# We Are Playing Football

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# Sport and Postcolonial Subjectivity, Panapompom, Papua New Guinea

By

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All of the images in the texts are mine, as are the maps and diagrams.

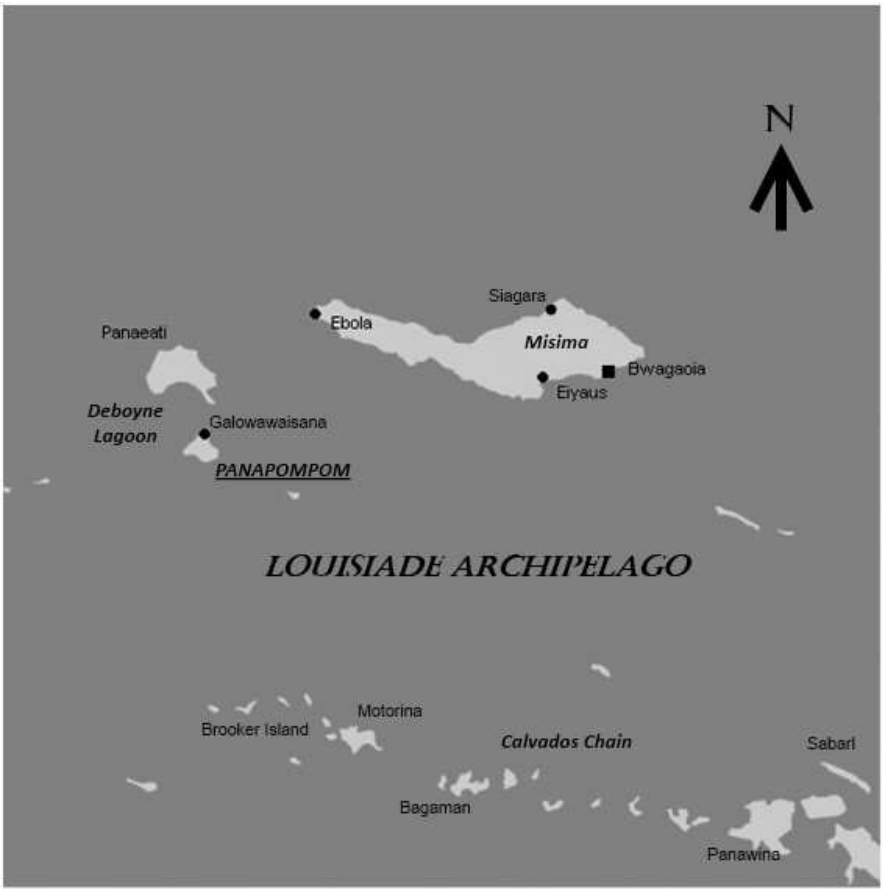
# NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Panapanaeati consonants are pronounced as in English, with the exception of *l*, which sounds halfway between English *l* and *r*. Occasionally, where there is a conventional spelling of a word, or where it makes pronunciation clearer, I have used *r* instead of *l*. *B* differs from English slightly in being pronounced very close to the front of the mouth, and is occasionally indistinguishable from *v*. Vowels are as in Spanish.

Panapanaeati makes great use of suffixes and prefixes, which occasionally build up into very long words or expressions. I use hyphens to separate grammatical components in some long words, in order to facilitate reading. Hyphens also separate vowels which are pronounced separately, for example in *mulolu-agiwa*. In other contexts, vowels are combined.

In almost all respects, I follow Bill and Sandra Callister's (2005) spelling and orthography. Occasional differences reflect differences in pronunciation and usage between Panapompom and other Panapanaeati speaking areas, notably Siagara, where their linguistic work was based. It should also be kept in mind that Panapanaeati speakers express grammatical distinctions and phonetics in a wide variety of ways when they write: the spelling grammar that I employ here appears arbitrary from that perspective.

Panapompom, showing some of the places mentioned in the text




Alotau is off the map to the west, Sudest to the east.

# PART ONE

# THE CONTEXT OF FOOTBALL

# PROLOGUE

# RESEARCHING PANAPOMPOM FOOTBALL

This book is about football played by people from the small island of Panapompom in the Louisiade Archipelago, a part of Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG). The question it asks is: how does football make these people who they are? That is, I ask how football subjects Panapompom people to ideas and images that place them in the world relative to others. The purpose of this preamble is briefly to take stock of the fieldwork on which this book is based and to make a broad justification of why I have written it as I have. More detailed theoretical and ethnographic positioning is internal to the argument as it proceeds.

Most of Milne Bay Province's area is covered by sea; the Louisiade archipelago is in many respects typical. Its inhabitants dwell on islands of varying sizes, spread out, by and large, in a series of chains running north-west to south-east. Panapompom lies at the north-western end of the Louisiades, where that archipelago gives way to the deep sea Jomard Passage and the Engineer Group beyond. Panapompom shares a lagoon with Panaeati, forming the Deboyne Group, or *Olalu* in local parlance.

Louisiade people are gardeners and fishermen, living from shifting yam horticulture and the produce of the coral lagoons that surround their islands. This way of life causes them to be called *Bwagalele*, island people. However, they have also long since been implicated in more extensive money-based economies, until recently founded on copra and coconut products, which have given way in the last twenty or thirty years to marine produce, especially edible sea cucumber, referred to as bêche-de-mer,[1] with the supplement of other cash crops, especially cocoa and vanilla, which was still a most speculative venture in 2004-06. Until 2006,

[1] Marine products were always part of the colonial money economy, with *trochus* and pearl-shells, used in the manufacture of buttons, particularly important. It has only been since the 1980s, however, that marine produce, and bêch-de-mer especially, have become the principle commodity produced by local people.

some people were also employed in the gold mine, operated by Misima Mines on the large island of Misima to the north-east.[2]

The population of Milne Bay Province is relatively low, although, as with most areas of PNG, it is increasing rapidly. Panapompom, with her larger neighbour, Panaeati, Misima, and the islands of the lower Calvados to the south-east share a language, Panapanaeati, which has an estimated 14,000 speakers (Callister and Callister 2005). Panapompom itself has an estimated population of 600 or so people all told, although this fluctuates greatly as people in this sea-going community are highly mobile.

Panapompom has not been treated ethnographically, although Panaeati was host to Stuart Berde, an American researcher, in 1971-72 (his main results are in Berde, 1974). Sandra Callister has examined funeral practices at Siagara, a large village on the north-east coast of Misima (Callister, 2000), while Jeff Kinch has made a study of marine resource use based on Brooker Island to the south (Kinch, 2002; 2003; Kinch & Smaalders, 2003). Julia Byford has studied women's participation in the Misima mine, with an emphasis on health issues (Byford, 1999; Byford & Veenstra, 2004). In general, however, the region has attracted relatively little anthropological attention.

That, with some exceptions (Battaglia, 1990; M. A. Lepowsky, 1993), anthropological efforts have been focused more heavily on the communities of the north and west of the province is interesting in itself. Malinowski was, of course, the first 'great anthropologist' to study the people of what is now Milne Bay Province (Malinowski, 1922), popularising the regional term 'Massim', the racialist term used for the people and region by Seligman, perhaps a corruption of Misima (Beran, 1988 p. 6). The anthropology that he established was oriented towards understanding exchange and the rationality of values in social life – how and why things came to be valued, and in what institutional circumstances (Malinowski, 1935 dwells on these concerns). Malinowski was committed to a vision of the rational native, making the most out of his institutional environment (see especially Malinowski, 1926).[3] More recent scholars

[2] Informal questioning revealed that few Panapompom people were regularly employed during the operation of the mine. Rather more found work there during the construction phase, but few worked for very long.

[3] His studies of sexuality and childhood (Malinowski, 1927, 1987), although seemingly very distinct, actually fit into this explanatory scheme rather well: the emphasis being on how one became a savage of a particular type. Even in his later

have questioned this view, but Milne Bay Province has remained the setting for 'Massim Studies', which is at root about the 'form and function of exchange' and its effects on the way anthropologists conceive of natives.

## Postcolonial subjects

In this book, I am not pursuing this 'traditional' avenue of research, but seeking space *around* it. I am aiming for an analysis of Panapompom people's experience of themselves in terms of football that *does away with the position of the 'native'*. This is implicit in the notion of subjectivity and, as we shall see in the Chapter One, bound up in the concept of post-coloniality as well. Here I situate myself by looking into the theory of the subject. However, this is not a theoretical book, but ethnography. Although ideas of the subject shape the theoretical claims that I make here, I have deliberately not committed myself heavily to particular notions of subjectivity or power; I was worried that these masterful narratives had too much capacity to overcome the specificity of what I wanted to say and make it into something else. Therefore, as often as possible, I avoid jargon of this type and refer to 'people'.[4]

The trend in the anthropology of Melanesia in the late seventies and eighties was for a problematisation of notions of the *individual*, and a move towards concepts of the *person*.[5] It makes sense to conceive of the distinction between theories of the person and of the individual in terms of the relationship between people and what makes them the sort of people that they are. Theories of the individual, as expressed by the likes of Malinowski (especially 1922; 1926), depend on the assumption that people

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work on cultural change in Africa (Malinowski, 1945), Malinowski regarded the management of colonised peoples as a question of managing their relationships to their institutional environment.

[4] It is unfortunate that the singular of people is person. I always endeavour to make it clear where I am using 'person' as a theoretical term, and where it appears merely in the singular.

[5] The notion of the person in the sense that I use it here was developed by Mauss (1954; 1985) between the wars. In his original formulation, the person refers to a concept of the human in which the distinctions between people, and between people and things or symbols, are not as developed as they are under capitalism. He treats this as an evolutionary issue whereby 'moderns' become more capable of individual ethical action. His position is disputed by Latour (1993), amongst others.

possess a native agency and will which is contained by some form of 'social control' (Marilyn Strathern, 1985). Theories of the person, on the other hand, presume that the different (cultural) forms in which people appear are the product of the relations that produce them: people embody their distinctive modes of acting, rather than being 'reformed' or 'reshaped' through control (J. Leach, 2003; Marilyn Strathern, 1975, 1992b). This implies a diversification of the ways in which it is possible to be human which in turn questions the universalism implicit in theories of the individual. Emphasising the cultural or historical specificity of persons, Annette Weiner writes:

> …my premise is that 'norms of reciprocity' must be analysed as part of a larger system – a reproductive system – in which the reproduction and regeneration of persons, objects, and relationships are integrated and encapsulated (A. B. Weiner, 1980, p. 71).

The grounds for this move towards the person were the greater capacity of notions of personhood – of the relationality and cultural groundedness of people in social life – to accommodate to an intellectual environment that was insisting more and more on a multiplicity of histories and the genius of cultures. Theories of the individual were being criticised for their ethnocentrism – their capacity to offer only one history: that of modernity.

However, the drive to multiply histories and ways of being in time comes at a price, which is that uncommon histories rapidly become discontinuous and external from one another (Gow, 2001). Narrative moves of this sort rapidly end up with the same difficulties as theories of the individual: the differences between histories make others aliens in need of coercive re-interpellation into systems of meaning in the same way as individuals find themselves dominated by exterior cultures and societies. Thus what seems to be an impasse – between individuals who are all the same, but disconnected from meaning, and cultural persons who are all different but fully integrated into meaning – turns out to come to more or less the same thing from an analyst's perspective: there are people who are hard to accommodate to *another* (or an other) perspective than their own.

Into this problematic bind, it is fruitful to insert the notion of the subject. Here I make a deployment of ideas that can be culled from Hegel, Nietzsche or Althusser, but whose most obvious and useful proponents for anthropologists have been Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha. The reason for dealing in subjects at this point is to get away from

the situation in which otherness is in some sense a problem – here because it represents the difference between people and the terms in which we would seek to describe them. Rather the notion of the subject takes that difference as *constitutive*.

The subject seems to occupy a middle ground between the individual and the person. Responding to a debate that occupied certain feminist thinkers in the 1990s (Benhabib, Butler, Fraser, Cornell, & Nicholson, 1995), David Stern (2000) has characterised theories of agency that correspond well to the distinction between personhood and individuality that I drew earlier:

> The assumption in these debates has been that we are faced with two fundamental alternatives … either causal forces have a universal reach, in which case there is no place in the world for a will or subject to act freely, and hence there is no free will, no locus of agency from which actions originate; or, on the other hand, the reach of causal forces is restricted, leaving a space for the will or subject to act, to originate actions in the world that inaugurate something new, and are not reducible to the effects of forces constituting the situation in which the action occurred (Stern 2000 pp. 109-110).

What *good* theories of the subject seek to do is to get around this problem – by positing a situation in which there is no universal, prior locus of agency, but then the reach of causal forces is insufficient to determine absolutely what sorts of people we become. What these theories become are theories of *similarity*: they show how people become *similar* (but not identical) to the systems of meaning in which they exist (Žižek, 1999a); they show how people can be conceived of as *similar* (different but clearly comparable) to one another through an analysis of the historical processes that cause them to recognise themselves and one another as people of particular kinds. The point is the processes that make people *recognise themselves* as who they are are no different to the way in which they become recognisable in the meaningful acts or 'discourses' of the people who seek to describe them.[6] Thus the observer and the observed,

[6] These discourses often take the form of 'power' – which is clearly a legitimate formulation. I avoid it here because of the harsh reception that the notion of power has received in Pacific studies (e.g. Sahlins 2000b), and the culture-heavy brands of anthropology that I seek to critique. There is no need to speak in these terms (as though power were obvious) in order to make the analysis work. Power appears throughout this book as a question to be answered.

subject and object, are agents in one another's history (which turns out to be the *same history* from different points of view).

Thus Foucault refutes the notion of a native individual agency:

> Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case… (Foucault, 1990 p. 96).

He goes on to deny, however, that the lack of a 'soul of revolt' implies a simple reduction of agency to culture:

> We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy (Foucault 1990 p. 101).

Taken together, these two statements lay out an intriguing position between the extremes of the separation of the individual from meaning and the reduction of the person to it. On one hand, there is no *a priori* individual, the locus of agency, who rubs up against culture and undermines it. On the other, the very operations of culture on the person do not 'reproduce' that person (in Weiner's terms) according to its own script, rather they furnish the tools whereby one can act to undermine them and make them into their own reflex motion (Butler, 1997b p. 97). A subject is one who is only ever *similar* to the demands placed upon her by the symbolic, and in that partial constitution (viewed as an historical process of signing, delimiting and marking) she becomes *similar* to other subjects, whose means of production are comparable in that historical frame or *context*.

The upshot of this is doing away with natives. The individual has a *native agency* that constitutes him as an individual. By contrast, the person substitutes the (universal) individual for someone who is *native to culture*. It is the location of nativeness that is at stake in this dispute. Compare the post-structuralist subject as it is written by Foucault and deployed by the likes of Butler. Butler writes of the subject and power (or culture):

> Power is both external to the subject and the very venue of the subject. This apparent contradiction makes sense when we understand that no subject comes into being without power, but that its coming into being involves the dissimulation of power, a metaleptic reversal in which the subject produced by power becomes heralded as the subject who founds power (Butler 1997 pp. 15-16).

Here Butler argues that *both* theories of the person and of the individual are correct about meaning, but wrong about nativeness. Proponents of the person are right to suggest that subjects exist only through the powerful operations of culture, which establish them as the provisional occupiers of particular historical (speaking) positions. However, the theory of the individual correctly highlights the capacity of a subject to exceed the power by which he is constituted and make some space for himself. Where they are both mistaken is in taking either necessary dimension of the constitution of the subject as the *foundation* of that constitution and the native location of reality. Rather the subject exists in the paradoxical middle ground in which it is neither determined nor determining of the meanings and relationships that constitute it and which it operates. The subject is *the point of reflexivity itself.*

## Ethnographic experience

The appropriateness of theories of subjectivity became apparent to me as my field research went on. Here I show how the implication of my informants in my activities, and mine in theirs, made for a situation in which nativeness was hard to define. Rather our ethnographic encounter seemed to be made up of the slippages and approximations of a situation of provisionally negotiated and heavily invested *similarity*.

In May 2005, the Sports Association was founded by Isso, the teacher in charge of the elementary school of Panapompom. He and his colleagues, Elsie and Brudo, hoped that the Association, by levying fees, would do something to help the disastrous state of the school's finances. However, the church, which controlled the only suitable sports field and the political leaders of the community engineered matters in such a way that the Panapompom Mini Sports Association, as it was christened, was not a school project at all, but something that was intended as a resource for everyone in the community.

I do not want to go into detail on the ins and outs of the politics of the Association in this book. My concern is with more general implications and questions about social life, to which a discussion of who said or did what would add little. Suffice it to say that games of nine-a-side were played almost every Saturday between early June and early November of 2005. The political leadership of the Association shifted quite rapidly in the early part of the season, as the teachers lost control in favour, first of all of the school-board, and then of completely independent officials. The

occasion for this politics, as it was throughout the life of the Association, was violence. Fighting broke out on more than one occasion, causing first the school board to relinquish control of the Association and pass it to the Councillor, who also rejected the running of the organisation, which eventually settled on Mokoli and Double, his uncle, who had run a then defunct Panaeati Association. Fighting and how to deal with it were the ongoing problems for the leadership of the Association, as well as for many of the players.

When the Association was formed, my wife, Ilva, and I had already been on Panapompom for six months. We had friends, a semi-permanent place to live in the Community Hall, and our own house, seemingly perpetually under construction. Neither of us was expecting a sports association to be founded – indeed we were in the provincial capital of Alotau when it was. Nor was football supposed to be a part of my research. My fieldwork had been planned as a study of the politics of identity in 'the community' of Panapompom. I was interested in the ways in which rhetorical images of social organisation could create 'community' out of what I saw as the inherently centrifugal motion of matrilineal politics (McKinley, 1971; J. B. Thomas, 1980; A. B. Weiner, 1985; Williamson, 1980).

The problem that I was facing in May 2005, and with which I had been grappling since our arrival in early December 2004, was methodological. I had come to the field with a mistrust of the approaches to ethnography and theory represented by the 'interpretive turn' in anthropology (Marcus & Fischer, 1986), sometimes crudely termed 'post-modernism'. I was concerned that what I saw at that time as a 'soft' self-referential approach lacked validity.[7] This attitude on my part was motivated very much by an engagement with Marilyn Strathern's *The Gender of the Gift* and other attempts to *de*-modernise ethnography without *post*-modernising it in the sense in which the term was used of experimental and reflexive texts in the 1970s and 80s. However, I was not convinced that *The Gender of the Gift* avoided the complaints raised by the interpretive turn. Particularly, I was concerned that it made too many claims to too much authority and as a result served to reduce Melanesians to anthropological analyses of them. I could see the difficulties of Strathern's authority claims in terms of the interpretive turn, but I was unwilling to accept the 'experimental' approaches that such authors recommended.

[7] This was probably an error, as Marcus (1998) makes clear.

My solution to this impasse had been to propose 'participatory research', which, in my ignorance and arrogance, I imagined would provide an antidote to what I saw as a double bind in conventional, Malinowskian ethnographic research: namely that the witnessing, confessing ethnographer seemed over-prone to devolve into a disembodied modern voice (Latour, 1993), or to turn on himself and become only a *self*-witness. What I hoped to do was to canvass what Malinowski had begun, but clearly never completed in the Trobriands – a *corpus scriptorium Panapompomensis*, a body of 'documents' upon which the analytic operations of ethnography could be performed over and over again from different starting points, breaking up the singular, witnessing ethnographic presence, while producing *hard* data that could be used to build an authoritative and falsifiable account (Malinowski, 1922; 1935; Rollason, 2004). I was drawn to the various versions of Participatory Research popular within the development community (Brocklesby & Holland, 1998; Cornwall & Fleming, 1995; Freire, 2000; Majid, 1992; Richards, 1995; Strachan & Peters, 1997; Turner, 1992; Whyte, 1991).

It was an elegant idea in its way, but utterly impractical. I was faced with a number of obstacles from the outset, not least of which was language. If I was to have meetings that would create accounts of things, we would need a common language. I had held fast to the very high English literacy statistics for the province in the hope that Panapompom people would all be fluent English speakers, but this was not the case. Moreover, the people who did speak useful English were not prepared merely to use it passively to facilitate what I was trying to do; rather they used it to try, more or less openly, to make me a facilitator of the schemes that *they* had in hand. Our relationship was difficult already, and it was also quite clear that other people who didn't speak English wanted things of us that they were clearly not getting through the select English-speaking community. My efforts at democratising the research process in order to avoid the othering effects of ethnography were to no avail.

I was not the only one who had problems with alterity, however. The leaders of the Association, the players, as well as other people with little connection to the Association except as periodic spectators on Saturday afternoons, all more or less explicitly hoped or assumed that playing football would make Panapompom people into *better*, more developed people. This attempt to become better was brought to bear from various political angles on the question of the role and value of violence in the Association. The operation of becoming developed people was tied up

with enacting certain forms of action that seemed to offer an identity between Panapompom people and white people, *dimdims*, which referred back to the problem of violence.

*Dimdim* is unusual in being what appears to be a local, vernacular word, which is nevertheless used throughout the province (although not, as far as I am aware, beyond it) to refer to a white person such as myself.[8] The relation between white people and black people is fundamentally tied up with a differential in (geopolitical?) power that adds up to give blackness a humiliating twist, as I shall elaborate in Chapters 3 and 4. In trying to enact football and other forms of developed (white?) life, local people aim get around the inequalities inherent in this relationship.

This racial orientation in football was sharpened for Panapompom people by my joining the Association and my local team, Kools, for which I played as goalkeeper throughout the season. I want to emphasise my role in the team, not as a claim to authority, but to suggest how I was able – and indeed required – to enter into productive relationships with Panapompom people. It was never the case that I was merely a spectator at football matches, in the way that at the building of a canoe or at a funeral feast I could not seriously take part and was reduced to observation. Football was something that I participated in and *did*, engaging as an embodied self, a subject. So whatever my pretensions to understand Panapompom people, or their worries about how to relate to white people, those relationships found tactile and concrete expression in our playing football together. My participation was not, however, an unalloyed 'good thing' for local people, as my friends both canvassed, and seemed to dread the judgement that I would be able to bring upon them from my authoritative (white) position on football. When the Association turned to violence, my friends expressed frank dread of the judgements I might pass on them. Despite – indeed through – these misgivings, we can discern a relationship of similarity in football, one that admits of common judgement from the positions of all parties.

[8] Actually, it usually or archetypically refers to a white *man* (Bashkow, 2006, p. 6); white women are referred to by the Police Motu *sinebada*, big woman, when their female gender needs to be stressed.

## Globalisation

In this book I am interested in the negotiation of identity, alterity and similarity as it took place in the context of the Association. This is not a book that dwells in alterity *except* as it appears as a feature of social life. Using the notion of subjectivity as a guide, I attempt to avoid the use of tropes of nativeness (alterity) as foundations of the argument: I'm not talking culture or society. That is a large claim that needs demonstration.

The basis of this claim is that the contemporary state of the political economy of the world at large not only does not allow for 'hard' alterity – for systems of 'incommensurate difference' (Gewertz & Errington, 1991 p. 56) that beggar understanding and demand translation – but that it invites playful (Taussig, 1993), strategic (Battaglia, 1995b; 1999), poetic (Abu-Lughod, 1991), or fantasy (Navaro-Yashin, 2002) *identifications* of and with others who are not necessarily present in the places and times that the people who inhabit particular spots on the planet experience. This is the state of the world that social scientists term 'globalisation' (Moore, 2004). This is a contested notion, and it is necessary to lay out some of the dimensions of globalisation theory.

In the first place, globalisation is clearly a dimension of contemporary *political economy* (Harvey, 1989; Tsing, 2000), one that has, essentially, developed since the mid 1970s. The image here is of economies that are dominated by Wall Street finance capital which, as a result of enormously increased communicative capacity, is able to exert control over the minutiae of economic policies all over the world (Ho, 2005). The idea that relations of production might be organised in systems that are sensibly conceived of as national or local economies, while it is not obsolete, is necessarily qualified by the implication of those relations in systems that are longer-ranged, and which have very real and pressing effects on them (Gill, 2000).

The second dimension of globalisation, historically linked with the first, is that capital is motivated by a particular politics, termed neo-liberalism (Harvey, 2005). Neo-liberalism is a crude appellation because there is no doubt that there are in fact 'neo-liberalisms' enacted by different centres of capital management (Ho, 2005), but the general lines of this philosophy are clear. Neo-liberalism is about creating capital growth without direct regard for issues of human development or quality of life (Sen, 1999). Indeed, in essentially neo-liberal models of development as they are applied in the developing world, it is assumed that rising

quality of life is a result of capital growth expressed as GDP (AusAID, 2003; Sachs, 2005; World Bank, 1991).

The third dimension of globalisation is linked to the communications capacity that we noted under the first head. Products and images, as well as information and ideas, are enormously mobile, and increasingly so (Appadurai, 1991; 1996). The result of this is that more ways of eating, praying, having sex, dressing, doing politics or making money, are available to the imaginations of more people, in more places than they were before. People are able to consume or otherwise employ denser and more diverse ranges of potential signs, images or objects than were available to them during previous periods.

Fourthly, and as a result of a combination of the wider spread of linked economic experiences and the possibility for communication that both supports and results from this, new opportunities for solidarity, discussion, and critique are available for the creation of sorts of political consciousness that are both less coherent (having more dimensions and attending to more issues) and longer ranged and more eclectic (including more people) than was possible in the period before the expansion of global finance capital. Good examples of this trend include the environmental movement, movements for human rights, and indigenous movements (Tsing, 2000).

This situation seems to undermine alterity conceived through society or culture because it makes it less and less plausible to argue that persons exist as natives of integrated cultural worlds. However, this cannot simply be an argument about the erosion of cultural difference through the commodification of everything as a result of the expansion of global capitalist markets; if we subscribe to the notion of culture as a 'life-world' then there is no sense in which the hypostatisation of culture, the creation of 'invented traditions', or the commodification and purchase of cultural forms, can displace the inherent meaningfulness of symbolic systems that are assumed to be worlds unto themselves (Greenwood, 1977; 1982; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; MacCannell, 1973). Capitalism isn't enough to trump culture, and that is not my argument here.

What is both more interesting, and a better way of negotiating the problem of alterity is, as Henrietta Moore has argued, to avoid it altogether by following the social and imaginary networks that are implicit in globalised markets and networks of communication in order to look at

how the people that we, as anthropologists, study are themselves engaged in making moves on other people in terms of a mutual similarity (Donham, 1998; Jackson, 1999; Moore, 1999b; 2004). This is a question of the metaphoric or contextualising possibilities for social relations that are afforded by the global situation. In this situation, and as a product of the ways in which communications, commodity markets, media and social relations are organised, people are able to conceive of communities in media that do not necessarily belong to them in the way that culture might. People find themselves 'partially connected' (Marilyn Strathern, 1991b) – metaphorically linked – to other people who are not necessarily literal consociates, and who do not even necessarily share in the same *meaningful* system; rather they are linked in the same metaphorical image. In this book, football appears as one such medium: a way of imaging a relationship to other people shaped but not determined by the form of the imagery and ideas in which those relationships are phrased.

The strength of this theory is evident from the way in which neo-liberal capitalism itself re-conceptualises people as particular sorts of ethical agent. In the mid to late 1970s, neo-liberalism as a political philosophy was a replacement for the essentially liberal socialist post-war consensus, which was a general agreement on the roles of the state and the market: states were to stabilise the market along Keynesian lines in order to limit the shocks suffered by the system as a whole as a result of speculation and fluctuating prices (Harvey, 2005). The commitment that this system made to the people under the jurisdiction of states was to provide them with employment as far as possible, and support and services where necessary. Neo-liberal economics, on the other hand, does away with the state's active role in the market, assuming that wealth is produced more rapidly and efficiently when entrepreneurs are free to manage their own risks in a marketplace that, although its security and openness is guaranteed by the state, is otherwise free. In the process, people's relationship to states change, on the whole, as state services withdraw in favour of privatised markets. Hence, people are expected more and more to act in the role of consumers rather than citizens, people who are responsible for taking and managing the risks inherent in the investment of money.

Getting people to act in market oriented ways is therefore a key objective of development conceived of in a neo-liberal mould. The World Bank, and other major funding institutions retreated almost completely from standing grants to governments for development work at the beginning of the 1990s (World Bank, 1991). In place of giving money for

development, grants are given to improve the infrastructures of the market, through transport and communications and institutions of governance (World Bank, 1999). For countries such as PNG, which continue to require large amounts of financial support, grants are given for 'structural adjustment' – that is essentially processes of monetisation – and further grants may be tied to liberalising markets and guaranteeing their security through rooting out corruption, for example (World Bank, 2007). In the processes of these changes, citizens are converted from people who have very many or very intense relations to states, into people who are essentially self-reliant and ever-more dependent on the sale of their labour-power in unregulated ways (Firth, 2007; World Bank, 1991). As such, people, for example in Melanesia, or elsewhere in the Pacific, whom anthropologists have becoming used to conceptualising in terms of alternate cultures, come under pressure to at least appear to conform to liberal capitalist norms of behaviour, at least in certain contexts (Rollason, 2010, Li, 2007).[9]

What this means is that there are both many opportunities and powerful forces in play that prompt people to become – *to actively make themselves* – into people who are similar to other people, in terms not necessarily of their own making (Laidlaw, 2002; Lloyd, 1999). This is not to say that people do not resist, or that their take on football, or feminism, or what have you, is unproblematic, but merely to assert that there is a project afoot in these situations that at least depends on an assumption that people across the world are *similar enough* to be able to treat them as participants in the same *metaphorical* sociality. Following Moore (2004), I take this operation of metaphor to be fundamental to the nature of globalisation. It allows us to work through *relative* alterity in the terms our subjects themselves use..

## Gender

An interlude here – I am speaking about alterity, but all of the information that I will present here is, by and large, sourced to men and the social relations that I had with men.

Issues of gender are of great importance to scholars of Milne Bay Province and other areas of PNG (e.g. Weiner 1977; Damon 1989; Lepowsky

[9] Key examples would be the liberalisation of the Pacific sugar industry (Firth 2007), or efforts to privatise land in PNG.

1993; Kahn 1994; Demian 2000), a trend that emerges directly out of the ethnographic material from all areas of the country, and was made a plank of 'Melanesian' theory by Strathern's *The Gender of the Gift* (1988). However, this book does not deal heavily with gender issues.

Why am I dealing only with men? Several things, both in my fieldwork, and in Panapompom politics and sports, conspired to make this an anthropology based on men's accounts. Primarily, this is because the discourses and social dynamics I deal with here were restricted to men. Football, development and questions of morality and law are dominated by men. Especially in the areas of activity in which I was most interested – development in the form of bêche-de-mer diving and football – gender forms a largely impermeable barrier. Development – indeed almost everything concerned with money – is men's affair (c.f. Kuehling 2005 pp. 173-174). In the Association, a division between women's netball and men's football created a gendered split that was sustained in meetings and other political arenas. Indeed, an abortive attempt to add volleyball to the Association – a sport that was to be played mixed – was met with downright hostility, on the basis that it was inappropriate to have men and women play together; physical strength and sexual propriety were the reasons most often given. Women do participate in debates about the proper way to behave, but mainly through the organ of the church, an area of social life that is beyond the scope of this book.

In terms of the activity of fieldwork, my focus on men was prompted in part by the sort of gendered relationships I had to Panapompom people. Most anthropologists to the region have, as far as I am aware, worked alone, whereas for the first two thirds of my fieldwork time, I was accompanied by my wife, Ilva. Concerned not to stand out as a 'white woman', *sinebada*, standing on her dignity, Ilva moved heaven and earth to keep our household running, our guests fed, our clothes clean, and scores of children amused, while dealing with visitors and attending Women's Fellowship on Wednesdays. These are typical women's activities. While Ilva was at work at home, I spent time walking between hamlets visiting, going fishing, diving or (not really) helping with whatever other work the men were doing. This division of labour between the two of us was a deliberate attempt to conform to our hosts' norms, and in general we were very successful. Both in work and in politics or religion, men and women are rigorously separated.

What this meant was that our relationships were structured along the same gendered lines that local people's friendships followed: Ilva's friends were almost all women, mine almost all men. Younger women might have become accessible to me as lovers, as they were to younger men, but this was not a relationship that I wanted to enter into. I was able to have excellent relationships with older women, but they were rarely forthcoming with things that I could note down, preferring to pass me over to their husbands. Similarly, Ilva's friends were mostly women and old men.

In the absence of women, this is a book about football, and I focus very much on the playing of the game, taking a subjective (with the attendant implications of intimacy) rather than a sociological perspective.

## Summary of the book

The central question that this book deals with is, 'how does football make Panapompom people who they are?' We can now rephrase this as, 'how does football make Panapompom people appear as subjects in particular ways?' In my use of 'subject' and 'post-colonial' I wish to highlight the lack of unproblematic nativeness implicit in Papua New Guinean people playing football, and with it, its critical potential: subjects are not *what they are* and as a result offer the possibility of becoming *something else*. The subject is the product of a founding *turn* (Althusser, 1971, p. 178) in which the subject becomes not merely itself, but *conscientiously other*, a split being that interrogates itself through the continuous tropic application of some other person. That other here is occupied by the white person, *dimdim*. I use 'subject' to destabilise the notion of the 'person', as something that *is what it is* in a culturally or intellectually determined way.[10]

I seek to answer the question of the book in two ways: first, I look at football itself and ask what sort of 'thing' this is, and what sorts of impositions it might make on people; second, I examine the historical conditions under which people have enacted football and made themselves its subjects. Putting these two efforts together, I create an image of football that embeds its own inherent power relations, as well as accounting for the way in which the game becomes actualised in and through its own

[10] The individual has already been so thoroughly and successfully made the object of critique that I do not extend the remarks I have already made. Note however, that almost all of the criticisms that I level at the person could apply equally well to the individual.

investment with powerful knowledges, politics, and ethical demands in a more general context of capitalist expansion and post-colonial poverty. These general trends in the book correspond to the three Parts into which I have divided it. Articulating these trains of thought is the central trope of the white person, the *dimdim*, who is tropic both from my authorial perspective as the figure who holds the text together through his function as the master of the plot, and from the perspective of Panapompom people as a way of envisaging (giving a face to) colonial and post-colonial oppression and inequality.

In the first Part, which consists of Chapters 1 and 2, I demonstrate more fully the case about the metaphorical identities that people create in globalisation by looking at the way in which the production (or reproduction) of football in the Association made it hard if not impossible to conceive of an unproblematic line of difference between myself and the people with whom I was working. Football is not authentic to the people who play it, but produces relative connections, metaphors of identity.

Part 2 is concerned with the production and history of this apparently inauthentic social life, especially in terms of the relationships between Panapompom people and white people. In Chapter 3, I offer an analysis of the ways in which this relationship alludes to its colonial history, which continues to exercise a strong hold over Panapompom people and their self-images.

In Chapter 4, I describe the dimensions of this relationship as Panapompom people today understand it. In this Chapter, which forms the analytic heart of the book, I analyse kinship relations, both to ground the discussion of the politics of the Association, and to demonstrate further the claim that I make in Part 1: that football is not a direct result of the relations of Panapompom (re)production, but an ideological or metaphorical overlay or modification to Panapompom life. By saying this I mean to highlight the lack of a *necessary* connection between development and Panapompom life, rather than to assert that football is 'not really part' of Panapompom life at all. Rather, the cross-purposes of kinship and football suggest a life in which the inauthentic (in the sense of 'not native or proper') might in fact be central to what it means to be alive in a particular historical moment. This argument gains force from an examination of what Panapompom people say they are trying to do when they play football: achieve 'development'. In this Chapter, I also describe the white

other in Panapompom terms, and show how 'development' takes shape as a project of becoming *more like* white people, seeking an identity in them.

Chapter 5 concludes this central section of the book with an examination of what this 'project of similarity' does to Panapompom people. I show that when fighting breaks out during football matches, players and spectators alike feel that they have failed, not by standards that they have set themselves, but on the basis of value judgments that they locate with white people. This chapter marks the abasement of Panapompom people in the service of their own (?) ethical project. This bind demonstrates the detachment of people from their native places.

In Part 3, I examine an alternative sort of consciousness; one that I suggest is the product of the footballing context itself. In Chapter 6, I examine the nature of the football game as a space offering to unlink people from the shared knowledge and compassion that mark them as natives of particular cultural-historical locations, in favour of a relocation of people in a 'global' domain defined by football. Extending this argument into Chapter 7, I describe the processes by which this sort of subject and experience is rhetorically and practically produced in the process of the production of football. Finally, in Chapter 8, which serves as a conclusion to the book, I examine the development and implications of this subjectivity. I suggest that football marks the detachment of Panapompom people from any simply ascribed 'native' identity and their movement into a space *between* the positions of white people and natives that they remark upon in their discourse: this in turn inaugurates football as an indigenous critique (ironically) of Panapompom social life.