the demands of an environment characterised by multiple ethnicity. The 'mini village' set-up provides immediate support where necessary, but at the same time, as Kathy puts it, "I'd rather be in Morata surrounded by my neighbours than being part of a clan". Her preference for urban life is mostly related to the partial dissociation from the string of obligations in which one is enmeshed when totally involved with clan life, but it does not imply a total dismantling of the network. If ties with kin have partially weakened, a process of reciprocity and obligation has been re-established with other members of the community, which often include members of one's clan or tribe. Men and women who have just arrived in the city do not take long to find *wantoks* who often provide the shelter and food needed during their initial stay. It is within this extensive network that people manage to survive in times of economic hardship. The situation does increase the pressure on the few who earn a steady income. Thus, women who survive on their husbands' income have to share that income with other dependants. However, women do not generally depend solely on monetary support from their husbands.

It is evident from this particular perspective on households that both men and women operate within extensive networks that are integral to their livelihood. The reliance upon specific gender relations and associated power positions diminishes in such an

environment. The importance of secondary victims in the context of sexual violence incidents (see Chapter 2) can be understood within the importance granted to those networks.

Economics

The state-based law-and-order debate suggests an increased economic dependency on men by women, especially in urban settings (e.g. Toft, 1986a). This situation has been seen as another factor contributing to increased violence against women. It suggests the limited capacity of women to remove themselves from situations which are potentially harmful to them, reinforcing a submissive image of women who are easy targets of violence. This particular understanding of gender relations does not find an immediate translation in Morata. Where possible, all members living on a 'block' provide the means of survival for its 'tenants', either by providing cash or by sharing food. But, often women have developed their own ways to be self sufficient in terms of food provision through subsistence gardening and sometimes fishing (see Chapter 3). Selling produce at the local market or even the larger city market has proved sustainable. In many instances it is women who hold a job and provide the financial security of a household. Women in Morata operate the trade stores, produce goods for the local market, and secure funding for small businesses and awareness programs. Some women work as clerical staff for government offices or private companies. One of the women on Lobu Street had even managed to secure funding for her electoral campaign.

Economic dependency does not really account for the image of increased suppression of women in urban areas, as it is clear that women partake in the cash economy and have access to alternative sources of support besides that provided by their husbands. Kathy receives help mostly from her half-sister Sofie and from Jean. Also, she can expect her brother and other family members to contribute. Some of the money she makes through gambling and through small donations given to her by neighbours allows her to purchase her ration of betel nuts. Patrick also contributes to household expenses by providing some money for store goods. Extra money comes through the performances Kathy manages to secure for her theatre group. Although there is little excess in terms of money to provide for daily needs, money always seems to be around. As much as everyone is focused on survival on a daily basis people, women and men alike, at times juggle with huge amounts of money which disappear as fast as they appear. It gives the

impression that money really does not that much value, unless it is used in exchange for something more meaningful such as burial and bride wealth rituals. Thus, the nuclear household cannot be viewed as the essential economic and functional entity in which women are assigned a secondary position and left without any form of agency or means of survival. Both women and men are part of a more extensive unit which affects people's daily life, even in this urban setting.

Nevertheless, in Morata there are without doubt traces of this state-based representation that portrays men of worth as being in the decision-making position and successfully entrenched in the cash economy. Hence, as mentioned earlier, young unemployed men are often labelled *pipia* [Tokpisin: rubbish], and for that matter often label themselves *pipia* when justifying their need to engage in unlawful actions including sexual violence. However, this label is not necessarily internalised as part of their personhood. Many of the young people, women, men and elders, present themselves as worthless within the Eurocentric framework of values where status is mostly attached to public positions of power and economic success. It cannot be denied that (many) people aspire to positions of power. However, since only a small number of positions are available within the formal sphere, and therefore unattainable for most, failure to secure them does not necessarily devalue a person. On the other hand, success in the formal sector is not automatically transposed to the community. While many of the people involved in the formal cash economy chose to dissociate themselves from economic obligations thereby losing status among clan and community members, men and women acquired who do not hold such positions can participate and achieve status. For example, Patrick acquired his status through his involvement in criminal activities and his capacity to participate in the strings of obligations and reciprocity within his extended network of clan, tribe and kin but also with his friends who do not necessarily share the same ethnicity and other community members living in Morata. Kathy, we shall see, achieved status through her capacity to initiate projects and access funds that benefit both relatives and other community members. Thus, individual prosperity, whether in the formal or informal sector, does not necessarily translate into a position of recognition and status. It can only be viewed as one particular aspect of a whole set of qualities needed to be highly regarded within a community and among clan, tribe and kin. Men and women's positions therefore cannot be cast solely in economic terms. Even if women are viewed as financially dependent on men, this relationship should not be automatically placed within a dependency framework with women in a submissive status.

<u>Relationships</u>

The importance of the broader unit is amplified by the common practice of adoption. In every household on Kathy's street at least one child had been adopted or given out for adoption. Jean made the choice of establishing herself on Kathy's 'block'. When she was about 13 years old Jean decided to leave her sister's home where she had been assigned the task of looking after her sister's child. Dismayed at the way she was left to do all the work whilst her sister continually went out she decided to leave. Her destination was Patrick's household. Patrick's cousin had been identified as the father of the child but had never taken responsibility for it. Jean[99] appeared on the compound one morning with the child and decided she would not return to her sister's. After several days the child was finally picked up by its mother but Jean never left the 'block'. She adopted Patrick and Kathy as her father and mother. No doubt Kathy and Patrick felt obliged to a certain point to cater for Jean as the child she was looking after was indirectly related to Patrick. In a Western nuclear setting no such obligation would have existed. Patrick's cousin, or a welfare agency, would have carried the burden of this situation.

There are multiple examples which point towards the primordial importance of an extended network of relationships and the overarching importance of those to the nuclear family. They are at the basis of many Village Court disputes. In one example the claimant was a Goilala woman who had left her Highlands husband to stay with her own family. She left her husband as he had so far failed to settle the bride-wealth. Even though this situation is related to an economic issue, it shows how a nuclear set-up remains powerless in the framework of extended obligations. The judgment by the Village Court magistrate went against all expectations, prioritising the nuclear family set-up in which the husband is the head of the household. The mother was ordered to return the child to the husband despite the fact that in traditional terms the daughter returns to the mother's side when the husband and his family fail to meet the bride-wealth payment. Afterwards the magistrate justified his judgment by claiming that the initial decision of the wife to leave her husband had been orchestrated by her family who wanted to benefit from the bride-wealth. As far as the magistrate was concerned, husband and wife had no issues but were drawn into this situation by the pressure of family demands. Hoping to

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[99] See more on Jean in Chapter 3; Entering the 'block'.

counteract the actions of the wife's relatives he awarded custody of the child to the father whilst encouraging him to pay the bride wealth as soon as possible.

Resentment against the court's decision was made clear by a rowdy dispute which took place just outside the court. Both the wife and her relatives were adamant that neither she nor the child would return to the husband until he and his relatives had fulfilled the obligations set out within the framework of extended family ties. In this example the marital connection is valuable only when connected to its economic worth. If not fulfilled the marriage can easily be dismantled. Despite an attempt by the court to counteract the power of the extended family relations, it was clear that the disgruntled defending party was not going to let a decision made by the Village Court magistrate change her course of action.

Thus, in terms of a person's position within the nuclear family setting it is clear that neither man nor woman has a prime position. The nuclear family setting is very much a powerless entity as such, in that the situation of both husband and wife is negotiated through multiple relations established within networks of reciprocity and obligation and which are at the centre of daily life in the settlement. As the court cases show at one level the relationship between husband and wife might be unequal, while in a broader perspective, which is more important to both men and women in PNG, they are not. In this context it is hard to establish positions of superiority and inferiority as portrayed in a conventional understanding of gender relations.

Man and Woman

The image of a powerful man and repressed woman is exaggerated by a discourse which portrays a powerful person as one who has succeeded in taking a decision-making position within the introduced institutionalised world or who has managed to become a successful business person. Within this framework, images of men in these high profile positions in society substantially outnumber those of women. The importance attributed to these particular positions is reinforced through the way gender relations are perceived or possibly constructed. Chowning (1987:145) recounts that a number of older people of both sexes criticise modern young women for choosing husbands on the basis of their possession of cash and Western goods, asserting that a young man is appealing only if he is educated or has a good job; otherwise a well-off older man will be preferred even if

the woman has to make a polygamous marriage. This statement finds resonance in certain areas of Morata, especially amongst offenders of sexual violence who justify their actions by this specific argument. In this context young men label themselves *pipia man* [Tokpisin: worthless man] who stand no chance against successful men to access women and fulfill their sexual desires. The above understanding of gender relations does not provide any scope for agency of women outside that specific framework, portraying women as interested only in those specific forms of power and furthermore, suggesting that they do not have the capacity to obtain such positions on their own merit.

That women have a desire to establish their personal position of worth, independent of men, is indirectly argued through the discourse of violence in which women are portrayed as the victims. Women in this situation are viewed as wanting to escape their traditional submissive position (Toft, 1985; Marksbury, 1993). Through violence, these recalcitrant women are then forced back to take an obedient role towards the male counterpart. However, as pointed out earlier, the particular position that is described as traditional is not necessarily one of submission and inferiority (Meigs, 1991). Not only is there a problem with the way reference is made to tradition but, as Strathern (1987) pointed out, notions such as inequality and domination cannot necessarily be applied in societies with very different conceptions of personhood and associated gender relations.

By the end of my stay in the settlement, it had become clear that there was no common denominator for either men or women, almost as if Meigs' (1991) interpretation of the Hulas having as many genders as there were people could be transposed onto the people in Morata. Combining this observation with Strathern's remark that "Contrasts between men and women become a vehicle for the creation of value: for evaluating one set of powers by reference to another" (Strathern 1987a:7), it becomes possible to move away from a 'constructed' dual representation of gender valorised through its dichotomy of superiority and inferiority.

One's position amongst kin, members of the 'block', the community or even more widely, not only depended on one's gender but resulted from a number of factors. Thus, the gender factor could not be isolated as the marker of one's personality but crossed different axes. Some of these refer to one's capacity to assist and share, work hard, be a good provider, a good negotiator and a contributor to major events. Being a prominent member of church or state institutions became valuable only when one exhibited some of

these characteristics. These characteristics are not solely attached to a particular gender identity but are part of the individual within his or her cultural and social environment. This is not to say that activities did not occur which could be considered as gender- and space-specific. In PNG traditionally men and women worked for the same goal although separately and gained prestige and status within their own spheres of activities. Because they worked separately or with different tasks, there was never competition between the sexes[100]. As such, the divide did not include a value of superiority or inferiority for either of the genders (e.g. Biersack, 1984; Meigs, 1991; Gustafsson, 1999b; Helliwell, 2001).

In Morata the value given to the different components enshrined in a person changed according to the situation and the relationship in which they existed. At the same time there were multiple indications supporting Moore's understanding of a subject existing as a set of multiple and contradictory positions and subjectivities (Moore, 1994:55). This understanding might make it easier to make sense of the extreme ambivalence surrounding the issue of personhood and associated gender relations in a varied environment such as Morata settlement.

Thus, there are a number of different components that influence the construction of identity. Some of these are indeed gendered and carry with them a Eurocentric value of that particular divide. It is interesting, however, that particular values are very much attached to one particular component of one's personhood, operating in an almost distinct manner without necessarily affecting one's standing and position in a different setting. Multiple and contradictory subjectivities arose amongst many of the people I socialised and lived with in Morata. Against this backdrop, it became obvious that different values are important at different stages and within different contexts, allowing many different opportunities to develop regarding the achievement of status.

Christianity

A major carrier of the gender divide and contributor to a status of worth is Christianity. It is omnipresent and exists through the establishment of different denominations within Morata. The importance of religion in the establishment of status is reflected, for example, in the fact that as an outsider you are often asked which religion you adhere to.

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[100] Issues of inequality may be more relevant among the 'middle class', where women are expected to be housewives (like good white women maybe). A study of the 'middle class' in urban towns might present a rather different picture than that in Morata.

A negative response will leave people puzzled as to your position of authority, since membership of a church automatically elevates a person from the state of primitiveness into the world of the civilised white people. After all, PNG declared itself a Christian nation upon independence.

It is also in the arena of Christianity that the nuclear family is advocated, with the patriarchal figure of authority. Kathy would sometimes be criticised for not preparing the meals for Patrick, her husband. For Sofie and Jean, Patrick was the head of the 'block' and should be respected as the patriarch. At the same time, it was clear that Jean and Sofie were also the two women whose lives were least affected by Patrick's actions and decisions. As mentioned earlier, Patrick was not that often on the 'block'. Their statement was an outcome of their understanding of gender relations as preached within the church. For both Jean and Sofie, church seemed to have importance as they often judged others by their failure to behave properly, meaning dressing decently and being industrious and low key, as advocated through the church. Disco music and anything associated with it was regarded as evil and immoral.

At the time of my fieldwork, the new millennium was nearing and both Sofie and Jean as unattached women had decided that there was no time for them to attempt to enter a relationship, because their whole attention should be devoted to the one and only man, God. However, their concerns were not as much to follow the norms about family life preached by the church but rather a common fear that judgment day was about to take place. Also, as mentioned earlier in relation to court cases, although Christian values are constantly raised the rhetorical use does not always reflect people's actions or beliefs. This situation is duplicated also within Kathy's household.

Kathy had a more ambivalent relationship with religion, allowing it into her life, mostly during times of crisis, but not necessarily accepting all associated values. She was quick to point out how Sofie, despite presenting herself as a Christian and living according the appropriate values, had accepted money from a family member who had earned it through prostitution. For herself, Kathy recognised the equivocal value of religion and was critical about particular issues within church. Kathy had changed denomination and no longer attended services with Sofie and Jean. Patrick himself did not associate with any particular denomination, despite the fact that his first wife was said to be very pious. In fact he was sarcastic about the whole matter.

Neither Kathy nor Sofie had been married in a church and none of the children had been baptised. One of Kathy's cousin's sisters was married to a pastor who was attending to duties outside town. On one occasion she had come to join a party organised on the 'block'. During that time she made no secret of the fact that she was interested in one of the 'boys',[101] who reciprocated her flirtiest behaviour and asked me to take a picture of the two of them entangled in each other's arms. The next day it did not take long for Sofie to complain about the behaviour of these two, but she received no substantive support from any other family member. That the cousin's sister was married to a pastor did not affect matters. Many pastors that I know have mistresses and out-of-wedlock children and are not openly criticised for it. Christian values have their place in a more restricted environment and do not necessarily intermesh with other values developed during one's identity formation. In this context the impact of Christian values on personhood is rather ambivalent. Hence, as the millennium made a trouble-free entry, Sofie and Jean re-entered the dating arena, with both now 'seeing' men.

The high mobility between different denominations might be another indication that internalisation of Christian and associated values as part of personhood takes place in a fragmented and not necessarily dominant way. A process whereby terms such as 'God' have been adopted but placed within a different context from that originally intended further exacerbates this ambivalence[102]. Criminals engaging in violent and illegal activities claim that one should fear nothing but God. In an environment where violence is seen as justified one could suggest serious problems with the interpretation of Christian values; however, one should not lose sight of the way in which violence is interpreted and used under different circumstances.

Overall, there are numerous references made to Christian values, making it rather easy to assume that the influence is deeply entrenched. In a country which declares itself a

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[101] Group of young men known to engage in criminal activities.

[102] Here is a story told by a gang member living in Morata. It was spoken in Tokpisin but due to its extensive character, I provide only the translated version. Where is paradise? Paradise is in PNG. Just think of the colours of its feathers? You (referring to white people) do not believe too much in the Bible. Why is the bird of paradise in PNG? God wants the bird of paradise to be in PNG. Paradise equals heaven. How come we don't have paradise on earth but we do have the bird of paradise? As we have the bird of paradise in PNG, then heaven on earth has to be in PNG. PNG has all the riches. Other places do not have all of them. In the years to come PNG will produce intellectuals and church representatives. It is the politicians that are destroying everything with their stupid thinking... One Tolai man [referring to a person from East New Britain] told him that Jesus was killed in the area where he comes from. All these white people told us lies. God is black (Personal communication, August 1999).

Christian country within its constitution, it would not be difficult to come to that conclusion and analyse gender relations and related issues of superiority and inferiority within that particular framework. Sofie and Jean would be good examples of people fitting that discourse, but their adherence to the Christian discourse is only partial and not necessarily representative of the moral imposition of Christianity on gender relations. The relevance of Christian values should therefore be considered within an analysis of subjectivity and gender relations characterised by a distinct degree of ambivalence.

That ambivalence also at times turns into clear resentment against the imposition of Christian values. During the National Women's Day celebration, I joined Kathy and one of her longstanding friends, Sarah. They had arrived at the venue at 8am, the supposed starting time of the program, but by 12pm, still nothing had happened. By that time a whole sports hall had filled with women from all parts of town. The organisers had by then entertained the participants with several hours of religious songs. Over time, Sarah grew increasingly weary of this 'whole business'. She was "getting sick and tired of being conditioned with these songs". She felt that women were being treated as children. Meanwhile the TV crew had arrived and Sarah threatened to air her mind on TV. She had had enough.

To change the tone of the setting Sarah proceeded to tell us about her sexual frustrations[103]. Since she had left her husband nine months ago, she had not had sex. However, a few days ago she had met a Sepik man who obviously showed interest in having sex with her. She was still making up her mind. If she went ahead, she would have "to clear the bush before the airplane could land!" Sarah had everybody in the group laughing. Although increasingly onlookers questioned this disturbing behaviour, Sarah's attitude and remarks are representative of a group of women who do not appreciate being told how to behave and pray by people who are part of the establishment. These women do not fit the image of the submissive wife limited by a Christian perception of their gender position, their economic dependency and lack of freedom of movement. Sarah, Kathy and many of their women friends had a similar story to that presented in Kathy's life story. These stories are characterised by a high level of agency despite the physical and logistic limitations of their economic environment. Their

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[103] Sarah had left her husband who lived in the Highlands with 4 of her 5 children. Her husband was a successful businessman. She felt frustrated at his flirting with other women and had decided to return to Port Moresby where they had lived previously, taking their last born child with her. At the time, I met Sarah she had lived away for over 9 months. She sustained herself through regular payments made by her husband and through her work with other women in a communal garden.

agency, however, reaches beyond a nuclear family setting centred on a male decision-maker. Again, gender construction needs to be viewed within a broader complexity in which people do not act and interact solely along a gender axis of powerful and powerless.

Black and white

In many discussions, references are made to a superior white being. As an older Simbu man told me, *"mipela ol blackpela ol pipia yupela ol wait lain yupela fit"* [Tokpisin: we black people are worthless in comparison with you white people]. The impact of whiteness indeed cannot be ignored. The seemingly continuous attempt to make it in the 'white world' might suggest that indeed the introduced values of capitalism and Christianity would be considered desirable and powerful, becoming important points of reference in identity construction. The adoption of an identity within such a framework would contribute to the acceptance of gender roles as perceived within that era, an era in which the adult, married male is seen as being in charge of the household in economic and political terms. Having said this, multiple negative references were made about whiteness. As one of my informants told me: "*ol Australian lain ol worse long tok baksait. Ol giamanim mipela, ol stilim ol samtin bilong mipela na ol bagarapim beauty bilong nation*" [Tokpisin: The Australians are worse when it comes to badmouthing. They cheated on us, they stole what belonged to us and they destroyed the beauty of our nation]. Why would one want to develop a personhood embued in Western values when these values are rejected on many other levels? In statements issued at the Village Court one was often reminded that issues would not be dealt with according to white men's rules but according to their own customs and values. Self-esteem and self-worth are not always associated with values attached to Eurocentric understanding of worthiness and power, even though some of the values have been amalgamated to produce the image of the 'big man' who has a fortnightly income, money to buy beer, a 4-wheel drive and several women in his company. It is an image often alluded to in conversations with young gang members and could easily be used to reinforce the image of a dominant male and inferior female.

Kathy and Patrick

This particular case study reinforces the necessity to look beyond a Eurocentric viewing of gender relations in a cultural environment submitting to globalisation but still strongly embedded in locally produced values and meanings.

Kathy and Patrick consider themselves, and are considered by others, to be powerful people who have the capacity to initiate change and to stand up on issues that are not necessarily in their own interest. Their position developed through their capacity to use, sometimes manipulate, government services, state agencies and Western perceptions to their own benefit and mould an operational system which is based on values related to a society organised around kinship values but adapted to a multi-ethnic version of it. In Kathy's case she acquired literacy skills and through her further education has developed a greater depth of understanding of the operation of the introduced economic and institutional systems. These strengths have allowed her to divert funding and programs into Morata. Patrick, on the other hand, has used the criminal way and the Western concern with rehabilitation to direct resources back into the community.

Both Kathy and Patrick were removed from a traditional family setting; both were brought to an urban setting and introduced to a Western-geared educational system taught in English. The outcome for both of them was very different. Since he was looked after by his uncle's family, Patrick' education was not a priority. He dropped out of school in 6th grade. Kathy went all the way through to University[104], where she was doing an Arts degree until she met Patrick and had their first child. She has made several attempts to finish her degree, but so far, it has not been a priority. On many occasions in her lifetime, Kathy has been part of the white man's world, accessing money in many different ways. She even lived with a successful white businessman for a while, but did not enjoy the lifestyle. Finally, she met up with Patrick and started a family with him based in Morata. Patrick at that time was the leader of a very successful gang group. Kathy admired him in many different ways. It could be argued that Kathy chose Patrick because he had access to large amounts of cash through robberies. However, much of that money would never translate into substantive benefits, as it would be distributed amongst other gang and community members, used for bail and to pay legal fees. Patrick derived his respected

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[104] As the only child of the union between her natural mother and father, the expenses of Kathy's education were carried by her natural father, even after her mother left the relationship to remarry another man.

and powerful position on the one hand from his capacity to engage with the cash economy, albeit in a disruptive manner, but mostly because he could defend himself and other community members from perceived injustices created by the institutionalised environment. The fact that he did not shun the use of violence against law enforcers turned him into a hero. It somehow revived the image of the tribal warrior who could defend his turf and associated values, and could challenge a system that did not bring general prosperity.

Kathy had developed the capacity to access funds to run awareness programs geared towards diminishing violence against women and the excessive use of alcohol. Meanwhile, violence and alcohol were a substantial component in her life. Kathy used her knowledge of Western values and institutions to access funding although her own values did not always support her actions. This does not necessarily imply that Kathy would support violence and excessive alcohol consumption, just that under specific circumstances these particular matters would not be an issue for her. Her capacity to be outspoken on many issues made her a much-wanted partner in political campaigns. Kathy's powerful position could be considered to follow from her association with a gang leader. However, Patrick's first wife does not enjoy such recognition despite the fact that she is his first wife; a position of worth. Kathy's status can therefore not solely be associated to her marriage to a prominent gang leader. In many ways Kathy could have been a successful and powerful person within the white man's world, but she chose to distance herself from that world. Patrick, having taken on a position with a security firm, did not take long, despite his minimal literacy skills, to become the principal security officer. His new position entitled him to a house within the university compound. He did not take up the offer until the house on the 'block' of Kathy's uncle in Morata burned down. While they now live in the house, they are working around the clock to establish a new home in Morata so they can leave the house provided by Patrick's work. The university environment has been described by Kathy as isolated and boring.

Many of the decisions and organisation in relation to family matters would be relegated to Kathy. Financially Kathy lived rather independently from Patrick. She expected him to contribute to food expenses and regularly refused to cook for him if he failed to do so. It has often been argued that men do not share their income with their wife/wives and children but the same could be said of women. Kathy, Sofie and Jean did not always share their money with Patrick. Also, money did not necessarily equate with a position of

power. It is more the capacity to make money 'move' that would give someone a position of recognition. Kathy could be considered the person with the most irregular capacity to contribute in monetary terms. She was recognised, however, as someone with the capacity to bring money into the community through her negotiation skills with people outside Morata. The acquired benefits did not have a direct impact on the living standards of the people on the 'block' but they did bring Kathy a position of recognition and respect amongst the community members.

Kathy was not the only woman with this standing. Maria, a cousin of Patrick's who lived at the start of Lobu Street, had managed to gain sufficient local support to stand for the national election in 1997. She did not win in her electorate but received substantial support from both men and women. Her status bore no association with that of her second husband, who was not employed and who had no specific status within the family or in the community.

Through Kathy's capacity to be outspoken on many community issues and to interact with both the local and the institutionalised world she became a community member with recognised status. Patrick, on the other hand, as a renowned former gang leader, was much sought after by politicians, police members[105] and other gang members, who wanted his help on matters of safety and security. His capacity to remain the 'simple guy' and to provide support to many young men in the settlement who were in trouble with the law guaranteed him a respectable position within the community.

For Kathy and Patrick the acquisition of a position of status had shifted slightly from a kinship base to a community one. Nevertheless, together with the other family members on the 'block', they were constantly reminded of their obligations outside the community, responding to demands of relatives and other kin, in and out of the city, and often finding themselves in a challenging position. Positions of power as such do alter, depending on one's circumstances, influenced by the networks in which one is involved in, but without necessarily favouring men above women. Elements contributing to power, such as

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[105] The cooperation between gang members and members of law enforcement agencies and politicians at certain points in time reinforces the ambivalent character of relationships and values carried by both settlement members and people living outside the settlements. It, in some way, epitomises the fact that state representatives ought to live according certain rules and norms despite the fact that they may adhere to different values in their real life situations. The divide set up by the state-based discourse between the 'educated' and the *kanakas* might therefore be seen as a construction aiming at promoting one lifestyle above the other.

knowledge and access to cash, certainly play an important role in self-esteem and in acquiring positions of worth. They lose their significance when not balanced by fulfilling obligations within an environment still built upon values emanating from a kinship and tribal society. In that particular environment, people do not operate solely along dichotomous understandings of gender. The situation is more complex and cannot be reduced to a debate around two values such as superiority and inferiority.

Conclusion

The above literature review and analysis of aspects of Morata's social life do not support a contention that PNG women are hopeless victims of men's desire for power. It is true that discourses circulate within the settlement that aim to strengthen that particular perspective, mostly through imposition of the importance of a nuclear family. Some men adopt this discourse but their success rate in implementing that perception is limited. Women, however, take part in the dissemination of that particular discourse especially when it can gain them access to specific activities or funds provided mostly by government or foreign aid agencies.

Meanwhile the format of a nuclear family in which the man is given a position of authority does not resonate in the settlement, where most people are locked into a wider network of obligations and reciprocities. These networks do not necessarily function along a gender divide. Women relate in these networks along different nexuses and are not set up in a divide against men. Within these different fields of action, both men and women gain and lose power according to their capacities, obligations and desires. Resistance expressed through conflict arises where these capacities and actions cannot be fulfilled or expressed, but such situations should not be analysed solely within a gendered framework in which men are seen as superior to women.

Overall, within the state-based rhetoric fed mostly by Western sensibilities, there seems to be undue attention given to the fact that women are passive, oppressed and victimised citizens locked into gender relations seen as embedded in power differences and therefore conflictual. However, a closer scrutiny of the way people interact and experience their life in Morata reveals elements that strongly challenge the representation of oppressed women. In this context, the hierarchy of gender cannot be

seen as the only major component in the analysis of incidents of sexual violence. Other elements need to be considered if one is to achieve a better understanding of sexual violence in the particular environment of this settlement.

CHAPTER SIX

Chapter Six
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN MORATA

Introduction

Ethnographic and government reports, together with police statistics, point to a high incidence

Picture 6

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN MORATA

Introduction

Ethnographic and government reports, together with police statistics, point to a high incidence of rape within PNG. In the chapter on law-and-order I described the different forms of rape throughout PNG history of law-and-order and the way these incidents have been analysed by different researchers and government officials[106] (e.g., Berndt, 1962; Schiltz, 1985; Strathern, A., 1985; Toft, 1985; Josephides, 1993; Kulick, 1993; Zimmer-Tamkoshi, 1997a; Knauft, 1999; Banks, 2000; The Law Reform Commission Reports)[107]. These publications as well as the government's focus on law-and-order issues inform a discourse which contributes to social anxiety in PNG society. This is further fuelled by regular coverage in the media of incidents of sexual violence. Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1997a:538) cites figures of 45 per 100,000 inhabitants for sexual violence, greater than the rate in the United States and other industrial and non-industrial nations. The high rate of rape and sexual violence is also reported in research on sexual violence conducted in Port Moresby (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). Until recently, tribal violence, but especially the violent actions of *raskols,* was blamed for the law-and-order problems of the country. The *raskols* were also seen as the major perpetrators of incidents of sexual violence. Nowadays however, there is a growing recognition that the problem is more complex; indeed, in several instances law enforcement agents have been implicated in sexual violence (Borrey and Kombako, 1997).

Meanwhile the social anxiety portrayed within the media and reflected in the constant reiteration of the issue at government level cannot be discerned in the settlement. As we will see, the attitude to sexual violence is an example of how the State is out of touch with issues embedded in the social reality of people living in Morata. The State's insistence on dealing with this issue according to legal and moral values fed by Western

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[106] Consecutive governments have made law-and-order issues a priority. Special commissions were established over the years to advise the government on how to tackle the issues affecting the country. The law-and-order sector has become a recipient of ongoing funding from the Australian aid program. (see Chapter 2 for more details)

[107] Despite the attempts by scholars to discuss sexual violence within the social and cultural context of the place, it is the discussion itself of the issue that has further fuelled the debate on the national and international level thereby contributing indirectly to waves of social anxiety.

sensibilities, and its ongoing endeavour to stigmatise a particular group in society (mostly the *raskols*), have in many ways exacerbated law-and-order problems in the country.

To clarify the above perception of the issue, I propose to look more closely at: a) the macroscopic perspective on sexual violence, or how the State and reactive members of the community[108] perceive and deal with sexual violence; b) indications of a different understanding and experience of the incidents of sexual violence; c) the microscopic perspective, meaning here the contextualisation and understanding of sexual violence in Morata; and lastly, d) the impact of tension between different understandings.

Throughout the exploration of the above issues, in no way do I intend to challenge the way sexual violence has been analysed in the West, which in many ways also reflects the macroscopic perspective presented by the state-based discourse on law-and-order in PNG. Instead, I want to emphasise the complexity of the matter by exposing some of the different understandings through the contextualisation of sexual violence incidents in a community such as Morata. It should be viewed, as such, as a complementary understanding, not one favouring one above the other.

Even though I provide some evidence about the experience of sexual violence through comments and accounts provided by victims, the bulk of the material focuses on building an understanding of how people within Morata understand and deal with incidents of violence. By focusing on this particular viewpoint, I believe one can still capture the essence of the way sexual violence is understood in this different cultural environment without becoming voyeuristic about particular incidents. This approach is also justified within the context of an emphasis on secondary victims rather than on the primary victim, an analysis hardly relevant to Western understandings of incidents of sexual violence, but which is important for the community members of Morata.

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[108] With 'reactive community members' I mostly refer to the group of educated citizens who have enjoyed a Western-based education, who are relatively well off and who use the media and other avenues such as seminars and conferences to vocalise concerns and ideas. In a Western analytical but culturally unfounded classification, these people might possibly be referred to as belonging to the middle class. From the point of view of my research subjects, they are referred to as the 'haves' or '*save lain*' [Tokpisin: those who posses the knowledge, mostly the educated people]. The *save lain* are those who posses the knowledge to operate and benefit from the government set up in line with a Western model of governance and with it a capitalist economic system.

The macroscopic perspective: how the State and 'ol save lain' perceive and deal with sexual violence

In this section, I look more closely at how the State perceives, represents and deals with sexual violence. It will become clear that the moral and legal values adhered to reflect Western sensibilities. In relation to sexual violence these sensibilities are further emphasised by _ol save lain_; in this case mostly both educated PNG and Western women (_National_, 17 November 2000)[109]. These women's arguments at many times highlight the ambivalent position of the State, which often pays lip service to the issue without really implementing the Western viewpoint on the matter. The Western perception of sexual violence is mostly used as a way of justifying a more oppressive law-and-order policy by increasing armed intervention at community level.

Sexual violence seen as barbaric

The fact that sexual violence is perceived as barbaric in Western society has contributed to its universal character. This follows from the fact that Western civilisation prides itself on the construct of a chivalrous attitude towards woman as a yardstick of cultural sophistication. Therefore, if sexual violence exists in the West it must also be part of less 'civilised' societies. Consequently, its existence within Western society automatically implies its universal character. Despite the fact that this reasoning has been challenged (Helliwell, 2001) there is no denying that rape was and still is part of PNG society. As pointed out in earlier work, rape in pre-colonial time was very much part of tribal warfare. Under those circumstances, rape of the enemy's women was an accepted method of retaliation. It was seen as a way of imposing the inferior status of the men from the enemy clan/tribe. As pointed out in Chapter 2, rape under those circumstances was not seen as a priority problem by the colonial rulers. The issue changed when more indigenous men came to the city for work. These over-sexed men were seen as a danger to 'white women' and to ensure control the 'White Women's Ordinance' was passed (Inglis, 1974). Despite the fact that the ordinance was later abolished, the image of the barbaric indigenous man was firmly established. Not only was he a furious warrior, but also a potential rapist. The protection of white women initiated during colonisation, was later integrated within a legal system based on Western sensibilities whereby the PNG woman is now also protected from potential rapists.

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[109] http://www.zipworld.com.au/~national 117/o1.htm

With Independence, the new local leaders elected alongside white bureaucrats did not overturn the perception of the uncontrollable and primitive indigenous man. Indeed, most of them internalised (if not totally at least paying lip service to) the above perception which had been carried through an educational system pervaded by Western legal and moral values. The process of taking on these values has contributed to a chasm between the leaders, *ol save lain* and the *kanakas* [Tokpisin: the uneducated ones], sometimes also referred to as the grassroots. The divide has been strengthened by the media, which publishes material supporting the need for development and the abolition of violent actions perceived as being associated with a primitive stage (*National*, 17 November 2000)[110].

Hence, in the eyes of the international community the problem of sexual violence is not associated with the *save lain*, who have adopted to a degree values and norms fed by Western sensibilities and which feed into the state-based discourse on law-and-order. However, at the same time the international community has put considerable pressure on the national government to deal with the problems of law-and-order, seen mostly as committed by *raskols* and *kanakas.* Support towards eradication of some of these problems has come financially and logistically in the area of the judiciary and the law enforcement agencies. Within an environment where there is an increased awareness of unequal development, strengthening law enforcement agencies makes it possible to control an increasing rate of resistance to state control. However, as will be seen later, continuing attempts to curtail law-and-order problems, including incidents of sexual violence, have led to an exacerbation of the situation.

Ongoing emphasis on issues of law-and-order, daily mentions in the newspapers and a continuing increase of these violent incidents have led to public social anxiety at different times within PNG's law-and-order history. In certain instances it has led to the establishment of a state of emergency and the deployment of special task force units (see Chapter 2). However, this anxiety is very much the outcome of a state-based discourse carried by the media and by *ol save lain* who increasingly need outside help to maintain a political and economical viable position in society. The striving towards economic and political power within a capitalist system has overshadowed a historical and cultural understanding of the law-and-order problems, including sexual violence.

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[110] idem.

Ol save meri [Tokpisin: the knowledgeable/educated women]

The misconstruction of the issues related to sexual violence has been exacerbated by both local educated and vocal women and expatriate women in PNG, referred to in this thesis as *ol save meri*. On many occasions they have made calls "to protect the women in PNG" (*Post Courier*, 5 April 2000) and to "improve" their lives (Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1993)[111]. In many ways these women have defined the position of the majority of PNG women as inferior to men. That perception is enhanced by a particular understanding of the practice of bride-price payments, which are considered to perpetuate the position of oppressed women. Bride-price payments are then seen as a way of establishing women as the 'property' of men. Even though so far there has been no agreement on this issue amongst the local educated women, it is an issue that has been picked up in the general debate on the condition of women in the country. Within that same framework there is also the impetus to do away with the practice of polygamy (*Post Courier*, 9-11 March 2001)[112].

Polygamy has over the years been linked with the increase of sexual jealousy, which is a condition directly related to incidents of violence against women. In many writings about rape, researchers are told by informants about the need to put inferior women back in their place if they attempt to cross the border of adultery, for example (e.g., Toft, 1985; Josephides, 1993; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997a; Banks, 2000). The 'liberation' movement started by *ol save meri* has on the one hand reinforced the image of an oppressed woman, but on the other hand fuelled resistance by both men and women who resent the reincarnation of the West through the establishment of the 'new white woman' (referring to PNG women aspiring to look, dress and behave as emancipated white women)[113]. Both Nihill (1994) and Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993) have referred to this 'new woman'. She stands out in many different ways; as in the case of Nihill she is the woman coming from a different part of the country, she is not married, she earns an income and she operates apparently independently. Zimmer-Tamakoshi on the other hand refers to these female leaders, politicians and female university students who increasingly push for women-centered demands and in doing so, some of them chose not to marry Papua New

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[111] Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993) refers here to the 'new woman' of PNG who include female leaders, politicians and female university students who push women-centered demands in a way to contribute to the improvement of all women's lives.

[112] http://www.postcourier.com.pg/20010309/news04.htm

[113] See painting (see Introduction-cover) which clearly depicts the changes in women.

Guineans. As will be shown later, the reference to this 'new woman' has become a convenient framework used by many rapists to justify their actions. To them she is the woman escaping 'traditional' duties. She is also often the young woman talking down to those young men who linger on the streets with oversized t-shirts hanging out of oversized pants. In contradiction with Zimmer's new woman, she is not necessarily part of the *ol save meri* or from the middle class. She is however, being perceived as the woman trying to escape her own world. By dressing and behaving in a 'white' way, she is seen as wanting to attract the attention of the 'better-off' man who can give her a life away of the daily drudge of settlement life. By doing so she creates the *'pipia man'*, the worthless man of the settlement. In Morata the new woman was more so labelled as the 'white woman', referring to her desire to dress in the same way as white women and in doing so, indicating that she would rather be part of that 'Western world', possibly attracting a white man.

However, it is interesting to note that these *ol save meri* have encountered much resistance from men in decision-making positions, who Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993) refers to as the 'new white men'. Thus, rape in marriage has yet to be legally recognised as a crime and attempts to make polygamy unlawful have so far failed in the male-dominated parliament. Furthermore the Law Reform Commission has reported that a high rate of domestic violence occurs in households where women are educated or working. In those families, who mostly live a life directed by Western social, cultural and economic values, gender relations seem to follow a pattern of male superiority and female inferiority, leading to more violent interventions directed against women. However, it could also be claimed that because the women are more educated and more assertive the reporting rate is higher amongst the urban elite. It must be acknowledged that the inferior woman discourse emanates from an understanding of gender relations fed by Western understandings and sensibilities. This particular construction of the inferior woman has been embraced by the powerful leaders of the nation (see Chapter 5). It is an image of gendered relations which does not reflect those in the settlement (see Chapter 5), but which may well be part of a rising middle class to which *ol save meri* belong to.

The barbaric image associated with incidents of sexual violence and the constant cry by the *save meri* in PNG society (e.g. *Post Courier*, 24 May 2000, 4 December 2000), have without a doubt contributed to the social anxiety which emanates from the law-and-order

situation. This particular perception found its way into the settlement and amongst its community members, but not necessarily in an uncritical way[114].

Indications of a different understanding and experience of sexual violence.

Researchers have already pointed towards an understanding of sexual violence different from that exposed within the macroscopic perspective. The possibility of a different understanding and experience of rape has been supported by Naffine (1997), who forces us also to allow space for meanings that might somehow contradict our own experience and understanding of incidents of sexual violence. Thus, she states:

> "rape takes its reality from cultural meanings and from that we can begin to view it in new ways that reduce the vulnerability of women. Rape is not simply a function of the crude reality of the penis – of men having them and wanting to get them into women ... The vulnerability of women, the aggressive sexually-proprietorial qualities of men, are not natural things in the world, the natural ingredients of a rape. Nor are they hard cultural facts that ensure that this is how things must be for women, or that this how women invariably view their own condition" (1997:102).

Thus, Naffine challenges issues of universality, biological determinism and the image of a vulnerable, powerless woman. She further emphasises the importance of language in the construction and deconstruction of social and cultural issues such as sexual violence, pointing out that:[115]

> "To take male violence or female vulnerability as the first and last instances in any explanation of rape is to make the identities of rapist and raped pre-exist the rape. Rape is not a hard fact" (ibid.).

Bearing in mind the themes related to issues of violence, gender and sexuality as presented in earlier chapters, which indeed have brought a different perspective to these

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[114] This supports Zimmer-Tamakoshi's (1993) claim that women in PNG are not a unified group.
[115] It is an issue that has been raised by other researchers, e.g. Marcus (1992)

matters, one should not be surprised by possible different interpretations of incidents of sexual violence, which are linked with issues of violence, gender and sexuality.

Hence, despite the macroscopic representation of incidents of sexual violence in the state-based discourse as barbaric and horrific, there are sufficient indications, especially in Morata in the way people talk or do not talk about incidents of sexual violence, to suggest a possible different interpretation of these incidents. Firstly, rape is not necessarily viewed as the most problematic issue for women in Morata and therefore does not really fit into the picture of social anxiety. Secondly, issues of consent, punishment and victimisation take on a different meaning.

No rape and no social anxiety

Women and men in different areas of the country were not always familiar with the term and the concept of rape (Banks, 2000; Borrey, 2000). If asked to provide examples of forced sexual intercourse, Papua New Guinean women and men will usually describe incidents of adultery. Adultery, for that matter, was identified as the most problematic issue by women during a survey conducted in different local communities (ACIL, 1997). Supporting this kind of different assessment of incidents of sexual violence is the denial by some of today's indigenous academics of rape incidents in pre-colonial time (personal communication with K. Wosae and C. Yala, 1995-1996). They insisted that rape was a new phenomenon, implying that it did not exist before the onset of the modern era. However, they did not challenge the multiple references to incidents of rape in a number of anthropological works (e.g., Berndt, 1962; Strathern, 1985; Knauft, 1999). They did not deny the occurrence of incidents described as forced sexual intercourse, but to them those rape cases in pre-colonial times had a different meaning and a different context, to those publicised in contemporary PNG society.

This inability to relate to the meaning of rape and the denial of its existence in pre-colonial times, despite accepted evidence, is already an indication that incidents of sexual violence might be interpreted and experienced in a different way in PNG than in the West. This particular ambivalent character of sexual violence also presented itself within a different study on sexual violence, which *did* acknowledge the high incidence of sexual violence in PNG. This high occurrence of incidents could thus support the general discourse on social anxiety. Surprisingly enough, this particular anxiety could not be

discerned within the local discourse of the settlement, for which a high rate of sexual assault was recorded (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). As we will see in later discussions, sexual violence is discussed, if at all, in a matter of fact manner.

Context and meaning: Issues of consent, punishment and victimisation

Past research, as presented in Chapter 2, has already made reference to that difference in terms of the experience and contextualisation of incidents of sexual violence. Firstly, Strathern (1975) raised the issue with regard to consent. According to her findings, Melanesians are less concerned with the issue of consent but are instead most concerned with the "correctness of the social relationships between the couple" (1975:37). Strathern suggested that the issue of consent is relevant but ambiguous and that women are not automatically perceived as victims unless they are injured during the attack (ibid.:37). She also highlighted the fact that Melanesians consider that no moral or physical damage results from the simple act of intercourse even if it is done against the woman's will or under culturally specific circumstances such as during pregnancy or during the two-year period a woman breast-feeds her child (ibid.). Incidents of rape mostly occurred within the frame of retaliation or as an insult and were part of a wider dispute between the parties involved.

Banks (2000) built onto Strathern's findings and, based on her study of the circumstances of rape offences, suggested that rape can be classified into three types: "as punishment against the victim or others; as a response to spurning; and opportunistic rape" (2000:100). In the first type, Banks refers to an act intended to punish a woman or her relatives for a pre-existing injury; men will sometimes punish other men as 'payback' by raping women relatives of the men they wish to punish. In this category, Banks includes incidents where traditional modes of thinking about appropriate behaviour for women affect an elite woman's chances of being punished (through rape or other forms of violence) for 'untraditional' behaviour. The second type includes responses to spurning, when a man perceives that a woman has rejected him or injured his pride by acting in a manner viewed as a rejection. The last type refers to offender(s) making an impulsive decision to rape a woman, or raping a woman who happens to be present during the commission of another offence such as robbery, or where the offender believes the woman is acting in an inappropriate manner. As in Western countries, rape is seen as a punishment for not behaving properly or for not submitting to the man's

demands or desires. The women depicted in Banks' case studies show many similarities to vulnerable Western women who, through their biological constitution, are bound to be victims (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975). At the same time, the ambiguous character of sexual violence resurfaces when Banks states that "most men and women do not condone rape"[116] (Banks, 2000:98). Western feminists may view this statement as the outcome of women who have been 'silenced'. But, as will be shown this is just one interpretation amidst different takes on the matter.

The microscopic perspective – sexual violence in Morata.

A closer scrutiny of the historical, social and cultural issues affecting Morata might help to obtain a better understanding of sexual violence. No doubt there will be similarities with issues raised in the debate about sexual violence within the macroscopic framework. Nevertheless, I will focus mainly on the specificity of the incidents as they relate to Morata and which, as we will see, reveal elements reinforcing the fact that incidents of sexual violence need to be assessed within their cultural, social, political and economic specificity. On many occasions, in the description of the following cases as presented within the microscopic perspective, there will be room for a different interpretation of the incidents emphasising the victimised character of women and a more Western based take on the issues raised. This results from the ambiguous character of so many aspects of life taking place in the settlements. It is also the outcome of an ongoing manipulation of different understandings of sexual violence at different levels of society by all people involved. Nevertheless, the conclusions attained at different points in the discussion on sexual violence are the outcome of the consideration given to broader understandings of issues such as gender, violence and sexuality as perceived within this particular settlement and which are directly linked with incidents of sexual violence. The purpose is not to downplay the understanding of sexual violence as presented in a more Western-based framework but to increase the awareness that the understanding and experience of sexual violence is not universal; that there are indications that sexual violence indeed can be understood and experienced in a different way. In the process of doing so it will be important to stay attuned to possible manipulations of concepts and meanings, as presented in the state-

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[116] Mellam (1985:14) quotes some students who had been raped at the University of PNG and who provided the following reasons for not reporting the incident: "I enjoyed it, like the guy, and so did not want to hurt him", "It was nobody's business".

based debate on sexual violence and which have been identified in relation to issues of violence, gender and sexuality (see Chapters 4 and 5). These manipulations, as stated in earlier chapters, have made it difficult to discern the issues as they are understood outside the state-based debate.

As foreshadowed earlier, I focus mainly on the way incidents of sexual violence are raised, discussed and understood by community members of Morata. Where appropriate I refer to the experience of that violence; however, it will not be the central focus. This approach follows from the fact that throughout the research women never really talked about the experience. The personal pain and trauma experienced by the women seemed to be absorbed within the overall concern of appropriate retribution demanded by both the victim and her relatives. When women talked about it, they did so mostly in a matter-of-fact style.

My first focus is the different contexts in which incidents of sexual violence are raised and understood. I take the issue of sexual violence outside the boundaries of gender and sexuality by problematising understandings of gender, the penis and bride-price payments. Within that process, issues of ethnicity, tribal warfare and political and social change are elaborated upon to provide a better insight into the complexity of the issue. Secondly, I turn to these understandings and, in certain cases, the experiences of sexual violence, as they touch upon issues of race, violence, normalisation, desensitisation, affection and fear. Lastly, I touch on the issue of 'redress' as it raises questions around the 'silencing' factor of the victim.

Contextualisation

Here I examine more closely some of the contexts within which sexual violence occurs or which help develop the microscopic perspective on the matter. I refer here to gender relations, the value of the penis, bride-price, ethnicity, tribal warfare and political and social change.

The gender story

Sexual violence derives its universal image not only on the basis of its perception as barbaric but also through its evolution from a specific view of men and women in Western societies that emphasises differences between them. This assumption is made

on the premise that people are naturally sexed. The difference is then often projected onto a difference in value, status and power, with men being perceived as the superior gender wanting to keep women oppressed.

Evidence from women and men in Morata has shown that men and women could not be juxtaposed in a position of superiority or inferiority (Chapters 3 and 5)[117]. Of course, this does not imply that women could never find themselves in a position of inferiority, but that position changes according to the nature of interactions. These positions should not necessarily be seen as fixed. In accordance with Foucault's thinking, Naffine proposed that power is a phenomenon, shifting between individuals and group. Within such a dynamic situation, power has a changeable character (Naffine, 1997:72). However, as Naffine further pointed out "neither the powerful nor the subjugated are free from the constituting effects of conceptual systems" (ibid.: 73). One of these conceptual systems relates to the introduced Western conceptualisation of gender relations as it found its way into PNG cultures during colonisation and which is still strongly marked by the dual image of a superior male against an inferior female. This particular image, which is also often viewed as, or confused, with 'traditional' gender relations, has been further accentuated through its challenge by women and activist groups who want to end this submissive character of women in PNG society. Knowledge of this conceptual framework, which also constitutes part of the state-based understanding of the law-and-order debate, is often used by local women to obtain specific favours from the mostly international development agencies[118], which operate within that particular dual framework.

However, as pointed out in the chapter on gender and sexuality, that particular conceptual framework is not necessarily the one within which the people of Morata construct their gender relations. The patriarchal system within the nuclear family setting, portrayed as a superior male against an inferior female, seemed absent in the majority of

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[117] Despite the presentation of a subjugated PNG female gender within the state-based discourse there are also many writings emphasising the value of women in PNG. Zimmer (1998) speaks about the 'bravery' of Gende women (ibid.:202), Errington and Gewertz (1993) write about how women dominated men in the Chambri (ibid.:234) and Counts (1984) states that Melanesian women are not stupid, downtrodden subjugated lot who suffer abuse in silence. (ibid.:93)

[118] Women have over the years been identified as victims of violent men. Economic dependency has been suggested as a factor contributing to the exacerbation of this situation, making it difficult for women to move on. Thus, over the years a number of organisations, mostly with overseas funding, have developed programs to increase women's economic independence.

the community. Neither did the polygamous relationships invoke a position of superiority or power of men over women. To the contrary, men get locked into relations of obligations increasing their burden of responsibilities in a world were men are still accountable to a network of clan and tribes' members.

It also became clear that a person's position in the community or in interactions with others was determined not just by gender. Other factors impacting on position are, for example, economic capacity (legal or illegal) and capacity to negotiate for the wellbeing of the clan, tribe, family or community (see Chapter 5).

In Morata, relationships between men and women do not necessarily exist along an axis of greater or less power. People take positions based on an identity not solely determined by gender. There is, however, no denying that there is a certain level of tension between men and women in PNG. At the same time, as expanded upon in Chapter 5, this situation of tension between men and women cannot be explained solely by the dimension of two different sexed bodies with one being the more powerful and aggressive one. Men and women are known to live separate lives in terms of specific tasks and in some cases living quarters. Nevertheless, urban living has increased dependency due to ongoing economic and spatial pressure, but competition as such between genders is not predominant. This might be more a feature of the so-called 'educated class', which in the reports of the Law Reform Commission are reported as having a high level of domestic violence. Thus, in terms of understanding sexual violence as an outcome of men wanting to reinforce their position of power, the more nuanced perception of power relations between the genders raises the need to recognise the existence of different dynamics at work in the case of incidents of sexual violence in Morata.

The value of the penis

Despite the above account challenging the establishment of a male oppressor against an oppressed female gender, there is recognition for sexed bodies as such. However, the penis does not necessarily turn into a weapon against recalcitrant women (Naffine, 1997). The acceptance of sexed bodies does not automatically imply the perception of a male embued with an aggressive and penetrating penis. During a court case heard at the Village Court, where two co-wives were attempting to resolve a dispute, the magistrate

demanded the presence of their husband in order to clarify his position in the whole situation. He urged the two women to go and find their 'diwai' [Tokpisin: tree or stick but also used as a metaphor for the penis] and bring it to court. Within this narrative, the husband was given recognition only as a sexed body, with the penis overshadowing every other possible aspect of his identity[119]. The relationship between the men and women in this situation was relegated to one of sex. However, its emphasis was not in terms of power but in terms of functionality. Emphasising the functional character of the penis made it easier to debate the matter in public court.

The lack of power attached to the penis also implies a less aggressive image of that penis. In the West, however, the penis often represents the aggressive sexually proprietorial qualities of men, with "rape being presented as the outcome of the crude reality of the penis - of men having them and wanting to get them into women" (Naffine, 1997). In this particular case the magistrate exposed the ludicrous situation of two women fighting for the favour of a man whom he had just managed to reduce to the level of a powerless penis, referred to almost as part of a toy. Both the women and the bystanders could not suppress their laughter when the magistrate alluded to the man's penis. Indeed, the reaction of the public and other magistrates encouraged him to repeat the remark a number of times.

This situation could easily be reassessed by suggesting that the magistrate did not respect the concern of the two women and that he diminished the value of their case by diminishing it to the level of a penis. However, the magistrate's allusion to a penis, both harmless and the subject of ridicule, incited laughter from everybody present. Within the overall framework of gender understanding in Morata, the allusion to the penis indicates a lack of other important characteristics which are primordial in the construction of one's identity, in this case the husband's.

The continuing confrontation between the two women, who had appeared over a dozen times in court, was the result of the husband's incapacity to treat them in an equal and respectable way. After numerous appearances, the magistrate had decided that the issues brought to the court by the women were not related to a problem between them,

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[119] Reducing a whole person to his/her genital can also be used in positive terms depending on the context in which it is raised. The laughter of the bystanders, the accusational tone of the magistrate and the body language of the targeted man, however implied a different value to the genital in this particular case.

but instead were the result of the shortcomings of a husband who seemed incapable of assuming the responsibilities of a polygamous relationship. In referring to the husband only in terms of his penis, the judge refused to acknowledge him as a person of value. His identity based only on his penis as a sexual symbol was clearly a problem, reflecting the incompleteness of the person despite his specific male biological accessory. The overemphasis on the *diwai*, then, clearly led to a situation of disempowerment.

Despite the fact that this case does not relate to an incident of sexual violence as such, it does give us an indication of the possibility of a different understanding and experience of sexual violence: indeed, it complicates existing conceptions of rape. As documented in the previous chapter, in understanding rape in Western terms the important feature is the development of a personal identity built on the divide of two different bodies, male and female, to which particular societal values have been attached. The differentiation in personal identity construction between men and women in this context refers primarily to a quality of superiority and inferiority. In this particular case, however, there is a definite sexed differentiation between men and women, but that particular differentiation does not necessarily link with a notion of one being powerful and the other powerless. Thus, rape as "simply a function of the crude reality of the penis" (Naffine, 1997:102) cannot apply in this particular case. However, I do not argue that Morata is therefore a rape-free zone. As I further highlight in this chapter, understandings of sexual violence are related to a broader range of issues in which gender values are not necessarily viewed as primary. In all the discussions related to sexual violence within Morata, incidents were never brought to the level of male and female anatomy.

<u>Understanding bride-price as bride-wealth: 'women of worth'</u>

In the state-based debate on law-and-order, bride-price has often been raised as a practice at the basis of domestic and sexual violence. There has been a tendency to associate the payment of bride-price with an image of women as being the possession of men. The fact that women are viewed as 'objects' that are the possession of men makes it easier to justify the use and abuse of them. The situation, as depicted in the previous chapter, is surely more complex. As so many women emphasise today, the payment of bride-wealth does not turn a person into the possession of the paying party. Its value is associated with the fact that the clan/tribe into which the woman marries will benefit from the outcome of the effort put into her upbringing by her people, leaving her own kin

without benefit of the fruits of their hard work invested in her upbringing. The bride-wealth is then considered recognition of the loss of labour and person by the clan/tribe of the marital partner, especially in cases where virilocality applies upon marriage.

In Morata, bride-wealth payments are still part of human interrelationships although in mixed marriages, involving different customs, this exchange does not occur with every couple who decide to live together or who have children together. Also, the common practice of virilocality upon marriage is somehow making space for the most convenient option, which, as in the case of Kathy and Patrick, might lead to the husband moving into the premises of the women's relatives. At the same time, there is no doubt that women in Morata are valued for both their economic and reproductive roles. But any suggestion that these particular values exist only through an association with men is far-fetched. Women and men have positions of recognition and power outside their gender association. Thus, the common association made between bride-wealth payment and the position of a woman as belonging to her husband is surely oversimplified. It should be recognised that both man and woman are part of a broader societal network. Hence, bride-wealth strengthens this network and does not antagonise genders along the axis of superiority and inferiority.

However, within the discussion of bride-wealth there have been multiple incidents of the manipulation of the more Western based understanding of bride-wealth. On some occasions, (Borrey & Browning, 1995) gang members have been known to use the excuse of insufficient funding towards bride-price payment as a reason for raping women. This would be represented by gang members as the only way of fulfilling their sexual desires. The fact that this was rhetoric rather than reality was confirmed during my many different stays with these young men, who not only had one but often several sexual partners. Also, in a multi-ethnic environment such as Morata, the argument that there had been insufficient bride-wealth would lose its value as increasingly this activity is relegated to people with sufficient funding. Married men consider looking after members of their in-law family and contributing in exchange rites, a sufficient and valid alternative to bride-wealth payment and there seem to be sufficient agreement between all involved parties to make this system work.

Ethnicity

The political character of rape within the context of warring parties has never vanished. One might agree with Strathern (1975) who suggests that these particular rape cases have diminished in number only to be overtaken by a new format of rape which she refers to as "physical assault by outsiders" (ibid.:35) (see Chapter 2). Many of these physical assaults by outsiders can be reduced to issues of political and ethnic differences.

Maintaining an understanding of rape as part of a war situation between enemy tribes or clans, the increased rate of sexually violent attacks on women/girls can be associated with an expanding multi-ethnic environment such as the one existing in Morata. As pointed out in previous chapters, in most conversations people are referred to in terms of their ethnic characteristics. In this multi-ethnic environment, ethnicity does become exaggerated despite the fact that personal relationships cross many different ethnic boundaries. Of course, changes are occurring in the form of personal identifications through association with the settlement in which people live; but they are exceptional. They mostly are used for people whose parents were from different ethnic backgrounds and who spent most of their life in the settlement.

The increase of relationships across ethnic boundaries has not meant a disappearance of the 'traditional' obligations and reciprocity characteristic of clan and tribes relationships. These obligations have extended themselves to include non-ethnic associations. However, with a continuing exchange between urban and rural settings, ethnic identity still plays an important role in the organisation of people's daily lives and the dynamics of violent incidents (see Chapter 3). On a daily and personal level, people socialise across ethnic boundaries but, as presented in Chapter 3, these ties often succumb to the broader ethnic alliances in times of conflict.

The ongoing issue of ethnicity also came to the surface with the incident of Marie's attempted rape, which is further detailed later in this chapter. During my stay in Morata Marie was the victim of an attempted rape. Marie lived across the street with her extended family who were all from the Eastern Highlands. The attempted rape took place in a neighbouring suburb, Gerehu. Marie was attacked by four men when visiting a 'block' in Gerehu with her girlfriend. According to Marie, she received no help from

bystanders who approached after hearing loud screams emanating from the 'block' where the incident took place, in full view of onlookers. After she was identified by onlookers as belonging to a particular ethnic group, she then received help from *wantoks* who called for an ambulance. Other bystanders who had arrived at the scene earlier had not provided any help. It is clear, as suggested in earlier chapters, that the settlement is still organised very much along village values, where one's origin is important in establishing one's duties and obligations within the set relationships. Once people move to urban areas these associations often expand from a close clan association to a broader ethnic association. Marie's girlfriend, who was somehow blamed for setting up the incident, was not of the same ethnicity as Marie. For Marie who had been brought up within Morata, this had never been an issue until the day of the incident, when she pointed out how devastated she was when her friend ran away from the scene without providing any help or assistance. It was her friend who had taken her to the place and she also knew the boys involved in the attack. In discussions related to the incident, Marie's girlfriend was often referred to in terms of her ethnic background. Thus, the incident not only became an issue of attempted rape but also demonstrated the importance of ethnic identity.

In the broader context of a multi-ethnic environment, the importance of ethnic identity construction overshadows the gendered character of the incident. When it came to settling a compensation payment for the above incident, it was Marie's girlfriend who was taken to task for it, further marginalising the gendered character which so far has always been considered central to the occurrence of sexual violence. In this particular case, it was Marie's friend who was held responsible for the violation of Marie's body; the sexual component somehow lost its relevance.

Violence arising between different ethnic groups is still prevalent in the settlement and sexual assault is very much part of that scene. In this context one can easily understand the importance given to secondary victims. They are people who through their social and political connections with the victim and the offender(s) become accountable for the outcome of the incident. The primary victim does not lose her voice but becomes part of a larger voice expressed by people connected to her through an extended network. The point of departure is without doubt the pain and damage inflicted upon her, but not to her as an individual but as part of a broader societal, economic and political network. It is in

this context that ethnic issues override the gender component of incidents of sexual violence.

Tribal warfare in the settlement: Gang politics and manipulations

A political character resonates strongly in the incidents perpetrated by the so-called *raskols* who organise themselves in gangs. These gangs were initially organised along ethnic lines (Harris, 1988) but have since evolved to a certain degree of multi-ethnicity. As an outcome of this development, gangs have developed a more co-operative than adversary style amongst themselves. It is within this specific arena that rape in its political disguise, re-surfaces in this urban setting[120]. Rape within this particular environment has now become a political tool used to extort demands from politicians and government workers. For the South Pacific Games in 1992 the government, fearing possible increased criminal activity, donated a substantial amount of money to the Foundation for Law Order and Justice. This non-government agency was asked to identify active gang members and provide them with assistance in the process of establishing sustainable projects. Lack of knowledge and experience in running legitimate businesses by the majority of these groups, together with lack of practical support to sustain the viability of these projects, eventually led to the downfall of the majority of these projects. Despite the high failure rate, the momentum lasted long enough to guarantee a peaceful sports event. It became clear that these gangs had developed a certain bargaining power.

The same bargaining power was used during my stay in Morata and in this instance, specific reference was made to the use of rape. As mentioned in Chapter 4, during my stay in Morata protest had been voiced against the appointment of the new police commissioner, Mr. Kaia who had a reputation of using and advocating brutal tactics in the process of apprehending alleged criminals. Upon his appointment young men threatened to increase rape activities in the city. At that time the settlements and the city had been rather rape-free in comparison with previous years. The reduction in violent incidents was attributed to a community policing approach, for which Morata had been a pilot area. The then police commissioner, Mr.Haofa had become closely involved with the community by participating in exchange rituals, organising training camps for

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[120] The political character of gang operations has also been identified outside urban and semi-urban settings (see e.g. the situation in Sina Sina (Borrey, 1995b)).

unemployed youngsters and integrating some of these people within the auxiliary police program initiated at community level. With the re-appointment of Mr. Kaia, the previous police commissioner, who indeed had developed a very brutal reputation amongst the Morata community, there was a concern that these initiatives would disappear.

That was the time at which women and men from Morata started to assert that the number of rape cases would surely rise again. Indeed, young men voiced such threats during a meeting with the representatives of the community-policing branch. It would be simplistic to reduce this threat to an attempt to impose a position of superiority towards women and not to recognise the threat of rape as an attempt to blackmail the government. By now, it had become clear to most of the community that within the Eurocentric framework of which State and government agencies are a legacy, rape was labelled an atrocious crime that was strongly associated with a barbaric and primitive state. It was an image that the government would try to prevent at any cost. The re-imposition of the death penalty for murder and in certain cases rape, and the threat of economic sanctions by the international community if the law-and-order situation could not be contained, reinforced that perception. The threat by the young men in the settlement to increase the use of violence and in particular rape obviously did not seem problematic for them. It resulted from a partial appropriation of the state-based discourse on law-and-order, giving them the tools to impose certain demands.

The use of rape as a threat by members of the Morata community resonates with the pre-existing format of rape, as it existed during wartime between enemy tribes. This situation, in which the State[121] is viewed as an enemy party seemed to justify those specific tactics. The fear and anxiety in government circles and amongst the local *save lain* who had immersed themselves within the Eurocentric framework surrounding the use of this particular violent action, had clearly been identified by these young men but also by the larger community of Morata. Their knowledge of the way sexual violence was understood within the law-and-order debate turned the threat of violence, particularly sexual violence, into a powerful tool.

Justification for the use of violence, including rape, was set against a background where the State, seen as the enemy, was known to use the same tactics: excessive violence

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[121] The State of PNG can be viewed as a human entity composed of primarily tribal people or individuals with certain kind of tribal affiliations.

when raiding settlements and also raping women. Thus, these particular incidents of sexual violence cannot simply be relegated to Banks' category of opportunistic rapes or viewed as a new form of rape developed in urban and semi-urban environments (Strathern, 1975). Instead, the political scope of the crime was maintained and extended to include the government as a potential enemy[122]. Under these circumstances gang and settlement members often targeted the 'new white women', seen as associated with the local elite and who often show disdain for their less sophisticated countrymen. These women are the potential victims who need the protection of the 'white men', now often members of the local elite who have assimilated the legal and moral values fuelled by Western sensibilities of civility and sexual restraint. Certainly, the incidents could not be considered as non-gendered, since the target is a woman. Nevertheless, it is important to contextualise the incidents in order to comprehend the ease with which potential offenders issued the threat. At the same time, it is important to point out that the cases targeting the new white women are not necessarily a majority. They receive lots of publicity however, as a previous study on sexual violence (Borrey & Kombako, 1997) pointed out, many victims of violence are found within the confinement of the settlements. The use of the state-based discourse on law-and-order was another tool used by potential offenders to force the State to attend to their demands.

Political and social development

As pointed out in other research, much of the increase in incidents of sexual violence and domestic violence has been attributed to social and political changes Toft, 1985; Josephides, 1993; Nihill, 1994; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1997a). The subtleties pointed out by social scientist are often brushed away in the overall discourse on law-and-order, which mostly emphasises the fact that within that changing environment there is allegedly a resentment of men towards women who attempt to establish economic independence and who move away from their 'traditional' obligations. The problems arising in the fast developing society in PNG are then exacerbated by the incapacity of a weak State to establish order in an environment where traditional control mechanisms are declining or losing their influence.

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[122] The recognition of the government/State as an enemy was previously pointed out by gang members operating in Simbu (Borrey, 1995b). See also Strathern, A (1993).

Political and social development in PNG has without a doubt impinged on the way both genders interact and develop their identity, and certainly incidents of sexual violence would be implicated within that process. At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge that not all processes or incidents can be attributed to societal and political change (Breines and Gordon, 1983:504-505). Invoking aspects such as the inability of men to develop positions of status through employment and increased relative poverty, somehow insinuates that the problem of sexual violence is predominantly linked with the new poor and apparently frustrated men. However, as mentioned earlier, incidents of sexual violence occur across economic boundaries and people have developed other means to establish positions of power and status that do not conform to a capitalist economic system (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, as discussed, using the threat of sexual violence to further their demands combined with a knowledge of economic disparity as expressed in the state-based debate on law-and-order – gangs have manipulated the government into providing requested funds and programs (Browning and Borrey, 1995). More than an attempt to extract funds, it is also a way of establishing the power of these new poor[123], by proving to the establishment that they can challenge its position of power as well as its monopoly on violence. (see also Strathern, A., 1993)

The microscopic perspective – the understandings and experiences of sexual violence in Morata

Sexual violence in Morata links with a number of issues that expose the understanding, and in some cases, the experience of sexual violence. One of the components of the microscopic perspective on sexual violence relates to the acknowledgement of difference between the 'white woman' and the local woman. 'White woman' in this context refers to both expatriate women and some local women who are seen as having turned their back on their own traditions, adopting Western values and dress codes. It does not necessarily relate to a particular economic strata. The understanding and experience of sexual violence also changes in a context where violence is not just the prerogative of men, where there is normalisation of that violence, where there is desensitisation and where the value of the collective is still very important. Issues surrounding the showing of affection and the experience of fear further influence the way sexual violence in Morata is understood and debated. In the following section, I further elaborate on these matters.

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[123] In Morata people do not refer to themselves as the poor. Instead, they speak about themselves as the *kanakas* or grassroots. There is as such no real class consciousness yet, despite the fact that the world according to my research subjects mostly aligns itself along a dual axis.

The race issue - the 'white woman'

Without a doubt, there is a 'script' (Marcus, 1992) which, in the context of the state-based discourse on law-and-order, presents women as vulnerable persons left at the mercy of violent men. This script, emanating from the state-based discourse on law-and-order, provides guidelines as to how incidents of sexual violence should be understood and experienced. Within that script women are mostly portrayed as vulnerable persons, at the mercy of violent men. This characteristic of the script, highlighted in different parts of this thesis, has often been manipulated by women themselves to achieve financial or logistic support. However, this vulnerable woman is not necessarily perceived by the people of Morata as a woman from their community, or for that matter a PNG woman. As a way of clarifying the above statement, I cite the way I was informed about the case of an attempted rape inflicted upon Marie, a young girl living in the same street as Kathy and Patrick. It will unveil a process of differentiation based on a different perception and understanding of incidents of sexual violence.

I had not been in the settlement during the weekend. Upon my arrival many stories were circulating. The dominant one was the fact that from then on, Patrick and his family would have to live sparingly in order to save up for Alex's[124] feast, the occasion on which the mourning for Alex could end. Caught up in the debate, I almost missed one of the side conversations that had just started between half-sisters, Sofie and Kathy. It was not a story that they felt was serious enough or concerned any other person on the 'block' and therefore, they did not share it with the larger group of people on the 'block'. The story was about someone from the street who had been raped over the weekend. Sofie had tried to extract some more detail from the victim's sister, but apparently the sister had been more interested in the gambling game she was involved in and thus the information acquired was meagre.

When I attempted to find out who the girl was I was given the description of a young girl called Marie, with plucked eyebrows, wearing lipstick, short skirts and shorts, who would giggle when walking past a group of young men. The current rumour was that Marie, who was from the Eastern Highlands, had been with Jill, a girlfriend of mixed ethnicity (Simbu and Gulf) and Jill's boyfriend. Together they had taken Marie to Gerehu, the adjacent suburb. Marie's family were suspicious that Marie had been forced into the situation, as

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[124] Patrick's brother Alex had been shot dead by police.

the boys involved were friends of her boyfriend. The girlfriend had not been seen yet and it was suspected that she had gone into hiding. Apparently, Marie had been badly hurt with knife wounds to the head and abdomen. Marie was now in hospital. It was then suggested that it was no surprise, considering the way Marie dressed and behaved. She was portrayed as the one who must have instigated the whole incident. What was she doing there anyway in the early hours of the morning? There was little sympathy for her situation among her near neighbours.

The next day Kathy informed me that Marie had been raped once before. Not much more was going to be said about the incident unless I probed for it. So I visited Marie in the hospital, where she had been admitted with serious injuries. She had been stabbed in the head, in her left breast, had her face cut and the vein in her right arm had been slashed. Further knife wounds in her abdomen had exposed her intestines. It was astounding that she was still alive. On my first hospital visit she informed me that she had not been raped. It had been an attempted rape with three young men holding her down; the fourth man, presumably out of frustration towards her strong resistance, had started stabbing her.

Marie was discharged after two and half weeks in hospital. Marie's sister, brother, stepmother and many relatives lived with her on the 'block' but during her time in hospital, she received visits from only her father and me. In the neighbourhood, even the limited talk that had taken place about the incident soon ceased.

The incident reveals a certain lack of interest regarding sexual violence amongst neighbours and family alike. However, it is interesting the way Marie was described and how that description was used to suggest that she was at fault. At first sight there seems to be little difference from the way victims of sexual violence in Western societies are often blamed for causing the incident. I would like to suggest that there might be a different angle to the comments produced at the time of the assault upon Marie. As Kathy and Sofie reiterated, it was no surprise that Marie had been attacked since she was known to use lipstick and pluck her eyebrows. Considering previous understandings of settlement life and the interrelationships amongst its members, two elements can be highlighted here. On the one hand, Kathy and Sofie might have been looking for justification for their lack of interest in the case, since through their work with women's groups they would have been exposed to an understanding of sexual violence as being

completely repugnant. In my presence and noting my personal reaction to the incident, they might have felt the need to justify their apathy about the situation.

On the other hand, the references to lipstick and plucked eyebrows could also be seen as a reference to a known discourse concerning the 'white women' which dates back to the time of colonisation. White women had to be protected from sex-driven, barbaric indigenous men (Inglis, 1975). This particular understanding of the vulnerable white woman remains in the post-colonial era. The expatriate community mostly lives behind security fences, women more than men are told to keep away from the street and especially from the settlements. As one white police adviser told me, he would never let his wife go out alone, nor would he drive close to a settlement. The vulnerable character of the white woman would be re-emphasised when one of them became a victim of a sexual assault by PNG men. The incident would be talked about for months and in certain cases for years. Within this discourse it was no surprise that anyone 'looking like a white woman' in the settlement was asking for trouble. Over the years, much publicity had been given to the rape of young PNG women who had adopted Western grooming style and who had been assaulted by so-called gang groups.

It is clear that the references made by Kathy and Sofie to Marie's looks were an attempt to brush the incident away under the specific banner of white woman. Could Kathy's and Sofie's reference to the political argument be seen as just an attempt to disguise their lack of interest in the incident especially since Marie in fact, did not fit the description of the 'new white woman'. Marie did not wear lipstick, did not have plucked eyebrows and did not wear fancy clothes. In many ways, it was regarded as just another violent incident. The sexualisation of the offence did not seem to make the incident more repugnant. This perception might further be related to the way sexed bodies are disconnected from power relations, as they exist in Western understandings of sexual violence (see: Value of the penis).

Violence – also a woman's business

Talk about a woman being taken to task for the attempted rape of her friend, as was the case with Marie's incident, could be seen by Western women as another attempt to blame women for incidents of sexual violence. In this cultural context, women are not necessarily seen as weak victims of predominantly male violence, neither by men nor by

women. Women accept a certain level of justification for violence towards them and, as indicated earlier, women themselves are known to be violent and even to take the initiative in that violence (Chapter 4). Under those circumstances, making a woman accountable for a violent incident cannot be seen solely as the outcome of a societal construction where women are the victims of any kind of foul behaviour by men. Instead, just like any other community member who has contributed to a disorderly situation, women are also burdened with the responsibility of restoring the balance that was destroyed as the result of a violent interaction.

The fact that women can engage in violent behaviour has been clearly exposed in Berndt's (1962:169) work[125]. However, in the general debate on law-and-order such references to women's use of violence have been relegated to a marginal position. Instead, there has been an increasing focus on the gendered image of violence, emphasising the violent man and the vulnerable woman of PNG (e.g., Toft, 1985). In more recent work, incidents of violence by women are also often omitted. If violence is mentioned in relation to women, it is often embedded in a situation exacerbated by men's behaviour, such as their promiscuousness or their failure to fulfil their obligations in a polygamous situation. However, it is clear from Chapters 4 and 5 that women even today use violence, that they do not necessarily remain in a situation of which they do not approve and that they themselves can be promiscuous. Women engage in extra-marital affairs and in certain cases make a choice to leave a relationship. Thus, excusing women's violent behaviour because it is apparently a rare occurrence results in the distortion of the social reality in which these women live.

Kathy and other women in the settlement had violent histories. They were implicated in violent interactions with men, women and children and sometimes they were the initiators of the violent behaviour. These violent actions are not just the outcome of a polygamous set-up, in which sexual jealousy is often seen as the main reason for women to engage in violent interactions (Toft, 1985). Not only are they involved in violent actions, but also they do not condemn its use by either gender. As seen in Chapter 4, violent behaviour is not necessarily seen as negative.

In 1996, an initiative was taken by surgeons at the general hospital to bring together representatives of concerned government and non-government agencies, to tackle the

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[125] See also Hallpike, 1977.

high number of victims of violence brought to the hospital. The surgeons indicated that the problem of violence could not just be relegated to the level of domestic or sexual violence. They pointed out that violence affected every person in the community, even though the highest proportion of people seeking treatment at the hospital were men who had been involved in drunken brawls. The meeting led to the establishment of an NGO called 'Community for Peace', which did not last longer than a year. Obviously, the concern relating to violence came from a particular group of society for which violence was an unacceptable and also expensive phenomenon that had to be eradicated to make society more functional.

The lack of support for the initiative might be an indication of a different viewpoint on violence, an issue that was explored in Chapter 4. In the case of Morata, the chapter on violence demonstrated that violence has a function and that any person, man or woman can use it. Unlike the claim put forward by the state-based law-and order debate, violence cannot be reduced simply to a gendered issue. Hence, the increase in sexual violence cannot solely be explained by a growing resentment of men towards women who attempt to escape violent and suppressing situations.

<u>Normalisation and 'no-talk'</u>

In an environment where incidents of violence occur on a regular basis, where both women and men can be the perpetrators and the receivers of that violence, one should not be taken aback by the rather apathetic reaction of members of the community to any form of violence, including incidents of sexual violence. As Berndt (1962:379) put it, "both men and women are culturally conditioned to accept more or less severe physical treatment in the course of every day".

None of the rape cases that occurred during my stay in the settlement ever became part of the local discourse; nobody really talked about them. Only the people from the adjacent 'blocks' knew what had happened to Marie. The fact that several days after the attempted rape, other households in the street did not know about it, is a direct outcome of the fact that the issue was not among the topics raised during multiple conversations. In another incident within Morata, a 12-year-old girl was raped by the man living across the street. This incident, unlike some, did cause some neighbourly unrest resulting in the suspect rapist's house being burnt down. This more severe reaction was the outcome of

the fact that the victim's mother, who was not only a widow but also physically handicapped, was looked after by neighbouring community members. In this particular case, the neighbours, together with the pastor, had taken on the role of family, clan or tribe for the widow and her daughter. They had become her surrogate family in Morata. Most people in the surrounding area were churchgoers, with the pastor living in the same area. As good 'Christians' they could not accept the rape of an innocent girl. But, being Christian was no deterrent to burning down the house. That, according to local stories, was initiated by the women in the street. Apart from the direct revenge, police were notified about the rape. Nevertheless, two days after the incident, concerned neighbours, including the pastor, would have been happy to relinquish the police case if the perpetrator agreed to compensate for the incident.

In both cases, the incidents had not become part of the gossip of the community; in the case of Marie, it was not even extensively discussed amongst close relatives and friends. The limited coverage of the incidents somehow also diminished any condemnation. The lack of interest could be seen as resulting from a limited concern about the incidents. Even though in the second case the neighbours reported the rape to the police and the women set the suspect's house on fire, there was no real anxiety associated with the matter.

In comparison, news of the rape of an expatriate woman would spread very quickly within the expatriate community. The reporting of incidents of sexual violence compelled overseas organisations to review their policy on allowing single, young, white women to work in the country. The story would be passed on with much emotional embellishment, re-emphasising the brutal character of the incident as well as the perpetrators. PNG men, especially *raskols*, would be described as animals. In this context, there was a clear sense of anxiety initiated by the fear of the unknown, the PNG 'beast' (*National,* 20 April 2000)[126].

Desensitisation and 'value of the collective'

As mentioned in Chapter 3, men and women's bodies carry many marks from violent encounters. But, there are also many signs of sickness and lack of hygiene, such as putrefied sores, running noses, feverish eyes and scabies. In an environment where

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[126] http://www.wr.com.au/national/000420p7.htm

people do not necessarily consider themselves poor, despite accepting the notion of relative poverty, the ailing body does not seem to have priority. Marie's father had been complaining about ill health and indeed did not look well at all. He definitely needed medical help; however, he told me he had no bus fare and no money to pay the minimal fee at the public hospital. He died not long after my departure from PNG. Relatives managed to collect sufficient funds to fly his body to the Highlands where he was buried in his village. It was clear, as in many other cases, that money could have been found for treatment, but as I soon became aware, the condition of the individual body was not a concern to the relatives until the moment it becomes a dead body. Death is an important ceremony through which people reassert their alliances. It is a process that reinforces the fact that the individual can only be seen as part of a larger network. The same issue, disregarding the pain of the individual, was apparent when Marie was admitted to hospital with the stab wounds she had suffered during the attempted rape. None of her relatives except her father showed any major concern over her physical condition.

On the other hand, in an environment where death occurs regularly and often in a very crude way, there might well be desensitisation to injury and sickness. As a girl who had been a victim of rape before my arrival in the settlement said, "They only touched my body. They did not touch my soul". This sentiment was conveyed to me by an expatriate woman who met the girl after the incident and was surprised by her attitude. The remark does not come as a surprise especially if one also considers the spirituality that permeates people's lives in PNG. It is an issue that was brought to my attention on a previous occasion when confronted with the assault of a young teenager also living in one of Port Moresby's settlements (Borrey, 2000). Linda, after turning down sexual advances from her father, had been attacked by him with an axe. I met Linda in hospital where she was recovering after having her leg amputated. She told me that 'papa God' would look after her leg until she got to heaven. There was no expression of anger, no expectation of pity. Life would go on, even on one leg.

There are different sensibilities at work. Injury and pain do not seem to linger in people's minds in a way that becomes a constant concern or necessitates retelling. When researching hospital records for incidents of sexual violence I was informed by an expatriate obstetrician of a case that had occurred only a few months before. An 18-month-old infant had been repeatedly raped and needed several operations to restore the physical damage incurred. Going through all the files, I could not find any reference

to this specific case, despite the fact that the child had been hospitalised for an extended period. Unable to believe that the doctor would have made up the story, I checked with the nurses on duty. Even though the little girl had been discharged only recently, it took them a while to recollect the case, "Oh yeah liklik meri em bin slip long bet long hapsait" [Tokpisin: Oh yeah, the little girl that was sleeping in the bed over there]. One could assume that the initial loss of memory might be associated with a desire to forget about such an atrocious case; however, the casual way of sharing the facts after recollecting the case suggests otherwise. Certainly, nurses deal with many disabled bodies and death; but one would expect them to remember such an extreme case.

When Patrick was admitted to hospital for complications resulting from knife injuries sustained during an earlier encounter with burglars at the university, I was again presented with a situation that epitomised, to a certain degree, the brutality of life in general. Patrick shared a cubicle with four other people. One young man had been brought in from the village with head and neck injuries sustained when hit by a coconut that had fallen from a tree. Another man was nurturing wounds sustained from police beatings. Next to Patrick was a man who had been stabbed in the face with a large knife during a drunken brawl. The knife, which had not been removed, had entered to the side of his eye. Across from Patrick was a young girl who was suffering from an 'internal' disease, "samting bilong ol meri" [Tokpisin: a woman's thing]. I could not help but think that these different cases were representative of the daily brutalisation of people in Morata.

In Chapter 3, I highlighted the number of people who had died at the hand of law enforcement agents. In one of the letters that Kathy sent me, she included a list of eleven people who had died over the previous year. Only four of them were elderly. Could sexual violence lose its seriousness in this environment characterised by injury, sickness and a high death rate?

<u>Showing affection</u>

In Chapter 4, I described the way people showed their affection by pinching a baby. Signs of affection occur differently in Morata. Whilst much affectionate touching occurs in

the open between people of the same gender[127], it is somewhat different when it comes to emotional exchange between genders and more specifically between a man and a woman who are intimately involved. Men and women's bodies touch, eyes meet, sometimes they hold hands, but there is no kissing and no hugging in public. Kissing on the mouth is for that matter referred to as *'kaikai mouth'* [Tokpisin: eat/bite someone's mouth]. As one of the young men from the settlement during a discussion said: *"nogat business antap, daun belo tasol"* [Tokpisin: there is no business on the top, only down below], implying that kissing and caressing are not important. The focus is on penetration. Even though there are indications of change, many men and women 'meet' mostly for intercourse and 'biting'. And as one man said, *"mipela save givim tasol. Planti ol meri ol laikim dispela samting"*. [Tokpisin: we just go for it (implying some roughness) and lots of women like it this way.]. Of course, in the above example the statements are made by men. However, Jenkins (1994:91) when interviewing women recorded similar statements: "I like the forceful thrust". In this context then the 'vaginal tears' recorded in the hospital records (see Chapter 4) can be viewed as an expected outcome of sexual intercourse.

This is not to say that people do not have any emotional involvement; far from it. In many ways, PNG is a very exuberant place with vivid emotional expressions, but they are not expressed in the same physical way as in Western countries. Bonding between individuals is strong and translates itself in very dramatic ways. Upon the death of three young men involved in an armed robbery, one of their friends, Michael, visited the morgue on a weekly basis over a period of three months. The extended time between the death of the young men and their funeral was related first to a coroner's inquest and then prolonged by friends who were trying to collect sufficient money for an impressive burial ceremony. During his regular visits to the morgue, Michael would go to the trouble of washing his deceased friends and changing their clothing. Over time, the process became increasingly more difficult due to the ongoing decay process, but in no way did it stop him caring for his friends.

The same intensity of emotional bonding also exists between men and women. One of the village magistrates chopped off one of his fingers when his latest wife died. The intensity of his loss could be expressed only through personal mutilation. There are many

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[127] It is a common practice in PNG for men to hold hands. This particular practice is often remarked upon by non-residents who mostly associate this practice with the homosexual scene of the West.

different ways of expressing emotions towards particular people. The absence of physical emotional expressions such as kissing and holding hands between intimate partners, a scene common to Westerners, can therefore not be interpreted as a lack of emotional bonding or caring. I mentioned in Chapter 4 that caring and loving of the other happens mostly through the exchange of goods such as *buai* [Tokpisin: betelnut], other essential food items and sometimes money. Also, as one young man wrote in his diary: "My love for her is still burning just because of her very kind habit, not too serious and friendly always towards my people and me". This remark suggests that the personal relationship is valued in relation to the attitude towards the larger group of people with whom his life is entangled, reducing some of the emphasis Westerners put on romantic, intimate and nuclear family construction.

Fear

Despite an increased desensitisation towards pain, disease and violence in the settlement, multiple allusions are made by women about women fearing men (*National,* 4 June 1998)[128]. The fear comes from knowledge that violence can be deployed against them under particular circumstances. As highlighted throughout this thesis, it is women who have been targeted; rape has been used as a tactic by warring tribes/clans. Violence, including sexual violence, is also justified in situations where women are perceived to be recalcitrant or elope with another man (e.g., Berndt, 1962; Strathern, 1975; Toft, 1985).

However, in an environment where women are known to deploy violence themselves, references to fear were mostly used in conversations with me and did not necessarily occur in the same way amongst women within the settlement. This tendency clearly emanates from knowledge of the discourse exposing women as victims of male violence, which has been used in public by women activists, by some women in decision-making positions and by some men from the clergy or in political decision-making positions.

The discrepancy between the stories and the reality emerges in the following situation. The women who lived two 'blocks' from Kathy's house, complained during one of our encounters about the fact that they were not allowed to leave the 'block'. If they did and their husband found out, they were guaranteed a beating when they returned home.

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[128] http://www.wr.com.au/national/980604f6.htm.

Probing further into the issue, I found that in fact they were out and about every day, going to the market and meeting with friends and relatives. No beating ensued from those activities. Only after I had spent substantial time in their company did they reveal to me that the beatings occurred when they were seen talking to another man. Sexual jealousy has indeed been reported as one of the main causes contributing to incidents of domestic violence (Toft, 1985). These incidents, however, are not limited to women. I have collected multiple accounts of women reacting violently when their husbands or boyfriends would dare converse with another woman. On one of these occasions, a father asked me if I could lend him some money to bail out his daughter. He explained that his daughter had picked up a stone and hit another woman whom she had seen talking to her husband. Police patrolling the area had arrested her. The injured woman was identified as a former girlfriend. As such, the attacker perceived her as a danger to her relationship with her husband. The father in no way criticised the actions of his daughter.

The danger of being molested sexually is not related just to women, despite the fact that they dominate the statistics of sexual violence incidents. One of my informants, John, told me he encountered a situation where he felt sexually threatened by two women. In telling me about the incident, he described these women as physically very strong and having a ferocious sexual appetite. The fact that he felt that he had to escape and finally managed to do so, reveals that his account was not about sexual prowess. Another man told me about an incident where in a different settlement in Port Moresby, a number of women raped a Korean man who had addressed them in an unacceptable way[129].

That women do not see themselves as passive victims of men's penises was highlighted by Jean's account. She told me that one night, when walking back from church to the 'block', she was followed by a group of young men whom she felt were stalking her. She did not hesitate to challenge them verbally, saying: *"Yupela laik rapim mi?! Yupela traim tasol bihain bai yupela kisim pain"*. [Tokpisin: Are you thinking of raping me? You just try and then you'll have to bear the consequences]. The young men left her and she continued her journey to the 'block'. This situation reveals that incidents of rape are a real threat also within the settlement; however, it also shows that women do not always become passive victims as soon as a possible situation of attack develops.

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[129] Even if the rape did not take place, the allusion to its possibility demonstrates a perception of women capable of engaging in that sort of activity.

At this level, it is important to come back to Helliwell's (2001) argument, which is also reiterated by Gatens (1996). An ongoing attempt to portray a man's penis as a dangerous tool might contribute to the establishment of passive victims who live in constant fear of being assaulted sexually. Even though this fear might not have been explicitly expressed by the women in Morata, there was a recognition of that fear when transferring the discourse to the 'white woman's body'. Thus, I would be constantly reminded of the dangers of being assaulted, especially when I tried to venture outside the confines of a number of streets where everybody knew each other. The greater emphasis was associated with my white skin, which somehow made me an easier target. The assumption was that since I had no connection with anyone in the settlement perpetrators were less likely to suffer retaliatory violence.

Over the years, an image of a more vulnerable white woman who had to be kept safe behind barbwire fences had become established. This image was reinforced by an almost total absence of white women (with the exception of missionaries) in settlements, which, within the general discourse, were described as rough and dangerous places. There was less concern for the white male. White men were not viewed as vulnerable and rapable. The concern was strongly voiced at the time I was considering living in Kathy's household in Morata. As explained in the first chapter, I would only be allowed to stay in the settlement when sufficient safety could be guaranteed. In many ways, I was putting my hosts in a dangerous situation that they did not really want.

The examples above reveal that there is knowledge of danger but it is also a perception of danger borrowed from the state-based discourse on law-and-order, which is known to create a sense of social anxiety. It does not always reflect the reality as experienced and debated within Morata. Thus, women talk about their restricted freedom of movement due to fear of violent repercussions. However, this representation of their position does not prevent them from moving about freely or from striking out violently themselves. Also, within that borrowed context of fear, community members acknowledge fear for the safety of white people, especially white women. By placing fear within this context they somehow distance themselves from it. Nevertheless, both Strathern (1975) and Morauta (1985:22) refer to fear when discussing urban living. Morauta explains that townspeople do not necessarily live close to relatives or kinsmen. They live much closer to 'outsiders' with whom they have no social ties. It is these outsiders, according to Strathern

(1975:35), whom women fear as potential perpetrators of rape. However, the emphasis here is on the nature of social ties, not on their gendered nature. Furthermore, the fear of movement out of one's familiar area has always been part of people's social reality, including within rural areas (e.g. Hallpike, 1977). The issue has become more apparent due to the increasing multi-ethnic character of the urban environment and the ensuing emphasis on ethnicity.

Nevertheless, the strength of Strathern's and Morauta's findings has faded over the years, especially when considering the increasing mobility of people living in the urban setting. Both men and women 'travel' extensively between different areas of town accustoming themselves to those areas by sometimes forging new relationships and thereby minimising the 'dangerous' zones. There is no denying that it is still ethnic and social ties that predominantly organise social life within the settlement. At the same time, as pointed out in earlier chapters, people increasingly cross those boundaries and establish ties of obligation and reciprocity with people they would not traditionally have related to in this way. These ties might not be as substantial as those with relatives and kin but they often suffice to guarantee a sense of security, especially under normal daily circumstances. These ties are often reinforced by a lifestyle, which bears resemblance to village life. People help each other with food and a few *toeas* (PNG coin currency) in time of hardship. Also, people venture outside their 'blocks', meeting in the middle of the street, grouping together in front of a TV set or playing snooker and watching videos in the local pub. Thus, one can expect a lessened sense of fear in the settlement. Also, as mentioned earlier on people also extend their relationships outside the boundaries of the settlement in which they live. At the same time, one cannot lose sight of a certain level of desensitisation towards violence amongst community members. Sexual violence cannot be dissociated from that reality.

That reality has also shown that incidents of sexual violence cannot be perceived just within the gendered dynamic but need to be assessed within the broader political, social and cultural context, which indeed emphasises the importance of ethnicity. This ethnic dimension creates a rather ambivalent situation as people integrate more and more across ethnic boundaries. Also, the particular ethnic dimension attributed to rape incidents has for a long time distracted attention from incidents of sexual violence that take place within families and within social units (Borrey and Kombako, 1997).

Redress: Silencing the victim ?

Considering the fact that incidents of sexual violence are often dealt with outside the formal court system, concerns have been raised about the silencing of the victim and the injustice ensuing from that process. As such, compensation demands are often seen as relinquishing the rights of the victims who are often women[130]. To highlight the ambivalence of that 'silence' factor I want to take the reader through part of the redress mechanism that was put in place to deal with Marie's case. Even though the redress process was not finalised before my departure some of the initial meetings revealed that both the victim and other women were given the space to share their concerns and demands. The initial involvement of the police in taking Marie away from the scene of crime and driving her to the hospital did not extend to an official complaint regarding the crime. The common argument about this choice of action is that both the victim and secondary victims are left empty-handed. Most argue that, *'giving blood'* needs to be compensated[131]. In some extreme cases redress could only implicate the death of one or more of the offending parties (Borrey & Kombako, 1997). In Marie's case, which for that matter is not exceptional, a decision was made to deal with the matter in a 'traditional' manner.

The time for the meeting was set about 10 days after Marie had been released from hospital. As pointed out earlier, Marie's girlfriend took her to Gerehu. Consequently, Marie's girlfriend and her family were asked to attend the compensation meeting. Marie's family members had also decided to invite the chief magistrate of the Village Court to attend the session. The chief Village Court magistrate was very much seen as the experienced and respected member of the community in matters of dispute settlement. Approximately 10 people on each side attended the meeting. The meeting took place on the side of the cul-de-sac leading to Marie's 'block'. Most people were sitting on the ground. Marie was given a chair so she would be more comfortable. People came and sat around her. The girlfriend was placed opposite Marie with her adoptive mother[132] in close vicinity. Male family members were seated a little removed from the central 'scene'.

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[130] These concerns were extensively publicised in the case of the 'compensation' girls. The young women concerned were to be given to the aggrieved party as part of the 'peace' ceremony (*Post Courier*, 7 August 1998, 'Clan give girls away in compo': p.1).

[131] The decision to ignore the formal court procedure is also be associated with its known inefficiency to deal successfully with the cases presented to them.

[132] The girlfriend had lost both her parents two years prior to the incident and had been adopted by her aunt and uncle.

Marie's father gave the opening talk. He described the way he understood his daughter had ended up in Gerehu where the attempted rape had taken place. In that way he set the grounds for establishing the invited party as the compensating party. From there on one of Marie's uncle took over. In his speech he emphasised the seriousness of the injuries sustained thereby setting the initial parameters for the amount that would be requested. Prior to the meeting Marie's father had talked about demanding K 30.000 especially since there was no guarantee that Marie would be able to have children following the nature of her injuries. It was then Marie's turn to give her interpretation of the events. She spoke out quite clearly but could not suppress her tears when describing how she had been attacked and how she saw her girlfriend running away whilst she was calling out her name. The whole group was silent for what seemed to be a long time. Soon, however, one of Marie's aunts took over, reiterating parts of Marie's statement and emphasising the gravity of the incident. It was then the girlfriend's turn to give her version of the incident. She was rather brief but did admit that she had run away as she really got scared. She obviously had not expected that particular outcome of the gathering with the friends of her boyfriend. Her adoptive mother then acknowledged that she had not been aware of the seriousness of the incident and she regretted it. It was clear that the girlfriend and her family were there as they were seen to be 'connected' to the boyfriend and his friends. As the 'accessible' party they would be burdened with sorting out the compensation payment. At no point in time was their 'connection' to the incident denied. The question remained though how they could be held responsible for what had happened to Marie since the girlfriend, as such, had not inflicted the injuries. But, obviously the circumstances leading to the incident were seen as important, or possibly even more important than the incident itself. Arguably, one could suggest that for Marie and her family this was the only way of vindicating the offence. It would be almost impossible to get hold of the offenders. After the first meeting where facts were laid out it was then agreed that the two parties would meet again the next fortnight. It had been Marie's first encounter outside the 'block'. After the meeting she was clearly tired and went off to sleep. The next day she made her first stroll down the street to buy betelnut. She was smiling, and stated that she was getting stronger.

During our many encounters Marie never expressed her anger towards the young men who had held and injured her. Her statements however, continuously conveyed her anger towards her girlfriend who had breached the existing trust and who had left her helplessly on the road in Gerehu. During her hospitalisation, Marie talked extensively

with her father, her sole caretaker at that time. She openly discussed the incident in front of her father and also vehemently denied the rumours that she had been raped before. I had put that question to her after Kathy and Sofie had alleged that this was not the first time she had got into trouble. According to her, it was the way she groomed herself and carried on in public that attracted those incidents. During those talks in the hospital it became clear that to both herself and her father, there was only one-way to resolve the incident; demanding compensation from her girlfriend and her family. Within a state system where many of the institutions and their representatives fail to carry out their duties (for many different reasons) one is not left with many different options. Hence, the compensation system as a legacy of pre-colonial time has shown to be far more effective and comprehensive to grieving parties than the formal court system. It is a system known to both men and women. As Marie's case highlights, both victims and women are given the right and the space to air their point of view, which become part of the overall approach of the incident. The other case of rape which took place in another section of Morata, involving a young girl, also allowed space for both the victim and her widowed and crippled mother to air their concerns and the way they wanted to deal with the matter. Besides having reported the case to the police, they had agreed to settle the matter out of court if the culprits came forward. Also, the mother expressed her desire to leave Morata and return to her people living in another province. The surrounding community members then agreed to collect money for tickets for both child and mother.

It is obviously not a clear-cut case that victims are silenced by the redress system that operates outside the formal court system. Both the victim and supporting female family members were given the chance to participate in the redress process. They were given the opportunity to tell their version of the story and they participated in the meetings discussing the issue of compensation. The reality is that neither imprisonment nor compensation will ever be able to rectify the atrocious experience of sexual assault. In the case of redress and compensation there is a 'comfort zone' for the victim to air her/his concerns and grievances. In cases where compensation works out successfully, it is true that the victim will only receive a part of the overall compensation payment. This is a community where kin-, clan- and tribe relationship still dominates the social network. In the event that the victim is not able to marry or bear children because of the incident, both victim and secondary victims are affected by the incident. This situation would definitely affect the capacity of primary and secondary victims to extend networks, which are at the basis of growth and importance. The point of view that all the compensation

payment should be relegated to the victim clearly emanates from a position removed from the broader understanding of obligation and reciprocity. Furthermore, in a tribal society where the state is a radically exogenous exploitative formation having acute problems of its own legitimation, and more importantly its own criminality; in such a society where many people struggle to make end meets, and where retribution is still a viable option in dealing with conflicts, compensation payments look far more attractive to all members related to the victim and to the victim herself.

Conclusion: The impact of a tension between two different perspectives on the issue of sexual violence

Incidents of sexual violence are by no means acceptable actions within Morata. The burning down of a house and the demand for compensation payment in relation to the cases discussed, clearly identify the problematic nature of such incidents. However, in an environment where violence does not always have a negative value, where individuals are not necessarily viewed as the most precious item within a societal organisation, and where sexual interactions are locked into a different interrelationship between men and women, the experience of rape might indeed be different. It is the different understanding and contextualisation of rape, rather than the number of incidents itself, which can be associated with the lack of anxiety existing in Morata about sexual violence.

The existing concern clearly emanates from a different part of society that, over the years, has attempted to monopolise the use of violence and that has attempted to adopt a more Western point of view on gender relations. The anxiety associated with the law-and-order debate, which includes the issue of sexual violence, has had a cyclic pattern (Cohen, 1972; Thompson, 1998) which began during colonisation (see Chapter 2). The panic arising at different times over the last century has been instigated by members of the high power and status hierarchy who have developed moral and social norms emanating from a Eurocentric point of view. During that process an image of the passive and victimised woman has been generated.

The insistence of a gendered view of people, with accentuation on the inferior, vulnerable female, can only exacerbate an already problematic situation. This is especially relevant when considering the political and ethnic character in which a number of the rape cases

are embedded. Setting up women as vulnerable people in an already volatile environment can only fuel an already precarious situation. Not only will it increase the number of incidents but it will also reinforce the negative impact of such actions upon the female population. As Marcus (1992:349) points out, "Various theories have recognised that rape causes fear, but have ignored the other half of the vicious circle, that often rapes succeed as a result of women's fear". In Morata, the lack of fear has not diminished the number of rapes, but it might have well contributed to a less traumatic experience.

The attempt to establish a victim image of women through propaganda aimed at introducing policies and legislation to protect women within the macroscopic perspective, leads to a more disastrous outcome for women within the microscopic perspective. Thus, the construction of a common denominator of women as victims brings about the development of a category of 'women' totally disconnected from social reality. In this way women are slowly removed from their position of worth established through networks of obligations and reciprocity. Considering the degree of desensitisation towards pain and violence, it is not difficult to imagine how the *constructed* victim increasingly becomes a *real* victim.

An acute awareness among grassroots about the way violence, including sexual violence, is being understood has created a new political tool. The group of people who use threats of violence to request specific services and monetary assistance from the government and its agencies, have gained influence in an environment where donor money is attached to the condition that the law-and-order situation improve. In this context, we see an extension of the tribal dynamics operating around the issue of violence and peace processes at the community level. The State in this context has been given the status of another tribe (Borrey, 1995b; Strathern A., 1993), thereby engaging the state in the cycle of violence and compensation. As such, there is an extension of tradition at work, into an area outside the conventional relationships between local groups. This threat of violence exacerbates social anxiety pushing the government to further protect its 'citizens', with special attention given to the vulnerable woman.

Furthermore, the 'woman victim' becomes an easier target in an environment marked by a tension between the local elite, who pay lip service to Western legal, economic and moral values and the grassroots who resist this influence. The violence used in this

situation is not then the outcome of a disintegration of traditional control mechanisms but more a reflection of culture at work. As pointed out, violence and rape are acceptable tools between enemy tribes. The tribes are now the grassroots and the local elite. In a situation of war, every woman can become a target of sexual violence.

Unless there is an attempt to come to terms with the different understandings and contextualisation of sexual violence, unless there is an attempt to reverse the process of portraying women as victims within the state-based debate on law-and-order, one can only expect a worsening fate for the women and girls of PNG.
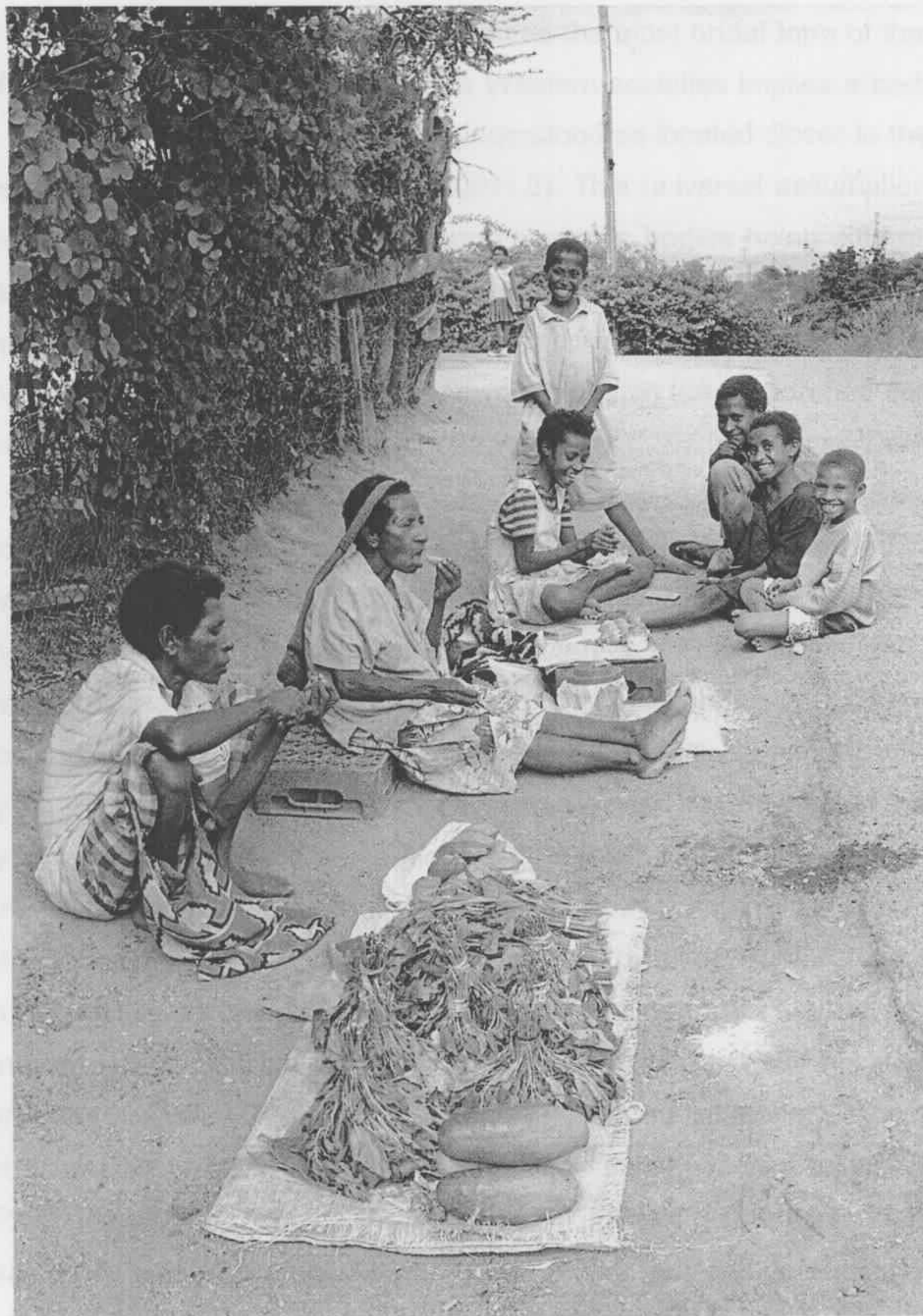
CONCLUSION

Picture 7

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The study of sexual violence in a particular community of PNG has highlighted the need to be more critical of a universal approach to the issue. This universal approach develops from the fact that rape is perceived in the West as the most brutal form of the gendered relation of power. Therefore, its presence in Western societies implies a certainty of its existence in less developed areas that are understood as located closer to the savagery end of the evolutionary ladder (Helliwell, 2001: 3). This universal assumption is further accentuated by an understanding of men and women's bodies being differently sexed, with men's bodies being capable of penetrating and therefore brutalising the latter (ibid.). In some studies (ibid.) these perceptions have been challenged, necessitating a review of the universal image of sexual violence. Nevertheless, in the researched community of Morata and in many other parts of PNG (Strathern, M., 1975a; Kivung, Doiwa, M. and Cox, S., 1985; Schiltz, 1985; Strathern, A., 1985; Josephides, 1993; Banks, 2000), sexual violence is not uncommon. However, this study has shown that Western perspectives on the issue of sexual violence cannot account for a consistent understanding of incidents of sexual violence within PNG. There are indeed alternative perspectives on violence, gender and sexuality that ultimately affect the way sexual violence can also be understood in a society characterised by values and mores that are not totally embedded in a Western analytical framework. As the thesis exposes, the incapacity to recognise different perceptions on the issue can contribute to a worse fate for women in PNG, since the micro and the macro views[133] interrelate in an ambivalent way allowing manipulations that can be misunderstood by all parties involved. This study, which focused mostly on the microscopic perspective gained from Morata, reveals some of these manipulations and the ways they can contribute to certain misconceptions on the matter. It also clarifies, to a certain extent, why the social anxiety expressed within the state-based debate on law-and-order, in which sexual violence takes an important place in PNG, is not shared within the community of Morata, despite the fact that rape does occur in this part of society. Nevertheless, this different understanding in no way implies that sexual violence is not regarded as a problematic issue.

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[133] As pointed out through the thesis the macroscopic perspective as presented here mostly reflects the way the state-based discourse is being understood by my research subjects who live in the settlement.

Methodology

The need to investigate alternative understandings of violence became evident from findings emanating from a pilot project aimed at establishing an appropriate methodology to study sexual violence in PNG (Borrey and Kombako, 1997). The outcome of that project showed a discrepancy between the results collected from quantitative and qualitative data. Further analysis of the results revealed that the problematic outcome was mostly associated with the uncritical use of concepts and their associated definitions that are mostly interwoven with Western sensibilities, by anthropologists and social scientists researching the issue in a social, cultural, economic and political environment different to their own. This observation was further reinforced by the outcome of another study aiming to identify the most urgent problems for women in terms of violence used against them (Ausaid, 1997). Although there was an expectation, based on previous research findings and statistical information, that domestic violence and rape would be mentioned as the most serious problems, it became evident that women considered adultery to be a far more serious issue. Certainly, that adultery could lead to violent incidents but, as the thesis showed, violence is not a primary issue either. It was clear that the research methods produced results that reflected the macroscopic perspective on the law-and-order debate, but which did not reflect the social reality of a part of the population such as those living in the settlement. For example, it was expected that the state-based discourse on law-and-order, which perceived violence against women as a problematic issue contributing to a certain level of social anxiety, would also be found here. However, the results, especially those emanating from the urban settlement, showed a different outcome (Borrey and Kombako, 1997).

Bearing in mind the outcomes of the above research projects, I opted to research rape from what I call throughout the thesis the microscopic or local perspective. This then implies trying to explore sexual violence from the perspective of the people living in the settlement, thus departing from the understandings projected by the state-based discourse on law-and-order, which I refer to in the thesis as the macroscopic perspective. Study of the microscopic perspective implied the use of the participant observation method, which in this thesis was complemented with diaries, interviews and the use of visual material. The aim was to create an environment in which issues such as violence, sexuality, gender and ultimately sexual violence, could be viewed and discussed in way that challenged my perceptions and definitions, which had emanated from my own historicity, fed by Western sensibilities.

The move into the participant observation method happened within the conceptual framework of gender studies, resulting in epistemological concerns related to conducting fieldwork in a different cultural setting. Through my engagement with issues such as positioning, communication, relationships and representation, I succeeded in bringing to the foreground elements related to agency, resistance, manipulation and ambivalence. A number of misconceptions already constructed at this level became evident, further reinforcing the need to be critical about an approach to violence against women, in this particular case sexual violence, from the macroscopic perspective. Imposition of Western economic, political and spiritual structures does not imply a blind acceptance of the values spread through those structures. In the urban settlement of Morata, where the influence of Western perceptions cannot be denied, and where one cannot immediately discern reminiscence of so-called traditional mores and values, it is easy to overlook the dynamics of agency, resistance, manipulation and the ensuing ambivalence that further cloud the social reality of the place. The critical evaluation of the methodology and the consequent choice of participant observation, allowed me to include those dynamics in the search for understandings of sexual violence from a microscopic perspective. Sexual violence within this perspective is analysed through an understanding of violence, gender and sexuality that follows from a particular social, cultural and political organisation of the community based on specific values and mores. The understanding of these matters sets the 'mood' in which incidents of sexual violence are understood and experienced from a microscopic perspective.

Law-and-order from the macroscopic perspective

Within that framework, I first consider the law-and-order debate from a macroscopic perspective, providing a better understanding of the ambivalence existing at the microscopic level of the researched community. Indeed, the way sexual violence is understood and discussed in Morata cannot be totally dissociated from the macroscopic perspective on law-and-order. An exchange of values and meanings has taken place that, so far, has allowed manipulation of the law-and-order situation by people representing either the macroscopic or the microscopic perspective.

Historical analysis of the law-and-order debate from the macroscopic perspective unveils a strong concern with Western sensibilities that were introduced through missionisation and colonisation. Overall, the macroscopic perspective reflects an ongoing concern with law-and-order issues as they have evolved in Western societies. It is tainted by a concern for increased civilisation, which should bring more prosperity and less violence to PNG society. It is also characterised by an increasing focus on the condition of children and women and the violence committed against them. Disturbances to that civilising process are often perceived as 'criminal'. Resistance, exposed at the microscopic level, against the civilising process has shown up on several occasions and persists in the construction of the State as an enemy by different community groups in PNG. At this level, a tension can be discerned between the perceptions emanating from the macroscopic perspective and those coming from the microscopic perspective. This does not imply a total rejection of the way issues are presented within the macroscopic perspective on law-and-order. The macroscopic perspective has infiltrated the microscopic and vice versa. However, values and perceptions on both sides have been manipulated in different ways to benefit the different groups behind the respective points of view. The exploration of that ambivalent situation has brought forth complementary perspectives on the issue of sexual violence, at least in the way it is understood in Morata.

Settlement – the area for investigating the microscopic perspective

Before further engaging in the study of sexual violence from a microscopic perspective within Morata, it is important to understand the politics surrounding settlements. Within the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order debate, settlements have in the past often been identified as the sites from which the disturbances and criminal elements emanate. The places are demonised by the representation of their population as being violent, uncontrolled, unemployed and engaging in criminal activities. The settlements are also considered dirty and underdeveloped. Presenting settlements as enclaves of misfits has the effect of contextualising violence within wider issues of economic pressure and the collapse of traditional structures based on kin networks. These understandings explain a certain degree of increased criminal activity. However, at the same time they ignore the existence of violent and disruptive behaviour in other sectors

of society, including the well-educated and prosperous people, at least in terms of the standards of Western capitalism.

By singling out settlements in such a way, it has been difficult to discern the way people living there conceive of their own situation, especially in terms of crime. Voices from the settlement indeed often reiterate the same perspectives as presented in the state-based law-and-order debate. However, as study of the microscopic perspective reveals, there are several advantages inherent in supporting that vision, because it creates economic and political possibilities for the people of the settlements. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the imposition of a capitalist market economy and with it a growing urbanisation process has exacerbated the problems associated with life in the settlements. These economic and political elements have had, as the study has shown, an impact on the way people use and understand violence.

However, this particular discourse, which is predominant in the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order debate, has misrepresented the microscopic perspective of settlement life in many other aspects. The negative description overlooks important issues associated with an environment characterised by a dynamic interaction between different ethnicities and different languages but similar aspirations to pursue life in this challenging environment. Thus, the microscopic perspective reveals that social control does take place, but not necessarily within the formal judiciary or according to principles underwriting that formal justice system. Insisting on looking at settlements from the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order debate negates the agency of people who live with different mores and values and who are working on ways to overcome difficulties generated by a multi-ethnic environment that is also influenced by economic, political and social agents embedded in Western values.

Violence

In the thesis, I depart from the premise that sexual violence cannot be understood separately from issues of violence, gender and sexuality. I explore those other issues in two chapters, one on violence followed by one on gender and sexuality.

Within the macroscopic perspective violence is portrayed as a dysfunctional action that curbs the social and economic development of a place. The violence occurring in the settlement thus reinforces the perception of the place as dysfunctional and underdeveloped. Interventions by representatives of State agencies, which can also be violent, are then justified as part of the development process. Within the state-based law-and-order debate, personal violence is mostly discussed in gendered terms, emphasising male violence inflicted upon women. (see Chapter 2; Morauta, 1986; Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission, 1992) It is suggested that women become victims of men's violence when attempting, under the influence of feminism, to disengage from the authoritarian male figure who heads the nuclear family structure.

Morata's dealing with violent incidents has, however, shown some other perspectives. The microscopic perspective reveals a degree of valorisation when it comes to violence. The value of violence is much embedded in its capacity to redress situations of injustice and conflict. (Strathern, M., 1993:214; Hallpike, 1977; O'Collins, 2000:26; Jansonius, 1989) As such it is not viewed as orderless or meaningless. One of the implications/outcomes of the valorisation of violence is that women also engage in violent actions. The use of violence is clearly not the prerogative of men but is also valued and used by women. A violent man or woman is not necessarily considered a bad person.

The valorisation of violence suggests a certain level of normalisation. This normalisation of violence existed already in certain circumstances but has extended its boundaries through the development of different fields of tension created through an amalgamation of different life worlds. In this context, social and political changes, as suggested within the macroscopic discussion of law-and-order, do have an impact. I refer here to the economic and political dismay expressed towards the State, which is regarded as another 'tribe' within the relationships of obligations and reciprocity. This discontent with the State easily spills over to the 'other', often personified as members of other communities with whom relationships of obligation and reciprocity do not exist or fail. It is the incapacity of the nation state to provide the 'goods' within the extended network of kin that has maintained the animosity between groups of people who compete for scarce or misappropriated resources.

Thus, violent actions initiated at community level are either the outcome of an accepted way of redressing unjust situations, or the outcome of resistance towards attempts to impose Western notions of personhood, justice, politics and values. These actions are

not viewed as dysfunctional. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all violent behaviour has a useful function; neither should all violent actions be categorised as irrelevant and unacceptable. This way of perceiving violence by members of the community, including women, is one of the aspects that influence a complementary understanding of sexual violence in a community such as Morata. For example, the violent actions instigated by women themselves in Morata question the victim image of the weaker, helpless gender. In the West, the atrocity of sexual violence is amplified by the image of a helpless victim who has little chance of escaping the violent and physically superior man. (Brownmiller, 1975) Although this image is increasingly being challenged in the West, it permeates the state-based law-and-order debate in PNG. However, from the microscopic perspective the image of the female victim loses its impact in an environment characterised by violence instigated and to a certain degree accepted by both men and women. Of course, as mentioned in the study, a dysfunctional relationship with the State, which often operates or pretends to operate along different sensibilities, can exacerbate the precarious situation of a community marked by a multi-ethnic profile in which existing operational patterns of obligation, reciprocity, competition and support need to be reaffirmed. Thus, the examples of aggressive acts in Morata are examples not of cultural disintegration but rather of culture at work. Violent encounters reveal points of friction which can occur at different levels of community and social life and which is not necessarily gendered. These areas of friction need redress. Violent actions can be justified in particular situations. The violence constitutes part of the controlling mechanism. As such, the controlling mechanism involving the use of violence is not just the prerogative of law-enforcing agencies but is also in the hands of community members entangled in the matters of concern. Widespread use of violence is the expression not of a lack of social control, but indeed of social control at work in a multi-ethnic environment in search of a new equilibrium, which is also confronted with the challenges of a social and structural system that operates on the basis of different values and understandings.

However, ongoing manipulation of the perceptions set out in the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order agenda by community members themselves contributes to the maintenance of a misunderstanding of many of the violent actions in the settlement. Conflict and tension exist at many levels within settlement life but are not necessarily understood or experienced as disturbing. Violence can be connected with notions of order, control and normalcy in an environment where the use of violence is not

just relegated to a single central authority such as the law enforcement agents of a nation state. (Hallpike, 1977; Knauft, 1999) Members of the settlement do not align themselves along a consciousness of nationhood but along ethnic, tribal or clan loyalties. In a multi-ethnic environment, relationships of reciprocity and obligation can sometimes transcend ethnic associations. Incidents of sexual violence are also often understood within those processes.

Gender and sexuality

The layered analysis, focusing on the understanding of gender relations and sexuality at community level, within households and between partners in Morata, revealed several understandings around the issues, producing a number of different insights. The most important feature is that positions of value and power for both men and women are not solely locked within a dichotomous understanding of gender, but have developed within a wider network of obligations and reciprocity. Women relate in these networks along different nexuses and are not set up in a divide against men, especially as they often operate independently from men. In a multi-ethnic environment characterised by a close connection to the urban economy, networks have expanded beyond those of kinship but have not necessarily moved away from them. This finding somewhat contradicts the state-based perception within the law-and-order debate that women in urban centres are left without the necessary support against possibly abusive men. (Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission, 1992) Further analysis of the situation exposes different ways in which women establish their own support networks, their position of worth and in many cases their economic independence. For both men and women their situation and position of worth is negotiated through multiple relations, established within networks of reciprocity and obligation, which are at the centre of daily life in the settlement. In this context, it is difficult to establish positions of superiority and inferiority as portrayed in a conventional understanding of gender relations.

Issues of worth and value arise more frequently between persons of the same gender. In the context of polygamy, women can be regarded as exposed to a more challenging environment, having to negotiate with both the male partner and other female partner. However, as case studies have shown, women in Morata who feel they are in a disadvantaged position can decide to leave the relationship. Within their existing

networks they often find the needed support to do so. It is easier for women in Morata to leave relationships because they are not locked into a dichotomous relationship within a nuclear family setting. Of course, it cannot be denied that polygamy generates an extra field for possible conflict and especially that it generates an avenue whereby women are set against each other. However, in Morata it does not generate disempowered women.

In terms of sexuality, women and men demonstrate a freedom that does not coincide with the state-based presentation of monogamy within a nuclear family setting. This particular perception of lived sexuality gains momentum in a nation state that claims anchorage in Christian values. Hence, ideas about sexuality in the state-based discourse evokes a particular prudishness, which has seen some *save lain* and representatives of State organisations challenge statements on promiscuity made within research on sexual behaviour. In Morata, both men and women talk both languages. Women complain about the entrapments of polygamous relationships whilst engaging in extramarital affairs. Young men complain about their lack of sexual encounters but are caught in acts of sexual intercourse that generate talk in the community. The stories are shared in a matter-of-fact tone. They do not carry judgements that would support a certain adherence to the state-based attitude towards sexuality.

However, the discourse in the settlement in regard to gender relations and sexuality still exposes points of similarity with that presented in the macroscopic perspective of the law-and-order debate. Thus, the image of the vulnerable and submissive woman is still generated at different levels. In discussions about their condition, women often raise the issue of limited freedom and submission to the desire of men. Christian values about gender relations are often intermeshed with those statements. Such statements have been shown, through the layered analysis of the processes in the settlement, to borrow from the main discourse on the topic but do not project the daily reality of the women disseminating them. Manipulation of the macroscopic perspective on the issue favours the possibility of economic or political gain from programs and projects attempting to support female victims of violence. The violence exists but is not limited to the specific male-female nexus; it is part of the broader economic, social, cultural and political set-up of the place.

Meanwhile the macroscopic perspective of inferior women, which advocates the liberation of these women, has created resentment in many men. Resistance from men

to the advocacy of liberation has led to the perception that the submissive and obedient woman is part of women's traditional role in society. In an environment characterised by economic and social changes, such an insight gives ammunition to men who are struggling to retain their identity and their position of worth in an environment where they are faced with different values and limited economic opportunities in a capitalist cash economy. Within that framework, young men often justify rape as the only means to gratify their sexual desires, claiming young women are interested only in men who are successful in the capitalist economy. It is then argued that polygamy exacerbates the situation by allowing an obviously successful man to take several women, thereby further limiting the opportunities for young men still seeking a partner.

The manipulation by both men and women of an image of gender relations influenced by Western sensibilities has made it difficult to relinquish within the state-based debate the image of universal oppression and economic dependency of women that plays a part in the understanding sexual violence. Even though the limitation of such a perception has already been challenged in the West, it remains an important part of the macroscopic perspective on sexual violence in PNG. Also, Christian values about gender and sexuality, propagated in the state-based discourse on law-and-order, are being manipulated to a certain extent. It is easy for an occasional visitor to the settlement to maintain the perception of an image of powerless women left at the mercy of men. It is a perception that has travelled through PNG history, from early colonisation when white women had to be protected from the perceived oversexed indigenous men. The educated/knowledgeable PNG woman (*ol save meri*) has now more or less replaced that white woman, needing protection from the primitive unemployed man.

The discourse on battered women is used by both men and women to advance their own cause in life. At the same time, it creates the space to turn constructed victims into real victims. As pointed out in the thesis, the insistence on a victim image of women within the state-based discourse, reinforced by the provision of political and economic support for these women mostly by overseas aid agencies, has several consequences. Women within Morata do not hesitate to associate themselves with that image if it can imply monetary assistance in one way or another. The insistence on the image of a victim dissociates the women from their real social and economic worth. Also, young men persuaded by this image in turn will find it easier to attack a weak woman. Hence, removing the social, cultural and economic constructions that determine the networks in

which both men and women operate and develop a position of value, by further insisting on an overall image of the vulnerable and inferior women, can easily exacerbate an already volatile situation. In an environment where the use of violence is not always frowned upon, where a multi-ethnic society is still working on a functional relationship within an environment created at the crossroad of different life-worlds, 'weak' people will become easy targets. Turning a blind eye to a different mode of gender relations will exacerbate an already violent environment and could thus contribute to an increase in sexually violent incidents against women.

Sexual violence

Different perspectives on the issues of violence, gender and sexuality at the microscopic level open the way to a better understanding of a diminished social anxiety associated with incidents of sexual violence. A framework has been provided which facilitates a shift away from the image portrayed within the state-based discourse on law-and-order that represents the macroscopic perspective on the issue. This image includes a perception of the violent actions as barbaric; a perception which has seen local educated elite women, along with *ol save meri*, taking up a campaign to save the women from the settlement and themselves from these barbaric men. Within that debate, polygamy and bride-price payments are questioned, with a call for the abolition of those practices. They are seen as perpetuating an inferior position of the woman to the man.

In relation to sexual violence, issues of universality, biological determinism and the image of a vulnerable, powerless women have been challenged by a number of researchers.(e.g. Helliwell, 2001; Naffine, 1997) Findings by academics in the West, together with issues raised in relation to consent and retribution in the context of sexual violence by other researchers in PNG (e.g. Strathern, 1975; Banks, 2000), and taking into account alternative perceptions of violence, gender and sexuality in a particular community of PNG, have contributed to the development of a complementary view on incidents of sexual violence in PNG. This complementary perception contributes to a better understanding of the lack of social anxiety at the microscopic level and highlights misunderstandings of the issue at the macroscopic level. References are also made to manipulation of the macroscopic understanding by people living in Morata to safeguard a

particular image of the place and to secure access to funding provided to deal with problems of law-and-order, including sexual violence.

To investigate further an alternative understanding of sexual violence, I first analyse the contexts in which incidents of sexual violence are debated within the macroscopic perspective. I refer as such to the association of sexual violence with the power-seeking man in a dichotomous gender relation, with the image of the dangerous penis and with the inferior position of PNG women further emphasised through a particular understanding of bride-price payments. The thesis shows, through the discussion of violence, gender and sexuality, that from a microscopic perspective these associations have lost substantial currency in the community of Morata. Thus, those elements which in the West are considered to contribute to the horrendous character of the offence, and which are implicated in the macroscopic perspective, cannot be discerned in the microscopic perspective. I refer to the sexualisation of the violence that in the West is seen as a violation of personhood itself; for in this context sexuality and personal identity are intermeshed. (Helliwell, 2001)

The microscopic perspective on violence, gender and sexuality, as exposed in the thesis, generates a different process of identity construction for a person living in the settlement. Individuals are removed from a gendered power nexus because they are also positioned within a network of obligations and reciprocities. A power relationship, which is strongly established between genders in an environment based on a dichotomous power relation between men and women, loses its impact in a kin-based environment. Consequently, in the sexual violence case studies from the settlement the importance of extended relationships re-emerges through a move from a focus on the individual victim(s) and offender(s) to the group or network to which they belong. In this context, the concept of secondary victims becomes important. They are the people who in one way or another have an invested interest or who are related to the victim(s). The reluctance to deal with incidents of sexual violence within a formal court system that focuses on the victim becomes more understandable as it does not recognise secondary victims. An insistence on understanding gender relations according to Western perceptions will view this situation as aberrant for the victims. Although the situation is indeed aberrant, one cannot overlook the fact that personal identity construction takes place along a different nexus, which in some way makes the violent attack less personal. Such an understanding of the incident can only contribute to a less anxious perception of the

matter as a diffusion of the enormity of the incident takes place among a larger group of people. Furthermore, the different experience of body and sexuality can reinforce that process. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the manipulation of this contextualisation can mask ulterior motivations by the offender. Personal sexual desires have been satisfied in this horrific way and are still part of the motivation for rape today.

The political aspect of rape is still expressed in the context of tribal warfare and within the gang situation. In both cases, the rape is justified within a particular political context. In the first situation, it is an attack on an important, economically valuable person, and in the second situation, it is an attack that challenges the State and the monopoly of violence by its law enforcement agents. In the latter instance there is manipulation of the way violence, especially sexual violence, is perceived by representatives of the state-based law-and-order debate. Sexual violence in this context has been used as a threat in a situation where the offending parties feel disadvantaged by the State, which in those situations is regarded as an enemy tribe.

Community members, not only women but also close relatives, do not extensively discuss incidents of sexual violence[134]. The incidents do not generate the same amount of concern as other violent disputes occurring in the community. This lack of social anxiety seems to evolve from a general lack of interest in the incidents. This situation could well evolve from the fact that extensive networks along true kin and ethnic association are making space for associations across different ethnicities. Under those circumstances, other community members who are not bound within the network of the victims and offenders are not necessarily affected by the incident thereby diminishing the impact of such incidents throughout a particular community. At the same time, sexual violence loses its impact and horror in an environment where both men and women engage in violent actions and where sexuality is not automatically embedded in a man/woman power nexus as in the West, where sexualisation of the violence adds so much to its repugnant character (Helliwell, 2000). As elaborated upon in the thesis, penetration of the body might not seem as traumatic as other injuries endured under other violent circumstances. Also, frequent exposure to injured, sick and dead bodies must also have an attenuating effect on the way sexual violence is understood and

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[134] Feminists could raise the concern of women being silenced. However, as pointed out in the chapter on sexual violence this is not to be confused with the 'silencing' of the victim. There are sufficient indications that victims and women are given the space to speak out on issues that affect them.

sometimes experienced. For the women in Morata, sexual violence was definitely not their prime area of concern. Adultery and broader tribal or ethnic disputes were considered more dramatic and they often had more substantial economic and political implications for the parties involved.

Women do talk about being fearful of moving about after dark, especially in areas unfamiliar to them. That fear is, however, also expressed by men and should therefore not automatically be considered a gender issue. Furthermore, in their daily stories, women tell of their movements at night, talk about their 'illicit' sexual encounters and share accounts of how they stood up to threats of violence and rape. Within this context, women are no longer the passive victims as portrayed within the state-based discourse of law-and-order. Their actions and words reveal another picture, emphasising the strength and capacity of agency of women living in an environment touched by the tension created by the coming together of different life-worlds.

The above analysis, which has exposed a complementary view of violence, gender, sexuality and sexual violence, illuminates the danger attached to the maintenance of an introduced concept of vulnerable and powerless women. Application of this perception has shown its limitations and dangers. By wrongly portraying women as victims, they are slowly being removed from their position of worth established through broader networks of obligations and reciprocity. Appointed victims in an environment characterised by a certain valorisation and normalisation of violence can only contribute to a faster creation of real female victims. Assertiveness should not be deconstructed by a state-based discourse that retains an already outdated vision of the universal oppression of women within a dichotomous understanding of gender relations. This does not imply that there are no serious problems in relation to violence and in relation to violence against women in PNG[135]. However, in the process of developing ways to change that situation it is important not to fuel an already problematic situation. Instead, there should be emphasis on the strength of women and the importance of personal development within networks of obligation and reciprocity to address the current crisis. Further victimisation will lead to increased disempowerment.

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[135] The gender emphasis in the context of sexual violence also results in one overlooking incidents of sexual violence targeting men and young boys.

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