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## Chapter 8

**How successful were Gebusi women in selling goods at the Nomad Market in 1998? Describe the cultural as well as the economic features of the Nomad market and how these help explain the continuing participation of women.**

As one might expect, in a changing culture, there are changing economic conditions and practices. For the Gebusi, this would have tremendous significance for females in their society. In 1998, misogyny continues to have a great presence in Gebusi lives; but, between the 1980s and 2000, it is also true that women have gained more tangible forms of independence or autonomy. One example of this independence is demonstrated by Gebusi women entering a market economy as the sales force of organic goods. Be that as it may, the volume of sales was often critically low for Gebusi women and “only a few of them could actually count,” the money tendered in transactions (139).

“Women hardly wanted to disclose their many failures,” (139).

As a result of those shortcomings, participation of the anthropological exploration by Bruce Knauff, in the late 90s was difficult to initiate. Knauff immediately found that “[b]ad sales were a touchy personal issue,” for myriad reasons (138). It advances the conversation to know that both Gebusi men and women “were motivated to pursue market transactions,” if for any reason than to engage in a modern society (139). Gebusi women were intent on earning their

own sense of status. Thus, the concept of money as oppose to reciprocal trade is a sensitive area. During a visit to the marketplace, in a unique and ethically justifiable way Knauft “reinforced the idea that monetary exchange is public, impersonal and prestigious,” as he supplied a crisp 2-kina bill to a Gebusi woman, who was hard pressed to make correct change but ultimately elated by the reward of earning paper money (140).

“The market was the prime place for village women to conduct business—and be modern,” (140).

As for the marketplace itself, “most sellers were, in fact, women,” just over 90% according to Knauft (140). Though it would seem to be a profitless venture from Knauft’s account as the “average earning per market day was just 20 cents,” leaving produce to go unsold, or gifted in some form (141). It is estimated “Gebusi women sold less than half the food they brought to the market,” and in many cases these heavy food items would be carried back to Gebusi settlements after a day in the Gasumi Corners or Nomad marketplace (141). Nomad was an interethnic marketplace, whereby “[w]omen from Gasumi Corners formed only a small fraction of those,” other sellers (140).

“If Gebusi marketing seems ‘irrational,’ it carries the value and prestige of earning money, of being modern,” (142).

With the promise of progress forming in Nomad in 1998, “[w]omen, in particular, had more possibilities for participation than they ever had,” prior to the rapid modernization galvanized by Christian colonialism and other influencing factors (149). Albeit a difficult task for any “unrelated man to talk with a Gebusi women,” due to the implications of sexual desire, Knauft dutifully manages to learn why Gebusi women engage in the profit loss venture of selling goods at the marketplace (144). The rationale is simple, “[w]omen took pride in their hard-

earned funds,” along with the ability to buy their own things (143). The marketplace was an area that women could put their status on display, which reinvented their culture. Though the monetary economy was less than productive, this culture gave women economic leverage and, “its economy of culture was strong and important,” (144).