

Volume 46, no. 2 (Spring 2007) | [SEE Abstracts](#)

Women without Qualities: Further Courtship Stories Told by Young Papua New Guinean Men	David Lipset
“Secret Sex”: Youth, Agency, and Changing Sexual Boundaries among the Dani of Papua, Indonesia	Leslie Butt
Matrifocality and Women’s Power on the Miskito Coast	Laura Hobson Herlihy
Tales of Danger: Parental Protection and Child Development in Stories from Chuuk	Edward Lowe Allen Johnson
Chungking Mansions: A Center of “Low-End Globalization”	Gordon Mathews

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WOMEN WITHOUT QUALITIES: FURTHER COURTSHIP STORIES
TOLD BY YOUNG PAPUA NEW GUINEAN MEN

David Lipset

A major sociological view of romance associates it with social structures that privilege the strategic solidarity of the husband-wife dyad. In stories of spouse-selection told by young men from the Murik Lakes in Papua New Guinea, representations of agency are organized by a Homeric chronotope in which actors are motivated by events and obstacles rather than inner desire. Although Murik culture has been subjected to important transformations in the twentieth century, its sociology and associated concept of the person have not given way to modern subjectivity. Among young men, the relationship of culture to modernity has not resulted in a psychological construction of spouse-selection. Attraction is not defined by romantic love but is rather set amid events that are fixed in the foregrounds of specific times and exact locations. (Modernity, romance, masculinity, chronotopes, Bakhtin, Papua New Guinea, Sepik River, Murik)

[▲ Top](#) | [▲ Contents](#) | [▲ Abstract](#)

“SECRET SEX”: YOUTH, AGENCY, AND CHANGING SEXUAL
BOUNDARIES AMONG THE DANI OF PAPUA, INDONESIA

Leslie Butt

In contemporary Papua, eastern Indonesia, young men and women are increasingly exploring novel sexual practices enabled in part by rapid economic development in the province. In particular, indigenous Dani youth are engaging in “secret sex,” a highly structured set of clandestine activities. Young Dani women also practice transactional sex with migrant Indonesian men. This article argues against the use of the term agency to describe these new sexual patterns. Using results from a large survey on sexuality and from in-depth interviews, the data suggest multiple constraints shape youthful behavior. The combination of cultural codes, kin, and parental intervention, alongside the disempowering effects of the commodification of sex in a frontier economy, together create conditions of relative powerlessness. Youth are primarily reacting to conditions around them, rather than acting with intention, when they transgress sexual norms. (Sexual practice, youth, West Papua, agency, frontier economy)

[▲Top](#) | [▲Contents](#) | [▲Abstract](#)

MATRIFOCALITY AND WOMEN’S POWER ON THE MISKITO COAST

Laura Hobson

Herlihy Miskitu women in the village of Kuri (northeastern Honduras) live in matrilocal groups, while men work as deep-water lobster divers. Data reveal that with the long-term presence of the international lobster economy, Kuri has become increasingly matrilocal, matrifocal, and matrilineal. Female-centered social practices in Kuri represent broader patterns in Middle America caused by indigenous men’s participation in the global economy. Indigenous women now play heightened roles in preserving cultural, linguistic, and social identities. (Gender, power, kinship, Miskitu women, Honduras)

[▲Top](#) | [▲Contents](#) | [▲Abstract](#)

TALES OF DANGER: PARENTAL PROTECTION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN STORIES FROM CHUUK

Edward Lowe
Allen Johnson

The traditional stories that people regularly share in their communities reflect Shore’s (1996) notion of double meaning construction, which makes these stories durable. People produce, transform, and reproduce these stories as abstract rationalizations and didactic understandings of transformative processes that are regular features of local life. People are also able to meaningfully participate in telling traditional stories because the stories employ core emotional sequences or “emotion schemas” (Johnson 2000) that are normal experiences. The texts of eight traditional stories from the Micronesian islands of Chuuk, and ethnographic vignettes for the telling of two stories show that people in Chuuk deploy these stories for educational and didactic purposes, but also use them to gain moral clarity with community events that are emotionally trying. Further analysis of collected published and unpublished stories from Chuuk shows that these tales draw on the same emotional structure and the emotion schema of transformative processes characterized by studies of human attachment in ways that are similar to attachment theory, yet with significant local differences and emphases. (Chuuk, meaning construction, story telling, human attachment)

[▲Top](#) | [▲Contents](#) | [▲Abstract](#)

CHUNGKING MANSIONS: A CENTER OF “LOW-END

GLOBALIZATION”

Gordon Mathews

In Chungking Mansions, a dilapidated building in the heart of Hong Kong's tourist district, thousands of traders, illegal workers, and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and other areas of the world seek their fortunes through temporary employment and low-budget transnational trade. This article depicts them, and the tourists who frequent the building, and applies macro-scopic anthropological theories of globalization to the microscopics of ethnic interactions at Chungking Mansions, viewing Appadurai's five scapes through a prism of Goffman to consider low-end globalization on a human-to-human scale. (Hong Kong, low-end globalization, traders, ethnic interactions)

[▲ Top](#) | [▲ Contents](#) | [▲ Abstract](#)