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Luksave Em Bikpela Samting! Witnessing Violence In Papua New Guinea

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DEDICATION

For Taunese Jane (TJ) Mavoho Neuendorf

(1979 to 2010)

This work is dedicated to my moriapo - a PNG woman who exemplified strength, resilience, tenacity, compassion, fragility, vulnerability, thoughtful focused and purposeful action and leadership. Your unwavering and ever-present support continues beyond life, and without which, I would decidedly not be in this position today. Thank you.

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STATEMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS TO THIS THESIS

I would like to acknowledge the following people and institutions for support and contribution toward the completion of this thesis.

Rich intellectual contribution has been afforded to me through, conversation, debate, analysis, support and thoughtful discussion regarding the topics of this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Gender violence presents as a persistent and pervasive issue in contemporary society in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Pathologized as a women's issue, much research and reporting has focused on an urban experience, often citing embedded and on-going cultural practice, the subordination of women and inherent aggression of men as the main factors for women's experience of violence. A lack of representative data sets limits nationally targeted response mechanisms that are primarily administered through Government and non-government agencies, focussed on Law & Justice and Health sector approaches and projects of economic and legal advancement for women. These response mechanisms are shaped by an experience that is not fully representative of a diverse, complex and layered local contemporary experience. This thesis sets out to detail and document social action related to gender violence, to inform an understanding of the social disruption and social cohesion that acts of gender violence cause in PNG. In doing so, this study will contribute to informing, broadening and developing the current discourse on gender violence in PNG, so to inform and broaden the response to such acts.

Utilising an ethnographic frame, this study seeks to decipher associated factors, beyond gender, that contribute to acts of gender violence in PNG. Furthermore, the methodological use of an ethnographic frame enables the voice of individuals to add detail to the dominant discourse of gender violence and recognise socio-cultural context within which individual action is formulated. The focus of this research is to collect the story of people in Baimuru who have witnessed acts of gender violence in their community and then tell the story.

People in PNG formulate their social action as a result of their individual identity and a notion of personhood that is embedded in and shaped by their kin and social relationships and associated set of responsibilities as a social form of mutual recognition and moral ordering. These modes of mutual recognition are known in Tok Pisin as *pasin* and *luksave*. Human action is constructed, situated and engaged within a particular socio-cultural context and takes on specific form, based on these local notions of mutual recognition. As people share individual experience, points of commonality between witness experiences are elucidated. The commonality of experience highlights a local context that shapes individual identity and moral personhood and contributes to social action.

This study focusses on the witness voice and associated stories from Baimuru Station in the Gulf Province of PNG, considered one of the least developed areas in PNG. Anthropological research on life in the Western portion of the Gulf Province is limited to historical record of administration patrol reports and writings of colonial anthropologists such as F.E. Williams, and the contemporary works of J. Bell. Baimuru, like other rural and remote centres in PNG, can provide an important story of a society undergoing significant change. A society confronted with the ambiguity of social life, given a transition from life signified by strong customary practices to a life that is preoccupied with engagement in practices of modernity. As people navigate the pressures of contemporary life and modern society, the issue of gender violence comes to the fore.

The nature of gender violence in PNG, as evident in the Baimuru experience, is that acts of gender violence are laden with both intent and purpose. Isolating gender violence as disruption alone, is not useful to understanding the context and circumstance within which these acts occur, and the responses formulated to address them. Furthermore, global discourses on gender violence can position women as victims of their circumstance and as suffering subjects. The representation of PNG women in dominant discourse on gender violence is often limited to a *victim* experience. This perspective limits the representation and visibility of women as active agents in these experiences. Enabling a platform to engage women in detailing their experiences, adds greater depth to understanding the position of PNG women and their experience of gender violence, beyond a victim experience. The research methodology to capture the witness voice and storytelling enables the story of PNG women to be uplifted, beyond a preconceived narrative of woman as the suffering subject alone.

Another feature made prominent through the witness voice and story from Baimuru, highlights how notions of *morality* inform particular social action that contributes to the experience of gender violence. Moral action is defined by kin and social relationships and responsibilities; religious ideology (or the Christian moral imperative); comparative assessment based on racial distinctions; cosmological belief systems; and, practices of modernity and development in contemporary society. The witness voice and story suggest that acts of gender violence are then assessed under these categories of *morality* to determine whether such action is reasonable, fair and good – or not.

Given these assessments, reasonable action and gender violence are not necessarily mutually exclusive entities. The parameters of what is defined as reasonable action emerges from the witness voice and story and what is made prominent is that gender violence in some instances, is deemed reasonable, fair and good action, particularly when action is determined as part of an individual identity and personhood based on kin and social relationships and responsibilities.

The act, process and product of the story, through a witness voice is an important mode of recognition that people in Baimuru utilise to make sense of their experience of gender violence. These moments of recognition are vital to people in Baimuru, as extensions of their individual personhood and identity within social relatedness. Such story of the experience of gender violence are useful to engaging global discourses that shape the understanding of and response mechanisms that seek to address the issue of gender violence in PNG.

The witness voice and story from Baimuru presents important research that identifies social recognition as an important component of the experience, story and response to gender violence. Including local notions of morality and the social frames of recognition, *pasin* and *luksave* into current dominant discourses on gender violence in PNG can in turn inform and broaden the responses that are formulated to address gender violence beyond social disruption or to support social continuity, particularly in locally specific contexts. This study seeks to inform and contribute to national data sets and offers a fresh perspective on the experience of and responses that can strengthen the way gender violence is addressed in order to limit and help to eliminate gender violence in PNG.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
FSVU	Family and Sexual Violence Unit
L&JS	Law and Justice Sector
SARV	Sorcery Accusation Related Violence
[TP:...]	Tok Pisin to English & English to Tok Pisin translation
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organisation

Language Note: When reading and pronouncing Tok Pisin words, all vowels take on long vowel sounds:

e.g. a = ah; e = eh; *pasin* reads as *paas-in*

Most of the speech was transcribed as it was expressed by individuals i.e. mix between English and Tok Pisin. This shows the nature of expression and transitions people will make between English, Tok Pisin in in some instances, Tok Ples (local language). The use of Tok Pisin in this thesis was purposeful to highlighting the social interaction between researcher and participants, and the speech and expression that people in Baimuru use to detail their experiences.

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awaiting charge and/or legal action. Often those accused of violence will see their accusers approach the police station from their very open public vantage point.

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CHAPTER 1 AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY: WITNESSING VIOLENCE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

"Gender violence is, yeah. But most of the time is no…Gender is not really".

(Mother Ana in conversation, August 2016)

One of the Baimuru mother's (*Mother Ana*) with whom I shared regular conversations, and lived in close proximity to, made this statement regarding "gender violence" and whether it existed in Baimuru. The statement is slightly ambiguous. The omission of the word "violence" in the second instance sparked my curiosity. It may have been an initial unconscious oversight on *Mother Ana's* part, but it provoked me to consider the notion of "gender" as it is understood in relation to violent action, particularly outside the current dominant discourses, that is, as it might exist and be understood in Baimuru. The dominant discourse as it relates to Papua New Guinea (PNG) tells us that two out of three women will experience some form of violence in their lifetime and men are identified as the main perpetrators (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017). Fundamental questions exist about how women and men experience violence, how they perceive it and what constitutes response. More pointedly, what are men and women's involvement in such acts? If there exists such a disconnect between the dominant discourse and local understanding that is, if gender does not associate itself to violence, can the current formal response provide adequate address to the issue across a country as complex and diverse as PNG?

Mother Ana's statement provoked an important focus for this thesis. Quite simply, people have the ability to meaningfully and purposefully voice the experiences of their lives to provide their own definition and meaning to particular actions within their experience. As people voice and express their experiences, they infer meaning and define broader concepts that contribute to their experiences including concepts of gender and violence. The meaning and definition are represented through the voice and story of personal experience which offers opportunity for further analysis and understanding by a broader audience. As people describe their experiences through stories of daily life, they offer a means to decipher the *"values and expectations … and significance"* (M. Strathern, 1988, p. 17) that frame their own social action and their individual and communal

understandings of gender violence. Local perspective is important and provides a great contribution to the broader context of gender violence in PNG. A local perspective can also contribute to a critical analysis of global discourses, particularly in relation to providing locally and contextually specific response to address and/or to eliminate gender violence in PNG. The pursuit of this can be strengthened by anthropological study and ethnographic work.

1.1.1 Story in Place: Witness and Participant

Green (1998, p. 6) asserts that the task of the anthropologist is to "*go to the field in an attempt to render intelligible the contradictions and complexities of people's lives. In doing so, we become at least temporarily both witnesses of and participants in those very lives*" so as to understand "*the language of people's practices.*" To not simply translate from one perspective to another but in an effort "*to address the complex linkages between perspectives.*" (Ibid). Anthropologists make sense of social experience by documenting the way people live, and in providing detail to the human action that shapes and reshapes the lived experience, and through the contextual, theoretical analysis of such experience. The expression of social action that people display within their lived experience is a product of individual determination to act, and shaped within particular social-cultural form (Bandura, 1977; Block, 2013; Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1979; Honneth & Joas, 1988; M. Strathern, 1988).

This thesis sets out to detail and document social action of gendered acts of violence (gender violence, herein) as a social activity to understand how, as a social action, gender violence can either cause disruption to social life, or effectively be used as a tool to restore social life in a specific local site in PNG (Goldman, 2007; Waiko, 1993). Presented in thesis are five stories as individual chapters, from four women and two men (focussed discussion). The intent is not to justify gender violence but offers a new perspective on how gender violence is both experienced and understood in a particular local context.

The *PNG National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence* uses the term "gender based violence" to define these acts as a "manifestation of unequal gender relations" (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017, p. 24). The terminology *gender violence* is used in this thesis to acknowledge that while concepts of gender and gender relations contribute to acts of violence, violence that presents as gendered is not always based in and/or motivated by gender and gender relations. Other underlying and

associated factors contribute to acts of gender violence. The detail of gender violence is therefore captured in the context of where it is constructed and engaged; and, as represented through the voice of people as they tell of their experience(s) as they have witnessed it unfold in daily life. The detail of these stories proves important points of reference to identify and begin to decipher the meaning that people give to particular social action, within the particularities of the context these actions unfold within. To this end, this thesis will demonstrate how storytelling as a witness elucidates meaning that individuals and community ascribe to particular social action that causes disruption or creates moments of restoration within the social lives of people. This broadens our understanding of the experience of gender violence in PNG and offers insight that contributes to formulating response, utilising the story of people within a specific local context, Baimuru Station in the Gulf Province of PNG [Refer Map. 1].
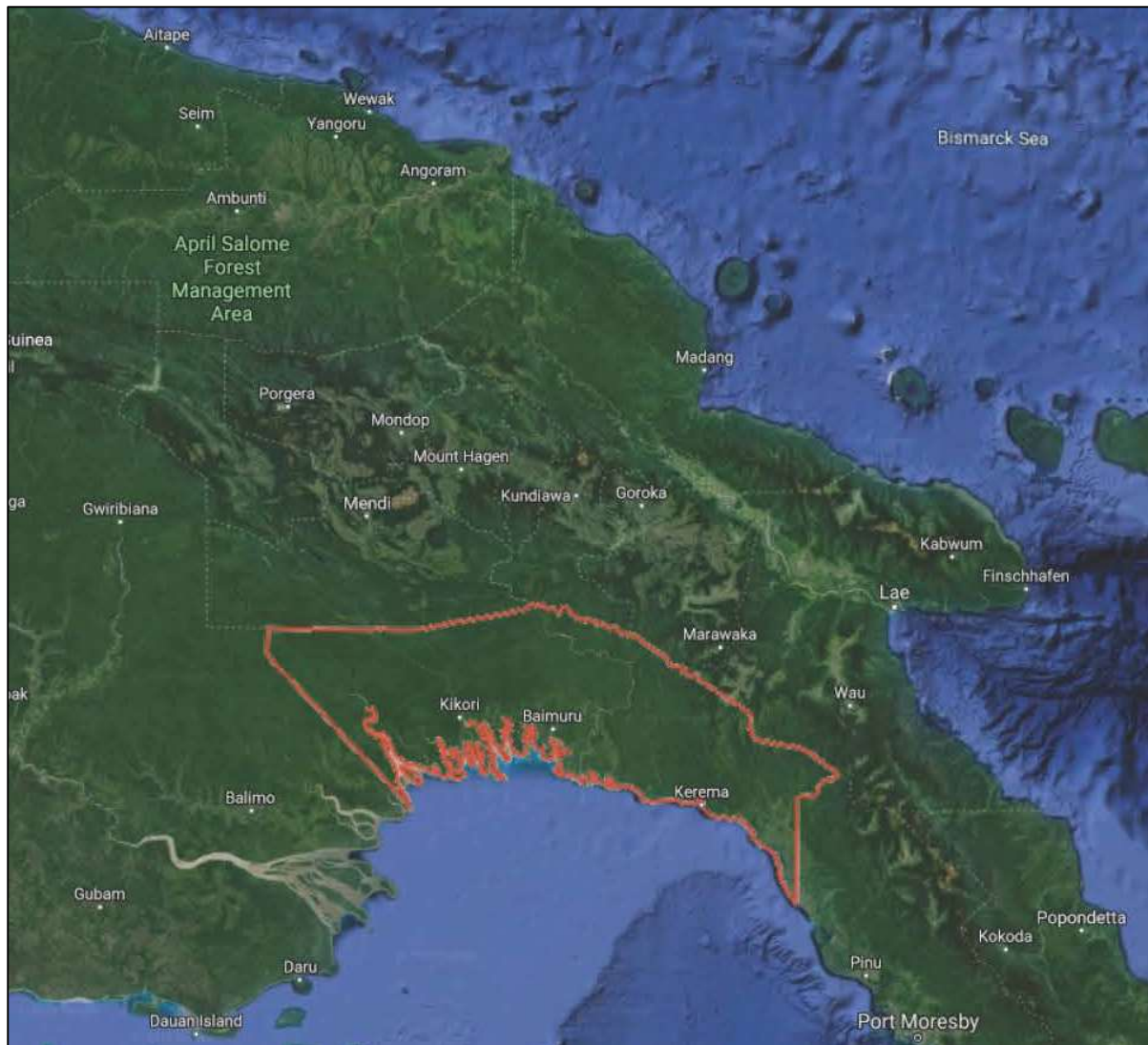
Map 1. Author edited map showing the location of Baimuru in relation to Kerema (Gulf Province capital) and Port Moresby (National capital). (Source: Imagery © 2019 / Copernicus, Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Map data ©2019 GBRMPA)

1.2   Ethnographic Intent

One aim of this thesis is to highlight the experiences of people in daily social life, through their own voice, and through different modes of sharing and storying (Archibald, Smith, Lee-Morgan, & De Santolo, 2019; Billy, A. in Dinnen & Ley, 2000, p. 173; Hirschman, 1970; Maggio, 2014; Whitinui, 2014). Ethnography serves as both research methodology and frame and provides a means to document the necessary link between people's lived experience and their own voice as a tool for sense making. It is a methodological tool that enables people to give meaning to personal experiences (Green, 1998; Howell, 2018; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

The focused attention on the story of the activity of daily social life to gauge how and why gender violence might occur provides a secure point to document the social microcosm that motivates, condones and reinforces particular forms of gender violence (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002; Heise, 1998). Through this study, as people voice their story of life in Baimuru, storying about their experience and detailing their own actions, they are able to reflection on the actions of others in their community (Ochs & Capps, 1996). In order to better understand the associated factors beyond gender that contribute to the issue of gender violence particularly for PNG, this thesis focuses on a *witness* voice to the experience.

The *witness* voice is expressed through various modes of talk or *storying* of experiences. A *witness* story of gender violence is useful in capturing community experiences and presents new and innovative methodology and analysis in research on gender violence in PNG. Furthermore, in the pursuit of the understanding and sense making that theorisation can afford (Nader, 2011), it is an ethnographic method that creates a space to centre and incorporate lived experience and elucidate local modes of being and knowing (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003). Ethnography makes prominent local knowledge claims and the ways in which people *story* in various modes to make sense of, and provide meaning to their experiences (Antweiler, 1998). Additionally, an ethnographic frame ensures individual story and experience is central to an analysis of the events, concepts, kin and social networks, local context and stories that I encountered, recorded and present in this thesis.

1.3   The Social Processes of Ethnographic Work

1.3.1   Storying with People and Communities

Storying is an important social process as much as it is an important tool for self expresssion, producing information, information sharing and knowledge generation (Antweiler, 1998; Jackson, 2013a, p. 18; Ochs & Capps, 2009). Jackson (2013a, p. 37) suggests that the importance of storytelling (storying) exists in "*the social process rather than the product of narrative activity*". Maggio (2014, p. 90 to 91) acknowledges that a story can take on a number of forms while also recognising that although story is defined in different formats every version is "an outcome of [a] process" that storytellers go through, each act of storytelling is intentional. However not all story is "sayable" whether

by omission or silence, and in fact some story involves certain physicalities and gestures that are crucial to the telling of a story. Storytelling is then in fact a purposeful and intentional act of expression and a process by which social beings go through to produce 'the story'. The story told and how the audience may respond then adds to the position of those telling the story, particulalry as people then position themselves authoritatively as the bearer of information (Smith, 2012). The storyteller is imbued with a role, status, power, and authority as they tell their story, and depending on their audience, it can elevate, create and solidify personhood and be usefully incorporated into future interactions and relationships with others (Brison, 1992; Maggio, 2014; Tirrell, 1990).

Archibald et al. (2019) along with other Indigenous scholars, recognise that *storywork* in research is an important tool for decolonizing some of the engrained power structures that have been constructed in research practice. Story enables a necessary platform for people to work through rather than feel restricted by frames that may not fit or explain local epistemological definitions for social action and behaviour. Historically, oral storytelling has facilitated information sharing, knowledge production, and been used as a tool to manage Melanesian socieites such as in PNG (Dickson-Waiko, 2013; Morauta et al., 1979). Dickson-Waiko (2010) asserts the omission of women from the historical record is detrimental to how PNG women are currently viewed. The inability of PNG women to tell their story and narrate their experiences has shaped particular perceptions about PNG women and this has led to broader narratives of subordination and submission as the nature of all PNG women.

It has been and remains embedded as an important tool for creating, exploring and reinforcing particular social and cultural connections (Brison, 1992). In PNG, as in other places, oral traditions form the basis of knowledge systems, and as such, storying has also proven to be an important tool for engaging and reinforcing social aspects of life (Bauman, 1986; Winduo, 2009). The social act of storytelling reinforces kin and social connections, situating individuals within the socio-cultural context of community life. This is an important use and product of storytelling. Additionally, storytelling about adverse events (such as gender violence) or other events, creates a space for individuals to engage in their own analysis of the action itslef, the usefulness of such action, and the appropriate responsive action, which might also include non-response to acts of gender violence.

This thesis includes the witness voice of different individuals and is multi-vocal to enable varied perspective. These voices include 13 participants[1] in 50 audio recorded conversations and stories, with 5 participant stories presented in this thesis, 3 women (*Mother Ana, sister Bree* and *sister Aggie*) and 4 men (*Uncle Alo, Uncle Biru*, *Bubu Doa* and *Uncle Ravi*). While each chapter represents open ended conversations between myself and these participants over multiple shared conversations.

Replicated in the presentation of these stories is the non-linear, non-sequential style of that individuals adopt when storytelling. As people tell their stories, time lines and dates can either be solidly identified or they are ambiguously referred to. What is most evident about each form presented is the social nature of voicing or storying that is used by people in Baimuru. One important limitation to note here is that there was little engagement with people in Baimuru to get them to define what they believed was important about story and storying about experience. There is an important opportunity to develop grounded theory of story and storying using local definitions and explanations of "story", "storying", "storytelling" that can be further developed from Baimuru and other local centres. Brison's work (1989, 1992) with the Kwanga in East Sepik develops local concepts of storytelling showing that talk and speech is used concertedly by people in different ways with intent and purpose. The stories in this thesis are both intentional and purposeful.

1.4 Modes of Storytelling

Defining the type of story that is being told can be ambigous and subjective, for the storyteller may provide their own definition based on what significance the story has to them (Fassin, Marcis, & Todd Lethata, 2008; Jackson, 2013c; Tirrell, 1990). Story can be delineated by labels of conversation, testimony, monologue, reflection, or gossip. While these help to typify story they do not define all the modes of storytelling that people engage and enact (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Within this thesis the ethnography is most aptly defined by what Smith (2012) defines as projects of; claiming, teststimony, remembering, representation and sharing (Smith, 2012). These projects are useful in giving voice to expereince, reclaiming space and broadening representation of PNG

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[1] Formal: Information sheet provided and informed consent from participant received.

people's experiences (Archibald et al., 2019; Smith, 2012). This is an important methodological stance that aligns to decolonizing research practices of Indigenous scholars' arguments about the importance of storywork and storytelling as political projects (Archibald et al., 2019; Chambers et al., 2018; Smith, 2012, pp. 241, 251).

Storytelling is used purposefullly as a means to give voice to experience through remembering to make claims, through testimony to enable voice, sharing story and enabling respresentation of experience. Storytelling is therefore used as a vehicle to support these notions and less as a tool for making political claims about PNG identities. There is an intent in storytelling to create a productive useful end for the storyteller and the audience. As the storyteller engages with their audience the process of telling a story becomes social where people share experience, engage reflectively and analytically in assessment of their experience (Ochs & Capps, 2009). The ethnography as presented constitutes this, and as Smith (2012, p. 241) suggests, it provides "a means through which oral evidence is presented to a particular type of audience" and where there is formality supported by a notion that "truth is being revealed" (Ibid) by the storyteller.

1.4.1   Storying, Luksave and Pasin

Storying and the work of creating and expressing story is productive for people as a tool of self expression (Czarniawska, 2004) as morally agentic (Tirrell, 1990) and conducive in the work of research particularly in decolonising methodolgies or practice (Iseke, 2013; Windchief & San Pedro, 2019). The use of *luksave* in the title of this thesis is dually purposed. Firstly, the colloquial Tok Pisin phrase *"luksave em bikpela samting"* [TP: acknowledgement/recognition is very important] provides an insightful and important frame as it suggests and is generally understood that acknowledgement and recognition are important to individuals and their social relations. The importance of recognition and acknowledgement can transcend the individual experience to acknowledge people are relationally situated (Hukula, 2019; Rooney, 2019) in greater networks of connection. As individuals situate themselves in reference to another, the way in which recognition and acknowledgement is enacted is bound in the social form of specific social and kin relationships. Whether as a family member, friend, or part of the broader community, people situate themselves in relation to another and then engage in social action consistent with the assumed title that defines their relationship (Gifford Jr, 2013; Long & Moore, 2012). The mode of relating is influenced by the type of sociality and/or social

recognition that is intended (Bottero, 2009). In PNG sociality and relationality are further detailed by ritual practice, cultural nuance and specificities that produce, support and reinforce relationships between and amongst groups of people (Bonnemère, 2018; Wagner, 1984; Weiner, 1988a).

1.4.2 Pasin blo Luksave

Luksave to see and know, to acknowledge and recognise is an important social process that defines and enables the production of acceptable and appropriate social action between and amongst people in PNG. As a process it is framed within the notion of *Pasin* as a "fashion, custom, manner, way of life, conduct, behaviour" (Mihalic, 1971, p. 150). As people define their relatedness between and amongst one another, they then develop and enact acceptable and appropriate social action. Producing a frame of acceptable and appropriate social action as part of a *pasin blo luksave* or frame of acknowledgement and recognition, creates a foundation from which individuals morally assess one another, and the social actions that are produced, shared and reciprocated in the space of their interactions between and amongst one another within particular places and spaces (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Sykes, 2008).

Rooney (2019) and Hukula (2019) detail how the *maket* is a space that can define and engage particular social relationships through social action and interactions between one another. These social relationships are not committed to these spaces alone, and can extend beyond the bounded notion of the physical space of the *maket*. Once acknowledged between two individuals, it frames on-going social and moral action between them. Using the example of my own interactions in Baimuru, I purposefully use honorific titles such as mother, sister, uncle, bubu, and father. Each of these honorific titles, although English, is used to acknowledge and recognise my relatedness to these participants. In doing so and invoking these titles, it required that I then behave and act in a social way befitting of that relationship. For all interactions it means operating in respect of the other person as distinguished by gender, age, marital status, religious affiliations, cultural placement, amongst other considerations. In like manner, each participant then relates back to me using the same analysis to determine what their own individual social action will be. Both myself and each individual participant made a moral assessment of how we would interact with one another, given the way in which we defined our relatedness to each other – *em pasin blo luksave* [TP: that is the way we

acknowledge/recognise]. This is both beneficial and limiting. Beneficial in that the research space can become comfortable and important rapport solidified in a short space of time. Limiting in that it might prevent full and detailed story by participants, or open and focussed questions by the researcher, if either party deems their position to be over stepped – certain interactions might be limited due to either party feeling they may either cause or feel offence due to the social action they employ within these interactions.

As described, it is really important to highlight the moral frame that *pasin blo luksave* engages. If there is a real or perceived disruption to kin or social relationships, whether by individual that causes offence or non-acknowledgement and non-recognition of action between persons (which leads to offence felt), *pasin blo luksave* prompts that address to restore social continuity and harmony for the sake of maintaining important kin and social relationships. Without address kin and social relationships that experience disruption can fall into disrepute and ongoing tensions ensue being mitigated and addressed intermittently over time, perhaps, never really resolved. Furthermore, non-address of disruptions to social relationships actively inhibits social continuity within community resulting in on-going disharmony. Social action is therefore predicated on mitigating and minimising disruption as an outcome.

1.4.3   Pasin blo luksave in Action

The moral frame that *pasin blo luksave* suggests is a mutual recognition that there are good and right ways to socially act between and amongst each other. The precepts of *luksave* are acknowledged in the statement *luksave em bikpela samting!* Acknowledgement and recognition are important! It defines position and personhood and asserts that there is a moral framework for how you should socially act towards others. *Luksave* not shown is considered offensive and speaks volumes of the bad or unreasonable social actions of others. Effectively you are then morally assessed as being a bad person because you do not engage those whom you share relatedness with, kin or social connection and networks, in acceptable, appropriate or reasonable social action (Hukula, 2019; Rooney, 2019). The recent ethnographic work by Rooney (2019) and Hukula (2019) provide timely examples of indigenous or PNG scholars, useful in promoting the decolonization of academic work, vital contemporary ethnography that importantly utilizes storytelling and giving voice to people's daily experience.

1.4.4 Insider/Outsider

Adding to the ethnographic work by Papua New Guineans, I acknowledge and recognise my own position while undertaking this research. Whether for the purpose of research or not, my kin and social relationships with others was defined and predicated by if, and how we were connected and/or related. Social action between myself and others was then determined by these factors. A predisposed respect and reciprocity is intoned when social action is produced as part of a *pasin blo luksave*, sometimes at the expense of minimising on-going tensions between historically disputing people. Although I had no overtly difficult relations with people. However my having kin in Baimuru may have prevented me from making links to people who did not associate themselves with my family. Conversely, my association with my Uncle and Aunty who hosted me during my fieldwork, afforded me a secure network of interlinked relationships and safety in regard to relative freedom of movement, allowing me to move around comfortably, for all intents and purposes. Being young, unmarried and a woman this comfortability in movement was important.

Being from the Gulf and having kin connections and having relatedness to people in Baimuru helped to situate me in place while undertaking this research, but many people did perceive my position in the world to be advantageous and privileged. This was further compounded by the perception that living in Australia, I had a greater ability to access and engage with modernity and development. My proximity to white people furthered the perception that I have an advantageous and privileged life (Bashkow, 2017). These are not things I wish to refute necessarily, but to highlight how my position as an outsider was defined, regardless of my strong paternal kin connections. I add a short excerpt from a prayer, recorded at the end of a conversation with *Uncle Vai* a Church Pastor. His words struck me at the time, and gave me some insight into how my presence in Baimuru was perceived:

> That your people need to be delivered. You have seen and heard the cries of your people in this community, or in this district. Thank you for our own child that has come back to rebuild Jerusalem – the broken down Jerusalem, in this manner. Father, there are many who have lack of knowledge. Therefore my Lord I thank you because, as you said, 'my people are destroyed because of the lack of knowledge'.

> Mighty God we have come to thank you for our daughter, sister that has come imparting something that is powerful, and that is educational in this community

oh Lord, and educate us, and open our hearts and minds to understand where we stand up to be, and who we are in you Lord. To have peace in this community, is through you! Through you, by this type of people that come in – that you have called to come in from where, when they were in their mother's womb. Thank You my Lord, my God, I thank you for this great leader that has come, Oh God. Thank you that you use her in many, many ways. That you will increase her knowledge, to know more! According to her search, what she is to search. That you will lead her in many ways, and she will come to know the needs and the cry of your people.

(*Uncle Vai* in interview, September 2016)

As someone who has experienced life outside of the Gulf, outside of PNG, my being in Baimuru may have translated to a perception that I was the bearer and/or facilitator for change, and assist people in their hopes of greater development and connection to these aspirations. This was solidified early on in my time in Baimuru when during my first week, I was visited by members of a Local Landowner Group and asked if I was specifically assessing land and resource claims (in that instance logging claims). By talking to me, this group of six *Uncles* believed I might be able to carry their message of land claim legitimacy to the people's and organisations responsible for undertaking logging in the area. In some respects, these Uncles wanted me to be and bear witness and in carrying their message out, acknowledge and recognise their struggles.

1.4.5   A Witness Voice

Being witness creates a space for storying or *bearing witness* which requires the acknowledgment and recognition of experiences (Agamben, 2002; Arendt, 1969). Giving *voice* to the experience of gender violence by witnessing is important work in response and address of this issue (Fassin et al., 2008). Being and bearing witness has important moral intent. It enables the perspective of individuals and the context of these experiences to be acknowledged and through this, prompts a recognition of the circumstances within which gender violence is enacted (Archibald et al., 2019; Windchief & San Pedro, 2019).

The traditions of oral history in PNG parallel similar traditions of knowledge systems in other indigenous cultures. These vibrant and on-going oral traditions and histories have been, and are integral to sustaining communities; validating experience and epistemologies, expressing experiences, nurturing relationships and sharing knowledge (Iseke, 2013). Storytelling has been identified as important to indigenous scholars in their approaches to research (Hokowhitu, 2016; Iseke, 2013; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Smith,

2012). Anthropological works in Melanesia, PNG included, calls for greater involvment of PNG voices and story (Abirafeh, 2009).

1.4.6 <u>Witness Voice and story</u>

Being witness and bearing witness through storytelling is important. Both Smith (2012, p. 242) and Bishop (1996) suggest storytelling is both "useful" and a "culturally appropriate way of representing the 'diversities of truth'…" where the "story teller rather than the research retains control". Furthermore, citing Archibald (2008), Smith suggests that the work of story or storywork "engages listeners and the story teller in a respectful relationship of reciprocity that creates and sustains oral cultures." (Smith, 2012, p. 242) – story as a *pasin blo luksave.*

In employing a decolonizing methodology to this work, capturing storytelling as ethongraphic method, is as much a social process that supports and/or facilitiates interpersonal interaction, as it is a process of knowledge production and information sharing (Jackson, 2013a; Ochs & Capps, 2009). Finally as Smith (2012, p. 134)"(r)eclaiming a voice" in the context of research "has also been about relaiming, reconnecting and reordering those ways of knowing which were submerged, hidden or driven underground." In view of this understanding, I use the term *storying* in this thesis to distinguish both the process of storytelling and outcome of storytelling.

1.5 Witness and *Luksave* (Recognition) through Storytelling

The concepts of violence and gender are not new to anthropological study, however, the way in which the story of it is told requires a fresh conceptual and methodological lens. The incorporation of storytelling as witness, utilizing the frames of the local concept of *luksave* as integrated with a theoretical lens of social recognition can enable this, and refocus the current lens and discourse that the story of gender violence in PNG situates itself within. As a small vignette, my own reflection gives credence to the ways in which storytelling, witness, *luksave* and recognition can interplay to enable deeper reflection and analysis of social action.

> After a trip to the National Archives in Port Moresby, I along with my two young cousin brother's decided to walk home instead of catching the PMV. It was almost peak hour in Port Moresby, and the idea of fighting for a seat on the afternoon bus didn't appeal to any of us. On the walk home, we got some soft drinks – a much

needed boost of sugar and relief in the hot Moresby sun. As we walked down Waigani Drive, we encountered a man. He had a collection of bottles strung together like a constellation slung over his right shoulder attached by a rope, and bigger hessian bag in his right hand – filled with bottles. He was collecting more from the sidewalk, gutters, and even the main road (Waigani Drive, is one of the busiest roads in Port Moresby). Without thinking I finished the rest of my drink, walked up to him and handed him my bottle. My 'escorts' two little brothers did the same. "Tenkiu sista – mi kolektim ol botol blo skul blo ol pikinini ya". It was profound in the simplicity of the exchange, and this man's words struck me. "Thank you, sister. I'm collecting these bottles (to get money) for my children's schooling". He was doing what was required of him, given his circumstance and capacity, to earn some income, to provide for his children. Furthermore, in that moment he had acknowledged a social connection to me in recognition of the action between us simply by calling me *sister*.

Granted, it was a fleeting moment, and I have no other interaction with this man, but it prompted me to deeper consideration of the dominant narratives of PNG men that I have internalized at some point: that is, PNG men seek power, pride and status and are inherently and intrinsically violent toward women and children.

After the encounter, my brother's and I continued on our walk from Waigani to Garden Hills, heading to our family home. As we walked the encounter saddened me in one particular way – it highlighted how I (as I'm sure others) view PNG men as being inherently violent and aggressive and concerned only with their own gratifications of status and power. I then began to think of my own father, my brothers, my male friends who I know to be nothing like this narrative and yet, given the narrative, would be considered violent by others who encounter them. Of my mothers, aunties, sisters, female colleagues who are powerhouses in their communities despite or because of their social status in their communities. It then prompted me to consider, why do we consider our men as 'being' this way? Why do we continue to talk about PNG women as powerless, without agency and/or autonomy, and subjects of violence only? PNG women are some of the most resilient, strong people, and yet, they are often represented as being less than.

[Author Reflection, May 2015]

This moment of reflection is important in that, in many ways it is the catalyst for questioning some of the existing structures that frame the way we a) view violence in PNG; b) narrate the experience of violence in PNG; and c) narrate and represent the lives of women and men in relation to violence in PNG and extendedly the broader notion of gender inequality. It is in the simplicity of daily exchanges that profound 'truths' are sometimes amplified – the story above is one such example of this for me. As the example highlights, the practice of *luksave* [TP: *pasin blo luksave*] is an important action that people engage as a means of active relationality. Enactment of *luksave* within an interaction creates a frame within which each person situates themselves in relation to

the other, given broader context of relational networks (kin, social or other) real, constructed and/or imagined (Hukula, 2012b).

In recent ethnographic work Rooney (2019) and Hukula (2019) use the Tok Pisin term *luksave* to define how social action is deployed to identify a *good* or 'ideal' person. *Pasin* contains within its frames a moral 'code of conduct' and/or moral valuation of another person in relation to oneself (Hukula, 2019; Rooney, 2019). *Pasin* as a social and moral frame is a permeable space within which some Papua New Guinean people can construct appropriate social action between one another. *Pasin* also points to interactions and concepts specific to a time, place and space. When *pasin* is used independently, it implies an overarching 'standard' of interaction between individuals (Hukula, 2015; Kaiku, 2011; Kula-Semos, 2009; Sai, 2007). This standard of behaviour asserts appropriate conduct with associated action to support such conduct.

Honneth's (1996; Honneth & Farrell, 1997; Honneth & Joas, 1988) individual and collaborative works on social action, human nature, recognition and moral obligation support the methodological pursuit of witness voice in storying as a mode of *luksave*. These works develop a notion that people are motivated to act by the intent that their action will be mutually recognised by others. This is pertinent to contextualising the experience of gender violence in this thesis, and in relation to the purpose of storying in this thesis. A commonality exists between the action of gender violence and the action of storying – people are motivated to engage in both modes of social action due to their belief that it will motivate (re)action. The assertion is that individuals consider their own action as acknowledgement of and equal reaction to another's action toward themselves. Honneth's theoretical works offer a frame of analysis and interpretation of the story contained within this thesis in suggesting moral and social action is mutually recognised and acknowledged through reciprocal action.

Honneth's universal claim gives credence to the more local variant that is *luksave*. Both mutual recognition and *luksave* are complementary in that both are relational and suggest the possibilities of bridging local and global epistemologies. Utilising the lens of *luksave* enhances the research methodology of ethnographic study. I use the concept of recognition through an analysis of *luksave* to understand the extent of kin and social networks and the effect of such networks on the enactment of gender violence in Baimuru. The politics of people's internal individual relationships comes to the fore in the

witness story from Baimuru, but further to this, the story from Baimuru highlights greater considerations, beyond gender that contribute to the enactment of certain types of violence. Within this thesis, this understanding then becomes the central figure to the story of gender violence. The nature of social relations as an important precursor to the enactment of violence, is the current gap in research and reporting on gender violence in PNG. Utilising these fresh perspectives offer important points at which the ethnographic material in this thesis could be further explored, understood and be used to engage in the broader discourse of gender violence in PNG.

1.6   The Story of Gender Violence in PNG

The global discourse situates the experience of gender violence within the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations Women, 2009). Adopted by the UN in 1979, and ratified by PNG in 1995, this convention sets out to acknowledge that *traditional* gender concepts disadvantage and discriminate against women. It was not until the "Beijing Platform for Action" or "Beijing declaration" (United Nations, 1995) that this convention began to have practical application in addressing the issue of gender discrimination and inequality amongst signatory nations. As a signatory nation, there has been much focus and attention afforded to the issue and story of gender violence in PNG in recent times given that it is described as being at pandemic proportions (Cochrane, 2015). In PNG, the experience of gender violence has a significant impact and effect on the lives of identified vulnerable groups which include women and children (Biersack, Jolly, & Macintyre, 2016; Thomas, Kauli, & Rawstorne, 2017). Within the global discourse and following CEDAW and the Beijing declaration, gender violence is considered a product of gender discrimination and gender inequality, particularly against women. It recognises that a lack of gender parity has significant detrimental impact to social, economic and political development within nations such as PNG (The World Bank, 2007; United Nations, 1995). The nature of gender violence is therefore premised on the notion that it is a women's issue, related to discrimination and inequality against them. As women experience inequality and discrimination, it prevents them from actively and fully engaging in processes of development. Their inability to access these spaces and activities has implications on other areas of their experience to include (but not limited to): human rights, law & justice, health and education.

The Government of Papua New Guinea's Department of Religion, Youth & Community Development is responsible for developing national response to address the issue of gender violence in PNG (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017) in accord with global Sustainable Development Goals (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2014a). Under these auspices, gender violence is defined as the "*physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse directed against a person because of his or her gender in a society or culture including, but not limited to, acts committed with force, manipulation or coercion and without the informed consent of the survivor, to gain control and power over them.*" (2017, p. 17). The definition derives meaning from the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations Women, 2009). The United Nations adopted this convention in 1979, to which 181 state-parties countries are signatories, including PNG (ratified in 1992) (United Nations Human Rights Office of the Commissioner, 2019). The convention sets out parameters to address various types of discrimination against women, including the act of violence against women based on perceived gender inequality. This convention offers a basis for and frame within which the issue of gender violence can be addressed.

The articles within the CEDAW respond to prevailing concepts of gender identity that are constructed from what De Beauvoir (1972, 2012) describes as the male/female divide. A Western conception of gender that indicates an oppositional binary between that which is masculine and that which is feminine. What is defined by biological dichotomy has over time, created a construct and associated narrative of gender violence that asserts an inherent male privilege and female subordination. This dichotomous binary shapes a dominant discourse that drives the overarching narrative of gender violence in PNG, and indeed embeds itself in the National initiatives and response mechanisms, that seek to address and eliminate the issue of gender violence in PNG (Garbe & Struck-Garbe, 2018).

1.6.1   A Note on Violence

Some of the conflict over interpretation exists because of how violence in general, is defined and understood at an individual level. In this thesis violence often emerges as a productive social act rather than what it is often defined as in dominant discourse, as an incursion of individual rights defined by displays of men's power and inherent aggression. Often in this dominant narrative, violence is deemed as socially disruptive and detrimental.

Violence in a general sense, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Violence Prevention Alliance (2015) as "*the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.*" There are pertinent points to consider from this definition:

1) It suggests the experience is shaped around how action is *used* (or the exertion of action) and;
2) The *use* of these physical acts are *intentional* – the action is meant and has purpose; and
3) The acts involve individuals and communities (or groups) of people; and
4) These actions have resultant actions, reactions and/or consequences.

Dinnen & Ley (2000, p. 1) states, "*what is violence to one person, may not be to another*", and further "*how we see violence as individuals varies according to the prevailing ideas and values of our specific time and place*" (*Ibid*). Indeed, as Das (2000, p. 59) recognises, *time* and the *work* of time in the story of violence has significant importance on the story of experience as it is "*revised, rewritten*" and *"overlaid with commentary*"**.** These considerations provide a foundation for the recording, analysis, interpretation and storytelling about violence within this thesis. As concepts of gender (including personhood and identity) are storied, people attach these notions and their own commentary to specific events of violence. These commentaries shape understandings of violence in a particular community (Baimuru).

As Riches (1986, p. vii) suggests, violence is "*understood best when it is examined over a range of cultural settings, and in a full variety of cultural settings.*". Therefore, the addition of the story of Baimuru can add important texture and depth to the story of gender violence in PNG, and indeed how we perceive, understand and respond to such acts. The National strategy for response (2017, p. 17) uses the term "gender based violence" rather than domestic violence or family violence or intimate partner violence in acknowledgement that violence based on gendered distinctions can occur in "different contexts". It takes many forms and can be experienced by men and women. It is perpetrated by "family members, partners, friends, employers, people in authority (teachers, police, etc.), and unknown members of the communities." (Ibid).

The term gender violence is used in this thesis to indicate that some form of violence can be directly interpreted as based on gender distinction, but not all gender violence is caused or prompted by gender alone. The National Strategy for the Prevention of Gender Based Violence (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017) acknowledges that use of the term *gender* "reminds us that we also need to address the root causes of violence: the gendered and unequal power in intimate, family, workplace and societal relationships which perpetuate discrimination" (pg. 16). Other factors beyond gender contribute to gendered and violent action including such factors as social recognition and moral reasoning. This understanding aligns with the methodological ethic and emphasis on storytelling which allows local witness stories to represent their experiences through their own voice and story.

The National Strategy also cites "family or the domestic sphere as key sites" of focus in response (pg. 16). These are important considerations in the analysis of particular acts of gender violence, yet they can restrict the analysis from deeper consideration of the issues beyond gender, such as kin and social relations, that enable, condone and reinforce the use of violent action – the very "root causes" that are embedded within local contexts that are often not analysed, because the focal point is often gender alone. Furthermore the term 'gender-based' suggests gendered violent action is based in gender and therefore predominantly driven by gender concepts. This also restricts a form of analysis that would enable other structures (such as social recognition) to be viewed as important drivers and root causes for the use and experience of gendered violent action.

1.6.2   Social Disruption

Gender violence is often documented as a disruption and hindrance to social life, particularly within the experience of women and young girls (United Nations Women, 2009). I use the term social disruption within this thesis to recognise the rupture that such violent action can cause in the social lives of people. Yet the story of people acting with intent also suggests the enactment of gender violence can contribute to social cohesion through the production of restoration. The stories presented in this thesis will therefore explore through the notion of reasonableness, how gender violence can be used as a tool of restoration, when the desired outcome is to return to and/or maintain social cohesion. This is not to diminish the extreme nature of such acts, but to suggest that there are other perhaps paradoxical values, expectations and significance embedded in gender

violence and this suggests that gender violence can be understood by participants as both often intensely destructive disruption and as generatively transcended, or encompassed, by productive moments of restoration.

1.6.3   Gender and Identity

The concept of gender and the distinctions made surrounding this concept are and have been constructed over time, and contribute to particular action and behaviour (Butler, 1988; Ortner, 1974; Spark, 2014). The same action and behaviour that is constructed can then, (through enactment), reinforce the initial concepts of gender and gender distinctions constructed. Synonymously, gender concepts develop specific frames within which people identify themselves given their own experiences in a particular place and time.

The gender ideals that individuals ascribe to their own identity in place and time, often become engaged when people interact and relate to one another. In PNG (like other experiences), gendered action as a part of identity is displayed within networks of kin relations (Bonnemère, 2018). In PNG, gender identity is reinforced in the action of relating within a particular network of relationships, within a given time and place.

Scholars have examined these networks of social relationships in PNG and more broadly in Melanesia sometimes as part of discussions regarding gender and violence. Scholars such as Strathern (1988), Rooney (2019; 2018), Hukula (2015, 2017, 2019), Zimmer-Tamakoshi (2012), Macintyre (2000, 2008a, 2008b) Macintyre and Spark (2017), Eves (2008); (2010, 2012, 2018), and Jolly (1989; 2012) recognise that gender identity situates itself in different social networks and relationships. Gender as a part of individual personhood is constituted in the shared experience of relating between and amongst individuals as it exists within particular local spaces.

Other important discussions include those of male female relationships using culture as a lens, where women and men enact autonomous choice at varying points (Kuehling, 2005; Mead, 1977; Wassmann, 1998); where the male appropriation of female reproductive power contributes to gendered actions, situating men and women in particular relation to one another (Akuani et al., 2010; Buchanan-Aruwafu, Maebiru, & Aruwafu, 2003; M. Strathern, 1988); female production and men's transactions creates modalities of social relations that enhance or deny the position of women (Godelier,

1986; Jolly, 2014; Mosko, 2015a; P. J. Stewart & Strathern, 1999); the role and impact of patriarchy on female positionality situated in conversations of agency and women's relationships in regard to the personhood of men (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016; McIlwaine, 2013); gender relations and interactions based on a moral economy, where social action is morally constituted and frames actions and understandings of gender, through exchange processes, ritual and daily life (Dundon, 2009; Gregory, 1980; Hemer, 2013; Hukula, 2019; Robbins, 2007; Sykes, 2008); transactional/relational personhood post-Strathern, underpinned by the notions of 'dividuality' and ceremonial and ritualistic through performative and reciprocal social action to constitute gender as not always binary and dichotomous (Mosko, 2015a, 2015b; Moutu, 2013); and the current discussions of networks and relationships based on human rights and women's rights discourses that operationalize binary gender constructs to highlight inequality so to seek address and response to gender violence in contemporary society (Hermkens, 2012; Jolly et al., 2012; Macintyre, 2012; C. Stewart, 2012). Components of culture, gender, power and sexuality contribute importantly to understanding gender violence in PNG. In addition to these factors, this thesis will demonstrate how processes of social recognition and moral reasoning/valuation are also important components to acknowledge and explore so that we can broaden our understanding of gender violence in PNG.

1.6.4   Kinship and gender

The arguments of kinship connections Sahlins (2013) and gendered relationships Bonnemère (2018) develop key conceptual connections to the work of this thesis. Gendered relationships as part of kinship connections and relationships are an important underlying motivation in various types of social actions in PNG. Sahlins (2013) work revisits the definitions of kinship through analysis of a variety of ethnographic and historical works. Prominently, his analysis leads to highlight that kinship constitutes social relationships of mutuality that shape personhood, including gendered roles. Bonnemère (2018, p. 41) offers that the role of "ideas about personhood and development over the course a person's life" and how empirical analysis of such ideas and practices should, following the work of Strathern (1988) emphasize the role of kin and social relationships. Although her ideas are derived from the Ankave people in the North Eastern portion of the Gulf Province, Bonnemère offers a valuable example of

conversations and sense making about kinship, social form and gender distinctions, and socially and morally acceptable action.

Bonnemère work highlights the implicit responsibilities that men and women have to each other when they engage in social action toward one another through the processes of male ritual. Taken with Sahlin's underpinning concept of kinship as mutual social relationship, I focus on how people in Baimuru develop the concepts of position, identity and connection as based in their kinship connections, within an experience that acknowledges customary practice and practices of modernity. It is these connections that then impact the enactment of gender violence, the rationalisation of gender violence and the response to such violence. Utilising this platform recognises a relational notion "that things function because of their spatio-temporal ties with other things, and to conceive of things as relations interiorizes this interdependence" (M. Strathern, 2018, p. 4). Kinship constitutes social relationships and is a key unit of analysis as to how social and moral action is developed.

1.6.5   Gender and Personhood

As gender constructs personal identity, it also constructs and reinforces an ideal of personhood within a particular place and time. Indeed in PNG, the limits (and reach) of personhood is defined by particular identity linked to concepts of gender, but more importantly, linked to the individuals relationship to their kin, social and broader networks (Morgain & Taylor, 2015). The individual exerts personhood, not just as a project of individual self-determination, but also as an extension of the limit and reach of their personhood in relation to others.

Strathern (1988) in her seminal works on gender in Melanesia, uses the term "dividuality" to recognise the stratification of personhood. Through her analysis of gender in the Highlands of PNG, Strathern develops her discussions on gender and personhood to suggest that personhood is not simply a project of self-determination but is linked to and defined by greater kin and social responsibilities and defined through specific performative acts. Strathern also acknowledges that concepts of gender are fluid, shifting between moments of masculinity, femininity and neutrality. Post-Strathern, contemporary experiences documented and detailed in ethnographic research offer broader understanding of how gender is conceptualised, how it is invoked through social action and relationships (Bonnemère, 2018; Morgain & Taylor, 2015; Mosko, 2015a) , and

how it relates to acts of violence being deployed. More contemporary ethnographic works on gender offer nuanced storytelling and associated represetnation of PNG women as able to act with autonomy (Lepani, 2015; Reay, 2014). The reprinted works of Reay (2014) showcases PNG women's ability to act autonomously within the broader considerations of social relatedness. Women are constructed in and by their social and kin relatedness while also impacting and influencing these relations (Hukula, 2017). While Lepani (2015) reports how young women in Milne Bay have sexual autonomy while their individaul agency remains bound in important kinship relationships and social ties. Gender identity and personhood is reported in the work of Spark (2010, 2011, 2014, 2015), to highlight tensions that PNG women face as they negotiate and navigate an urban contemporary experience. An important point that is raised from these discussions is how PNG women are perceived and how this might align (or not) to their own definitions of personhood, particularly in view of their own engagement in modernity in various ways. What is evident is that PNG women envision their own personhood in the pursuit of individual freedoms, agency and autonomy, while still holding to deeply embedded gendered notions attached to social and moral obligations of kinship, society and culture.

The way in which these conceptualisations have been used to narrate the lives of PNG women is important to situating gendered experiences. The works of PNG woman and prominent PNG historian Dickson-Waiko (2009, 2010, 2013) are of particular note as they highlight how the narrative of PNG women has been constructed since colonial settlement. The wilful ommission of PNG women's voices both pre and post colony settlement coupled with the intent to "domesticate" PNG women has over time generalised women's expereinces, creating much tension between what is deemed traditional value and contemporary value of PNG women and their personhood and position in society (Dickson-Waiko, 2010).

Gender is merely one component of personal identity and personhood, rather than a definitive concept that shapes an individual's action. There are other considerations, beyond gender, that define personhood and identity particularly those pertaining to networks of relationships and responsibilities, and, in my view, these are of greater importance than gender which is understood to be primarily concerned with the relationships of difference between reproductive men and women.

1.7 Researching Gender Violence in PNG

Gender violence is constituted by and embedded in particular socio-cultural structures and networks of relationships that involve subjective interpretations of multiple ontologies and epistemologies (Hunt, 2014; Scotland, 2012). Previous research posits gender inequalities as the cause of gender violence. Such analysis can too easily transform cultural differences linked to gender, such as bride wealth, into power inequalities thereby pathologizing aspects of PNG daily life in suggesting women have little or no agency and/or autonomy in these experiences. Acts of violence between men and women are then 'explained' by differences automatically converted to inequalities. While the approach is useful, focussing on gender inequality alone, particularly as a women's issue, often simplifies and can polarize components of daily life, social and kin structure by too easily sorting them into patriarchal and non-patriarchal entities.

1.7.1 Gender Inequality

The current and numerous reports of gender violence in PNG suggests that there are different lived experiences of violence between men and women. These different experiences are related to the assumption of men's inherent power, and women's lack thereof. These distinctions have developed into a view that gender violence is predominantly something that happens to women who are positioned as victims of men's greater capacity to inflict physical force on women. One result is that the narrative of gender violence becomes women focused where research, reporting and response gets transformed into programs that focus predominantly as a women's issue or Violence Against Women (VAW). The particular use of Western notions of gender distinctions that shape identity and personhood are then represented and they develop the narrative of PNG *women's inherent subordination* under the VAW focus. This is not only restrictive but can actually be detrimental to PNG women who (through structures of response) are reinforced with messages that may tell them that they have little ability to act as agents in their own experience. Furthermore, it reinforces a view of PNG men as inherently violent, which assumes they are prone to violent action and PNG women are merely victims, a view that is being expanded by this thesis and the previous works of others (Eves, 2016; McPherson, 2012; Spark, 2014; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2012).

The focussed attention on the skewed experience of violence between men and women in PNG is an important point of reference, but it tends to solidify gender inequality as the sole determining factor in such violence. It subtly suggests other forms of violence are not motivated by gender distinctions, and blatantly that men's violence against women is based on gender alone. Gender inequality contributes to violent acts being performed, however, if we take gender to be a component of personhood and identity, in the understanding that social life in PNG is complex and layered, we understand that other factors exist and contribute to the experience of and responses to acts of gender violence in PNG. The meaning and intent of what is defined as gendered violent action, while always gendered, requires other considerations, that may include (but not limited to) social imperative, culture, tradition, historical construction, values, expectations and significance that individuals engage in a broader experience.

1.8   The PNG Experience of Gender Violence and Response

Papua New Guinea reports high incidences of gender violence, which are often described as being at pandemic proportions (Cochrane, 2015) akin to that of a war zone (Hinton, 2008) or post-war situation (Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2011). While highlighting the importance of addressing gender violence, one news report claimed that "*between 60-80 percent of PNG women*" experience violence in their lifetime (Author Unknown, 2014). A Child Fund Australia report estimated that two thirds of families in PNG experience violence in some form (Wiseman, 2013). While a recent Human Rights Watch report (Human Rights Watch, 2015), provocatively entitled "*Bashed Up: Family Violence in PNG*", suggested that gender violence is part of a cultural makeup that renders response programs difficult, and the ability to actively respond, made difficult by ineffective National and sub-national institutions that are tasked with providing justice.

1.8.1   Men's Experience of Violence

These reports are often limited and unable to convey the deeper context within which these experiences occur. As a small example, the suggestion that up to eighty percent of PNG women have experienced violence, assumes that men are the perpetrators and that men do not experience violence to the same degree. Yet, there is limited reporting to provide the comparative narrative of men's experience of violence. The narrative of men's experience of violence focusses on their positions as instigators and perpetrators

(Eves, 2010) which assumes and indeed reinforces, to some extent, inherent violent behaviour of PNG men.

1.8.2 Community Experience of Violence

The continual focus on women's experience of violence as gender violence, can sometimes distort the understanding that this violence happens within the confines of a *community* experience and indeed communal lifestyles (Hukula, 2017). I use the term community loosely here to signify the relational networks that branch out from kin to broader community. However the sentiment remains: the "*dividuality*" of experience claims people are defined by who they are, in relation to others, and as others relate to them (M. Strathern, 1988). The reciprocity of relationality that exists in PNG is an important practice and facet of the story of people's experience, especially in relation to gender violence. The focus and reporting of gender violence through a "women's only" lens, disregards the strong implications that relational reciprocity assumes in the daily lives of PNG people, and indeed, in the experience of gender violence. By such reporting, the narratives that focus on women's suffering, become engrained in the psyche of people and this internalisation can later inform and transform experiences of gender violence. Furthermore, the integration and reintegration of this narrative can actually compound the efforts to address the issue (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016).

1.8.3 National Response

The *PNG National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence (2016 – 2025)* recognises that gender inequalities exist, and, there is a greater need to explore "*associated factors*" that contribute to the experience of gender violence (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017). Associated factors importantly inform the contextual understanding of experience from individual and community perspectives (Dinnen & Ley, 2000). The National strategy recognises that the experience of gender violence in PNG centres on Intimate Partner Violence (within known relationships), predominantly, violence against women. The mandates of the National Strategy are closely aligned to National Government agenda to address the issue of VAW as gender violence. This National agenda is framed within the auspices of strategic development, which has been shaped by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) (Figure 3). The frames that shape our exploration of gender violence, become the frames through which it is then reported.

These frames include perspectives that are driven by development, human rights, law & justice, health, education and economic advancement under the auspices of gender inequality and gender discrimination (predominantly against women). These frames are important, yet inhibiting to deeper understanding of the issue of gender violence in PNG, given that PNG has the highest ethno-linguistic diversity of any nation, and as such, great socio-cultural complexity exists (Australian Government, 2018b; Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), 2019).

Figure 1. Data from PNG National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence in PNG (2016 – 2025) pg. 23
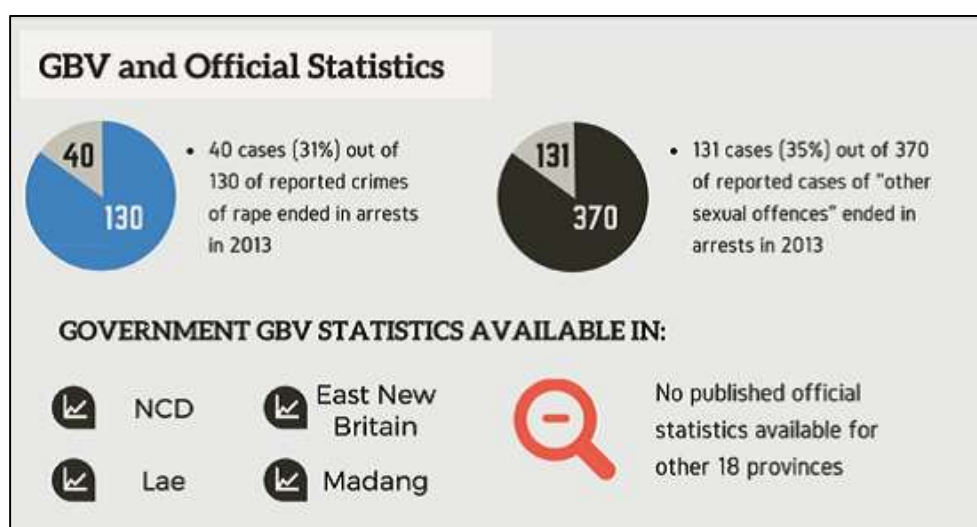
Figure 2. Data from National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence (2016 – 2025) pg. 40

Figure 3. The Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2019). Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

1.8.4   Anthropology: Human rights and engendering violence in PNG

The work of anthropology, as Green suggests, can *"render intelligible the contradictions and complexities of people's lives"* (1998, p. 6), particularly in relation to social and relational aspects of gender violence. PNG has presented itself as a subject of interest in anthropological pursuits for many years. These pursuits have been driven by a need to "*make sens*e" of that which is alternate – to understand the *other*. The ontological turn encourages anthropology to move beyond an othering, to recognise that the nature of being and knowing of the *other* is not simply a variation of the Western knowledge system, but is in fact a study of socio-cultural systems, distinct to people and place, and equally important (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017). This fresh perspective enhances anthropological exploration of gender violence in PNG in that in requires this exploration to develop understanding based on the meanings developed by individuals whose sense of knowing and being is embedded within social processes given particular time, place and space.

The edited collections of anthropologists Jolly, Brewer and Stewart (2012) and Bierseck, Jolly and MacIntyre (2016) seek to better understand gender violence in PNG and Melanesia by exploring the local contexts within which acts of gender violence occur

while also engaging with global discourses about human rights. Bierseck, Jolly and MacIntyre (Biersack et al., 2016)(2016) collection entitled "*Gender Violence and Human Rights*" discusses the concepts of gender, personhood, the notion of seeking and restoring justice and emphasizes "*the efficacy of human rights and advocacy of related reformist strategies*" in PNG, Vanuatu and Fiji. What is most prominent in these works is that although acts of gender violence are formally recognised as criminal acts under legislation and indeed the precepts of a Human Rights framework, the ability to respond through a formal structure is not always fulfilled or very limited in providing sustainable address. Cultural frameworks that define gender and rights can compete with the broader global notions of human rights that align to the pursuit to seek justice through formal apparatus such as Government legislation and local policing and the process of the courts.

"*Engendering Violence In Papua New Guinea*" is another important addition to the conversations around gender violence in PNG. Each chapter provides narratives that dialogue through particular experience to understand gender as it relates to various acts of violence. These include the position of men and masculinity as perpetrator stories, through acts of sorcery accusation related violence and conversations with convicted rapists (Gibbs, 2012; Hukula, 2012a); women's experience of violence compounded by their connection to religion (Hermkens, 2012), the notion of domesticity as a cultural construct that enables violence against women including masculine identities and patriarchy that contribute to acts (McPherson, 2012). Noted throughout these works are the moral valuation that is particularly placed on women that shapes their experiences of violence and can often condone and/or reinforce the violence enacted against women (Jolly et al., 2012; C. Stewart, 2012).

These works are complemented by the detail that can be offered through analysing kinship and social relatedness, a task this thesis demonstrates through the stories of those who makes sense of these acts as witness to gender violence. What this thesis offers separate to the collections by Jolly et al. (2012) and Biersack et al. (2016) is to broaden the narrative of gender violence by those not always directly involved in instigating and/or experiencing violence that is beyond the victim or the perpetrator. By doing so, it recognises the broader context of people and how they align themselves to each other and to these acts. Understanding how people align themselves to these acts as witnesses and bystanders and/or people that might condone or reject these acts, opens up

discussion to consider the responses that can be formulated to include whole communities. Responses that are not focussed on victimhood or criminality, rather, response that can be realigned to consider community responsibility as an important component of how these acts of formulated, and what the *necessary* response might then be.

Both the collections by Biersack et al. (2016) and (Jolly et al., 2012) suggest "outside influences" whether changing society, or the introduction of external influences that contribute to the nature of gender violence in local lived realities. This thesis situates itself in recognition of these "outside influences" to add further debate and discussion regarding the "local influences" that contribute as factors that condone, reinforce and enable the continuation of gender violence, particularly in the PNG experience. What is helpful from these collections, is the call to be mindful of the context that response and address occurs (Lusby, 2017). Lusby (2017) in review of both these collections and others (Hameed et al., 2016; Hemer, 2018; Hermkens, 2015) suggest local context is important to strengthening response. What this thesis offers is a way to dialogue with these calls and offer how such a focus on local context through witness perspectives can be utilised to enhance and support response.

1.8.5   Considerations for Gender Violence Research in PNG

In PNG much reporting on gender violence involves the review, monitoring and evaluation of key gender projects aligned to the national response agenda (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017) driven by global response agenda (United Nations Women, 2009, 2012) to address gender inequality as the key focus area (United Nations Women, 2009). These reports focus on the experience of girls and women as the victims of gender violence (AusAID, 2009; Australian Government & Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015a; FemiliPNG, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2015; United Nations Population Fund, 2009). These reports highlight a particular focus on girls and women, exclusively at times, narrowing the discourse of gender violence, influencing formulated response. The focus of gender violence as a women and girl's issue, broadens to situate experience in household and family life, reported on as domestic violence, violence against the children and elderly, and recognised widely as family and sexual violence (Martin, 2013; Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2011; Wiseman, 2013). The work on sexual violence highlights the intersections between gender and sexuality, health, economy, society, law and justice,

reported through the work on HIV and AIDS (Lepani, 2008; C. Stewart, 2012). This work includes accounts of to rape as an extreme form of sexual violence and the responses to addressing rape cases from victim and perpetrator perspectives (Hukula, 2005; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2012; Zorn, 2012). The work on sexual violence and associated reporting is also concerned with women's sexual and reproductive health rights (Australian Government & Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015a). While other forms of sexual violence involve violence against the transgender community, female sex workers and men who have sex with men (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2017; Kelly-Hanku et al., 2018). The *Kauntim Mi Tu* study (2017; 2018) contributes to gender violence knowledge through work with marginalised communities with a focus on concepts of gender and sexuality within the experience of public health service provision. Discrimination due to gender and sexuality has other public health ramifications including the heightened risk of HIV and AIDS (Ibid). Limitations in public health service provision highlight other work on the need to strengthen structural responses to prevent HIV and eliminate and/or minimise gender violence (Abirafeh, 2009). Structural responses to gender violence has most notably been highlighted in the public service sector through GESI or the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion policy (Government of papua New Guinea, 2013a). Further response work is being conducted through a Law and Justice Sector approach that seeks to strengthen legal and judicial processes through the village courts mechanism (Demian, 2016). While this work has progressed responses to gender violence in PNG, it is limited to urban experiences. Much of rural and remote PNG live outside of the reach of these structural response mechanisms, and address and response in these contexts remains challenging. Attempts to broader community response through law and justice sector programs have been useful across the nations, particularly in the establishment of Family and Sexual Violence Units (FSVUs)(Australian Government & Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015a). While at a higher level of governance the National Public Service: Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy (2013a) provides a structural framework for gender and social equity and promote change and inclusivity in the public sector, with the desired effect of filtering change behaviour and inclusive practices to other tiers of government. Structural frames and multi-tier Government approach is important to addressing gender violence in PNG.

In more recent times, the emergent crisis of Sorcery Accusations Related Violence (SARV) presents as a gendered issue, where those accused, women in particular, become targets

of violent action (Forsyth, 2019; Thomas et al., 2017). The work on SARV and responses as a matter of gender inequality is compounded by the some of the structural inconsistencies previously mentioned. Although an Action Plan (2019) to address SARV exists in draft and legislation (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2013b)repealed to criminalize these acts of violence, response to this form of violence continues to proliferate. Cases of SARV are pervasively experienced by women who are marginalised in their communities, becoming targets of violence due to cosmological belief intersecting with ideals of social and community well-being (Garbe & Struck-Garbe, 2018; McIntosh, 1983; Zocca, 2010). The work to address SARV and gender violence highlights the need for community involvement. The broader community experience provides detail to understanding the factors contributing to gender violence, beyond a focus on it being a women's only experience. Such projects as the "Kommuniti Lukautim Ol Meri (KLOM)" project (FHI360, 2018) suggests community involvement is important toward accountability and in sustaining response and should involve men, women and children. Community led initiatives involving creative mediums contributed to support the work of gender and social inclusivity in broader society, whether in health promotion (Barcham, Silas, & Irie, 2016) or as a project of women's empowerment and men's engagement in gender violence response (Thomas, Kauli, & Borrey, 2018). The work of the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation in Bougainville provides response and address to dealing with community trauma associated to violence during conflict, in a post-civil war context (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, & Jama-Shai, 2014; Smee & Leddra, 2018). This work recognises the legacy of trauma that the experience of gender and other violence can have on individuals and whole communities (Fassin, 2012), and the important work of testimony and witness in response to reconciling these experiences (Fassin et al., 2008). Whether firsthand or as witness, the experience of violence in various forms, affects entire communities.

Other important gender work that contributes to developing broader scope for community response, involves the focused research and reporting on religion (Bieler, Bingel, & Gutmann, 2011; Hemer, 2013; Hermkens, 2008; Robbins, 2004) and masculinities in PNG (Eves, 2008, 2010, 2016; McPherson, 2012; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2012). An important component of this work highlights how traditional gender roles of men have transformed, reformed and at times compete with ideals and values of modernity (Eves, 2010, 2012; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2012). Competing interests between

tradition and modernity have been cited as displacing men's position in society, and this contributes to men's use of violence against women (Chandler, 2014; Garbe & Struck-Garbe, 2018).

These reports highlight some important considerations that underpin the methodological approach and research perspective employed in this thesis. Firstly, reporting and research regarding gender violence in PNG is not nationally representative. As an example, the national strategy to prevent and respond to gender violence in PNG (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017) cites statistics from only four of the twenty two provinces. In a country as ethno-linguistically diverse as PNG with over 800 language groups (Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), 2019), this data is unable to convey a *National* experience that can inform and formulate appropriate and/or adequate National response across the extremely diverse local context and experience. While many reports cite *community response* as a necessary mechanism for addressing violence against women particularly (Amnesty International, 2006), these offerings are limited to recommendations rather than formulated and/or practical application (Bott, Morrison, & Ellsberg, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Martin, 2013; United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2010; Wiseman, 2013).

Few exceptions have been previously cited (Barcham et al., 2016; FHI360, 2018; Thomas et al., 2018). Community response is vital to understanding local experiences, particularly those outside of urban contexts. However, it is less apparent how this community response should be formulated to achieve the outcome of reducing and/or eliminating gender violence. Up to eighty-five percent of the population of PNG live in remote, inaccessible, under resourced and under serviced areas (Australian Government, 2018b). Research and reporting should focus on local communities that have unique and context specific challenges to response and address, such as ineffective and inefficient structural governance, legal and judicial mechanism, and limited public health capacity (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2009); locally specific social and cultural nuance and individual subjectivity to experience (Abirafeh, 2009). Additionally, non-urban centres present as economically poor and other structural issues and social disadvantage including poverty contribute as associated factors to the experience of gender violence (McIlwaine, 2013; Wardlow, 2007). As men and women engage in more contemporary

lifestyles, tensions arise as they navigate new and transforming gendered spaces (Macintyre & Spark, 2017; Spark, 2014, 2015).

1.8.6   Representing PNG Women

Given that gender violence is often focussed on the story of women, particular analysis shows that the titles of several of these reports are highly provocative (e.g. "*Bashed Up*"; "*Violence against women in PNG: Some men are getting away with murder*"). From global to PNG specific reporting on gender violence, these reports contain highly emotive and provocative imagery (Figure 4). This imagery reinforces and polarises the narrative of gender violence in PNG, which then shapes the way readers engage with and interpret the information and then understand the response initiatives. This type of imagery can be evocative and pre-emptive to a particular narrative of PNG women's victimhood. As previously mentioned, local contextual understanding is imperative, not to detract from the extreme experience of gender violence, but to appropriately interpret this experience, so as to better inform appropriate address that involves and includes entire communities and provide meaningful and productive response.

The contextual detail that ethnography offers can help to broaden this current narrative through documenting local experience. It is important to note that in many ways these images are subdued and reflective, and respectful of protecting identity when compared to other representations of women shown with visible scarring and marking due to violence (Sokhin, 2014). Yet, I would argue that even reproducing these images (Figure 4) it subtly reinforces a one dimensional view of PNG women's experiences as isolated, and their positions as sentient sometimes immobile beings bereft of kin and social connections. The dynamism of PNG women as constructed by their social relationships and networks of relating are somewhat silenced through such images. Therefore the storytelling that then exists around such images, perpetuates the view that PNG women are submissive and subordinated and PNG men are perceived as inherently violent and aggressive beings' perpetrators and instigators. It can stifle attempts to consider the broader context of these women's lives and the involvement of men in anti-violence work.
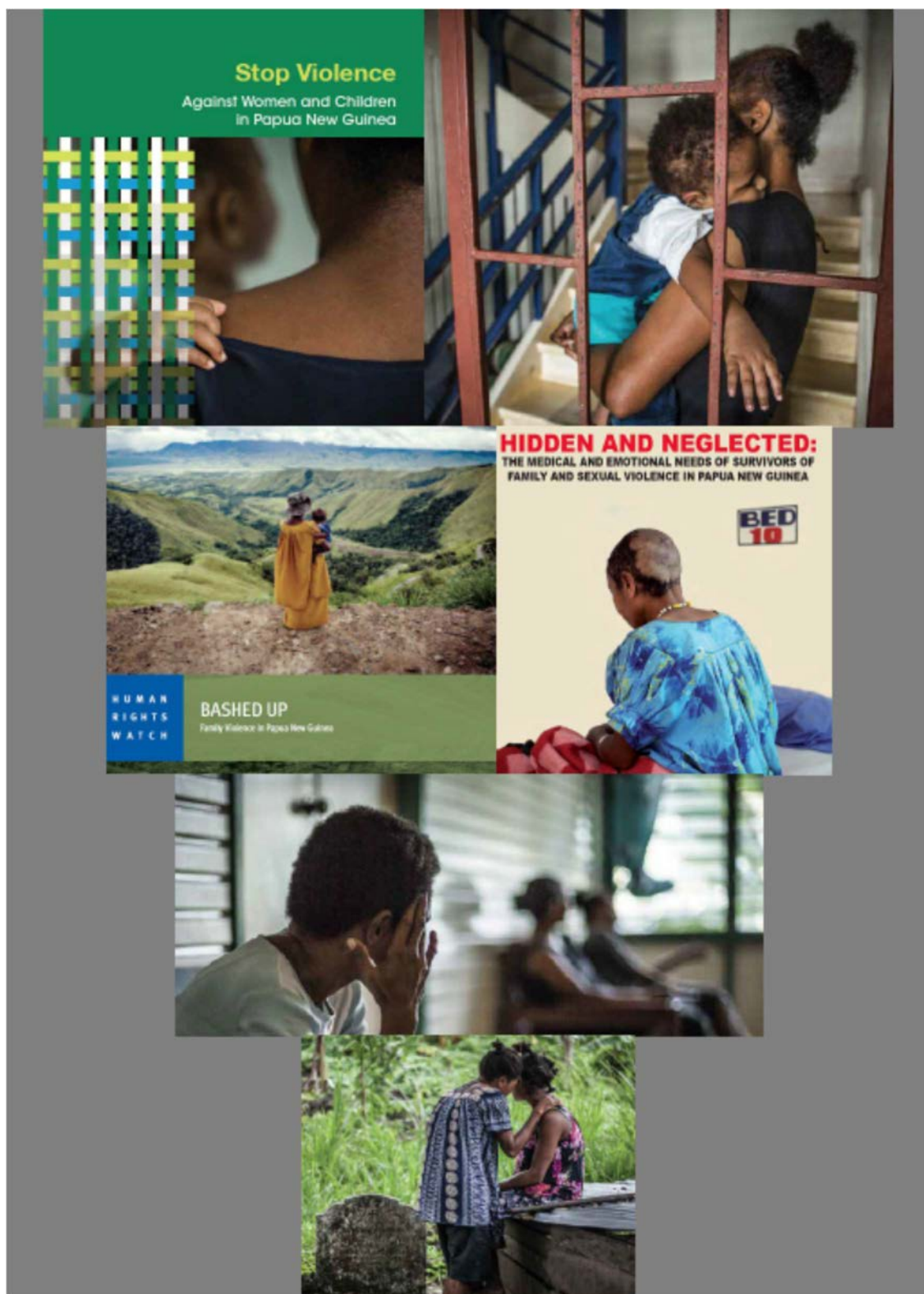
Figure 4. Examples of images used in key documents and reporting on gender violence in PNG

1.9   The Purpose of Study: Research in PNG

The objective of my research is to broaden the understanding of the factors beyond gender that contribute to gender violence in PNG, *and*, to engage the global discourses that frame response mechanisms, with locally contextual experiences and the approaches used in response. The ethnographic frame used in this thesis focuses on the local experience of people at Baimuru station in the Gulf Province of PNG. Some of the particular aims of this research involve:

1) Recording and interpreting various experiences of gendered violent action, through the voice and story of individuals, who have experienced such violence themselves (particularly as *witnesses*) within a particular local experience.

2) Identifying and examining the way gender is defined and enacted, and how it links to notions of personhood and identity and the experience of violence in contemporary Baimuru.

3) Exploring the voice and story of individual and *community* reaction/action and response to issues of gender violence, as part of a greater social form, processes and practices, with particular focus on relationships and networks of relationships within which specified reciprocal responsibilities become attached to social action.

1.10   A Place for Baimuru: Research Contribution

As the scope of this thesis is concerned with detailing and documenting a local lived experience of the action of gender violence, the emphasis is on the story and storying from the witness voice. Therefore, what is captured in this thesis are the multiple voices of those who witness gender violence and then give account of this experience. The mode of these accounts varies, yet they all aim to give voice to their experience and the experience of the people of Baimuru as events of gender violence occur and/or have occurred. The many voices present moments of violence, which can highlight some of the factors that contribute to moments of gender violence enacted within social life. The focus on the *witness* voice recognises people have both direct and indirect experiences with/of gender violence, particularly as individuals within a particular community and lived experience.

The ethnography presented will contribute *new* insight and understanding to the way people develop meaning and make sense of the experience of gender violence so as to contribute to informing and formulating response. This ethnography further contributes by providing a broader understanding of gender violence in PNG, and, broaden the perspective through which gender violence is currently viewed, researched and then reported. Additionally, as we explore the ways in which people experience and respond to gender violence, we can also develop an understanding of the intent of such action, and how this action might be condoned and reinforced within Baimuru (Heise, 1998). Engaging in an analysis of intended action can help to develop and decipher how gender violence has become a "*pervasive*" and persistent issue in PNG (Jolly et al., 2012; Macintyre, 2012).

In PNG the focus, detail and documentation of the lived experience of gender violence has often been told from the larger settings of urban spaces (Baines, 2012) where lifestyles are perceived as more aligned to the pursuit of human and societal advancement within hegemonic neoliberal structures (The World Bank, 2007). The contemporary urban experience is important, but limited to around fifteen percent of the national population (Australian Government, 2015). Apart from the urban experience, there is a perpetual focus on specific and distinct social, cultural and linguistic groups (Ganster-Breidler, 2010) ethnographically renowned for issues of gender violence e.g. Southern Highlands (Goldman, 2007; Haley & May, 2007; Wardlow, 2006). For a country as socially, culturally and linguistically diverse as PNG, this focus is limited. As a result the understanding of gender violence is equally limited, particularly in relation to formulating adequate and appropriate responses (Feeny, Leach, & Scambary, 2012, pp. 121 - 122). Furthermore, the recent Human Rights Watch report (2015, p. 15) suggests there is an "*urgent need for up-to-date nationally representative data*" in PNG to better understand the prevailing issue of gender violence (Online Editor, 2014). Bridging this gap in the broader national understanding of gender violence requires contributions from more sources. This thesis provides significant contribution through its focus on a small remote community in the western portion of the Gulf Province – Baimuru Station.

1.11 Baimuru

The Gulf Province of PNG is located along the Southern Coast of the island of PNG. The landscape of the south-western portion of the Gulf Province is one of immense river

systems, numerous ethno-linguistic people groups, and limited by lack of transportation and access to the area, a lack of infrastructure and lack of basic service delivery (Lovai, 2009). The people of the Gulf Province refer to the waterways as a highway, the only viable option for travel from outer stations and villages, to the major centres of Kikori station in the West or Kerema Township, the provincial capital in the East of the Province [Refer Map. 1]. From Kerema town there is road access to Port Moresby (National capital) via the Hiritano Highway. While Kikori station links to the Highlands Highway, giving access to the Highlands region via the Southern Highlands Province.

Map 2. Map of Papua New Guinea showing Province locations (Source: http://www.mappery.com/map-of/Papua-New-Guinea-physical-Map)

Developed as a Government station pre-independence, Baimuru is situated along the Pie` river within the greater Purari Delta river system. The Purari Delta area is home to people of various language groups (Seligman, 1938; Williams, 1924) [Refer Map. 2]. The most notable groups being the I'ai, Koriki, Kaimare, Voroi, and Vaimuru. These clan groups are similar in dialect, however, as several people in the community expressed, the languages "have different tunes". The Ipiko tribes (in two distinct villages Ipiko and Bagemba), approximately 12.16 kilometres (7.56 miles) up-river, speak a uniquely different

language. The other notable language with great connection to Baimuru is the Pawaia ethno-language group, fondly referred to as 'highlanders' of the Purari [Refer Map 2].

Map 3. Language Groups of the Gulf Province. (Source: http://www-01.sil.org/pacific/png/maps/GP_small.jpg).

At the last census (2011), Kikori district recorded the population at 50, 966, of which Baimuru rural area accounted for 12, 059 (National Statistical Office of Papua New Guinea, 2011). There are approximately 800 people residing in and around the station itself, this includes in the outer villages of Kar`a`rua and Nene`gau; Ip`i`ko and Bag`em`ba. These estimates ebb and flow as often as the tide of the Pie` river, due to visiting family, travellers and tradespeople whose visits are often open-ended and undefined. Baimuru is host to people from other parts of PNG and foreigners who travel to the area to be involved in mission work, trade and significant mining and logging operations (Bell, 2009, 2015). The diverse nature of people in the area contributes to a dynamic and fluid contemporary lived experience. As with most remote centres, the people of Baimuru look outside for hopes of development. Given the opportunity, many have left the village-like existence to seek out employment, services and simply, a better way of life in other centres such as Kikori station, Kerema Township and Port Moresby.

1.12 Social Anthropology in PNG: Luksave em bikpela samting!

1.13 Thesis Synopsis

This chapter has situated the story of gender violence in PNG and outlined the methodological frame for this research and the analytical tools that are being used to present the Baimuru story. It provides a basis for this study and the importance of people telling stories as a means of detailing, documenting and as a means of giving meaning and sense making and as an important social and moral process of acknowledgement. This is importantly recognised through the self-representation of a witness voice to experience from a particular local setting in PNG - Baimuru.

Chapter 2 focuses on the story and storying of *Mother Ana* and her experiences as a mother and as a local leader in her community. As an introduction to lived experience in Baimuru, this chapter offers claims about gendered personhood in the domestic space of the *haus*. Women and men constitute themselves as social and moral beings in this space. As such, social and moral action is enacted in ways that are expected of them. For some, this equates to the experience of violent action. *Mother Ana* tells us that when your home is *ok*, you will be less likely to experience violence.

Chapter 3 presents a conversation I had with two Uncles: *Uncle Alo* and *Uncle Biru*. At the time of fieldwork each were undertaking pastoral training in the Baptist Church. Much like myself, these men were not from Baimuru, but had very strong connection to the station. It is their station. The *Uncles* provide us with insightful reflection about their own experiences of witnessing and responding to an extreme act of violence between husband and wife. Being part of the Church layers their perspective with a Christian moral imperative to action, yet, it also proves to separates them from fully engaging in local life. Under this frame, what is deemed as *right* social action, is framed by Christian values of goodness. People may not always act in the *right* ways or they act in sinful ways, and, in the view of the *Uncles*, this is what leads to violence and conflict in Baimuru.

The Christian moral imperative frames the experience of *Sister Bree* in Chapter 4, particularly as she talks about her personal experience of violence, within her *married* life. She details her struggle to be a *good* wife at the expense of her safety. Being *good* is a matter of social and moral concern, particularly as people determine these within their relatedness to others. For *Sister Bree* to be a good wife meant performing duty bound roles as a wife and mother. The expectation she had that her *goodness* would equate to a

good and happy life was thwarted by the violence she felt. This unmet expectation then became the catalyst for her decision to leave her abusive relationship.

As we move to *Sister Aggie's* story in Chapter 5, we see that the pursuit of individuals in Baimuru is to live good and right lives. The purpose of being good and right is a matter of enabling *normal life*. A life where men and women are concerned with the end goal of marriage, family and homemaking. Education is viewed by men and women, as a favourable way to spend time, until *normal life* begins. Boys and men, girls and women are constructed for this *normal life*, of marriage which secures and situates personhood and position in Baimuru. To realise *normal life* women are faced with greater concerns that challenge their social and moral standing from the time they are sisters and daughters, to the time they become wives with affinal responsibilities.

Chapter 6 presents discussion regarding how people in Baimuru respond to gender violence as a matter of social and moral concern toward restoration rather than a matter of justice. In broader gender violence response discussions, justice for victims is viewed as the desired outcome of structural response. However, in Baimuru, justice is often viewed as ineffective and non-responsive to matters of gender violence, based on structural inconsistencies, police apathy, and an acceptance of gender violence in certain contexts as *normal* action, which prevents reporting such incidents. This chapter makes distinctions about response as restoration and response as justice. These are not mutually exclusive to each other, however, what is apparent is that response to gender violence is rationalised through a lens of *pasin blo luksave* to determine what is good, right, fair, and reasonable

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis and brings together the story of Baimuru. The notions of *luksave* and *pasin* along with the Western theoretical underpinning of social recognition exist as a lens through which to develop meaning from storytelling of the experience of gender violence as both a social process of expression and relating, and as a frame through which moral valuations are made about social action. Importantly, the position of the witness voice and the associated story and process of storying, is highlighted as integral to research methodology utilised in this thesis. The witness voice, associated story and process of storying, the frames of *pasin*, *luksave* and social recognition all converge to create an important interface that supports the notion that *luksave em bikpela samting* in recognising and responding to gender violence in PNG.

CHAPTER 2 "WHEN YOUR HOME IS OK"

"You see, sometimes I used to advise mothers: 'When your home is ok. Your husband will not belt you.' That means you clean your house, ask your husband, if he releases you then you go. If he doesn't release you then don't go out, because when you go, come back, then there are differences in the house. The home will be a problem. And your fellowship is going to be spoilt."

Mother Ana in conversation with Neuendorf (2016a)

Beginning with story from *Mother Ana*, this chapter provides an introduction as the first of five specific witness voices from Baimuru, documented in conversation and storying. The personal experiences that are shared involve broad networks of kin and social relationships and modes of relating. Individual voices will highlight from personal perspective and understanding, a) what motivates particular acts of gender violence; b) an assessment of such acts; c) commentary on the response (or non-response) to such acts; and d) commentary on the implications of particular acts of violence that span from the individual to entire community impact.

I begin with *Mother Ana* as her story provides an important example to explore the significance and use of story and storying (Windchief & San Pedro, 2019) and the way gender modulates storying (Moreton-Robinson, 2016). As a woman of the Purari Delta, specifically, from Mapaio village, (the largest village of the I'ai/Koriki ethno-linguistic group) (Refer Map 2.), *Mother Ana's* personal position provides a voice that highlights the lives of Purari women in contemporary society. As an older woman, a mother and matriarch in her family, her storying brings to the fore the notions of gender (as feminine) that she attaches to particular action, within a specific space and place, the *haus* [TP: House]. *Mother Ana's* storying defines *haus* life through her own observation and through her understanding of what *haus* life represents for people in the Purari Delta. The linkages between what was (customary practice) and what is (contemporary experience) recognise a society and people under pressure of transition and transformation.

The introduction of Christianity through missionization has influenced family values and contributed to reinforcing particular gender narratives in domestic spaces (Jolly & Macintyre, 1989). Different Christian denominations influenced the position of husbands and wives within the *haus* (Langmore, 1989). These denominations included in Baimuru:

The United Church, Seventh Day Adventists (the two predominant Churches); the Baptist Church (considered a *white* church because of the white American missionaries); the Christian Revival Church (CRC); and the foursquare church. Church spaces were gendered and on Sunday's when attending the Uniting Church service I would often sit to the left with all the women, while the men sat on the right side of the building. The Church promotes gender expectations impacting the family structure and life within the *haus* (Hemer, 2019; Jolly & Macintyre, 1989). The *haus* provides an important place and space to view transitions between custom and modernity that contribute to gender violence.

2.1   Mother Ana

As a woman from Mapaio, the largest village in the Purari delta, *Mother Ana* significantly represents of the experience of I'ai women living in Baimuru. Particularly, as a married older woman and mother who has held positions of leadership within her family, social network and broader community. It is from this perspective that she speaks with much authority of *haus* life, particularly the role of women in this space. She is married to a man from East Kikori. The Kikori delta being the neighbouring landscape, connected to, yet distinctly different to the lives of people in the Purari delta (Rhoads, 1983; Weiner, 1988b). People in Baimuru make clear distinctions about being different from people of the Kikori delta region (Refer Map 3), the ultimate distinction is that the Purari and the Kikori delta people have different ways of producing sago (Ulijaszek, 2003, p. 325). People in the Kikori delta were described to me as having a sub-standard production of sago, based on a critique that they only 'washed' their sago one or two times, and used their hands and feet during the filtration process, rather than tools fashioned from bush materials. The sago produced for sale is less processed and therefore, of much lesser quality to sago produced in the Purari delta. Comparatively, people of the Purari delta have *cleaner* sago, based on more steps in the filtration processes before the sago is made into a final product. This comparative came across as a value judgement based on an economic unit – Kikori sago is considered of lessor quality and by extension lesser value because of the way it is produced, therefore by extension the people that produce it are not very *good* people. Maybe the intended inference of such comments is that Kikori people are not as advanced as the people of the Purari delta. Utilizing the analytic of *luksave* very basically, moral judgements were made based on quality and economy.

Map 4. Gulf Province Local Level Government Ma. Kikori District constituted by West Kikori Rural and East Kikori Rural areas (Map from Gulf Provincal Corporate Plan 2013 - 2015, Gulf Province Administration, 2013, p. 16)

Although *Mother Ana* is married to a Kikori man, she proudly defined herself as an I'ai woman. I would surmise that her sentiment was based on a clear distinction that she considered being from the Purari as having greater value than her marrying into Kikori. Further, the strong kin network she had in Baimuru far outweighed the connection that her husband *Father Aita* had on the station.

2.2   Mother Ana's *Maket*

Her marriage struck me as exceptional. The most prominent reason being a specific observation about her *maket* [TP: market] business. I was fortunate enough to reside with my father's cousin brother (my uncle) who also happened to live in close proximity to *Mother Ana* and *Father Aita*. Their *section* included their own house, and two other structures that housed their two daughters (one married, one unmarried) and their married eldest son. *Mother Ana's* main work, indeed, the role I was introduced to her in, was as a very good market seller. *Father Aita* had constructed a permanent *maket haus* [TP: market house] that sat prominently at the main entrance of the Baimuru main market – the first stall on entering the market space from the Trade Store side (Refer

Plate 1, 2 & 3). The *maket haus* is both sturdy and functional and importantly comfortable to the point of luxurious, for *Mother Ana* who would go to the market most days (except the Sabbath – Saturday – holy day for the Seventh Day Adventist Church). No other woman in that space could boast the same level of attention from their husbands in support of their market sales.

Plate 1. The entrance to Baimuru main market, with Mother Ana's haus win to the left of the picture.

Plate 2. Picture shows an unfinished section of the main market, under contract to be built – financed by the Provincial Government. The mismanagement of funds by the private and local construction company has led to this section not being completed. However, on busy days, sellers are forced to sit on the dirt and sell their wares. Additionally, the owners of the contracted company are from the Purari. Their inaction/inability to finish this project has led to internal conflict in the community in Baimuru – even escalating to violence at points.

Plate 3. The view of the main market area from Mother Ana's haus win.

Living in close proximity to this family [the *Karu* family], I would observe each morning as *Father Aita* would load all the market goods into his *kenu* [TP: canoe] and paddle them up to the main market rather than allow his wife to carry the heavy burden from their house by foot to the main market which was at least one kilometre away. This action was repeated in the afternoon when *Mother Ana* would close her *maket* to come home. This spoke volumes to me of the support that *Father Aita* had for his wife in her *maket* endeavours. The support of *Father Aita* ensured good business for *Mother Ana* and this had the effect of building the status of *Mother Ana* and by extension, the *Karu* family. Furthermore, the action by *Father Aita* in this way showed a reverence to *Mother Ana* in relation to her being a leader in the community. This is a simple example of the nature of *luksave* in kin and social networks. *Father Aita*, through his simple actions of support was showing acknowledgment and understanding to the position that *Mother Ana* held as his wife, as a mother and as a leader and businesswoman in the community. The actions of support for her business was, in part, motivated by the understanding that it would be reciprocated by good sales from which he would also benefit.

Luksave as a concept of relational action, also acknowledges mutual recognition and respect between *Mother Ana* and *Father Aita* (Honneth & Farrell, 1997). The action by *Father Aita* indicates a level of respect he had towards *Mother Ana* as having a position and place that required him to be supportive in distinct ways. This is particularly pertinent given that Baimuru is not his place. The dedication that *Father Aita* enacted

spans many years of living in Baimuru station as both are now in their mid-sixties. In like manner, *Mother Ana* reciprocated by deferring to her husband in matters of decision-making, and indeed family matters.

2.3   These Men In Baimuru, They Don't Understand

One of the particular critical points that *Mother Ana* raises in her storying is that men in Baimuru do not support or even consider support of their women. This critique was conveyed as follows (May 2016):

> These men in Baimuru, they don't understand. Whether my wife is sitting down ok, doing the *maket*.
>
> Because, the *maket* is for, to survive us ah? We need something in our house. So, the lady is going up for the *maket*. The men should think, 'is my wife sitting ok, or?' if he comes around sitting like that [idly], they are not thinking to make anything, that the ladies can sit down properly.

The importance of the support *Father Aita* provided her over the years is not lost on her and is highlighted in her assessment of the situation of other *maket* sellers who are all mostly women[2]. Her voice acknowledges the prominent place of the *maket* in the lives of women in Baimuru while also acknowledging the hardship that women face, having little or no support from their men to achieve *gutpela maket* [TP: a good market]. Women should be afforded support from their husbands, just as she has from hers.

2.4   Lukautim haus - a version of "Domesticity" or a justification for violence?

Although her critique of Baimuru men is negative in the *maket* example she also explains that the support of husbands is a direct assessment of women's own actions within the *haus*. She states:

> I used to give this advice to the mothers … *lukautim haus* [TP: Look after you house/home]. Sometimes, if you don't sleep with your husband, that means, the problem will come up. If you share with him that one is; he's releasing you, because two of you are already talking to each other. Cause he's already releasing you to go out and do the work.

Although she is speaking from the perspective of women's ministries as part of the SDA church this statement covers her assessment of women's roles and responsibilities within

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[2] Most *maket* sellers on a daily basis were women. Only on occasion would men sell.

the space and place of *haus* that directly impacts the actions of their husbands in and out of the *haus* space and place. The role that women play in this space and place is directly bound to their responsibility to their men. This sense of responsibility (of women to men) directly impacts the way in which their men are responsible to, and then develop action toward their women. It is this type of sentiment that contributes to women's acceptance of violence that may be enacted against them and men's sense of entitlement to enact violence against *their* women.

2.4.1 "Problems Will Come Up"

Mother Ana cites one specific part of marital life as an example of what may cause men to react and respond with force. She clearly states that if women withhold in their sexual relationships with men *problems will come up*. There is a notion that women's biological distinction dictates their role as sexual partner to men and bearer of children. Given this consideration women's responsibilities to enact both roles within a marriage relationship are expected and highly regarded by men and women alike. The neglect by women to this part of their role within the *haus* context then creates a basis for the ill treatment they either expect and/or eventually come to expect from their men. This expectation is also deeply embedded in the consciousness of others in the community (particularly kin and affine). The expectation of ill treatment for non-fulfilment of such responsibilities then also becomes the reinforcement that develops into the acceptance (women's' own, and others), of their experience of violence especially when experienced within the *haus* context.

2.4.2 "The Home"

The other distinct point *Mother Ana* makes is the advice she gives to women to look after their homes or in Tok Pisin, *lukautim haus*. "*Lukautim haus*", distinguishes, for *Mother Ana* what the role of women in the *haus* should be. If this role is not recognised by women, it can create hardship within their relationships with men in the *haus* context.

In a short statement she suggests Baimuru women are defined by particular action, within a particular context while also asserting that, the movement of women, is dependent on the fulfilment of these displays of womanhood, within the *haus*. By *Mother Ana's* assessment women who do not achieve these goals are not performing their role as they should within the *haus*, therefore the reciprocal action is that they will not receive the necessary support from their husbands in their other activities (e.g. *maket*).

> When your home is ok. Your husband will not belt you. That means you clean your house, ask your husband, if he releases you then you go. If he doesn't release you then don't go out, because when you go, come back, then there are differences in the haus. The home will be a problem. And your fellowship is going to be spoilt.

A woman is tasked with the responsibility to ensure a clean and orderly house. This responsibility casts her in a role that also implicates her character in and outside of the "*home*". If this role is not realised (or neglected) a woman should expect that the inability to fulfil her responsibilities will ensure a negative reaction within the space and place of "*home*". The implications are far greater than unease in a household. There are distinct attachments of *morality* that are asserted in this statement that suggests a house that is unkempt is due to the inaction of a "bad" woman. The assertion of a *spoilt fellowship* highlights the implications for those who adhere to Christian beliefs and associated lifestyles. *Mother Ana* suggests that a woman's action (or inaction) within the *haus* will result in her inability to engage in her religious duties effectively hindering her relationships in the Church and the associated activities of the Church.

Essentially, a woman's responsibility is bound in the desire of her husband/man. This responsibility is based on the basic premise that her role is to ensure her *home is ok*. These roles that *Mother Ana* highlights suggests a form and measure of "*domesticity*", which is akin to the divisions of labour imagined in the Western conceptions of domestic life, marriage and extendedly, family life (Engels, 1988). These divisions of labour within Baimuru *haus* are not to support and reinforce capitalist endeavours. They serve as a frame through which Baimuru women are expected to act within a particular relationship set (married relationship) within a particular context (*haus*) involving particular responsibilities (*lukautim haus*). Therefore, the expectation attached to a relationship set within a particular context involving particular responsibilities provides the distinction of gender within the space and place of *haus* life.

Mother Ana's explanation is shaped by her position (and perspective) as an elder in the SDA Church, as matriarch in her family, as a proficient businesswoman (*maket* seller), which equates to her position in Baimuru as a leader and advisor. This role was reinforced by her previous position as a women's representative in Local Level Government for over twenty years (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2009). This position was in fact the reason she was asked to participate in an interview.

Her witness voice from that experience included particular story of events of gender violence which she herself responded to and as a result, it has invoked her desire to provide *advice* to other women. This advice can be interpreted as preventative or the 'what to do' to ensure women do not encourage or exacerbate violence against themselves. However, the way it is shaped suggests women are implicitly condoning the violence that may be perpetrated against them.

2.4.2.1 *'Haus' in the Global Discourse*

The action of women in Baimuru is not distinctly assumed as a matter of feminist distinction or biological divide. Although, biological divide was expressed in *Mother Ana's* storying it is not the distinguishing factor that defines notions of gender. Rather, the actions of expectation within the confines of the *haus* are greatly attached to the expectation of action in regard to the relationship set that exists within that space and place. In fact, a western feminist lens might interpret this as the structure of patriarchy on the lives of women, and women who seek to operate outside this patriarchy as subversive (Wardlow, 2006). What is made prominent is the responsibilities women are faced with, and the expectation of fulfilling those relational responsibilities. Furthermore, these responsibilities are reinforced within the definitions of womanhood and gender within the context of the *haus*. The social responsibilities and pressures of expectations that women feel in their roles defines the action that then ensues within that space. As Jolly and Macintyre (1989, p. 1 to 2) noted in earlier works, *Mother Ana's* story shows how domestic and family relations have been impacted by introduced European ideas particularly "relations between the sexes" (Ibid). As *Mother Ana's* account makes evident, people in Baimuru have incorporated introduced notions of domestic life as part of their understanding gender roles in specific spaces, like the *haus*, marriage and gender relations more generally. Whether as the pursuit of modernity or reverence to religious frames, men and women see their own involvement with these structures as elevating themselves closer to global ideals of contemporary society. By conforming to these structures it is one way people represent themselves as actors in this space, and this includes the institutions of marriage and gender relations under the Church, and through a Western ideological lens.

2.4.2.2 *Women's Behaviour*

Mother Ana also states that women's behaviour is the precursor to their experience of violence against them. This suggests that the burden of responsible action is placed on

women rather than men. *When your husband is ok, he will not belt you*. In this context, we understand the husband's good well-being and position to be paramount to ensuring good relations between men and women. When men do not have good well-being in the *haus* violence can occur or be expected by women. Notions of domesticity as constructed around good action by women within the home underpin this notion (Choi & Jolly, 2014; Jolly & Macintyre, 1989). Good relations between men and women are dependent on and determined by the ability of women to "keep house" or in Tok Pisin, *lukautim haus;* seek permission prior to their movements and, keep their men sexually satisfied. These are contextual markers that *Mother Ana* suggests are mutually and broadly understood:

> But, for your home ... men must understand you. And wife, I must understand my husband. Understanding must stay with each other. But a husband who doesn't understand you, you have a problem. The problem will stay between the two of you. Like argument for things like money. Punishment from them ah?!
>
> Going out to the market, coming back, we got this amount of money – like that I think – that thing must stay. Understanding must stay, between the two of you. The home will be ok.

A man in the role of *husband* is cast and tasked with the same underlying imperative. "*Understanding*" is a mutually recognised entity that supports the *right* action between men and women in the context of *haus* and discourages "*problems*" between men and women (Honneth & Joas, 1988); necessary *pasin bilong luksave* that supports accord. What *Mother Ana* suggests in this part of her storying is that understanding is important, and that understanding can come from open communication between men and women.

2.4.2.3 *Is Your Home Ok?*

An understanding between men and women that comes from communication leads to a good *haus* life, a life without *problem.* A good *haus* is one where women perform the necessary actions that constitute, *lukautim haus*. This is not surprising given the historical construction that now manifest in contemporary society that define domestic spaces, particularly when influenced by the Church (Choi & Jolly, 2014). What is apparent and important to note is the acceptance of this position by women themselves (Hermkens, 2008). The expectation of marriage within a *domestic* space such as the *haus* is interred with responsible action by women, and when acknowledged by their men presents them as socially and morally acceptable within this space.

The distinguishing features of gender within the specific context of *haus* is used by *Mother Ana* as a moral lens that defines and is used to assess the action of women and men as

good or not. This lens helps to determine (and accept) why *problems* occur or whether a *home is ok*. The scope of that moral lens does not assume that violence against women is outright bad. In fact, when a husband *belts* their wife it is an acceptable action as part of their particular relationship set and appropriate when a gendered responsibility is not realised or *lukautim haus* left unfulfilled. Herein lies the "pervasive" nature of violence in Baimuru and more broadly, a factor acknowledged (Chandler, 2014). The frames through which people rationalise the *use* of violence, is based on expectations of behaviour. Expectations unrealised determine necessary reaction such as belting and or *punishment*, particularly against women. Within *Mother Ana's* storying of *haus* life in Baimuru men are centred as the point from which their action and the action of women are defined.

The expectations of creating (and maintaining) good *haus* life is not dependent on the actions of men. *Mother Ana's* storying shows that women experience violence within the frame of *haus* life in their relationships with their husbands/men and this is understood as a product of their own action. In contrast, men in Baimuru are not held accountable for their individual use of violent action. From *Mother's* perspective it seems the good life is constituted by women's responsible action and an understanding that neglect to perform responsible action will bring about inevitable violent action against them (Dolan, 2009). Dolan's (2009) work provides discussion around what it means to be married extracted from historical European representations that have solidified this institution. Dickson-Waiko (Dickson-Waiko, 2010, 2013) and Abaijah (Abaijah & Wright, 1991) suggest PNG women have contributed further to this conversation, recognising the deep roots of colonial and mission structures that further shape women in 'domestic' spaces.

> The domestication of these small numbers of Indigenous women effected their incorporation into the developing colonial state to some extent, although Indigenous and colonial patriarchy colluded in largely preventing such women access to education in most districts until the 1960s.
>
> (Dickson-Waiko, 2013, p. 179)

Fidelity of women in marriage is also at issue. Within the bounds of the definition that Dolan (2009) analyses, what constitutes and defines conflict, including violence associated to fidelity are enacted and experienced within the frames of the institution of marriage. Often in discourse about marriage in PNG, Melanesia more broadly, is the notion of uneven power distributions between genders as matters concerning men's (in)fidelity (HIV) women's (in)fidelity (gender violence) (Akuani et al., 2010; Hammar,

2008; Leavitt, 1991; Wardlow, 2007; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2012). Therefore, in the pursuit of no *problems* and an *ok* home the acceptance of violence exists in a belief that hardship is entangled within and often considered necessary toward achieving these things - ok home with no problems. This sentiment is prominently reinforced in Christian doctrine on the nature of marriage which reinforces a patriarchal structure that affords men prominence within the *haus* (Ephesians 5:22 - 23, Bible, 2013; Bird & Carroll, 2016).

2.4.2.4   *Other Problems*

Mother Ana even suggests that the point at which relationships between men and women are formed pre-emptively shapes the nature of *haus* life which then proceeds to shape the actions they are likely to exhibit. In Baimuru and the greater Purari Delta *haus* life is a product of *accepted* relationships between men and women. However, the customary practices that once facilitated the formation of these relationships is seen to have diluted in contemporary society:

> Now you look at these young couples when they are married; because they are not planned.
>
> Before [in] our father's time; like the boy's family will come to father and mother, that one is a good culture. So, you will not go out and make another friend, with another boy. Cause you are already engaged. But now, you see, young girls are married, without a plan.

It seems young men and women are not appropriately "constructed" in contemporary society to equip them for *haus* life. Their ability to live up to the expectations of roles and responsibilities within *haus* are drastically hindered than previous times and especially compounded by the fact that they may be in *unplanned* relationships. Use of the term *plan* is not to suggest that the young men and women who enter into these relationships are devoid of foresight. Rather, *Mother Ana's* suggestion is that the customary practices and processes that were once negotiated and bound people into these relationships are no longer engaged and as a result the relationships formed will experience hardship. This is a moral dilemma for parents as much as it is an indictment of and dilemma for their children. The previous process of identifying a marriageable partner, the *plan*, is presumably the ability of extended kin networks to identify a good and compatible man or woman to marry. There is a subtle critique of the ability of young people that is expressed in the words of *Mother Ana*. This critique is likely from a place of her perceived status of leadership. Yet it is also a distinct commentary on the emergence of the *new* ways that relationships between men and women form, within a contemporary society.

Mother Ana's assessment suggests that the previous practices of her "*father's time*" were structured, sanctioned and trusted and ensured acceptable coupling and a good *haus*. *Mother Ana* represents a generation that is nostalgic for customary practices that were perceived as structuring good life in Baimuru. The action of young people to determine and form their own relationships is not only a point of critique but also deeply unsettling (for *Mother Ana*) to the nature of relationships that exist within the context of contemporary *haus* life. Very few families adhere to previous conventions of customary practices. What is observed are people autonomously choosing their relationships for the purposes of creating *haus* life. There is a space of transition toward the acceptance of *new* modes of forming relationships that involves the choosing of partners by both young men and women (Neuendorf, 2020). As these relationships are realised and become known, the current uncertainty around what adequately defines and formalises these relationships, can often be a flashpoint for acts of violence between and amongst kin networks in Baimuru.

2.4.2.5 *Constructing Men and Women*

Analysis of historical records elucidates how distinctions of gender have been constructed over time and how these distinctions were reinforced through customary practices. The documentation of the lives of people of the Purari delta is limited and it is the seminal works of F.E. Williams that continue to serve as an ethnographic guide to understanding the lives of people in the Purari delta region, including life in Baimuru (Williams, 1919, 1923, 1924, 1934, 1939, 1940; Williams & Strong, 1923). The works of Bell around resource extraction activities and relational responsibilities serve to deepen this understanding in more contemporary times (Bell, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016; Bell, West, & Filer, 2015). Colonial administrator and anthropologist F.E. Williams wrote that the daily lives of the people of the Purari delta region were preoccupied with ceremony and custom, focused primarily on the lives of men and the intricate *Ravi* or men's longhouse ceremonies. William's interest in women and children stems from the perspective that the lives of women and children and their story is ultimately attached to the lives of men. A direct correlation to the view of *Mother Ana* in contemporary society.

Williams (1924, pp. 60 - 61) writes "*women enjoy a fair amount of personal freedom*" and children were "*treated very kindly*". The lives of children were of little concern until it was

deemed that they might be eligible for initiation into adulthood. Boys specifically, before and after seclusion in the initiation ceremony (the *Ravi*) were not tasked with duties that entail responsibility within the *haus.* The business of men and young boys, particularly in the *Ravi,* was to share custom, transfer and produce knowledge, and learn ceremonial practice and cosmological systems (Williams, 1939). Additionally, and importantly, the *Ravi* was a place for young men to learn about the relational networks that exist to which they are participants within. The relative freedom experienced by children in the delta region continues in contemporary society as observed in Baimuru. However, what was once used as the mechanism for training and learning, the *Ravi*, has in some local settings been replaced by other social practices, alternate corporal spaces and places and in some instances, has been made entirely redundant. In previous times although children were granted relative freedom it was the practices of seclusion and initiation that provided opportunities to discuss and impart information and knowledge of maturation into adulthood. Bonnemère (2018, p. 41) speaks to the way in which kin relations are formed during ritualised moments of the life cycle (such as conception, birth, growth, maturation, marriage and death). In Baimuru from the story, there is a sense that these moments at which ritual solidifies meaning for personhood and relations, are diffuse and may no longer exist at all. This creates internalised tension about how people then make sense of kin relations including the timing and action that signifies these relationships throughout the life cycle. This is particularly pertinent for *Mother Ana* when she identifies children are not *advised* as they should, in contemporary Baimuru. Additionally, a diffuse ability to engage in ritual creates issues for men, as the means of authenticating their experiences in contemporary times is limited (Bonnemère, 2014; Sai, 2007; P. J. Stewart & Strathern, 1999). Given the emergence of such things as the *new* formations of relationships between men and women, the situation of children within broader community life has also changed. *Mother Ana* recognises that this transition affects children and she offers some recourse:

> Talking to children too, if you go over, the child won't listen to you. Because the word you are throwing is over her or his limit!
>
> When you want to talk to them, go to their level and talk to them. You scream, he or she is seeing that 'oh mummy and daddy are screaming at me. I'm frightened'. So, every time, it will stay to his brain or her brain [children's memories]. So, sometimes, the son or daughter will not come close to you. Anything she wants to

talk to you, she's frightened. Cause, otherwise, you will scream at her or him. That thing will stay in the home.

Every time I control my bubu's [grandkids], so they listen. I say, 'when I married your Bubu [grandfather] here, I talk a lot. He never talks a lot.' I belt the children he never belts the children. Now they are already big.

So, listen and understanding is a very big thing! And respect!

Some people's property if they just take it out – 'excuse me, can I have this thing?' – ask [asking/permission] is a very big thing. If you don't ask, you are stealing it. At home, when children are doing like that, the mother and father will fight.

Cause father and mother, you are not advising the children. Advice is a very big thing and understanding. That's how two of us, we stay.

Talking, communication and advice are highlighted by *Mother Ana* as the keys to developing children towards the outcome of a good home. She does cite *belting* and *control* as a means of shaping the development of her own children. In somewhat contradiction she deplores the use of screaming, suggesting that it *frightens* children. Whereas she talks of *belting* her children as useful to their upbringing. This is another subtle indication of the pervasiveness of violence in PNG. Within the *haus* violence against children is acceptable in some forms, driven by a moral outcome of constructing good children through discipline. Violent action (using that understanding) is a means of expressing parent's discipline and children learning to be good. As *Mother Ana* understands it, this is both socially and morally acceptable, however it in fact reinforces within PNG children that violence is useful and justifiable. The precarious nature of the intent and use of violence within *haus* life is that it is linked to a notion of *good* home life, where parents act out of goodness to show through violent action that they care enough for their children to teach them to be good. In doing so, they are then also acknowledged as good and moral beings by enacting necessary discipline through violence.

2.5 A Daughter's Burden – A Father's Right

The *control* of children that *Mother Ana* intimates is not only exerted over children but can be openly exerted against young unmarried people, girls and young women in particular (Bhana, 2010; Spark, 2015). The manifestation of *control* is often experienced as violence but underpinning this is a moral intent to discipline. For young unmarried people, women in particular, the use of violence is intended to either reinforce parents right to *control*; or serves as a lesson taught through disciplinary action. That lesson is

effectively to ensure a good or ok home and goodness of character in their young people, which is importantly, a reflection on kin.

The following reflection illustrates these two points. It is a story of my own experience of being witness to a father's violence against his own daughter and was recorded as a diary entry during my time in Baimuru (August 2016):

> Friday family movie night had quickly become an institution not long after my arrival in Baimuru (February 2016). We were just about to finish the first movie and as we had enough battery power in the laptop, we were discussing what the next movie might be. I heard, what seemed like a gust of wind. Odd, given that it was a very still night after substantial rain that day.
>
> It was already around 10 pm, and as with most nights in Baimuru, we seemed to be the only family still out, under our house. Most people retreat to the comfort of their homes when it starts to get a bit darker, due to no electricity and the strong and lingering belief in sorcery. Our family was the exception – we would often stay up later, chatting and telling stories. Friday night particularly, was the designated night for movie watching, after a day of charging the laptop at the trade store – one of the very few sources of power in Baimuru. The section[i] was dark, there was no moonlight out, and the night sky was shrouded by clouds.
>
> About ten minutes from the time we heard the 'gust of wind', we then heard heavy footfalls (thuds) down the lane that divided our little section, known as "middle-town" (known as such for being the middle section between the main Station area and the end of Baimuru town at the end of the airstrip). As the steps became louder, we realized that it was a person running (we could make out sounds of heavy breathing) and another set of steps - someone following in pursuit. There was a louder thud, a crash, and then a loud screech. I assumed it was a dog or pig (or possible cassowary) that had got loose and was making its grand escape down the lane. It was not.
>
> We heard a large scuffle and then the air was still again, though heavy. There was not much noise during the scuffle, just more heavy exasperated breathing, and tension in the air. My Uncle, I noted after the event, had remained silent and calm and unmoved as he sat hearing this event unfold. I along with the rest of the family was mystified – what was happening? Given the community is not powered, we remained in the dark and silence, individually assessing what the situation might be.
>
> The scuffle over, my Uncle then made a short comment about a neighbouring house. My family started to talk about the fact that the daughter of the neighbour house, Sha, had been in trouble that afternoon with her parents. As one of the younger women in our section, Sha had become like a small sister to me. Often in the afternoon's I would go and sit by the river with her and other young people from our section and tell stories and share information. (Refer Plate 4.)

Plate 4. The afternoon meeting area along the river. The picture was taken as the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Medical ship was arriving (September 2016)

One of the main topics of conversation on my return to Baimuru after a short break at the beginning of August 2016, was that Sha had recently started a 'friendship' (i.e. relationship) with a young man from Daru in Western Province. He had in fact been left stranded in Baimuru[ii] and was unable to leave. It was during this time that Sha and he had formed a friendship.

What we had witnessed that evening, in the darkness; what we had heard, was, in fact, sister Sha, fleeing from her father. Although Sha's relationship was known to many, her parents had only recently become privy to it, and (as we found out later) had tried to prevent her from seeing this man. Sha had tried to escape the house and the anger of her parents. What seemed to enrage her parents further was the fact that Sha was meeting with this young man in somewhat plain sight of them, under another house in our section.

After hearing the initial scuffle, there were then further screams as Sha's father began to drag her back to their house. I then heard a thumping sound – it was the distinct sound of wood hitting flesh followed closely by gasping and screaming in anguish – it was Sha. I found out later from another family member that Sha's father had used a coconut branch to hit her so she wouldn't run away. He hit her repeatedly until she was on the ground and barely moving. While hitting her, he kept yelling "inaf nau ah?" (is this enough?) and she replied in language "na da ri'o" [I don't want any more]. The reference to *enough* struck me as two-fold: 1) enough of the relationship and 2) have you had enough discipline?

The incident started a conversation that eventually ended our family movie night. Everyone was reeling from this event. I myself, in particular, not only because of the nature of violence against a sister but also as I had come to know Sha's mother and father – I referred to them as Uncle and Aunty. I had interacted with them amicably at various times and had never witnessed either act in like manner at any other time during my fieldwork. It was a shock to know that this had taken place.

I eventually saw sister Sha two days after the event – she could not speak, her face badly beaten, her mouth and cheeks were swollen. All she could do was a nod in acknowledgment and shake her head in disagreement. It was a tough thing to witness as a friend, as a person unable to provide any response, knowing what had happened not far from where I sat. What seemed more exasperating was the action by Sha's father was broadly accepted. He had been justified in acting this way so that Sha could know her error. Her father's action was necessary to reinforce parental rights and the obligations of Sha to consider her parents' wishes. The situation was further compounded by Sha's blatant disregard of these wishes in plain sight of her parents. The action was necessary as a means of reinforcing parental control (i.e. right) while serving as an instructive to their daughter to defer to their parental advice, rather than act independently.

The use of violence in family situations like that described in Sha's story is observed to be common in Baimuru. Particularly, parental violence against young unmarried women is often intended as a form of discipline and of ensuring the virtue of young women. Another quite persistent form of family violence that occurs is perpetrated by male kin who inhabit particular places within the family structure (e.g. eldest son) who then enact violence towards other family members not just specifically women alone (Human Rights Watch, 2015, p. 3).

Sister Sha's experience of violence is linked to what *Mother Ana* talks about in that it acknowledges the acceptance of gendered and violent action within the parameters of family and *haus* life. What *Sister Sha* argues for is a foundational role of gendered and violent action in relation to space and place – *haus* is not merely a bounded, physical structure. *Haus* is a conceptual place and space that frames the way people embed and enact their relationships with one another. The space that afforded the violent action between *Sister Sha* and her father was outside the physical *haus*, yet, the interaction is defined and condoned because it is understood to be an extension of what is allowed and expected within the physical space that the *haus* affords – whether between man and wife, or between father and daughter, as shown in this example.

The violence enacted by *Sha's* father is viewed on two fronts by those that made sense of it. Myself as researcher saw it as extreme reaction to a young woman who had acted

independently to engage in a relationship with a young man. The second, that can be gleaned from the story from others, is that *sister* Sha had entered into a cycle of her life that signified maturation or the ability to form a relationship with a man that would lead to marriage (Bonnemère, 2018). Her life in this realm is bound in her social and kin responsibility firstly to her family, and secondly to her community – entering into an unsanctioned relationship created tension and disruption in these relationships (Ibid). The choice she made reflected poorly on her parents and they would be recognised by her action amongst others in Baimuru. The impact of which was not just the action of a disobedient daughter. It was in fact the shame that her parents may have felt given the community perception of her place as their daughter in the context of her relationship within them as part of their *haus* life. Her actions directly reflected her relationship to them, and her disobedience when engaging in this relationship was a slight to her kin. The violence against *Sister Sha* was justified as necessary and even reasonable to protect the family. As *pasin bilong luksave* dictates, *Sha's* action as a non-acknowledgement of her parent's wishes for her, defined her as a *bad* daughter, acting in a way that was both socially and morally unacceptable.

2.5.1 Control and Fear

The actions of parents may stem from a fear of promiscuity of young unmarried women, and this presents a direct challenge and barrier for young women and their general and sexual health and wellbeing (Clark, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). The ability of Purari women to determine and enter into relationships of their choosing is not uncommon, in fact it was once acceptable particularly as it followed that these relationships would be formalised by ceremonial exchange (Williams, 1924, pp. 52 - 55).

In more recent times the missionization that occurred in the Gulf at the time of colonial contact has embedded itself in the lives of people and has constructed particular frames that negatively impact the freedom and actions of unmarried women (Firth, 1997). The impact of this is the inability of women to enter into relationships with men without chastisement from kin or being made vulnerable in the transactional exchanges that occur between men and kin (Lewis, 2009; Vallely et al., 2010). The underlying fear of the promiscuity of young women therefore provokes the active control of family, particularly male kin, the result of such control is often then enacted through the use of violence such as that against *Sha* (Wardlow, 2006). What *Sister Sha's* experience exemplifies is that

some young women in PNG are denied certain sexual and reproductive rights, particularly when they are seen to transgress kin and societal values (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016). While shown in this experience, other areas of PNG, such as the Trobriand Islands in Milne Bay Province, young women (and men) experience a certain level of "sexual freedom" and are afforded autonomy in the relationships they choose with men (Lepani, 2008). While autonomy in sexual relationships exists in the Trobriand Islands, women's agency, in making decisions, is bound in a strong sense of collective identity and social ties within kinship and inter-clan relations (Lepani, 2012, 2015). Whereas, we see in the case of *sister Sha*, sexual autonomy in Baimuru is as much a matter of social ties and kinship as it is a precursor to the future considerations of marriage and reproduction. Therefore women like *Sha* are encumbered at all stages of their unmarried life, and this constructs their individual autonomy prior to entering into *marit* and *haus* life.

2.6   Relationships between Men and Women

The use of violence in *Sha's* story exemplifies a core value in the lives of people in the Purari and indeed in Baimuru. The value of women is aligned to the expected outcome (an expectation driven by their families) to enter into appropriate relationships toward the ideal of marriage and the outcome of *haus* life. Choosing partners and securing marriage was and remains an expectation of young men and women and the necessary responsibility of male kin (Williams, 1924, p. 54). *Mother Ana* spoke of her own experience of this process (May 2016):

> Like before, I used to tell one of the stories to, who, [daughter in-law NAME], got married to my son. She's asked how I got married to father. So, my daughter [MA referring to me] I can tell you my life story!

> I didn't want to get married to this father here! My brain was thinking that I was going to marry a rich man! So, my family can stay rich people. So, I can stay with my mother and father and they will be looked after by this man. Just because of, my father doesn't want.

> [Researcher: Did you choose to marry Father Aita?]

> No! I [was] forced to marry him! Because my father wanted me to marry a man who can work and look after them. So that was my experience, my life story. I should marry a rich man and look after my family. And my brothers and sisters will grow up as educated people. That was in my brain.

> When people used to write a letter [propose] to me, I don't accept them! Cause I don't want.

Until father doesn't want a rich man, to look after them; he wants a grassroots man. So, I marry him [Father Aita], by force. That was my experience.

I used to tell these stories to my girls. My father was trying to shoot me, with a shotgun for this man – so I will [would have] died! I don't' know what these young people are thinking, but my experience is different.

I used to tell these stories to [daughter]. My aim was to marry a European man, but my father doesn't want to. Because he was a manager of the store, but my father doesn't want, so it's ok. My father wants a grassroots man. And here we stayed.

He [Father Aita] got married, he got one son [previous relationship]. I don't count on that one – before is before. That is your life. I am a fresh woman. I will not get cross. He will not go anywhere, I will stay.

Most of the time I will go out, because of this Women's rep business. Even that [youngest daughter] is a very small girl, about 6 or 7 years. I used to leave her. I used to go out to the women's rep.

All those Kerema big people, they know me. Any women's what [business] that used to come up, they used to call me 'Mother Ana we need you'. So, I used to leave [daughter in Kerema] and go up to the lodge.

It seems contradictory that the sentiment of *Mother Ana* in this recent statement suggests she did not appreciate the *planning* of her own marriage, given that she spoke nostalgically about her "*father's time*" and customary practice as being a good way of forming relationships. Her marriage to *Father Aita* was at the behest of her father, it was a matter of responsibility for him (her father) and a matter of duty for her (*Mother Ana)*. The arrangement of *Mother's* situation was as she admits not of her choosing. Her father was responsible for solidifying her relationship with her now-husband, *Father Aita*. Additionally, *Mother* perceived that she might have a *good* life if she was married to a 'white' or Caucasian man. Her siblings might have been afforded education and other opportunities had this been the case.

The perception of *good* is multifaceted as we unpack the various distinctions that are attached to the definitions of a *good* that shapes the lives of men and women. *Mother Ana* made a distinction of goodness based on a belief that being connected to a *white* man would enable advancements for herself and her family (Bashkow, 2017; Falck, 2018; Neuendorf, 2016b). The hope for advancement is attached to the ideal notion that association with white men will elevate the position of women. This sentiment has been constructed in the gender violence response mechanisms that currently exist where an alignment to Western values will provoke change and end violence. These views have been duly critiqued (Hukula, 2012b; Rooney, 2018). The frames of response are driven

by Western concepts of the experience of gender violence and often coupled with broad generalisations about PNG culture and society, particularly generalisations about PNG women (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017). These generalisations are useful to a point but are inadequate and inhibit the translation of the social microcosms within which gender violence is enacted in PNG into the global discourses which frame response mechanisms.

2.7 "I Used to Give Advice Only"

The structures that frame and provide gender violence response remain underdeveloped in small communities like Baimuru. There is no welfare office and the closest Family and Sexual Violence Unit (FSVU) officer is located in Kerema over one hundred kilometres away. The welfare officer as the first point of contact would provide important services for mediation, conflict resolution, and support for men and women that require such support particularly in response to gender violence. Women are only able to attend these services when the Police have enough resources such as money, time, fuel and manpower, to transport these women and men to Kerema and facilitate formal supports and response. Although the FSVU is not in close proximity to Baimuru it does not assume that these types of services like mediation, conflict resolution and support do not occur. Indeed, *Mother Ana* explains how her previous role as Women's Representative to Local Government afforded and even required her to engage in response activities either to prevent or respond to gender violence:

> Sometimes they [women] used to come for, welfare case. Divorcing husband or husband is divorcing wife – like those cases. But I used to advise them, I am not the welfare officer, but the advice I gave it to [them], if I give you advice, you give me the right answer.
>
> Because, when the husband is belting you, there's no choice, you have to go to court. The court will decide whether to [stay] married, or divorce. But my decision is, when the husband is belting you all the time, it means that you have to divorce.
>
> I used to tell them, if you really want to leave the husband, then we go to the court.
>
> But sometimes, when I used to talk to them, they never used to come back again. That means… she loves the husband.
>
> [Researcher: Did this happen a lot?]
>
> Yes. Plenty times. But we don't have a welfare officer here. Kerema I gat [TP: has a] welfare officer lo hap [there]. But we don't have one here. Those cases, like,

husband leaves the wife, those men used to come to me. But I used to give advice only.

The more prominent feature of *Mother Ana's* story is her personal translation that the non-response or inaction of women is because of their *love* for their men. For women in Baimuru the non-response and/or inaction of women to seek help might be taken as tacit compliance and/or acceptance of their given circumstances. The feelings of these women toward their husbands prevents them from seeking police response. Further, it is presumed that the great emotion that women might feel or "in love", somehow outweighs the extreme violence that women experience. It is akin to broader narratives of domestic violence that suggests the inability of women to seek advice or response is because of conditioning behaviour and grooming by perpetrators also known as the battered woman syndrome, which normalises the violence they may experience (Gelles & Loseke, 1993). Continuing on *Mother Ana* intimates through further storying that women's actions and (in)ability to communicate can cause them to experience violence:

> So, she will not; when she stays [out] long and then goes back to the house he will say, 'Where have you been?' The argument will come up because … Like, the husband will think that 'Oh, she's got another boyfriend there' … 'Oh, my wife is with another man'.

> [Researcher: Em bai suspicious o?]

> Eh he [yes]! Because when she wants to go out, she didn't let the husband know, 'Oh, I am going to go that way'. But an understanding man will say, 'Oh, you can go. I will go out myself too'. But some of these men they are not understanding, ah understandable. They will think, 'Oh my wife is going around with some man'.

> And the wife will think, like that man and woman there [she then points out people at the market who are this way], he can joke and laugh, but the wife is jealous. The wife will say that 'Oh, my husband is acting loose and he is looking to any woman that is going around'. She will become jealous 'Oh, you are like this!' But he [referring to the man in the market] is sitting down at the market.

> Most of the young girls and young boys do like this. Jealous. Ol yanpla. But bifo, it was ok.

Hukula (2012b), in her doctoral research regarding gender relations based in the Nine-Mile settlement outside of Port Moresby, reports that men will often develop a *theory of justification* for their violent acts based on an assessment of their women, and particularly the actions and behaviour that these women exhibit. The assessment suggests that men enact violence against their women due to a preconceived notion that they have about what is means to be a woman. In fact, *being a woman* is defined by certain socially and

morally attributable action, within the *haus* (Hukula, 2012b). What the National Strategy (2017, p. 27 to 31) suggests is needed is rather obvious - prevention and response. It requires confronting such theories of justification and challenging these theories before acts of gender violence can occur. More concerted efforts toward prevention helps to reinforce different ways of thinking and associated behaviour to eliminate the need to react in violence when a woman is seen to be *acting* in a way that is different to the understood way of *being a woman*, within her local context. The stigma attached to perceived gender behaviour, particularly of women, continues to disadvantage women's abilities to seek justice and further challenges how witnesses view gender violence and then respond. Men in Baimuru may formulate a justifiable reason for their violent actions such as a mistrust in the actions of their women when women are absent from them. Women in Baimuru may also formulate this reasoning in a similar fashion toward their men. The result of such reasoning is often described as "*jeles pasin*" [TP: Jealousy; jealous behaviour] (Wardlow, 2006). Men enact violence as a means of expressing themselves particularly when they fear that their women might be unfaithful to them – a suggestion of action because of patriarchal fragility and/or men's own fear and shame. While men act blatantly to express these sentiments, women are more likely to express themselves in more subversive and less violent but equally disruptive ways (Hukula, 2012b, p. 92; Wardlow, 2006). The covert actions of women can be viewed as a gendered difference in the way women and men respond to violent action.

2.8   Boundaries of Response

The response to men's violent action, as shown throughout the storying of *Mother Ana* continues to place the burden of responsibility on women, their actions and behaviours. There is much more emphasis placed on the actions of women in responding to violence rather than an emphasis on the responsibility of men to not engage in violent action. Baimuru men are not held to account and tasked with the responsibility that presumes their actions have consequences. This sentiment is elaborated by *Mother Ana* through her own experience:

> Most of the time when I used to go out, those men, the council, mostly at Kerema. They go, sleep with one other, you know women's; I don't come and tell their wives. That's their business, it's not my business!

> Like if I come and talk to them [the women], that is, I'm spoiling their family.

> You yourself will really to find out that your husband is like that. To me, I will not talk about anybody's secrets.

Mother Ana's self-reflection on the effect of men's behaviour reinforces an understanding that Baimuru women bear the responsibility of the violent and in this example, socially disruptive action of their men. There is little to no accountability for the actions of men as she has witnessed and been privy to. Furthermore, the burden of responsibility falls once again back on to women's conscience and invariably, their action and behaviour. The responsibility of men's fidelity or infidelity in this case is directed back to women and informs their actions. As *Mother Ana* acknowledges in her reflection, if she were to make the behaviour and actions of these men known, it would *spoil families*. As previously discussed, the mandate of people in Baimuru is to build good homes, therefore the social disruption that men are responsible for is generally accepted rather than ever challenged. For when it is challenged it has a broader and detrimental impact on entire families.

Even within a leadership role as a Women's Representative she was hesitant to speak truth to wives of unfaithful husbands. The burden of responsibility, to tell the truth, does not rest on her outing the bad behaviour of these men. Instead, the burden is that if the truth is told it can have some drastic effects on women and families. This is an important consideration in the continued privileging of men's behaviours and actions in PNG, especially given that PNG women (and in Baimuru) are not in positions of autonomy and financial freedom. Despite this, women are observed as being household managers, major income generators, and caretakers, for entire families (Sepoe, 2000).

The lives of women are entirely entangled and often beholden to the lives of men (Dickson-Waiko, 2013). The burden of responsibility in this example is that in holding bad behaviour and action of men to account there are very real and social spaces (such as *haus*) that will be disrupted. The lives that operate within spaces and places will be rendered tenuous. To this end, the notion of women's position as subordinate is not a matter of male privilege or internalised male patriarchy as much as it is thoughtful action, so as to continue some stasis in social and community life – the responsibility and overarching mandate that women exhibit in this example is action that furthers social equilibrium and good homes (Goldman, 2007). Women utilise their agency as autonomous action within these spaces. Wardlow (2006) suggests these to be subversive acts by women, however women can also assert their agency creatively as autonomous

action, while also maintaining their important kin and social relationships (Tommbe et al., 2019).

2.8.1 "I Am a Main Talker"

Although she had relinquished the Women's Representative role (late 2015), *Mother Ana* was revered because of her position and leadership within the SDA church and as matriarch to her family unit. Interestingly, during another conversation [August 2016], another participant described her family to me as *"... one of those popular families in here [Baimuru], you just imagine? Very big, very popular everyone knows them. Good family!"* My own kin would often comment on the *pawa* (power) of *Mother Ana*. The use of the tag *pawa* in Baimuru (and throughout PNG) denotes the attainment of empowerment and in most cases certain leadership status (Thomas, 2014; Waffi, 2017). Although the use of the term by others was often meant positively and implied status, there were times it was used in mocking tones by both men and women as a means to criticise, debunk and/or destabilise *Mother Ana's* position and opinion. The confidence that *Mother Ana* exhibited may have been reinforced by a particular localised reverence, but it was definitely reinforced by her own proclamation:

> For example. My husband doesn't [doesn't] talk. I am a main talker. So, like, I'm women's church rep now. When I go out, my husband doesn't get cross. He already understands that I go around already, that I am working with the men. Joking everything, you can joke [with men]. But, some men, their brains are not good. But you must think good and talk.

She understood that as much as she had the ability to engage with these men, there was some vulnerability for her in the way they may have *thought* about her, inhabiting that space. She is quick to defend this by acknowledging her power in being able to *"think good and talk"* that is, intelligence possessed by women equates to their ability to converse *freely* with men. She cites her ability to converse freely with men, the association of her position and person to men surrounding her and the comfort she felt in these interactions elevated her own status.

It was from her position as a leader in the SDA church, however, that *Mother Ana* speaks with the most authority. Within that role and from this position she briefly highlights in the excerpt opening the chapter what she deems as *right* behaviour for women within a *marit* relationship and how a woman's enactment of *haus* life should have the flow on effect of attaining a good home. The *right* way to act as a means of being is attributed to

truth being part of the Christian moral imperative. A doctrine that presumes that if a woman is able to maintain her virtue this notion of goodness (attached to *purity*) will effectively limit the experience of violence (Ochs & Capps, 1996; Robbins, 2010; Tirrell, 1990). The claims *Mother Ana* makes about the right behaviour and action of women is based on a Christian principle that defines the virtues of being a woman. Adhering to a virtuous lifestyle is ordained by God and will ensure a *good* life (Franke, 2009).

2.8.2   "Now I Have the Right to Talk"

It would be naïve to presume *Mother Ana's* belief in her status and position was due solely to a proximal power to men or for the interest of pleasing men. The mandate of her position as a Church women's representative and leader afforded her moral godly claims to distinguish goodness as a product of adhering to Christine doctrine:

> Now, I have the right to talk, because I am a Church Rep. I can tell the mothers what to do. But as for me, I mix around with the men. What they talk, I have to go talk with them.
>
> [Researcher: Do you find it hard sometimes to talk with men?]
>
> No. Talk with the men is not hard for me. I can talk to them. Cause I always carry what they want. That's what I told President (Local Level Government). They'll ask for betel nut or smoke. You don't smoke, but at least that thing must be in your bag. You get used to sharing with the men. So, you can talk to them, they can talk back. But, if you don't have these things, they will keep away from you. Cause most of them, they are chewers and smokers. And, I am already used to going around with them [i.e. travel]; talking. Kerema I was like that. When I go, all those Kerema, big people [infers mostly men], they know me.

The simple gifting and exchange of tobacco and betel nut assured *Mother Ana* that she had attained a level of equitable interaction with men in the spaces she operated in; spaces she negotiated her relationships with men outside of *marit* and *haus* life – particularly in her role as Women's Representative and as a representative of the SDA church (Labov, 1982; Ochs & Capps, 1996; Tirrell, 1990). She had constructed a view that her ability to provide these goods to *gift* to men demarcated her position as a woman in that space, yet it formed a frame within which she could *"mix around [iii] with the men"*.

2.8.2.1   *Gift Exchange and Social Relations*

Social relations between men and women can be solidified through the mutual recognition enacted in exchange and gifting of items (Gregory, 1980; Honneth & Farrell, 1997; Morgain & Taylor, 2015). These exchanges can often be gendered in nature (Sykes, 2013). This notion of mutual recognition as conceptualised in Western philosophy is akin

to the acknowledgment shown in PNG that is labelled *luksave. Mother Ana's* use of *luksave* is displayed as she details her awareness of her position in relation to the men with whom she travelled and worked, men that were neither kin nor particular social acquaintance. Yet her awareness of the frame within which she instigated her interaction with these men through gift giving, enabled her to develop the *right* social relations with these men.

Her pride in this ability to *"mix around with men"* might be perceived as an internalised structural patriarchy (McIlwaine, 2013) combined with ordination from God (Hermkens, 2008). Indeed, if viewed within the frames of Western notions of patriarchy and feminism her words and the pride attached seem to elevate the status of men, rather than acknowledging her own action. Released from the bonds of patriarchal and feminist gaze, we can offer *Mother Ana* an important acknowledgement – that her ability to recognise these relationships and the frames of interaction attached to them ensured her to develop a mode of interaction that empowered her status and position in that space and time, to ensure a particular sociality based on specific relationality (Long & Moore, 2012). Although it was not said (and probably more evident in my own observations of the action of men towards her), in recognising a particular relationship structure in that space, it reinforced her position as a woman but also allowed her position as a leader in her roles and in the community to be elevated. The gifting of favourable items gave *Mother Ana* agency to effectively negotiate her social relations to men in the spaces she had to interact with them (Gregory, 1980). What *Mother Ana's* experience affords us is an important insight into the lives of PNG women and the leverage that can be attained by women to ensure their ability to operate in specific space and place.

2.9   Gender Violence in Baimuru

The basis of these social realities is the interpersonal interactions between men and women, and the weight of acknowledgement that exists in mutual recognition. *Mother Ana* provided her own assessment of the nature and frequency of gender violence as she has witnessed and experienced it in Baimuru, beginning with a comparison with the larger centre of Kerema, capital of the Gulf Province:

> When you go to Kerema, gender equity is still there. But, like Baimuru, you go to East and West Gulf; Gender [violence] is not really.

> When men are talking, they do not allow a woman to talk, and you think that that is not good. You think you must have that gender equate [equity]. I went for this workshop too, gender equity. So, every time I used to talk to these men. When there's a meeting a woman has to come inside. Put the women inside – must have an equal share.

> But you see most of these women sitting down here, when men talk, the women don't talk. They will never open their mouths. They are most of the mother's selling [in the market]. Only 2 people or 3 people – not more than 3. They will sit down and listen. But their thinking is very slow? Or, I don't know?

> So, Gender [equity] is not really in Baimuru.

Despite the calls for gender equity (equality) at the beginning of her story, *Mother Ana* contradicts that sentiment in the sub-text of her other comments. She believes that women and men should have equal status or an equal *share*. Yet she further comments that women in the market are slow thinkers or unintelligible and therefore their ability to acquire that space is limited. Maybe even unwarranted if, according to *Mother Ana*, they are not fit to the task. Women are hindering their own ability to achieve equitability according to *Mother Ana*. Extendedly, the words of *Mother Ana* indicate that PNG women must also contribute to processes of equitability through the self-reflective processes of considering each other's positions. The experience of equitability (and equality) is further compounded by the multi-layered, complex nature of lived experience. Especially given that PNG women's experience of violence is relative and based on distinctions of positionality and personhood (kin, affine, clan, language affiliations), status, cultural frame, socio-economic position, religious affiliations, other belief systems, and other locally specific considerations (Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2008).

Another prominent feature of *Mother Ana's* assessment highlights that if there is deemed to be limited cases of gender violence that are *not really here* (in Baimuru), are people necessarily equating or defining particular acts (such as *Sister Sha's*) as gender violence? If not, why not? Perhaps the obvious statement in response is that there is an apparent separation between the terminologies transferred from the global discourse of gender violence (used in response mechanisms) with those in the reality of the lived experience in local sites. An incongruence exists that requires strengthening response messaging to be contextually relevant to provide comprehensive understanding to people in places like Baimuru.

Another feature that adds to women's experience of gender violence in Baimuru is what seems to be the acceptance of the fate of women that are bound to their role and position within their families, within the relationship set of marriage, and within *haus* life. This acceptance of position reinforces the justification of violent action as normal and in some cases necessary, particularly acts of violence against women in *haus* life. *Mother Ana's* own words belie this sentiment. Yet *Mother Ana,* like many others, operates in positions that are both full of conviction and contradictions. The value to achieve equitability and equality is great yet the internalised construction of the place of women in Baimuru creates contradictory action and is a strong inhibiting factor that prevents this actuality.

2.10 Chapter Conclusion

The story of gender violence in the global discourse suggests that PNG women are subordinate, submissive and mostly passive as they encounter and experience these, and this contributes to how women respond (Baines, 2012; Bott et al., 2005). *Mother Ana's* storying allows us to understand in a small part why this narrative exists and how it has been developed in PNG. Given her position as a leader and elder in her community and having a particular religious affiliation, *Mother Ana* not only offers her storying with particular confidence, she also commands the audience. In PNG, it is the Church and its' leaders that offer support in places such as Baimuru that are for the most part out of the effective reach of government service structures. Churches and their leaders spearhead many responses to gender violence in PNG and in return many Papua New Guineans respond to these structures (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017, p. 82; Hermkens, 2008; Hermkens & Lepani, 2017; Keck, 2007; Thomas et al., 2017).

Mother Ana's storying highlights how the actions of women are examples of dutiful responsibilities in direct response to the actions of men and how these may situate people within their community. The sense of responsibility that women feel in relation to men directly impacts the way in which their men then develop action toward their women. It is this type of sentiment that contributes to women's acceptance of violence that may be enacted against them and men's sense of entitlement to enact violence against their women. The unequal division that exists in the burden of responsibility to social action between men and women within the *haus* requires men to be included so to recognise the consequences of their actions and the effect of their action on *haus laif* (Eves, 2008).

This is sentiment that is not by any means new or that insightful. However, what currently exists in response is the acceptance, at times, of men's bad behaviour as innate and cultural, and therefore less likely to change. It is true, men must be better engaged to understand their action has direct implication to creating social disruption within their own homes. The burden of responsibility must shift.

As we uplift the position of women through their own experiences, we must balance the tension that can be raised in *haus laif* when men are not engaged. This statement does not seek to justify the expectation men have of their women; it hopes to provoke the greater need to engage in raising men's awareness to the greater consequences of their actions. One non-government organisation, Oxfam, cited in a recent report (2017, p. 2), part of their mission to address gender violence and accusations related violence, is the need to include boys and men to adopt "*positive, gender equitable masculinities*". The focus of response should be inclusive of equitable male representation, story and understanding to balance community wide responses to gender violence in PNG. Nuances do exist in the moments of acknowledging the autonomous action that women engage themselves given the broad nature of their own experiences.

2.10.1 Forming Relationships

The formation of relationships can be the flashpoint of violence – particularly given the state of flux between customary practices and contemporary society the point at which young men and women determine their relationships with one another reinforces distinctions made about *haus* life and the role of men and women within this space (Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2012). The division of labour that once defined a men's and women's positions in *haus* and community are very much in flux with the onset of an engagement in practices of modernity (Errington & Gewertz, 1996; Jolly et al., 2012). As people navigate to orient themselves in contemporary society, the processes that once helped to solidify men-women relationships have been diluted and the ways in which men and women are constructed have dissipated. *New* modes of acknowledging relationships are obscurely defined and can contribute to the instability in *haus laif*, particularly for young people (Kaiku, 2011, pp. 86 - 87; 95 - 97).

2.10.2 What is "Good"?

The perception of *good* is multifaceted as we begin to unpack the various distinctions that are attached to the definitions of a *good* life. *Mother Ana* made a distinction of goodness

based on a belief that being connected to a *white* man would enable advancements for herself and her family (Bashkow, 2017; Falck, 2018; Neuendorf, 2016b). The hope for advancement is attached to the ideal notion that association with white men will elevate the position of women. This sentiment has been constructed in the gender violence response mechanisms that currently exist and dually critiqued (Hukula, 2012b; Rooney, 2018). The National Strategy to Prevent Gender Based Violence (2017) recognises the importance of developing response that is appropriate to PNG local contexts .National response mechanisms can be strengthened when considering the importance of social relationships in the lives of PNG people. Rather than isolate women's experiences of violence, engaging community in dialogue, particularly men, can help to raise awareness about the implication and extent of impact that gender violence has on broader communities (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017).

2.10.3 Incongruence between the global and the local

Indeed as highlighted in the collections from Jolly et al. (2012) and Biersack et al. (2016) and other's in these works highlight, is that for the immense effort of developing response to the issue of gender violence in PNG, the 'outside influence' that response is shaped by, does not engage the local context as much as it could. Perhaps the information regarding what gender violence is, needs to be more digestible and accessible to people in remote centres such as Baimuru. This suggests greater efforts must focus on information sharing in ways that engage local forms of expression and more importantly, local comprehension (Lusby, 2017).

2.10.4 Final Considerations

Mother Ana is definitive in her assessment of the role of women in Baimuru, particularly as she places them in the context of "*lukautim haus*". As she stories, she details the necessary action of women (specifically) in these roles and the associated responsibilities that are contained within these roles. In her assessment, the ability to experience violence or not is entirely a matter of being a *good* woman within *marit* life and this is achieved by ensuring *gutpela sindaun lo haus* (or harmony in the home) which comes as a result of *lukautim haus.* As much as *Mother Ana* seems adamant in her assessment of women's position in Baimuru, she importantly highlights the need for men in Baimuru to have more understanding of their women and relationships and to support their women more. There is a proclivity to imagine the position of PNG men as being one that has an inherent

power that is associated with dominance, aggression and violence (Anderson & Ubmberson, 2001; Eves, 2008, 2010, 2012; Macintyre, 2008a; Silberschmidt, 2001; Wood, 2006). *Mother* even unreservedly states that it is the action of men, particularly when homes are not good – men will belt women. This is a position that men are afforded, and it is often supported by calling on patriarchal culture as a justification for men's behaviour and use of intentional physical force. The use of such force has far too often been viewed as cultural norm (Dinnen, 2001) and as a means of giving meaning to men navigating between traditionally cultural spaces of customary rite to understand contemporary spaces where their masculine identities are less defined and indeed the mechanisms for realising these identities are limited or may no longer exist (Macintyre & Spark, 2017; Silberschmidt, 2001).

As an introduction of the witness voice yet to come, *Mother Ana's* storying serves as a precursor and example to the very individual voice of the other participants of this study, while also offering important insight into specific sets of social relationships. These social relationships are important to defining how people act in ways that are both socially and morally acceptable to one another.

CHAPTER 3 "IT'S A 'HEART' PROBLEM!"

"Do human beings act morally because they obey socially defined rules and norms as the result of a routine of inculcated behaviours, or an embodied fear of sanction, or perhaps both? Conversely, do they act morally because they decide to do so as a consequence of rational evaluation, or transformative endeavour, or inseparably both?"

(Fassin, 2014, p. 429)

As *Mother Ana* began to raises our interest in what is means to be a moral person, through her example of goodness in *haus life* and how people in Baimuru might define this, other questions about what motivates moral behaviour are asked about what is *right*. The question posed by Fassin extends Laidlaw's (2002) questions on the ethic of social action. Indeed, the nature of social action is framed by considerations of what is *right,* and these considerations directly impact the meaning that people ascribe to particular action. However, the notion of *right* is not uniformly understood across cultures. In the example of *haus* and in the pursuit of the ideal to achieve a "good home", *Mother Ana* explained how the expectation of women's action and behaviour within these frames directly impacts their experience of violence against them. What is therefore considered *moral* action may in fact involve the acceptable use of gendered violent action toward women. Social relations can exacerbate particular gendered distinctions pitting men at times men and at other times women as *right* and moral in their action. Social relations can at times cause, reinforce and condone particular violent action under a pre-existing ethic of what constitutes right, good and acceptable social action as reasonable. This chapter broadens the notion of *morality* that frames action in Baimuru. The story of the *Uncle's* contained within this chapter focusses on the impact of religious ideology on the notion of *moral* action. In particular it will discuss how the precepts of this ideology contribute to how people make sense of particular acts of gender violence and how responsive action is determined, including the impact of including religious ideology as a frame that influences moral individual response.

3.1 The Uncles' Story

The focus of this chapter is the story of men, specifically, the *Uncles*. Although neither are directly related to me, use of the tag *Uncle* indicates the nature of their connection to me and indeed the frames within which I interacted with them. What began as an impromptu conversation quickly developed into a chance story with these two Purari men who generously offered their experience and perspective of life in Baimuru. Both *Uncles* were at the time (2016) trainee Baptist Pastors. Given this pursuit, their experiences of gender violence in Baimuru centre around their particular positions of being men of the church.

The Baptist mission was a well-known space in Baimuru, mostly due to the fact that the only expatriates in the community resided there (American Baptist missionaries).

Plate 5. Fence being built around the Baptist mission site. Source: (Wil and Trina Muldoon, 2011 - 2017)

The mission is situated on the edge of the station, parallel to the main basketball court and sports field. The grounds of the compound are always well-manicured in clear contrast to the adjacent sporting areas, Government land, which remain overgrown with long grass most of the year. The grounds are diligently cared for by the trainee pastors and their families, as part of their duty and service as trainee pastors and members of the

Baptist Church (Wil and Trina Muldoon, 2011 - 2017). Apart from the sawmill, trade stores and the primary school, the Baptist mission site is the only other fenced space in Baimuru. It is a well-known part of the station for a number of reasons: stated previously, it is home to the only *white* people (American expatriates), it is a Bible school, and it was the only available source of clean water during the El Nìno in 2015 (Bourke, Bryant, & Lowe, 2016). The trainee pastors and their families, all from villages in the Purari Delta region, present themselves as missionaries in public, separating them from the majority of people in Baimuru. This is often exemplified by their sharp (neat and clean) attire. The compound itself, consists of houses for the missionaries, trainee pastors and their families, the Church and a newly built classroom. The classroom is used to teach and train local pastors in theological study. The wives of each pastor are also invited to attend basic literacy and numeracy classes where the wife of the American missionary is a teacher. I was fortunate enough during my stay to be invited to sit in on classes and even interact and practice conversational English with the trainee pastors and their wives.

BAIMURU STATION – SKETCH MAP

Baptist Mission Compound

Basketball court

Sports field

Council Chambers

To Airstrip

Primary School

Pie River

Trade store locations
(Chinese owned ⬤
PNG Owned 🟠)

Sawmill / Main Trade store

Police Station/Office

Main Market

Clinic (i.e. "haus sik)

KEY

🔵 Haus (household)

✚ Churches

/ Walkways

(Not to scale)
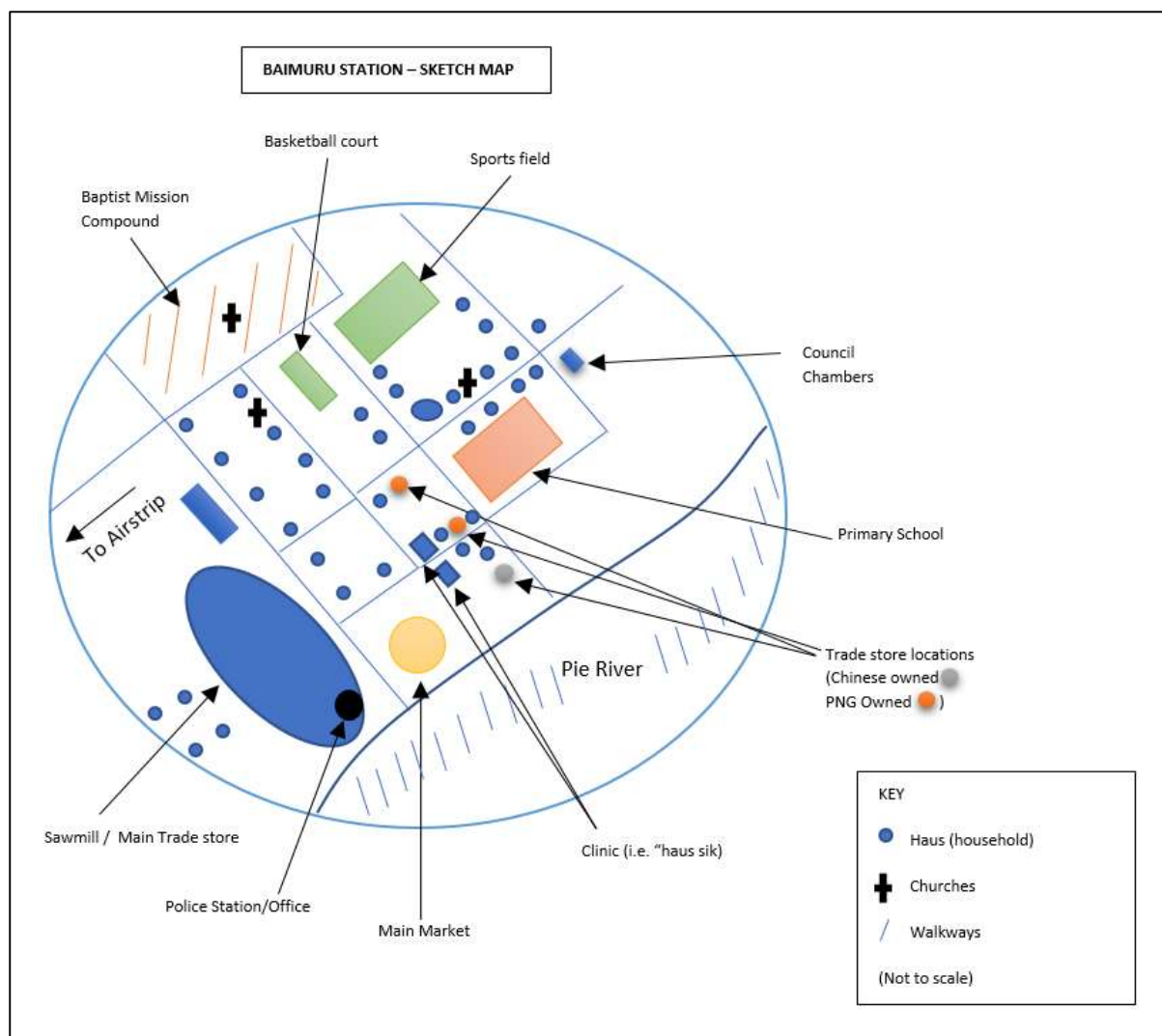
Map 5. Sketch map of Baimuru Station (Author illustration)

Map 6. Map of various areas of Baimuru

3.2 "This is Our Station"

On a visit to the mission to photograph topographical maps of the Gulf Province which are displayed on the classroom walls at the Baptist Church, I encountered *Uncle Alo* and *Uncle Biru,* avidly studying.

As I began to take pictures their curiosity piqued, and we began a general discussion about why I was there and what I was studying, and this led to story about life in Baimuru and their experience of living there for the past three years. As our discussion continued, they became more interested in the focus of the research. Both *Uncles* had particular thoughts on the way life was in contemporary Baimuru, and these views included specific thoughts surrounding the issue of violence against women in Baimuru.

Having both travelled from their respective villages to attend Bible School in Baimuru, both *Uncles* started their storying by situating themselves and their connection to Baimuru:

(KEY   Uncle Alo: UA   Uncle Biru: UB)

UA: I'm from Kinipo [village].

UB: Ah, I'm from Varia [village].

[Researcher: What is life in Baimuru like?]

UB: My place is down at the coastal side and, I came up here for Bible school. But mostly we used to come and go. This is our station. I spend my big time in Moresby, in the city.

Came to the village and I came for bible school. But living here is a bit, changed. Like, the village, we go around with *kenu* [canoe], find fish and different food stuff. We don't have it here. We enjoy garden food, out there.

The lifestyle of a trainee pastor is not far removed from the subsistence lifestyle of the village setting where the *Uncles* have travelled from to attend Bible College. *Uncle Biru* reminisces about the village he left (Kinipo), a place where he and his family could *"enjoy garden food"*. People are largely reliant on subsistence farming practices, but there is an undeniable desire for modernity in the way of economic advancement. The perception is that economic advancement would make the lives of people in Baimuru significantly more manageable that is, affluence can equate to a "good life". Granted affluence would allow people to pay for much sought after household items (such as sugar; tea; rice; oil; batteries; kerosene), and support children to attend school in bigger centres. However, there is an underlying sense that if people have greater engagement in economic

activities, their lives will be elevated and they can achieve harmony along with wealth (Gewertz & Errington, 1996).

One of the well-known aspects of the Baptist compound is the abundance of produce and gardening by trainee pastors and their families (Refer to Plate 5. Garden food lining one boundary of the compound). Each trainee pastor is allocated a plot of land where they and their family grow their own produce. My own Uncle (father's cousin), another trainee pastor at that time, would gift pots of cooked sweet potato and tapioca to us when his family had an abundance. Despite the abundance of garden activities and produce the *Uncles* did note that one exception to their life on the station was the limited access to fishing and marine resources. Their respective villages (refer Map 5 & 6) are located at a river mouth where they can access the open ocean for marine resources. The *Uncles* like others in Baimuru, are reliant on buying market goods of sago and fish, both staple to diet in the Gulf (Ulijaszek, 2003) to supplement their diet when gardens supply is low. The considerations and often constraints of food and resources presents particular tensions for people in Baimuru as they navigate their own involvement in the modern economy.

3.3   Mobility and Accessibility

The local administrator or District Manager storied about life in Baimuru on different occasions. In one of our conversations (April 2016), he suggested that *"Baimuru is isolated from all things. Cut off by the river system",* and because of this remoteness, and lack of economic advancement and the mobility of people is also limited. Access to and from other centres is dependent particularly on money, payment of outboard motor transport and ability to pay for fuel expenses.

The *Uncles* spoke of their respective villages, Kinipo, and Varia, which are both situated at the lower end of the Purari delta, along the Southern coastline on the Gulf of Papua (Refer Map 5 & 6). Both villages have strong affiliation and connection to Baimuru being a part of the Purari Delta network of villages, ethnically and linguistically (Williams, 1924).

Plate 6. Heading towards the village of Kinipo by *kenu* and outboard motor.

Plate 7. The village of Kinipo.

On a trip to Maipenairu village in October (2016) located some thirty kilometres away from Baimuru along the Gulf coast, I had the opportunity to visit both Kinipo and Varia villages. The proximity and connection shared between the villages is strong. As experienced by dugout canoe with a ten-horsepower outboard motor engine the villages were only ten minutes from each other. Although the villages are separated by the river system, there are historical and on-going kinship, affinal and social networks that extend between the two. This connection has been solidified over time by inter-marriage, ceremonial and goods exchange (Williams, 1924).

The village of Varia and indeed the people of the village are known in Baimuru and in the greater Purari Delta region as being exceptional pig farmers and you will often find, during times of ceremonial significance, pigs will be sourced from Varia village. Kinipo on the other hand is well known for its supply of coconuts and as a site of one of the first schools in the delta. As *Uncle Biru* acknowledges in the conversation, although they come from these coastal villages, Baimuru "*is our station, so we come and go.*"

Map 7. Location of Varia in relation to Kinipo (Source: google maps).

Map 8. Location of Varia and Kinipo villages in relation to Kerema (Gulf Province capital), Kikori (District Centre) and Port Moresby (National Capital (Source: Google maps).

3.4 "Because now there's no gender difference, so men has to work, women has to work"

The mobility of people in Baimuru is dictated by dependence on access to economic prosperity and financial gain, a contemporary pursuit under a somewhat neo-liberalist agenda tied to the imagined futures of the operations of the current tenuous resource extraction industry (ACIL Tasman Pty. Ltd., 2009; Exxon Mobil, 2015). The prominent distinction that is made about gender difference, highlighted from this experience, is that paid employment is a man's pursuit. Women continue to be bound in the expectation narrative of *haus* life as *"…they garden or looking after the house…things that women do, in the house."* [*Uncle Alo*]

In the following story, it was *Uncle Alo* in particular who had an ardent view of the changing nature of society. The expectation of life on the station is attached to access to employment and economy. There is a belief that the community is no better than *"the village"* or that it is, in fact, returning to the state of being *"village-like"*, regardless of current resource extractive interests and the potential for wealth creation these activities might generate (ACIL Tasman Pty. Ltd., 2009; Exxon Mobil, 2015; Online Editor, 2008). The sentiment that Baimuru has not developed from a *"village-like"* existence was reiterated by the District Manager, and other people in Baimuru during my time there. As such, employment opportunities are drastically fewer, or entirely non-existent as *Uncle Alo* further explains:

> Well, the men are unemployed. Then he has to look for some other ways to make himself busy. I'll put it that way, because, as I said, we are in the village, not in the city where there is always employment … As for women here, they garden or looking after the house, or some of the things that women do, in the house, like weaving mats and making handcrafts. Those are the necessary things that women make in life, what I always see in my house here. Or they're looking after children or working in the garden. Or, like in the school studying.
>
> As for men, as I've said, if there's no employment then, some of the things that men normally do is make garden, or other things here. I'll put it that way. So, as I've said, we're in the village here.
>
> Like in the city, there are employment opportunities that men and women have to find. Because now there's no gender difference. So, men have to work, women have to work. Right in the village; like my 3 years here, I don't see that here, only those who are employed [men and women], get work get all those here.

Uncle Alo suggests that men in Baimuru who are otherwise unburdened by employment should be actively seeking employment. While women, already have distinguished roles

within *haus* life. The fact that employment is neither realised nor achieved by men in Baimuru is further reinforcement that Baimuru is not a town-like centre but is *"ples"* like (like the village). Due to the "*village-like*" existence, people's lives are considered hard.

Uncle Alo does not dismiss the access to and engagement in employment as the pursuit of men alone. He acknowledges that in the *city* (ambiguously, any urban centre, but maybe as a reference point Port Moresby) women also pursue employment rather than just the work of *haus* life. Somehow the urban experience of the *city* is imagined offering greater access to economy and perhaps by extension greater opportunity for gender equality. There is an underlying belief that economic advancement and associated development provides a "good" life. The pursuits attached to the notion of *modernity* are also attached to the notion that engagement in decidedly Western practices of *development* is desirable, and therefore the achievement of such is akin to becoming like the *white man* (Bashkow, 2017; Wood, 1995).

The global discourse on response to gender violence as a matter of gender inequality, continuously offers projects of women's empowerment to directly address the issue of gender violence. This is also based on the premise that the practices of *development* and *modernity* will support women to achieve a *higher* status in the local experience. Elevated status will contribute to better livelihoods, and possibly even minimise the experience of gender violence (Bailey, 2013). This sentiment is not without its challenges. Particularly given that the advancement of women is seen as a direct threat to the position of men, given the pervasive nature of gender distinctions in family life (Silberschmidt, 2001). The *Uncles* broaden this understanding that a "good" life is one that involves *modernity*:

> [Researcher: Is it mostly men that would work?]
>
> UA: Yeah. But, as you are in the station here, in the village you can see, most are...
>
> UB: Surviving, making garden; garden food.
>
> UA: Fishing...
>
> UB: Fishing. Sell it and get money and buy kerosene for the light.
>
> [Researcher: usually market?]
>
> UB: Yes. Market is where you will normally find money.
>
> UA: A good example is the Oil Min sawmill there, when it stopped [August], people stopped breathing air.

[Researcher: Everyone was panicking, yeah. Trangu[iv]!]

ALL: Yeah [chuckling]

People in Baimuru are seen to be "surviving" and an assessment of this is their engagement in the subsistence activities of gardening and fishing. These activities that once supported livelihoods are now just activities to support life in contemporary society. A life dictated by the engagement of people in economic activities are perceived to lead to advancement and a "good" life.

The marketplace is a central figure in the lives of people in Baimuru. Indeed it is the hub and centre of most activity whether economic, social, political or religious (Benediktsson, 2002). The reference made to "*surviving*" was also given in direct relation to the recent closure of the Baimuru sawmill in August 2016. The sawmill presented as a beacon of *development* as the biggest employer and greatest source of income generation. Its' closure signified further restriction to advancement, engagement and development in the practices of *modernity*. This assumes "*the market*" as the only place for *"finding money"* as paid employment becomes almost redundant with the sawmill closure.

The closure was enough to make people feel like an essential need was being removed: *"when it [sawmill] stopped, people, stopped breathing air"*. People in Baimuru understand the importance and impact the sawmill has had for themselves and the surrounding villages since the start of operations in 1961 (Bell et al., 2015, p. 135). My own family had settled in the community because of my *Bubu Man's[v]* work at the sawmill and have now lived in that community for three generations.

The sawmill operations and indeed the cash flow generated by the employment at the sawmill created a trickle-down effect to the rest of the community. During my time in Baimuru I observed the impact of this during *fortnight* or pay week. The Friday that the sawmill payday fell on was known as a *fortnight* and this was observed as a day of good market(ing) in Baimuru. On *fortnight* market sellers came from as far away as Kikori and villages in Ihu to the east. These were considerable distances of travel to come and sell fresh produce, fresh seafood, and sago. *Fortnight* also encouraged local loan sharks. As I understood it, given I had an Aunty who dabbled in what is known as *moni maket* [TP: money market = loans], many people who had employment and wages, would fall into a trap of borrowing the exact amount of their wages from these loan sharks. They inevitably became trapped in a cycle of dependence and were beholden to *moni maket*

based on repayment interest that equated to their original loan plus fifty percent interest fee. This lack of financial management is another facet of life in Baimuru that bred animosity, on-going conflict or *Birua* in Tok Pisin, and violent action in various forms.

Plate 8. Baimuru market - the place of "finding money"

Map 9. Map shows the location of Kikori and Ihu stations (marked by blue dots) in relation to Baimuru. Relative distance and reach of villages engaging in marketing activities with Baimuru on "fortnight" Fridays.

(Source: http://www.angelfire.com/folk/purari/Koriki/Database/T/Maps.htm).

Apart from the microcosm of the financial economy that the sawmill sustained, other means of money generation and transferral within the community was through the four trade stores – two of which were owned by Chinese businessmen, who never reinvested their profits in Baimuru, rather, sending these profits back to China (Browne & Mineshima, 2007). Apart from the Chinese owned businesses, the main Baimuru trade store is owned by a family company from the Western Highlands Province who also owned the sawmill (OM Holdings Ltd). This trade store was originally part of the colonial administrative businesses, bought by OM Holdings in conjunction with the sawmill. The other smaller trade stores are attached to one of the two guest houses that exist in Baimuru and are owned by two different men from the Southern Highlands Province. One married to a fellow Southern Highlands Province woman, the other married into Purari clans, to an I'ai woman. The diversity that exists in Baimuru is an important consideration when developing an understanding of community dynamics particularly in relation to the experience of gender violence and the responses that are formulated in response to such violence.

Uncle Alo recognises in his story that the lack of options for employment (and the closure of the Sawmill) contributes to the unease people feel about their place in the project of development. In fact, the project of development continues to extricate itself from people in Baimuru, which is effectively akin to cutting off air supply. A positive and important gender distinction as voiced by *Uncle Alo* is that the pursuit for employment is not ,and should not, be just for men. Women are and must also be included because this is currently indicated by the changing practices of people in the cities, however this change does bring its own set of issues for mobile women (Lepani, 2008, pp. 158 - 159). Yet Baimuru, relatively out of reach of the urban experience, is still entrenched in the notion that gender dictates who accesses and engages in modern pursuits such as employment (Dickson-Waiko, 2013).

3.5 (Dis)Connected with Outside

3.5.1 "But this one [Baimuru] I see, it's just very remote."

Baimuru's lack of development became more prominent with the closure of the sawmill, and people saw their place as being less attuned to advancement through development. Advancement attached to the ideal of being like *"white men"* would amount to a *"good life".* While issues of access to, and the generation of wealth is compounded by the fact that Baimuru is logistically isolated from larger centres such as Kikori, Kerema and Port Moresby. There is no road network beyond Kerema (Provincial Capital), and Baimuru is primarily accessible via boat and air. *Uncle Alo* explains:

> I see the survival is very hard here!
>
> Like Kikori, comparing Kikori to this [Baimuru] and like Kerema is close to the town [Port Moresby]. Kikori I see that it's a bit ok, because of the road linking down to Kikori, and cash crops coming down [Highlands] and people going down and, ah, like, it was like this in Baimuru, but since OilSearch and Chevron came in, set up things where people can make money for themselves. And Turama forest [loggers] came in and they set up things where people could make money. So, I see by my prospect of observation, I see that Kikori is a bit ok. It's like a town, town life. But this one [Baimuru] I see, it's just very remote.

The disconnect that is felt is further compounded by an inability to access the perceived opportunity that exists in these larger centres. The notion that modernity has enabled these places to be advanced and therefore the people dwelling in these places to have a

"good" life, adds further distinction to the disruption to development that people in Baimuru experience:

> UA: You can feel it here. There's no new faces to meet just the same. Sometimes I don't want to talk to people here [laughing].

> So, when you live in a place where services are and new faces are, you'll still be connected with outside. When you're isolate[d] and very, I don't; what will I say – I see this place as a very remote place. But, like, with the white man staying here [Baptist compound] we feel comfort here, because every information that he gets he gives us, and we look through books and all this.

> UB: Making us little bit aware.

> UA: Yeah. Taking us a little bit out of this place.

The proximity to the "*white man*" in the Baptist Church compound, provides both *Uncles* with a sense that they can access a solution to the disconnect that they may feel. Being in close proximity provides "*comfort*" because *the missionary* deems to share *his* information with them, and provides them information through *his* books, opening their pathways of knowledge and access to greater community and broader understandings (Bashkow, 2017). Both *Uncles* recognise the fact that as they interact with the white missionaries it provides an access point to the "*outside*". This is also cause for pause to consider the internalised sense of reverence afforded to *"white men"* (and *"white women"*) as having a better understanding and knowledge (Dorney, 2016) and as somewhat able to save the Papua New Guinean from their ill developed state (Straubhaar, 2015). A sense that is evident in the terminology used by *Uncle Alo* in his statement as he uses racial distinctions to claim what might constitute a "good" life.

Expanding on this notion of racial distinctions that frame a perception of what "good" might mean, Brison (1992) suggested from her experience with the Kwanga of East Sepik Province that the direct impact of the reverence shown to the *"white man"* is a mistrust in the ability of PNG leaders. Granted the governance system in PNG is fraught. Brison directly links an inability to follow leaders and adhere to the leadership of PNG authority, based on a suspicion surrounding the motivations of these individuals (1992, p. 181). The comparison that the Kwanga interpret between PNG leadership and the leadership of *"white men"* is also the cause of complaint that breeds the mistrust in the ability of PNG leadership to provide a response (Ibid; Street, 2016). It is also indicative of the sentiment expressed by the *Uncles* or that the ways of the *"white man"* are better. A sentiment that perpetuates from a seed sown during colonial governance and is internalised within

many Papua New Guineans in contemporary society. In a broader sense, this privileging of external knowledge exists within the response mechanisms formulated to address the issue of gender violence in PNG. Mechanisms that encourage non-PNG driven initiatives to proliferate as the necessary, good and right form(s) of address to the issue (Macintyre, 2012, p. 239).

3.6   Is Gender Violence a Problem in Baimuru?

The removal of ourselves (Papua New Guineans) from our own stories and the lack of our own ability to imagine we can create the good and right we long for in contemporary lives and livelihoods, compounds the nature of the response to gender violence in PNG. The *Uncles* voice this in different parts of their own storying and also observe this as indelible failings of individual personhood. A broader critique emerges - that Papua New Guineans are currently unable and perhaps ill equipped to formulate a response to things like gender violence:

> UA: There are too many [gender violence], that I usually observe. You know, one of the problem that I see is, in our area like this, maybe it's a cultural thing or heart thing; we always want to retaliate. Retaliation. So, not in Baimuru only but in other place, you know when somebody comes and talks to somebody in a different way then [they] retaliate and want to fight. So, I think that's a problem here.

Maybe the issue at hand is that our culture (as a collective) and heart (as an individual) are incapable and unable to meet at a point at which a necessary response to the experience of gender violence in PNG can be formulated. What is needed, as voiced by *Uncle Alo* is a change of both and perhaps further a meeting of the two. The assessment of the *Uncles* is that people are quick to respond in retaliation and that is what provokes people to act violently. This action is intentional and purposeful to providing recourse after perceived offence. The use of a label like *retaliation* is known broadly as *retributive justice* or more colloquially labelled *payback* (Waiko, 1993, pp. 38, 73, 249). Each label suggests the emotive call to action – a reactive response, rather than a proactive approach. Retaliation manifests in a desire to fight, to show the nature of offence felt against oneself or one's kin.

3.7 Retaliation (retributive violence or "kros na birua")

The retributive nature of some acts of violence in PNG is embedded within the relational context within which people necessarily interact with one another (Waiko, 1993). People are prone to act violently in reaction toward offence they have felt or in response to the offence a kinsman/woman has felt. Violence is also used in forms of retaliation against structures that are inefficient and ineffective or wholly useless in their daily lives (Farmer, 2004; Price, 2012).

Street (2016) recognised this in her work amongst PNG health workers in Madang. The lack of structural support felt by health workers was interpreted as a lack of recognition and acknowledgement of these individuals and a lack of *luksave* by the state. This is also a form of structural violence that is felt amongst people in more rural and remote parts of PNG. *Uncle Vai,* a local pastor and leader in the community commented on violence occurring in the wake of leaders withholding resources and *luksave* in the form of resource dispersal to their people. In a story about the lead up to an act of retaliation between Baimuru people and their elected local government leader, *Uncle Vai*, a pastor and *Sister Bree* (a witness voice in this thesis), had the following exchange (September 2016):

(KEY   UV: Uncle Vai   SB: Sister Bree)

> UV: So, raising voices to leaders, almost led to an eruption of violence. It's caused by men and women, children; and leaders as well.
>
> Violence cannot take place until somebody acts upon it.
>
> [Researcher: right – somebody puts it into action.]
>
> SB: So that is what happened. They've been talking about it and thinking about it (the example of violence erupting) – it is hard for them to talk, so to express their anger they just have to put it into action – by force! In Tok Pisin they say "kaikai ting ting blo ol" [digested their own thoughts]. They talked about it already and they were angry about it, and they had to put it into action.
>
> UV: So, then who caused the violence?

The rhetorical question *Uncle Vai* poses is his way of rationalising the actions of the frustrated people of Baimuru, toward what they perceive as an ineffective leader. The *"talking"* and *"thinking"* about their situation and the treatment they received from their leaders prompted the anger that swelled amongst them which eventually manifested in violence. *Uncle Vai* and *Sister Bree* both recognise this as an expressive and reasonable action given the circumstances the people were in. The poor *luksave* of the state shows

itself in ineffective service provision and the lack of funding and resources (Lovai, 2009; Street, 2016). People in Baimuru feel forgotten and they inevitably lash out at this structural violence in retaliation that manifests in expressive and violent ways they deem as reasonable action (de la Roche, 1996; Ray, 2011). Therefore the act of retaliation that manifests as retributive violence seeks to acknowledge injustice and offence that is experienced by people, an offence that can extend to entire communities (A. Strathern & Stewart, 2012). Retaliation as retributive justice allows individuals and groups of people to solidify their strength, power and associated status amongst each other. The sentiment that is generated in these ways can strengthen kin and social relations. Displaying power through retaliation as a retributive act of justice is also a means to garnering *luksave* (acknowledgement and recognition and respect) with the effect of deterring others from usurping and/or challenging that position (Tilly, 2003). Often these forms of violence are seen as necessary and indeed are deemed appropriate response to particular acts of violence (Waiko, 1993). The flow-on effect of such violence is to engage in more violence. The continued use of retaliatory or retributive acts of violence in contemporary society in PNG is another indication amongst PNG people that advancement and development have not reached people. The following critique made by *Uncle Alo* reinforces this understanding:

> Let's put it this way, Papua New Guinea is a hopeless country. We always want to retaliate. We always retaliate. So, some few handfuls of white men saw this already. So even husband and wife too, they want to fight, the wife is the target. So that is the problem. So, I see that maybe the law and order problem; we have law and order [police] here but, I don't know what's going on here to solve these problems, stop these problems here.

The word *hopeless* implies a broader critique at a National level, not just specific to Baimuru. *Uncle Alo* seeks to validate his own statement by invoking the observation of "*white men*" who have previously seen the hopeless state of PNG and its' people. The racialized critique suggests "*white men*" know better and therefore we should enlist *their* ways. This critique also links to a Christian moral valuation based on Christian principles that suggest PNG people are irredeemable. The use of the word *hopeless* and the short vignette is in itself *Uncle Alo's* indictment and judgement of the way people live their lives in Baimuru. The hopelessness felt by the *Uncles* at the lack of appropriate response to violence is intoned in the acknowledgement that while the law & justice sector mechanism exists to provide support to those experiencing violence, it is ineffective.

Comparing a PNG system to a Western system, reinforces the reverence to the "*white men*", and exacerbates the frustration felt by *Uncle Alo*, who does not see the current mechanisms of response in Baimuru as adequate which further debases the ability to engage formulated responses.

3.7.1   "Yu kam lo tok agens"… "no it's law!"

National legislation to address issues of violence against women and children exists in the form of *Lukautim Pikinini Act* (2015) and the *Family Protection Act* (2013). Acts of violence, including family violence and VAW are often addressed within the village courts system (Australian Government, 2018a; Government of Papua New Guinea, 1989, 2014c), integral to resolving conflict and addressing violence in local settings. This system also acknowledges particular customary rights to action under the *Customs Recognition Act* (1976). The higher engagement in the village courts to address issues of gender violence as a matter of custom debases the ability to consider and indict these cases under the *Criminal Code Act* (1974). Although violence is considered an offence under the *Criminal Code Act* (1974) it is subject to interpretation, as stipulated:

> custom may be taken into account in a criminal case only for the purposes of –
> (a) Ascertaining the existence or otherwise of a state of mind of a person; or
> (b) Deciding the reasonableness or otherwise of an act, default or omission by a person; or
> (c) Deciding the reasonableness or otherwise of an excuse; or
> (d) Deciding in accordance with any other law whether to proceed to the conviction of a guilty party; or
> (e) Determining the penalty (if any) to be imposed on a guilty party,
> Or where the court thinks that by not taking the custom into account injustice will or may be done to a person."
> *Customs Recognition Act* (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1976)

Although these mechanisms exist, and resolution might be achieved, the reality is that justice through criminal convictions is severely limited and possibly non-existent (Rooney et al., 2018). Part of the frustration felt by the *Uncles* and others in service poor areas in PNG is that this legislation does not reach their communities and the mechanisms for enforcing these options are limited or blatantly non-existent (Wiltshire, 2012). The ineffective provision of law & justice services compounds the hopelessness of resolve after events of gender violence, as *Uncle Biru* stories:

> Like one time, when he [*Uncle Alo*] said about wife beating. That's one of the violence we have to deal with. The people who are looking after law and order

need to enforce this thing. Because one night we heard too many times about the wife crying, the husband beat her, and she was crying. But later we found out that, her hands were tied up – hands and legs and her husband was beating her up. And, we went down in the night – we got permission from Missionary and went down. We went down and we disturbed. But the husband was hiding at the back of the house and, we were trying to bring him out and you know, to stop him from beating his wife. And then I tried to make this; I mentioned one of the law that nowadays our PNGs, we are enforcing this law, that wife beating is violence against women [Researcher: a criminal act] – yeah, it's a criminal act. And when I said it's a law, that husband he came to say: '*yu kam lo tok agens'* and I said: 'no. it's a law'; the people who are looking after law and order are not looking at it very serious. It's dangerous, you'll kill your wife, and you'll suffer for it, you know, like looking after children by yourself. Life will be very hard. So, we came to help him, but he was against(ing) us.

The husband in *Uncle Biru's* story was unsure of the *Uncles* response to his violent action against his wife. Why had they interfered in something that was a matter within his *haus - yu kam lo tok agens.* This husband believed his action, the violent treatment of his wife, as being his right and gave him reasonable cause for that action. The *Uncles* suggestion that he was in fact in the wrong caused this man to feel offence that his position as a husband was being challenged. He believed his action, the use of violence against his wife, was reasonable, justified by his position and relationship to her as a husband. The proclamation of right and reasonable action is attached to roles within *haus* as we heard of in *Mother Ana's* storying. By *Uncle Biru's* own expression the husband continued to assert his right in that situation, even after it was explained that his violent action would have a severe impact on his own life should his wife be killed.

3.7.2   "You'll kill your wife and you'll suffer for it"

For the *Uncles,* the only reasonable way to then encounter this man where he was, was to make him aware of the effect of his action on his own life. If he were to be violent enough to kill his wife, he would in fact *"suffer*" and be burdened by the responsibility of taking on his wife's role within the *haus*. The way in which this was stated by *Uncle Biru* was as a reasonable assertion explaining the husbands' action (violence and killing) would have a drastic outcome or effect for him (the burden of responsibility). Although the *Uncles* realised that this particular act of violence was beyond what might constitute as "*acceptable wife beating*" (Williams, 1924, p. 57) the nature of their response was to highlight to the male perpetrator the consequences of his actions. He (husband) would suffer – not his wife.

3.7.3   The Reason to Act and the Act of Reason

The introduction to this chapter highlighted an ambiguity that exists between what is known as "good" action and this frames response mechanisms in PNG and what actually motivates people to violent action. Fassin (2012) asserts that there is moral reasoning to action and behaviour and this includes violent action and how and why people might tell the story of violence. Both Arendt (1970) and Agamben (2002) speak of the underlying moral imperative to tell of "*atrocity*" in the context of being witness to the large scale violence of the Holocaust. In like manner, recounting of violent acts by witnesses is an important response to gender violence in PNG (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Macintyre, 2000; McPherson, 2012). It is therefore the act of meaning making exhibited in witness story that provides an important point to connect what frames the National response to the intent of violent action within a local lived experience. This connection provides a means to formulate meaningful responses to gender violence and provides a necessary link through different tiers of response in PNG (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017). Also, highlighted in the story of the *Uncles* is the sense of their moral right based on their religious affiliations and standing in Baimuru provided them the platform to challenge the actions of the husband in confronting an extreme case of gender violence (Bird & Carroll, 2016). This is a position that many PNG people are uncomforatble inhabiting, based on their deeply embedded connections. What the *Uncles* displayed, exhibits a moral right to act in response to gender violence that aligns more with a Human Rights ethos (United Nations, 1948) one motivated by Christian values they have engaged with through religion.

3.7.4   Right and Bad

Williams (1924) and others (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016; Menjívar, 2011; Moffett, 2006; Wardlow, 2006) highlight that circumstance and context can allow certain forms of gender violence, particularly violence against women to be deemed acceptable. Indeed, these spaces are found within marital relationships and often associated with women being perceived to contravene the right and good or virtuous ways in which they are expected to behave. Returning back to the *Uncles* storying of their response, *Uncle Biru* recounted the following:

> He said, 'No. It's family problem'.

No. It can be family problem but, there's a law there made that not to beat your wife. But, not plenty people in this community do that, maybe just one of two. Like, brother, Uncle Alo said, there's a problem and they retaliate.

The problem we see is, doing these kinds of things, they're under liquor. You know, pulling marijuana, like drinking of hard stuff and, they came up with this kind of thinking of beating their wives, or something like that. So that's one of the problem or cause the violence against women.

"Family problem" is cited in reporting on gender violence in PNG as a particular inhibiting factor to delivering anti-violence messaging (Wiseman, 2013). PNG people have developed a society that is deeply embedded within strong kin and social networks of relating. The importance of these relationships attaches itself to the response that people might formulate in response to specific forms of gender violence like wife-beating. The importance of maintaining relationships is considered of greater value than interference in a disruption (violent action) to married life. As such, citing "family problem" absolves outsiders of any responsibility to intervene but translates a greater consideration for people in PNG. The consideration to intervene is rationalised around the implications of disrupting a relationship set within a particular space and place such as *haus* life. Granted there are instances of violence that are determined beyond a threshold of acceptance and these issues to implore external intervention. However, it is the issue of acceptance of some or any form of gender violence that presents as the most inhibiting issue to developing adequate and appropriate response.

3.7.4.1 *The Good and Bad Things*

Further exacerbating the *family problem* is the intrusion of "*bad*" things in the lives of people. It is these bad things that detract from the good and right actions of men and impacts their actions and behaviour within the *haus*. The influence of drugs and alcohol is one such example of *bad* things that contributes to the experience of family problems, especially social problems that impact the lives of women. The action of men associated with their sexual desires is less scrutinised than that of women's actions as a matter of fidelity, and the rationalisation is that it is the 'bad' influences (alcohol and drugs) that cause men to lash out at their women (Uncle Alo):

Like now, when a person gets drug and alcohol and returns home there's one thing that he thinks of and goes. So, when he goes and the wife rejects then, that's when the beating comes up. That's my observation.

The Baimuru Station District Manger identifies these *"kinds of evils" as:*

> … people getting drunk and … Causing trouble and so much of women affair issues … Not because they [women/men] do it, but they're being forced to do it because they're drunk or whatever.

The use of drugs and/or alcohol impacts the type of behaviour and action that men engage in. Worded as a justification of violence it also shows a need to reconcile particular action and behaviour so as to make sense of the use of violence. The bad influences cause an action that is *uncontrollable* by certain men, suggesting in these moments that they are incapable of countering such action in themselves. The likening of male behaviour to "*animal*" behaviour suggests the extent of these influences and that effectively they are the cause of men's thoughtless, inhumane behaviour, such as violence towards their women (Chandler, 2014), a notion that *Uncle Alo* reiterated:

> Some [men], they treat them [women] like animals…

These are not *bad men,* rather, there are bad forces that shape the behaviour of men in certain ways. Men are removed or absolved from the moral valuation that is placed on women. In the state of desire and under the influence of 'bad' things women are dehumanised, they are thought of and treated *"like animals"*. It seems when women are dehumanised, as the language use would suggest, the way in which they are treated is directly associated to the fact that they are no longer recognised and/or acknowledged as human in that space. *Luksave* as a means of recognition that forms the way interaction occurs effectively no longer exists. Men engage action and behaviour that taps into the things that exacerbate some manifestation of perceived maleness or patriarchy that is reinforced by cultural hierarchy. Because recognition does not exist in those moments, the responsibility felt towards their women does not exist.

3.8   Men and Narrative Identity

Eves' extensive work (2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018) on men and gender identity in PNG in recent years has opened the conversation on the way men's lives are narrated and how these narratives can compound the way gendered action and indeed violence, is viewed. There is a proclivity to place PNG men in positions of power that is associated with dominance, aggression and violence (Anderson & Ubmberson, 2001; Eves, 2008, 2010, 2012; Macintyre, 2008a; Wood, 2006). These positions are supported by calling on patriarchal culture as a justification for men's behaviour and their use of intentional

physical force. The use of such force has far too often been viewed as the cultural norm and as a means of making sense of the shifting nature of masculine identity in a contemporary space (Macintyre & Spark, 2017; Silberschmidt, 2001).

The ethno-historical construction and representation of PNG men in the narrative has been skewed toward the story of men's inherent aggression, and in a contemporary sense this narrative has been misconstrued and rationalised because of shifting spaces between what was once customary to what is now contemporary society. Dickson-Waiko (2009, 2013) suggests that the historical construction of PNG male identity that is represented has had implications for the formulation of policies and emergent legislations that shape a continuing narrative of PNG men's inherent aggression. In the analysis of historical policies, Dickson-Waiko (Ibid) suggests that the identity of PNG men is attached to a notion that they possess an innate proclivity to violent action. It was first based in the assumptive legislation of colonial apparatus, and compounded by underlying and associated racial undertones associated with PNG men (Inglis, 1974). The legacy of these structural products is that PNG men's identity is still shaded by these perceptions of aggressive and violent. This impedes response in that it unwittingly omits men's involvement. This narrative shifts focus from the reality that gender violence is also perpetrated by women. It requires redress, as PNG men can and should play a greater role in championing and advocating against gender violence (specifically violence against PNG women but generally all forms) (Digicel Foundation, 2018) and in acknowledging that women can also enact violence against men and other women.

3.8.1   Culture and Inherent Aggression

The notion that PNG men are prone to violent action is exacerbated by an idea that the actions of men are predetermined by some predisposition and generational genetic makeup or the *warrior gene* (Chant, 2009). Men of *othered* societies predominantly indigenous societies are often categorised as such (Ibid). The notion of the warrior gene suggests action and behaviour is determined by a genetic trait and infers that men of these identified groups are predisposed to action in these instances and cannot help but engage certain violent actions. It suggests these men, categorised as having these genes do not have the ability to change this behaviour. Furthermore, that these characteristics are deeply embedded in biology and genetic proclivity that violent action and behaviour

is innate. Moreover, the societal tools for managing and tempering these actions are inadequate or non-existent.

The idea that particular groups of people are predestined to act in a certain way dismisses any notion that gender traits are entirely constructed and indeed enacted within particular cultural and societal frames and contexts (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Leavitt, 1991; M. Strathern, 1988). The necessary criticisms of the notion of a warrior gene, as found in the work of Hook (2009) is that the continual use of the warrior gene as deeply embedded and unable to change, contributes and continues the hyper-masculine imagination of men and I assert this to include PNG men which generalises the position of all men of indigenous groups (Mosher & Tomkins, 1988). The imagined hyper-masculine PNG man is a narrative that is often perpetuated by PNG men themselves (Wood, 2006).

3.9 "It's just heart problem. It's not cultural thing"

Whether men are prone to violence is not at issue for the *Uncles* as they story of what they have witnessed and experienced. Rather, it is the external influences that play upon the lives of men that cause them to act with violent intent. It is in fact a problem of the *heart* and not of culture that frames the actions of people.

> UA: It's just heart problem. It's not cultural thing. It's a man's behaviour. Or a woman's behaviour.
>
> UB: Like you (UA) said, we are mixing the modern way with the culture. So, when a person drinks, he thinks some evil thing.

Modernity has brought the entrapments of a *new* lifestyle, and the lives of people have become entangled in these things. The issue at hand, as the *Uncle's* suggest, is the entanglement in these things causes the *bad* behaviour of people. This conservative view is espoused as part of a Christian *moral* worldview, for modernity has also reinforced the introduced Western religion that arrived in the Gulf at the turn of the twentieth century (Firth, 1997). The dichotomy between what is right and wrong, good or bad in contemporary society is distinguished by a Christian moral imperative at one end of the spectrum and the introduced evils that corrupt people at the other. Therefore, a Christian moral imperative as espoused within the teachings of the Church serve as a frame that action and behaviour is enacted within, and more precariously, assessed under.

Individuals aligned to Christian ideology have developed their sense of *morality* in opposition to the customary practices of the past and in fear of the effect of the introduced ways as they emerge into a *new* contemporary society (Gewertz & Errington, 1996). Robbins (2004, p. 314) recognised this ambiguity between custom and modernity, amongst the Urapmin in West Sepik and acknowledged that the "*struggle to live between two cultures is fought over issues of morality – over questions of how to live as good people*". There is an evident struggle for the *Uncles* to make sense of their witness of gender violence in Baimuru. This sense making is deciphered within a moral dialogue on the things that cause people (men in particular) to act in bad ways and for *Uncle Biru* it is the struggle between the modern way and cultural thinking exacerbated by modern entrapments that cause immoral behaviour and results in such things as violence, particularly for men.

3.9.1 "People want to watch wrong things, you know…" The Internet

An addition to the every growing list of factors that may present as *evil things* in the lives of people in Baimuru is the access to technological advancements of mobile phones and internet connectivity (Watson, 2011). The effect of such things contributes to people's bad behaviour:

> UB: He [non-specific person] tries to act like what he sees in a picture or movie or something. You know, now we have a network [internet] that can get some kind of …
>
> UA: People want to watch wrong things, you know …. [alluding to pornography]
>
> [Researcher: The thinking changes or, opens to other things?]
>
> UA: Like, internet is ok, but we have to control what we see.

The intrusion of the digital world into everyday life in PNG is felt in many and varied ways (Andersen, 2013; Falck, 2016; Lipset, 2013; Watson, 2011). The challenge, as the *Uncles* articulate it is the introduction to more bad influences on character, such as a "*picture*" or "*movie*". The internet itself is not entirely negative, but it does require regulation. The call for regulation as a form of *moral* policing is not limited to the issue of the internet.

3.10 "The Good Way"

In reference to a *"good way"* the *Uncles* are speaking from a particular position as local missionaries within Baimuru. It is an obligatory responsibility as they inhabit the space,

knowing from their Christian teaching what is right and good and what is bad. While extendedly the obligatory responsibility given their position and role as local missionaries provides them with a safe space from which they have the necessary ability to respond or response(ability). As insiders from the Purari, and as outsiders (local missionaries) their ability to act is based on their embeddedness as part of the community, while also having the ability to remove themselves from the particularities of local events of violence. Being able to remove themselves as such also gives them the freedom to respond in a way that would not provoke retaliation against them, necessarily. Their positions in the Church provides a shield to any retributive action that might manifest against them. At the same time, the shield of the Church props the *Uncles* up on a platform that would elevate their status, allowing them to operate above local particularities in their responses. Their position in the community provides them with some leverage to be able to act independently and in good conscience without fear of social retribution.

The fact that they have responded to instances of wife beatings returns them to a moment of reflection and critique on the nature of law and order and police and the ability and obligatory responsibility (or lack thereof) to respond.

> (UB) Yeah, even like us, we are trained to be pastors, we are in the school; we can see very clear, people; even if you ask somebody oh, what's going on here or, what happened? He or she won't give you a full information or the full detail. They are going to avoid or say 'oh, it's ok'. It's ok to them, but to us, it's not ok! There's sin. You know, you need to change. Like mostly, we go down to the market and we preach about sin, for people to repent. Even you might be religious; but if you're living in sin, that's sin. If you don't repent, you're living in sin. So, we are, like we used to tell them 'repent, repent from your sin'. That's the only solution you can find is you must choose Christ in your life. Repent from your sin, choose Christ in your life; that's a good life.

Their position as trainee pastors sets the *Uncles* apart as outsiders perhaps, operating in a peripheral space to the general community. It is their identity as agents of the Church which has greater impact on the way that people interact with them. As trainee pastors there is a moral value attached to the assessment they make on people as particular situations occur. The perception of the general community toward the pastors and other's in the church sets them apart, and this can at times inhibit the ability of people in the Church to engage in supporting a response. The church and its' workers can represent a polarising figure for individuals who also assess their actions through a Christian moral

frame. Therefore, the challenge of the church response is also the greatest asset – the Christian moral imperative to act (Barker, 2013; Eves, 2012; Robbins, 2004).

3.11 Moral Imperative to Act

3.11.1 "Repent … choose Christ … that's a good life"

Given that both *Uncles* are deeply embedded in the Baptist Church, it is unsurprising that they use terminology such as "*sin*" to mark what they perceive to be bad behaviour and given previous discussion, bad influences such as alcohol and drugs to be the mark of sin. Asserting particular action as *sin* affords the claim that it is individuals who are at fault and therefore people must alter the decisions that directly contributes to the "*sin*" that encroaches on their behaviour and action (Bieler et al., 2011; Hermkens, 2008; Robbins, 2004). To the person in the wrong: *"you know you need to change"*. The moral imperative is a need to *repent* – to acknowledge, mutually recognise, seek forgiveness, atone and find absolution from bad behaviour (Brison, 1992, p. 72; Cochrane, 2011; Franke, 2009).

3.11.2 "The only solution …" Sorcery and Jesus

The *Uncles* have suggested that there is a dichotomous divide between good and bad action. This divide is shaped by the ideology and moral imperative of their Christian belief system that they have been trained under and personally adhere to. Both ideology and moral imperative shape the way the *Uncles* view and understand the experience of gender violence in Baimuru.

> UB: You will try all the way to stop your problem or situation or life you are living, 'Oh I want to live a good life'. There's no other way you can find solution. Or mi bin givim problem, problem; you won't find a solution. The only solution that you can find is in Jesus Christ.
>
> UA: Those type of practices [sanguma; sorcery] are normally going on in secret. There's a secret society that practice those here. But when we accept the gospel and come to know the bible very well, you know, mixing around with white men, and our thinking becomes like them, you know, then we look back at our cultural ways, we see that 'yeah', there is a secret society that is involved in those movements here [UB: Mmm, darkness], which we can see, but, you know, we have to stick to the bible, and we don't believe all those, because that is the place the things that we came out from. Not us, but our grandfathers and our ancestors they came out from that. We want our generation to change that by modern lifestyle on the bible – bible changes lifestyle here.
>
> So, the point that you bring out, I see that, and I hear that there are still those practices going on here. But, me I don't believe that, now, here.

Jesus Christ is the *"only solution"* for achieving a good life. Using the example of sanguma and sorcery, the *Uncles* highlight the complex layers that people navigate when formulating their own rationale to understand their experiences of hardship, such that violence might present. The talk of sanguma and sorcery by members of the Church, suggests that people in Baimuru are encumbered by multiple belief systems that structure their personal action. These overarching belief systems develop the way individuals might define their intent to act and how they might deem this intentional action as reasonable – whether violent or not. What the storying of belief systems also infers is that people in Baimuru transmit and transfer information through a particular lens that shapes their engagement with, and acceptance or non-acceptance of the information shared (Uncle Biru):

> We believe that the bible says there's an evil spirit, but when people practice it, it becomes power[ful]. Like that. But, as a Christian, when I read the bible, I know the bible, I believe the bible, and when I trust God, I began to make this kind of thing, unbelieve. I won't believe this thing. I have to depend on God, so that will not affect me.

> But it's true that these kinds of practices, it's like, when you practice it; when you believe it and practice it, then it happens!

The speech of both *Uncles* indicates an important point. Western Christian philosophy and religious practice does not negate and/or make obsolete a belief in the cosmological belief and associated practices of sanguma and sorcery. However, the practice of Christianity offers a lens to view these cosmological beliefs and critique them and provides both a means to respond through necessary action and attitude.

> (UA) There's a group of people around [here] like that, a dark society type of people who do evil in darkness and practice those things and want to destroy people – they are still around here. Things haven't changed here. There are some things that have changed like you know, few here, but we are in the village here – Baimuru is still the village. You can see when you go around. Just because of the tower [Digicel network] and we have a little bit of phone there to call out! Otherwise, we are in the village here! [Chuckling]

> Going around in public marketplace, still, I don't trust some of the people here. I don't want to talk here. Because we are in the village here. Because you can hear, 'Oh, in other villages, these things happen', and that's the result of those here. But let's say in our Christian way, we don't have to believe on those things. Otherwise, when we believe on those things then we believe it's true here, so we need/read the bible here.

> So, you get my point? [Chuckles]

The advancements of modern technology, engagement in a *Christian way*, and the proximal distance to *white men/women* has not been enough to encourage people away from ancestral cosmological belief systems. The alternate reality of the *"dark society type of people"* proves useful to the *Uncles* when rationalising the disruptive forces that develop bad action, particularly when used in comparison against the frames of Christian moral imperative and associated religious ideology.

3.12 Heart change and thought change

During the storying, the reference to the *heart*, is made numerous times, suggesting the *Uncles* recognise it as the crux of the issue. A corruption of the *heart* is caused by *evil things* and leads to a *bad* life:

UA: So, it's not a cultural problem

UB: It's a heart problem

UA: So, you can see it by [for] yourself there. It's a heart problem.

UB: If people retaliate, like you see the clear example there. Our Governor came [Plate 10 & 11 - Independence Day] with the President[vi] and he was trying to say something and people where [UB starts making mumbling sounds to indicate crowd displeased shouting]. That's the heart problem. That's why in the first place, brother said, you know, people are; they have a bitterness in their heart. Retaliation is one of the problems.

UA: Not only us but maybe around PNG. Not maybe – around PNG. We as Papua New Guineans we know PNG.

UB: We are talking about just this area, but there,

UA: In the Highlands,

UB: There's this type of program where it happens in some other places also.

Plate 9. The Governor pictured on stage (yellow shirt) addressing the community in Baimuru, on Independence Day celebrations (16th September 2016).

> UA: Stay in Moresby and you see, almost every day the newspapers will come out with violence, violence, violence! That's why when I started, I said Papua New Guinea is a hopeless country because it's true. That's how white men think about us because it's our life here [chuckles]. Only few people inside, you know, they change here [points to his head].

The chuckle at the end of the sentence indicated some exasperation rather than any mirth and represents *Uncle Alo's* sentiment of *hopelessness* due to the pervasive nature of violence.

> UA: Yeah, inside their minds. Thinking change, heart change, they're the only ones who know how to live life. But the rest, you know, because we are all tied to our cultural life; everyday life here. So, our everyday life is tied up with our cultural life.
>
> NN: Very much.
>
> UB: Even now.
>
> UA: Even now, you can see here. Thank you!
>
> Researcher: No! Thank you both!! It was very unexpected!! [All laughing]

The previous efforts to distance individual action from cultural habit is lost in *Uncle Alo's* final statements. Cultural life does frame the individual action and intent behind violent action, because it is cultural life that is "*everyday life*" in Baimuru. Throughout all of the storying of the *Uncle's* there is an on-going tension between what is perceived as cultural,

customary practices of times gone by, and the contemporary society and practices of modernity.

Plate 10. The Local Level Government (LLG) President addressing the Baimuru Community, Independence Day celebrations (16th September 2016).

3.13 Chapter Conclusion

The *Uncles* present an important discussion that highlights men's voices of experience and the impact of the Church on people and how this impact frames the logic and analytical lens through which people then rationalise their experiences and witness of gender violence. The Christian moral imperative to action adds a frame within which individual action is assessed as *good* or *bad*. Often what is good is determined by adherence to a Christian ethic and associated code of conduct. While action deemed *bad* is often equated to *sin*. People, men specifically, are not necessarily bad; however, they may be influenced by bad things.

Further tensions arise as the behaviour of men and women is further compounded by the ideals of modernity and the pursuit of economic advancement. Navigating between customary practices and practices of modernity has polarised the experience of men and women in contemporary society. The inclusion of a Christian moral imperative adds another layer through which experience filters. This additional layer has direct implication for women who experience gender violence, the ideology of those who perpetrate such acts (either men and/or women) and the way people may or may not be motivated to provide response. As people in Baimuru involve themselves in practices of modernity there is a small shift and transition from traditional customary roles that provokes the consideration of how men and women's roles are beginning to be defined outside of the *haus.*

3.13.1 The Christian Moral Imperative

The ability for men to mirror this transition has not been reflected in social action and indeed not in how gender violence is witnessed and perceived. Men, just as women, are precariously placed in a transition between custom and modernity and this impinges on their ability to realise and possibly solidify their place in contemporary society (Haley, 2008; Taylor, 2008). Inability to solidify this place, adds to the diffuse (between custom and modern) social action that occurs, and indeed adds to the reasons and intent to perpetrate violence and often the justification for such acts by those that witness it. The story of the *Uncles* confronts this position, and indeed use of a Christian moral imperative to act, serves to give these particular men leverage to confront a form of gender violence – as witnessed in the story of response. Furthermore, inhabiting the outsider space as trainee pastors, being considered part of but separate from the broader community, solidified the ability of these men to actively respond and intervene.

Just as a Christian moral imperative might support responsive action, further detail of the impact of the Church on the lives of people in contemporary PNG needs to be pursued. Particularly in regard to the rationalisation of particular patriarchal and structural gender claims that the roles within the Church may encourage. This does not exist in the scope of this thesis, but the story within this thesis suggests more research should be conducted to understand the patriarchal and structural frames that the Church might implicate, within the lives, experiences and actions of people in places like Baimuru.

3.13.2 New Technology

An additional impact on men's social action, as discussed by the *Uncles,* is their access to new technology. Access to new technology has exposed another problematic that impinges on the notions of morality that confronts men and women as they navigate between the spaces of custom and modernity. This problematic is the introduction of new sources of information flow that impinge on traditional (customary) modes of new knowledge generation. Old knowledge and new knowledge converge, sometimes melding to create confusion amongst those navigating contemporary spaces. The other part of that problematic is the lack of ability to filter the information that gets transferred through new technology. As is stated by *Uncle Alo*, new technology is merely a corrupting factor to men's (and women's) lives. Using the example of new technology, what has been elucidated from the story of the *Uncles* is that people are not prone to act in either bad or good ways. Rather their action is framed by certain extenuating factors that may create and result in good or bad action.

People deploy their own frames of moral reasoning to determine the *right* and *good* action. These frames overlap, and this can create moments of personal contradiction and complexity for individuals. It also contributes to the way in which they determine, through their own analysis, what is good and bad action and behaviour. The men that I spoke to did not disclose that they themselves had enacted violence. This does not mean that they did not directly act in violence towards another. Silence about their own actions suggests people have the ability to morally reason their own actions and the actions of others to then construct stories about violence. This detachment suggests it is either not important and/or perhaps shameful to highlight your own actions of violence. Or it can simply mean that it is easier to scrutinize and make assessment of others' violent and bad actions. This is particularly true for the *Uncles* who already see themselves as morally distanced from that kind of behaviour.

Finally, what is also made prominent in the conversation of the *Uncles* is a racial distinction which frames assessment and evaluation of action and behaviour in Baimuru. The links between the Christian moral imperative and the racial undertones that support such imperative are unsurprising when we acknowledge the Christian moral imperative as a Western concept. However, the comparative analysis that this sentiment provokes between Western ways and PNG ways, requires further exploration (Neuendorf, 2016b).

If this divide is interred within the psyche of individuals in PNG (given this example in Baimuru), there are obvious implications on the way in which particular information is filtered down and delivered to and accepted by people in communities like Baimuru. This is particularly true for both the narrative of and response mechanisms to gender violence that currently exist in PNG.

CHAPTER 4 VIRTUES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BAIMURU WOMEN

"Because I myself see that; a lot of times I would sit down and think (to myself) – there was one Pastor, he preached, and this is what he said, 'It is a man's responsibility to look after the family. But he must look after the family with Godly love, and the woman has to submit. In that way, you will have a better marriage'."

(Sister Bree in conversation, August 2016)

Situated in relation to one another men and women develop socially and morally acceptable action that constitutes them in their lived experience. The actions of women are attached to their positions within their relationships to men and to the lives of men and vice versa. These relationships are shaped by the expectation of community living and what might constitute *good* or *normal* lives. The Christian *moral* imperative of the Church to decipher what constitutes a *good* life. In previous chapters, the story of gender violence in Baimuru has developed around the notion that people act with intent and perform social action that is deemed good and reasonable particularly within their interactions with one another.

(*Mother Ana*) Violent action occurs within a specific place and space (e.g. *haus*). The roles that men and women play within the *haus* contributes to the experience of violence in that context, particularly of women. Although women's expected roles within that context cause and exacerbate the experience of violence, it is the relationship to men that develops reciprocal action. The responsibility engrained and associated to reciprocal action can be the catalyst for women's experience of violence.

(The *Uncles*) Violent action is interpreted through a lens of Christian moral imperative to act. Gender violence is viewed as the product of people in transition between competing values of historical customary practices and contemporary practices of modernity. Furthermore, it is the introduction of specific practices and objects in contemporary society (e.g. drugs, alcohol and the internet) that corrupt the lives of people (men in particular) and contribute to violence within families and in the broader community. The perspective of the *Uncles* from the standpoint of the Church, is used as a conduit to rationalise and critique the experience of gender violence in Baimuru.

The witness voice thus far focuses on the lives of women, which assumes that gender violence in Baimuru is predominantly a *women's issue*. As the witness voice continues it is apparent that women feel and experience violence differently from men. It is also important to acknowledge that women's experience are complex and varied.

As men and other women make moral valuations of the acts of gender violence they witness, it is also important to consider the moral evaluation that women make of their own personal experiences of violence against them. In recounting personal experiences of violence, men and women provide evaluations that may or may not justify the violence they experience. The juxtaposition of this evaluation against the reality of their experience of violence is that women become in some ways complicit in the violence they might receive. This is not dissimilar to instances of violence where masculinities are invoked. Ethnographies such as these provide external audiences, whether researcher or activist, to fully understand how gender violence is considered and reproduced in communities like Baimuru not just as acts of social disruption, but as a way for men and women to enable social continuity and cohesion after disruption.

Women's experiences in Baimuru are full of contradiction between what is expected of them, as women and how, even in fulfilling these expectations, they are subject to particular forms of violence against them. This is an important realisation for *Sister Bree* in that through her own assessment, the ideal life that she had envisioned was unachievable, even as she tried to adhere to the expectations set for her. This realisation enabled her to then challenge the basis of these expectations and consider her own agency and autonomy, which created an opportunity for her to leave a bad situation.

As evident in the narrative women come to think that if they behave in a *good* way, they will not experience hardship, including violence. It also sets a frame that suggests their experience of violence is therefore of their own doing. It is important to discern when and how gendered perceptions can provide agency to men and women. There is a need to develop a means of identifying the points where response can be capitalised on; where people can engage in conversations that support response; and where men and women can identify for themselves, the sources of agency that help them to prevent and/or otherwise directly respond to gendered violent action. Acknowledging the agency of people through gender distinctions provides an important counter-narrative to the dominant global discourses of gender violence that is women's subordination and men's

inherent aggression, as being a uniform experience while additionally, these individual experiences can inform important and appropriate response.

4.1 The Good Wife

Sister Bree was one of the first women I met not long after my arrival in Baimuru one early morning at the market, as we were waiting for the sago sellers to arrive from outer villages. She had already been privy to my area of research before this discussion. Eager to be involved, she had sought me out at the market. From that point forward, over the course of my time in Baimuru *Sister Bree* and I developed a very close bond. As she told the story of her life and experiences, the frustrations she had over the violence she experienced was tempered by her own belief of God's ultimate *right* in directing the circumstances of her life (Hermkens, 2008). Her words begin this chapter as a solemn statement of this sentiment and her role as a wife and mother bound her in these responsibilities:

> [TRANSLATION] I felt that talk was strongly directed at me, because, sometimes I myself create the problems in the haus – that's through my experience.

> Like we are women ah? We want to see everything must be in order. Like if we want food for the children everything must be there. For me, like, I prefer him to come home straight away and stay here. But if he doesn't come straight home, then I have a lot to say. It is this talk. He would go out and get drunk, come home drunk and we would fight, and there's always violence. But this violence, it doesn't happen for no reason. I fought for the rights of my children. He shouldn't abuse us [family].

PNG women can situate themselves within their relationships in alignment with Christian beliefs (Hermkens, 2008). These beliefs determine the role and responsibilities of women within the relationship set of married life particularly under the ideals espoused under religious precepts. Through a Christian lens of morality their actions outside of these roles and responsibilities are seen to provoke their own experience of violence. *Sister Bree* believed her own experience of violence was her own fault, perhaps a lesson to learn as part of a greater purpose, a sentiment reiterated by her father, which she repeated to me:

> Sometimes God allows it to happen, so you can know what life is. You must know that God has his own timing.

God allows certain hardship to happen so that you can learn about life and everything in life is dictated by the timing of God. The desire to have a Godly or good husband is solidified by a strong belief in God's ultimate right in directing individual circumstance (Wardlow & Robbins, 2005). This underlying Christian moral imperative serves as justification for women's experience of violence within their homes, particularly from their husbands. The torment they may feel at times, in regard to violence against them, is reasonable. Moreover, it is manageable.

Sister Bree's subtly acknowledged her own use of violence in counter-action to her husband's behaviour and implies this action is to ensure the welfare of her children within this environment. This violence is purposeful and has meaning. Her use of violence was as a reaction in response to her husband's use of violence and to protect her children. The counter-narratives' that are subtly drawn here suggest violence is an expression that is reinforced by both men and women in certain contexts.

4.1.1.1 *Women's Attitudes to their Own Experience of Violence*

The perspective of Christian doctrine can be useful to women in these experiences, as it provides solace and hope to their otherwise hopeless experience. It can create resilience in these circumstances and is important to recognise as a means of coping with the experience of violence, however it can hinder the ability of women to extract themselves from these circumstances (Hermkens, 2008, 2012). While the frame of Christian doctrine can reinforce an attitude of acceptability of particular types of violence that are experienced, particularly within married relationships, in the context of *haus*. The acceptability of VAW in the *haus* is also compounded by the expectation of roles and responsibilities within that context as evident in *Mother Ana's* story of the role of women (McIlwaine, 2013) (Refer Figure 5.). McIlwaine's analysis of these attitudes reinforces earlier observations by the *Uncles* and *Mother Ana* as to why men use violent action against women within the *haus* and why women expect this violence given particular circumstance.

TABLE 2

Women's attitudes towards wife beating in relation to whether husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife

Country	Husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife (% of women who agree)									
	Burns the food		Argues with him		Goes out without telling him		Neglects the children		Refuses to have sex with him	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Benin (2001)	35.3	20.2	45.5	30.6	50.6	34.3	59.3	38.9	19.4	13.5
Cameroon (2004)	25.8	13.8	33.3	21.1	40	28.2	48.7	42	27.1	14.8
Ethiopia (2005)	67.5	30.8	63.9	34.6	69.1	41.5	69	44.2	49.6	19.8
Ghana (2003)	18.5	8.9	34.3	24.3	39.2	28.4	42.9	30.8	24.1	15.5
Kenya (2003)	17.7	12.3	50	33.5	41.9	31.6	59.3	42.8	31.8	22.1
Malawi (2004)	12.5	6.3	12.8	7.1	14.7	10.1	18.6	10.5	14.7	8.6
Nigeria (2003)	35	22.7	47.8	35.4	58.4	42.2	53.8	41.1	42.5	28.1
Senegal (2005)	27.4	19.1	58.1	38.7	60.8	38	57.6	39.1	55.4	34
Egypt (2005)	25	10.4	47	23.8	49.4	27.4	48.6	27.1	43	20.1
Jordan (2002)	72.9	56.1	9	3	37.1	20.8	49.9	33.2	–	–
Indonesia (2002–2003)	3.6	2.2	6.3	4.1	21.1	14.9	22.1	16.5	7.9	5.8
Nepal (2001)	5.1	3.9	8.8	8	12.1	13.2	24.8	29	3.1	2.7
Philippines (2003)	4.3	2.2	7.1	3.7	12.6	6	25	17.3	4.5	2.4
Bolivia (2003)	9.2	3.6	9.9	4.9	12.9	7.2	19.9	15.3	4.5	1.9
Dominican Republic (2002)	3.6	1.8	1.7	0.8	5	2.3	9.5	5.9	1.3	0.6
Haiti (2000)	14.4	6.6	14	6.4	34.4	23.4	33.2	21.6	16.9	10.2
Nicaragua (2001)	7.9	2.6	7.5	2.6	9.9	3.4	13.4	7.2	4.8	1.7

SOURCE: http://www.measuredhs.com/, accessed 10 January 2012.

Figure.5. Sourced from McIlwaine (2013, p. 68). Example of some of the attitude's women exhibit towards wife beating.

The study and indicated measures contribute to a global discourse that suggests VAW is a particularly pervasive form of gender violence, especially when experienced in *haus* life. Indeed in the story from Baimuru these attitudes are prevalent. The connections between men and women, particularly within *haus* life strengthens some of these attitudes and these have already been highlighted in text: *refusal of sex*, and, *goes out without telling him*. However, the statement by *Sister Bree* develops our understanding to acknowledge that women base this attitude of acceptance on a belief that it may be predestined. Their forbearance of such experiences of violence then lends itself to their belief that they will attain a *good* life under God. Furthermore, women's use of violence reinforces a cyclic experience within relationships and within the context of *haus* life.

4.1.2 The Responsibility of Women

Women are responsible for their own experience of violence. This is the sentiment that has been engrained in the experience of violence, particularly against women, in Baimuru. The following story of an incident that occurred during the final stages of my fieldwork highlights the precarious position of women and how their responsibilities to others can shape their lives.

4.1.2.1 *"Em laif blo mi": A Case of Choice*

Lily is a single mother in her mid-20's, with one young child from a previous relationship. Living with her mother and father (*Mother Ana* and *Father Aita*), she is largely independent, responsible for providing for herself and her young son through subsistence activities and market sales. She had an ability to cast out a net and catch many fish and to spend all day in the garden and bring a harvest to share with her family. One of my first personal encounters with her was after she had just reeled in a big catch of fish. As is the local form of welcome, she presented me with two of her freshly caught fish that she had cooked on the fire. Lily is outspoken, not shy in airing her views and opinions.

The youngest of five children, two of her elder siblings live within the family compound in Baimuru while an older brother lives in Port Moresby and older sister in Kerema. As is expected, each of the siblings contribute to their parent's household in different ways – monetary support; work in the family garden; contributions (goods, money and other) at times of ceremonial significance. Lily particularly benefitted from her older siblings who provided store bought items which she would then on-sell through in the market.

She developed a relationship with Charlie, a man from Milne Bay, employed at the sawmill. As often happened, relationships between sawmill workers and local women would occur, and sometimes these relationships would be transactional (Bell, 2006b, pp. 224 - 225). Like most in Baimuru, their *friendship* was clandestine, although, rumour and gossip surrounded their courtship. When the relationship was made known publicly, Lily was already pregnant with Charlie's child. This relationship needed definition, particularly as there was now an unborn child to consider. As Williams wrote in 1924 (p.54), "*It appears that a man who had thus compromised a girl would eventually marry her.*" Thus, the expectation of *marriage* or at least formalisation of a relationship was required by Lily's family. Charlie would have to comply.

Lily's family, being prominent in the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church were also faced with the moral dilemma of responding in a way that would absolve her and return her *goodness*. Although the relationship between Charlie and Lily was recognised, there was unrest amongst Lily's family – the fact that Charlie had a wife and family (outside of Baimuru) and his eventual departure (closure of the sawmill in August 2016) would mean he would leave and not support Lily in this predicament.

One Sunday afternoon, amidst the buzz and activity of the local basketball competition, Charlie was summoned to attend *court* – effectively a discussion with

the family, to determine his culpability in this relationship, and responsibility for supporting Lily and their child. The session involved Lily, Charlie and Lily's family (August 2016). It was presided over by a Pastor (Christian Revival Church), who also happened to be Lily's maternal uncle. The involvement of her pastor uncle afforded authority to the proceedings.

Following a family court, Charlie agreed to pay a sum of money as an indication of his promise to support Lily and her children. Charlie had brought along a sum of money (K2,000 ~ AUD780) as compensation and resolve. Charlie had hoped to remove himself from any parental responsibility of the unborn child. However, his ability to negotiate was limited, given he was not from Baimuru, and further, although his wishes were acknowledged, it was ultimately Lily's kin who directed negotiations. The family set out the terms of exchange and set out their wishes for Lily to be married and as such be considered Charlie's responsibility. Without the ability to negotiate, Charlie was required to pay an amount for bride price, stipulated by Lily's family, and take her as his wife from that point forward. It is unclear how much was asked for by Lily's family, however, there was very serious talk as to Charlie's agreement to pay part of it before he left the station. It would seem Lily's choice to enter a formal relationship with Charlie was realised; a situation not necessarily favourable to Charlie; a situation favourable to Lily and her kin; a situation that enabled her position to be recognised.

On the day of Charlie's scheduled departure, Lily's brother, feeling that the situation was not adequately resolved (outstanding bride price amount), came to the airstrip shouting that Charlie had no right to board the plane and leave until he had compensated them in full. Tom, as Lily's brother (and oldest born son) had traditional rights to speak and demand this. He approached Charlie's manager (an expatriate) shouting "He cannot leave – he got my sister pregnant; he must stay and deal with this!" Tom feared that in leaving the community, this man from another place would likely go back to his home, and never return to Baimuru or that bride price would remain unsettled.

As Tom approached Charlie, to prevent him from getting on the plane, Julie (Tom's younger sister) stepped in. He slapped her squarely across to face to assert his anger at the situation and his right as a brother, male kin, in his demands. Before being hit, Julie was calling for him to let Charlie leave, and resolve the situation later. Also prior to this altercation, Julie herself had been sitting under Charlie's house, demanding he would take care of her younger sister before he left, by making the necessary compensation to the family.

The situation was further compounded when Lily appeared at the airstrip, with a packed bag, ready to board the flight with Charlie. If she were to leave with Charlie, effectively becoming his wife, Lily's family (particularly Tom) were worried that being away from Baimuru, there would be no pressure on Charlie to finalise any 'payment' for Lily. The altercation prevented Charlie and Lily from getting on the flight that day. Charlie's manager, having no prior knowledge of the situation, decided that Charlie should take responsibility for his actions. He also fired Charlie on the spot and withdrew any company support.

Sister Bree, like others in the community, provided her own commentary on the responsibilities she felt Lily had:

[TRANSLATION] If Lily was working and she acted in this way it would be ok! Because if she were working – she would have pay to support this [unborn] child. But, right now she's handicap, you just imagine. She didn't complete her schooling and she entered into a relationship with a man that wasn't thinking about her future. He [Charlie] just got her pregnant and isn't concerned about Lily's future, how she'll live with this child – she [Lily] didn't think about the child's future. And now it's like the family are burdened [Researcher: Yeah, ok]. The family are burdened, and that is why the brother is angry and she is bringing shame to the family [Researcher: Ok – that's the biggest thing!]

What it is like for our fathers and mothers here, what you have come and seen here, like, we work very hard to bring up our children, until they are grown up and they will go to school; this hard work you have come here and seen it. Whatever little market that we do so that we can buy school fees, clothes: shirt, trousers, a good pair of shoes for them to wear; just so that the child looks like there is someone who care[s] for him.

Until then; their continuous hard work will go and be wasted! Even this brother of yours, you don't know, he must have spent some amount of money to help your father and mother to buy school fees, your shirt or trousers; he has already contributed one way or other, you have no regret [mistake] about it. But, your aim and your seal is to, like, concentrate, and do something that is for your family. And it you don't end up doing that! It's like, this kind of gender violence it will happen! Almost like, you are asking for it!

It's partly you asking for it!

For *Sister Bree,* what had transpired showed that *Sister Lily*, by her own action, prompted such a reaction from her family members (Neuendorf, 2020). The ongoing vested interest in the lives of women, before marriage is a matter of responsibility for families and provides justifiable reason for intentional action, often violent against them. The moral concerns of parents prompt the violent action they enact toward their children, young single women specifically. Parents work hard to create a good life for their children to grow and mature "*mother's and father's … they work very hard to bring up their children".* That hard work goes to waste when women do not achieve or accomplish educational goals as they have been supported and as expected of them. *Sister Bree's* argument is that it is the lack of *gutpela pasin* in recognition (*luksave*) of the young woman herself, her thoughtlessness that had resulted in her experiencing violence – *"it's partly you asking for it".*

[TRANSLATION] Because you have the lack of knowledge and understanding that you, don't go to this kind of level that shows your education! Someone made you to become that type of person; to come up to that level and to that stage that you have come through to? Somebody else has; like your mother and father, your brother, your sisters, your older siblings that receive an income and helped you

until, the time you do not do good by them! You are most likely to be beaten up because you asked for it! You disobeyed the family! You disobeyed the rules in your home! And this expectation that they put on you ya! You did not reach it [Researcher: Ok]. So when you get this kind of situation, then, like that's when gender violence comes inside, through this way. For the young man and women is what I am saying. So, one way or another you ask for it, so that's what it is. Outcome of it is, they will hit you because you are disobedient. You are reluctant to listen to good advice and follow instructions, so that's how you will end up; how you end up how you live your life in the future is your problem.

Disobedience is often used to justify violence against daughters, given the *right* of parents and kin to attach themselves to women, particularly young unmarried women's actions. When we acknowledge disobedience contains moral concerns for parents over children, it requires us to understand that parents out of what is perceived as right and good. In some instances this is to enact violence. The actions of young unmarried women are of most moral concern to parents. *Sister Bree* contrasted the experience of *Sister Lily* against the circumstance and outcomes of her own experience. She suggested that her own *unselfish* actions were part of the reason her family willingly supported her and her children after her own separation from her husband. In contrast, *Sister Lily*, because of her own action and choice to pursue a particular relationship, had brought about her own problems. A moral judgement was made on *Sister Lily* and a suggestion made that, by her own action, and expected outcome would be that her kin to respond in violence. It was *Sister Lily's* own fault, and her individual actions had implications on her family, shaping their reaction and sense of duty and responsibility as part of their moral concerns for her and for themselves.

> [Researcher: So is there some point where the family just don't take any responsibility anymore, or?]
>
> They will! They will come to a time when they will feel sorry for you, and; at times they will at least one K20 or at least hold the child, but, sometimes, not all the time like I said; it comes [help] once in a while. But the grandparents they have a heart for their grandchildren.
>
> Like, for my case, my parents, like, they don't allow me to hit my children, and when they cry my father always gives them one K2, or, at least he will give a K10 or K20 to go and buy biscuits or scones or something to eat. Until the mum comes. Like, my parents don't even hit my children – they don't. That's one thing about my parent I like. But when I hit them [children], all their [her parents] arrows are shooting at me, because they don't want, because they love their grandchildren; even if their [children's] father is not supportive to them, my parents always support their grandchildren. That's for my case, but for other families, I don't know how their lifestyle is with their parents. But for me, like, I feel more flexible.

> So that makes me, relieve(s) me of some of my pressures, and I don't worry too much.

The responsibility of parents to young women is in fact to ensure the legacy of their own heritage through their grandchildren. For *Sister Bree*, making decisions that were considered by her family to be *right* resulted in the on-going support of her and her children at a time she needed it the most. The importance of inter-generational connection within families can motivate women to seek and be granted support. The national discourse and response to gender violence suggests that the cultural practice of bride price can inhibit families from supporting their women after the breakdown of relationships, particularly as they experience violence (Garbe & Struck-Garbe, 2018; Wardlow, 2006). Yet, an important distinction is made through *Sister Bree's* experience. Inter-generational support of grandchildren by grandparents can have the important effect of the support to women as they extract themselves from violent martial situations.

4.1.3 Situation and Circumstance

Understanding the situation and circumstance of family life, particularly the relationships within, provides a basis for understanding the set of responsibilities that exist. It is the set of responsibilities between kin that frame the moral concerns that are felt between parents and children, husband and wives. This is exemplified in *Sister Bree's* relationships with her father and mother and siblings. Her father is a widower and the woman *Sister Bree* calls mother is in fact her stepmother – using Western notions and family labels. *Sister Bree* storied of losing her mother and how that loss had impacted her father and solidified his relationship and responsibility to his children:

> I'll just say a little bit about dad, it may be supportive to your research here. When mum died, like it's a custom that we have in Baimuru, I'are and Koriki tribes, they have a custom – when a man is married to a woman and he doesn't pay her bride price and when she dies, the woman's people come for demands and if you don't give, they will take the children away. So when my dad saw that, it wasn't really good for him, if they had to take all of us. He would have nothing left, so...he just paid the first part payment of the bride price – when they were first married. But after that, all of us were born, dad didn't pay the rest of the bride price. When she passed away, her people came for demands, and they asked for, if they can take all of us [children]. If they could take all of us away from him. But, he didn't like that so he paid; he went and withdrew some money from the bank and gave them 10,000 kina, with some pigs and, um, chicken and lamb flaps, you know, those kind of things.

Understanding the history of her family situation, provides important detail to the support the *Sister Bree's* family gave to her at the time of her experience of violence. Children hold important value in the lives of men and women, mother's and father's in the Gulf. The legacy of family is an important asset. The social organisation of families and the relationships within these units has been an important mode of solidifying identity and personhood amongst peoples of the Purari delta region (Williams, 1924, p. 49 to 52). The importance of clan history and genealogies continues in contemporary society and the significance exists in a pride of people and place. These factors are important considerations in solidifying the type of inter-generational support that can be afforded to women and their children.

4.2 "This Kind Of Life": Marriage (Marit)

The value of bride price exchange is often tenuously understood through distinctions of value that are attached to gender (Hermkens & Lepani, 2017; Sykes, 2013). The hardship for some women in PNG is that bride price and transactional exchanges that constitute the formalisation of *marit* relationships can create distance in the relationship's women have with their own families. *Sister Bree* did not face resistance from her family when she wanted to enter into a relationships just as she did not fear resistance when she left her relationship:

> [TRANSLATION] My daddy never even slapped me for their father; because I never had a man before! I was single until their [indicating her children] father came into my life. And they [her family] never fought him! They [family] just let him come in. We organised a small feed [feast] and shook hands between us and he [her husband] came and spoke; because he came to 'marry' me. They [family] never hit me or the man [husband].

In Tok Pisin phrases such as "*mipela fren*" [TP: we're friends]; "*mi tupela fren*" [TP: The two of us are friends]; "*tupela fren*" [TP: they are friends]; "*ol marit*" [TP: they are married]; "*tupela marit*" [TP: those two are married]; as expressions that signify a marriage-like relationship between a man and a woman. While these relationships are not always formalised by exchange or ceremony they do carry the same expectations of reciprocal responsibilities, fidelity between partners, procreation and home support (LiPuma, 1988). Marriage is a defined term in Western concepts of domesticity and religious bounds of formalising relationships between men and women (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1963). The *Tok Pisin* term of *marit* is not bound by domesticity or

notions of monogamy, necessarily. Rather it indicates that a man and woman are attached to one another, but not in temporal bounds, but they have a particular set of responsibilities to one another under specified roles, a *luksave* of a committed type of relationship. These attachments frame the way men and women interact with one another within these types of relationships. A *marit* relationship also distinguishes gendered and hierarchical protocols for interactions with others (whether kin or affine).

At the time I met Sister Bree she had only recently returned to Baimuru after living for several years in Port Moresby, working in a well-known resource extraction company. Over the course of our conversations she told me of the struggles in her *marit* life with her husband and her personal experiences of violence.

> I didn't expect to come across this kind of life! I was thinking when I get married I will live a happy life.

The expectation is that men and women form relationships that engage roles within *haus* life and this is both normal and good. As they enter into this context and enact these roles and associated responsibilities the product will be a *good* home. The reality as we understand is much more complicated and complex. *Marit* relationships form sets of responsibilities and social relations that embed women in situations that in fact create spaces where women might be made more vulnerable and even susceptible to and encourage violence against them. This experience contravenes human rights assumptions and anti-discrimination messaging as the expectation of women to have *good* lives after marriage and compounds their experience of hopelessness.

4.3   The Responsibility of Marriage

The responsibilities within a *marit* relationship in contemporary society is further encroached by a Christian doctrine of what constitutes a marriage. As an example, one of my cousin's in Baimuru related to me proudly that her church wedding was the only one to have been conducted in Baimuru to date. Her pride over this was only matched by the rest of the community, particularly her (my) family and her friends that saw this as a significantly important recognition of the relationship she had with her husband. It somehow meant more than simply the acknowledgment of the relationship through ceremonial exchange or the tag of *marit*. It meant that the relationship between herself and her husband was sanctified on another level – both in a religious sense and in the sense of Western mechanisms of legitimising the relationship.

Sister Bree's story of her relationship with her man is coloured by her Christian belief, even though their relationship was never sanctified by religion or formalised by institution or traditional ceremony. Particularly interesting to note is the way in which she defines her action and the action of her man in recognition of Christian distinctions and definitions. *Sister Bree's* storying follows:

> [TRANSLATION] Like marriage!? On the side of marriage, for you in white man's culture – you will be friends for a long time, and then you will put on an engagement ring, and then – you sign a piece of paper and have a wedding, and then you're married! Like, you will make some strong voice and then you will be married for life. That's in your country.

Distinguishing how *we* (outside) might define *marit* is a comparative lens through which *Sister Bree* marks the nature of *marit* relationships in Baimuru. The formality of marriage is acknowledged by putting on an engagement ring, the signing of a paper and having a wedding, where you will make strong vows. All of these things symbolise the relationship set between a man and woman solidified through a Western conception of union or a marriage. The mode of recognition in Baimuru is similar yet different. Using the tag of *marit* to acknowledge a relationship has purposes. Firstly, it publicly acknowledges and recognises the formality of a chosen relationship, it requires *luksave* of that relationship. Synonymous to a Western marriage relationship, using the term, rather than going through the motions of ceremony allows people to distinguish their relationships as somewhat formal and bounded. In that way, these relationships then necessarily adhere to certain codes of conduct or *pasin and luksave* between the two in the relationship. Additionally, those outside of the relationships, who interact with a man or woman in a *marit* relationship are also bound to modes of interaction. These modes are defined by the full acknowledgement and recognition of the defined relationship that exists between a man and woman in a *marit* relationship and requires people act in socially and morally acceptable ways towards the married couple. A *marit* relationship can therefore be a safeguard for women and affords them a form of agency and autonomy to operate in certain ways within their communities, given their identity and associated personhood as a *marit meri* [TP: married woman]:

> [TRANSLATION] For us here [Baimuru/PNG], there's no wedding ring! And no wedding ceremony! It's like we have a shared agreement and then we are married!
>
> Like I explained. The difference in your country, whereas in PNG, In PNG, if we have a Christian life, like we go to Church and stay faithful to each other, ok the

boyfriend will say 'ok the parents too will know me; my parents too will know the man'. Ok they become partners.

The distinction of marriage or *marit* regardless of ceremonial exchange practices, is the intentional act of forming a relationship. Negotiation and acknowledgement by kin then formalises these relationships between men and women. Exchange practices such as bridewealth exchanges (historical in the Purari), are then also negotiated further to agreement to formalise a relationship. Talk, agreement and acknowledgement as *pasin blo luksave*, is the key to solidifying the relationships between men and women in Baimuru. The role and position of the Church is more pronounced in shaping *marit* relationships in contemporary society, despite the continued deference to cultural modes of formalising these relationships.

4.3.1.1 *Church Style*

The social contract of marriage is neither formal nor permanent, like in other societies. The structures that bind these sets of relationships however are embedded within the particular set of social relationships surrounding these social contracts.

> [TRANSLATION] Like we go to Church, if we're Christian and we become friends with a Church man. Ok, we'll be friends and hide for a while, then later we'll think about telling our family – ok I go and visit your family, you come and then the both parties observe, our life [relationship]; we're not causing nonsense [or being responsible] go go, faithful to each other. Yeah, then they will do a wedding.
>
> Families that have enough money will do this.
>
> The Kapuna nursing school do this for their staff.
>
> But in the village! In the village, like I said, custom marriage, in our tradition, that style of marriage is there. The village style.

Using the example of the Kapuna nursing school, a Christian/Mission organisation (Unknown, 2019) as a point of reference, *Sister Bree* distinguishes between the types of processes that can formalise a relationship between a man and woman that might constitute as marriage. Her statement serves as an indicator that these types of relationship are good, based on an explanation of good *moral* conduct between young men and women under the Church. Being a Christian organisation using Kapuna as an example is important. Such weddings are perceived as legitimate examples of marriage or *marit*. Mention of the Church wedding, assumes that relative good will exists within the relationships of men and women. Relationships that are sanctified by God.

4.3.1.2   *Village Style*

While the Church style of marriage creates a *moral* obligation within interpersonal relationships of men and women under a Christian moral imperative, the *"village style"* of marriage signifies how social relationships have been embedded in the process of solidifying relationships between men and women:

> [TRANSLATION] The family of the man, if they like a woman from another place, they will go by canoe, sit down with the family and like [say] 'we saw that your daughter is good, good at this and that, so we would like [like her as a daughter]'. So they will come to a verbal agreement, and then they will be married. Before they used to do this.
>
> But today! The lifestyle today, is/has changed, they go to Moresby, they go stay there and then, they see this kind of life for a while, then they feel, ok, we'll do this [get married].

The *"village style"* marriage has in the past been formalised by kin. The contemporary experience of young people entering into these relationships is more dynamic, particularly in urban centres like Port Moresby. Living in a *marit* relationship brings about the processes of formalising relationships. Men and women in contemporary times are at odds between the Church, the village and contemporary styles of formalising their relationships. The ambiguity of what constitutes the formalisation of these relationships between men and women makes the nature of the social contract of marriage more undefined than in previous times. Moral concerns regarding how one conducts themselves in these relationships are therefore layered. The continual discussion surrounding bride price or bridewealth as the predominant signifier of marriage in PNG is problematic. Furthermore, the use of bride price or bridewealth as a major contributor to the experience of gender violence within global discourses limits a broader understanding of the fluid and dynamic nature of men and women's relationships in PNG.

> [TRANSLATION] So even now, things are changing. Before, like, men and women would grow to an appropriate age and then they would get married, so they understand [understood] what marriage is all about. But now, we get married too young. Not at an appropriate age to be married.

Compounding the experience of men and women in contemporary society is the transition of societal practices and the inability to share knowledge between generations. A particular social and moral concern as suggested by *Mother Ana*. There is a critique of contemporary society in that there are more underage marriages and there is a loss of mechanisms for sharing knowledge and information about marriage. Both these factors

have resulted in the misinformation about marriage, married life and all the responsibilities these entail. The result of which is that people enter into these relationships and formalise these relationships without the knowledge to make informed decisions about these choices. Therefore the likely outcome is a bad marriage and bad life. This is the explanation for bad marriage and the likely experience of violence within marriage. The good understanding that should provide a good foundation on which a marriage relationship can be built does not exist. People continue to navigate their spaces in contemporary society between what was and what is and in doing so are in a state of flux and this is evident in the way men and women may choose to formalise their relationships – or not.

4.4 Prevention: "We can stop it, by behaving ourselves"

Sister Bree suggests that when women do not enter appropriately into relationships with men they are likely to experience violence, conflict and/or hardship within these relationships. Violence does not happen for no reason. Men's actions are intertwined with the actions of women in *marit haus* life. It is the responsibility of women to behave and act appropriately in terms of relationships with men to achieve the outcome of a *good* marriage. It is then also the responsibility of women to act with intent within their *marit haus* life in support of men's roles and with the support of their own families, to ensure this outcome:

> We can stop it [violence] by behaving ourselves. By humbling ourselves. If you submit, even if our husband is not right to us, we must always submit. [Researcher: Ok]
>
> [TRANSLATION] Because, the way I see it, is sit and think about this a lot – there was a Paster who preached, he would say 'it is a man's responsibility to look after the family. But he must look after the family with Godly love, and the woman has to submit. In that way, you will have a better marriage'.

According to *Sister Bree* women are able to prevent their husbands acting violently by "*behaving themselves*". The action of women, that is to behave, is a direct reaction to men's action within *marit* relationships and *haus* life. This idea is a product of Christian doctrine, the roles of men and women in the house, one where men assume the pinnacle position and women and children dwell in subordinated positions. The patriarchy of Christian doctrine reinforces the inequality that women feel within these relationships in the context of *haus* life. Furthermore, it reinforces a sentiment that women internalise, that suggests their experience of violence is of their own making.

[TRANSLATION] When women behave it means like, if a man goes to work and I am not a working mother, I am a housewife. My responsibilities in the house is to look after the children, take the children to school, bring them back to the house. Make sure the house is clean at all times, tidy; and food is set on the table; clothes are clean; and my husband comes home he sees that oh, my wife is; she has her responsibilities at home to play.

But some women! They don't have respect for their man. Their man is employed/will work. On fortnight (or payday) they will come and give some money, when the men get up to go out, the women too will go out. They [women] will go out with their own intentions, go, go, go, go, play cards, some women will drink beer! Some women will aimlessly go out. You'll think they [go out as if they] are working! No. They just aimlessly go out and are sure to come home before their men come home! And that late hour they are trying to prepare something, and the husband comes home – 'What were you doing all this time?' Or men go drink! Women will also go drink! Or man play's pokies! The women to also go play pokies! And that's why men! That's why they say 'ok, do you have respect for me? You are one disrespectful woman, so why will I look after you like my wife?'

The measure of a woman in a *marit* relationship is engrained in the responsibilities she is tasked in the context of *haus* life. Masculine identity in the space of *haus* life in contemporary society is attached to particular action regarding how he reacts to his woman's behaviour. This action then automatically excludes women's enactment of such things as *drinking beer* [TP: *drin bia*] and *playing pokies* [TP: *plei pokies*]. Aside from particular gender perceptions, *Sister Bree* critiques this behaviour and action of women as immoral, in accordance with the lens of Christian moral imperative to act. Women are critiqued as disrespectful when they inhabit spaces that are considered men's spaces. Acknowledging women's behaviour as disrespectful to men, suggests that men's positions within the *haus* and indeed in their *marit* relationships is elevated above women's. Further, the specific use of the tag disrespectful suggests women are not behaving themselves. Therefore whatever action, particularly chastisement and physical force that is used against them in these moments, is therefore deemed reasonable. It reinforces McIlwaine's (2013) assessment that particular attitudes of women reinforce the acceptability of the violence enacted against them. Furthermore, if a woman is behaving like a man then she is unable to fulfil her role as a wife and that encourages a particular reaction from men:

[TRANSLATION] 'Now you will feel some kind of pain and struggle in your life and you'll stay.

'You don't want to submit to me' and when he comes the children have sores and they are constantly sick – it's because their parents are unsettled, always out.

And then like, you won't look after the children; there is always violence for the child. Or you as mother, you're responsibilities are not played properly because the children are looking sick; the children are hungry and crying; you expect what? [what do you expect?] I took them around aimlessly to the cards place or somewhere else and now they are hungry – you haven't cooked at home! You go out and buy good, cold food on the road/market, flies covering it and the children get sicker – that the kind of behaviour I'm talking about here.

But if you are good at housework? Because sometimes! If you don't know how to cook rice well, your brother will kick the good and hit you – gender violence comes in like that. Because when you go aimlessly around! Do you think? You don't get hit for nothing. Because you are wrong, you get hit. You desire to get married? Then you don't behave your own way inside your marriage in your house.

Like, do you know how to look after how many multitudes of people coming to your house? you know how to feed and look after they are gone next day? you know how to accommodate them, and you know how to do everything in the house? – If you do, then you are a great woman!

So your husbands' people will see you and say, 'you are a great working woman!'

You are just friends [and you do this] your boyfriends' family will be look at you with pride, because you are a woman who works.

Sister Bree stresses that a woman should be proud of her ability to be a good mother and a good wife. Pride in home is a moral concern for women and men. It develops mutual recognition and respect between man and woman and extendedly, the woman (wife) and her affine. Affinal pride bodes well with women who seek to ensure their position as *good* women within their *marit* relationships and within their *haus.* This also entails ensuring children are cared for, and women do not neglect their household responsibilities. The acknowledgement and recognition of these works by women affords confidence in their position as mothers and wives and *tambus* [TP: in-laws/affine].

[TRANSLATION] So, the way I see it with my man, he always likes me to respect him. Even if he doesn't do the right thing, as least you [I] have to show some respect. So one thing from me, I am very good at that. I can cook – he would bring visitors, lots of 'big' [important] men would come to the house – I know how to handle them. I will fix the bed for them, sister! I would wash their dirty clothes; I would tell them 'you leave your dirty clothes. I will fix your bed again'. Remove all the dirty beddings, wash your dirty clothes, fold them, put them back in the house. In my house! Like a guest house I use to do that in my house.

And they will eat and eat, and they fill feel tired of eating! And they used to tell my husband – they would say "Ay! This women of yours doesn't get tired of working! She works and works; we sleep over night and hear some small noises until midnight and then she must sleep. Early morning she is up again, and we hear her and get up". That's the kind of life that, men like!

The enactment of roles and responsibilities of women within *marit* relationships in *haus* life provides women with a sense of their own pride. Fulfillment of their place within these roles is an important moment for them to situate themselves within their current lived experience. In places like Baimuru, the reality of everyday life is still very much bound in these relationships between men and women that encourage certain types of relationships. For some women, like *Sister Bree*, it is these relationships that continue to shape their identity and define their personhood within a contemporary experience. Acknowledging this position does not omit the lived experience of inequalities between men and women, given the examples. What it does suggest is the story of people's daily lives and indeed their experience of gender violence (in Baimuru) is set within modes of understanding an individual's place in their kin network. The importance of this place then translates to their social and community networks and impacts their experience. Moreover, it is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed at various points in the lived experience. *Sister Bree* acknowledges this during her young times:

> [TRANSLATION] Another thing, when I was younger, my father started talking to me too; ay you have to learn to get up and look after/tend to the kitchen quickly. And do this work. Because, later, when you are married, your man – some men, they don't really worry about meal preparation, they will understand. Some men they will not understand you! They will yell about preparing food and eating. You'll still be asleep, and they will say 'Shh! Have you heated the tea and prepared food for me to eat so I can go to work?", that's the kind of talk he used to give me.

The importance of fulfilling these roles, particularly for women, is as a reflection of their kin relationships and the ways in which their kin have impacted their understanding of how to operate in the world. There is a continuation of responsibility that is constructed in the lives of women, experienced over their lifetimes and reinforced at various points. The inability to learn these things signifies an immaturity in women who are unable to enact their role as mothers and wives.

> [TRANSLATION] Like, some women they have careless attitudes, and some women are childish. Their behaviour is like children's thinking. As if they want to go and play marbles like children, they'll take their children and go play. And your man will think, is this life? He will not want to behave like that. And some men you'll see that [behaviour]. Here, you'll see, a lot of my brothers are married, but they are not truthful with their women, and will go out. One time I got cross and said to them "You have no shame! Do you think you deserve to be a father and married?" Those are not your responsibilities. Your responsibilities are to look after your wife, to make garden and feed your children.

Just as women have a set of responsibilities, so too do men. While the expectation of women is bound in these sets of responsibilities, so the expectation of men is bound in their relationships to their kin through the recognition of wife and children. Just as the expectation of women creates a frame within which they exert action, influence and agency and autonomy, men do the same. Men are also constructed by their inability to fulfil their responsibilities as fathers and behave within *marit* relationships.

4.5   Chapter Conclusion

Within the social bounds of *marit* relationships and *haus* life, the being and doing of a woman has attached expectations given particular gender perceptions. These expectations are enacted as roles and responsibilities that situate women in the experience of life in contemporary society. It also contributes to their experience and the acceptance of violence against them. The recent work of the Church Partnership Program which includes the mainline churches: United Church, Seventh Day Adventist, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Baptist Union and the Salvation Army (Australian High Commission of Papua New Guinea, 2019). Of these mainline churches, The United Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Baptist Union all operate in Baimuru. The Church Partnership Program in PNG seeks to define gender equality according to theological doctrine (Bird & Carroll, 2016), and have collectively developed a united Christian response to gender violence in PNG (Ibid). It rightly asserts that the notion of 'submission' in marriage should be the joint or mutual responsibility of men and women in married relationships (Bird & Carroll, 2016, p. 10). Mutuality and in Christian Relationships and Marriage point 7 of the "Theology of Gender Equality" clearly indicates a dual responsibility in that men and women have equal responsibility placed on their actions and behaviour to contribute to harmonious marriage. Yet, as has been evident in the story of *Sister Bree*, the burden of submission to your partner, if you identify as a Christian, is unequal, and women feel the weight of this responsibility more severely than men might. Even under a Christian mandate of equality in marriage, where men and women are seen to have an equal share of responsibility to contribute to harmonious relationships, women feel more burdened than men. This further highlights an important point for further research and analysis of understanding men's roles, through their own

voice and story, in the discourse regarding how religion frames the experience of gender violence in PNG.

Sister Bree's storying allows us to understand some of the frames within which relationships between men and women in Baimuru are bound, and violence may be *reasonably* and intentionally enacted. Further how women internalise these and use them as critique of their own situations within their *marit* life. Her voice adds detail to the way we might understand the sets of responsibilities men and women (particularly through this chapter) feel about their own positions in their relationships within one another. She highlights through the story of her own experience how the lives of women are influenced by the lives of men and a belief in this influence can reinforce internalised structures that shape their views on life (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997; Yodanis, 2004).

4.5.1   Transitional Spaces: Between Custom and Modernity

Men and women in contemporary society solidify their relationships in a way that reflects the flux between customary practice and practices of modernity. As men and women choose their relationships, they are bound in the responsibilities and reciprocal social action that these relationships require. Yet, they are also compounded by the influence of external and new factors that shape their daily lives. The ambiguity of men and women's relationships further confronts the notions of kin responsibility when moments of conflict (violent or non-violent) arise. Intergenerational ties can help to support women who choose to extract themselves from particular hardship, as evidenced in *Sister Bree's* story. While the hierarchical and generational importance of grandchildren, and the value placed on them, can help to support women, in a place like the Gulf Province. However, from *Sister Bree's* words it is also clear that for her, the greater story is one of entangled relationships between men and women, families, and communities. Contemporary lifestyle has impacted upon the way these entangled relationships defined the role of men and women and shapes their relationships with one another. These spaces are ambiguous and dynamic.

4.5.2   The Ambiguity of Marit Relationships

The ambiguity surrounding what *marit* means in contemporary life in PNG gives us pause to question whether these sorts of labels are useful as frames to understand relationships between men and women in Baimuru. Are there other frames that can be utilised to develop an understanding of the lives of women and men and the relationships and

associated modes of relationality between them? Can we build on the traditional practices to create better mechanisms for defining the place for men and women in our local communities? These are important questions that underlie the issue of gender violence in PNG and can in fact help us identify the factors that cause offence; the ways of being and doing that are deemed *reasonable* and non-violent; and how people respond to offence in a way that is considered by them to be reasonable action. Identifying men-women relationships enables us to acknowledge the constraints within which gendered action takes place in local communities (Hukula, 2017). This understanding then becomes a basis from which we can determine the ways people seek resolution and justice when they experience offence. Importantly, this understanding helps us to identify what people deem as reasonable action regarding the intentional use of violent physical force, particularly in *haus* life and *marit* relationships. Given the witness voice and storying of *Sister Bree* and others in previous chapters we come to a point of recognition in that there is a need to develop the discourse of gender violence in PNG to encourage more nuanced detail that enables greater understanding. The examples from Baimuru requires us to consider the interconnected social and kin relationships and community frames that contribute to and structures the experience of gender violence both positively and negatively. We can acknowledge that action and behaviour associated with acts of gender violence are multi-faceted and the broader context of community is complex and layered. We must also acknowledge the focus to formulate adequate response of the State and aid agencies can and should extend to consider community structures as part of the experience of gender violence (Baines, 2012; Jolly et al., 2012; Macintyre, 2012; Rooney et al., 2018).

CHAPTER 5 "THAT'S WHAT WOMEN IN HERE DO"

"… it may be difficult to talk about something called 'female agency' if Melanesian persons are situationally gendered or if femaleness ebbs and flows over time."

(Wardlow, 2006, p. 9)

A thread that has developed through the story of the participants thus far, that directly impacts and contributes to the experience of gender violence, is the definition of what might constitute a *good* life and the role of men and women in achieving this. People are concerned with what constitutes moral action toward one another. There is the *good* life that *Mother Ana* describes as synonymous to having a *good* house from a good relationship between a man and woman. There is the *good* life that the *Uncles* recognise as part of the Christian moral imperative, where people may be influenced to do *bad* things. *Sister Bree* then continues on to acknowledge the complexity of considering what a *good* life might constitute, and the roles of women and men in enabling a *good* life even when faced with adversity to enact that *good* life.

This chapter moves on from these points of moral reasoning to highlight deep and contradictory notions that divide *good* and *bad* behaviour, especially for young women. These contradictions are incorporated into the decision's women make and what shapes their individual action. On one level, women are driven to act by their expectations and will therefore concede to a certain way of life. Although conceding does not necessarily indicate defeat, rather it indicates a decision based on what is ultimately *good* for them and for their kin. Through the moments of decision making that women encounter during their lives, they can be exposed and vulnerable to being targets of certain types of violence, as exemplified in the story of *sister Sha*. Although she made an autonomous choice to enter into a relationship, the unsanctioned nature of her choice resulted in her being perceived as opposing her parents well wishes. This opposition was taken as offence by her parents which resulted in what her parents believed to be necessary and violent action against *sister Sha*. Notably although women are perceived as being required to form relationships with men and possibly unable to refuse advances, they are duly seeking husbands to secure their position and personhood in kin and social networks within their community. Women like men, seek to constitute themselves and their lives

as *good*. So not withstanding contradictory pressures for many women in Baimuru, regardless of their own desires and preference, the best action is often to enter into a relationship with a man, for security and because of family and/or community pressures.

5.1   A Teacher: "Someone who Builds People Up"

This chapter contributes further detail to developing the story of gender violence in Baimuru through another witness voice. *Sister Aggie,* a teacher at Baimuru Primary School is similar in age to myself and at the time of fieldwork had a long and established career of teaching. She had been working at Baimuru Primary school for fourteen years out of a sixteen-year career (August 2016). Having lived in Baimuru much of her life she was familiar with the dynamics of life on the station. Furthermore, being from two of the largest tribes of the Purari Delta (I'ai and Korovake) she had specific insight and lived experience of the cultural and contextual intricacies and nuance of daily life on the station. *Sister Aggie* spoke candidly with me about her observations of life on the station, school, and the role she played as part of her community. As a teacher, *Sister Aggie* spoke with much passion about her students and the challenge to access education:

> I've seen so many students come and go. To upper primary. Some going as far as college. Some staying home and getting married. It's good. As long as I see people walk out and enjoy their way of life.

> [Researcher: What are some of the barriers or challenges that students might face?]

> Most of the students walking out (leave) school, especially girls. I don't really see them get that far as tertiary institutions. But boys, yes. They do. One or two girls have gone that far. Most of them, probably they drop out in grade 8 and they become home makers. Few who make it grade 9, 10, 11, at least they leave along the way.

> You know, as a teacher and someone who likes to build up people, I feel sort of, discouraged and let down, when I see my students coming home – especially the girls! Boys, I rather say that, some of them make it out, as far as tertiary institutions. But most of them, I see walking around in the village, up and down the road. I look back to the year I taught him; who was he? How was he? You know, those type of questions. I answer them myself, when I see them on the road. But, after all, this is a small community, not so much of a challenge to boost the students to be somebody! To pursue academic [pursuits], you know?

> It's a smaller community. Secondly, it's their background, where they come from. It's [education] not encouraging for them to build themselves up.

The challenging nature of education in PNG is that for many, such as *Sister Aggies'* students, the opportunities outside of one's local centre (in this case Baimuru), are limited (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2016). Women's access to education is further limited and drastically decreases as secondary and tertiary levels are reached (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2015). Particular socio-cultural frames create gender perceptions of men and women that further creates inequality of access to education streams and likely employment opportunities (Liu & Cahn, 2008). Particularly for young women, more so than young men, as they face the uncertainty when having to consider leaving the *safety* of their kin and social networks in place, to seek out education in outer centres.

5.2   "Just Live a Normal Life"

For many in Baimuru and extendedly in PNG the desire for education is coupled with the ideal that education can provide advancement and access to greater economy and reimaging how the modern man and woman is constituted in contemporary society (Errington & Gewertz, 1999; Spark, 2015). Although education is highly regarded in PNG, in Baimuru there is a veiled acceptance that education does not benefit everyone. As students leave school there is little opportunity to engage in secondary and tertiary education due to a lack of economic support. Often the economic support that might be available is offered to boys rather than girls due to a fear that the girls would only use the opportunity to *find husbands*. Several times during my stay in Baimuru I encountered the comments of *"skul blo painim man tasol"*, suggesting that girls only went to school to find men.

The National Education Plan (2015 – 2019) recognises that the pursuit of education to access paid employment competes with the prevailing reality of the opportunities in the *"formal corporate sector"* (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2016, p. 15). That is, the reality of an opportunity for successful professional pathways through education is currently very limited. The Department of Education also cites in the same report that there is a very "*narrow employment base*" that is not sufficient in providing school leavers with employment opportunities (Ibid). Access to education is not the antidote to unemployment. Lack of employment opportunities in other centres have seen many men and women return to the *normal* life of Baimuru. While formal employment may be

limited, what is referred to as subsistence activities (the informal sector), actually supports an estimated seventy-five per cent of "*households*" in PNG (Ibid; United Nations Development Programme, 2014). It is this informal sector that most in Baimuru represent.

> Most of the families they come from fishing, gardening backgrounds where their children, you know, for the sake of passing the time they're in school, when they're at home they join their parents just to be normal – you know, live normal lives.
>
> Some may leave along the way, just to join their parents. You know, they're off at the camps – fishing camps or sago camps. They make it a habit now; they leave school. They are enjoying life in the village. I mean they see that life is [as] normal. Unless they can come to the store, buy sugar and rice, you know, just live a normal life.

The normal life of people in Baimuru is based in and around the activities of engaging in subsistence livelihoods (Author Unknown, 2007; Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017; The World Bank, 2007; Wiltshire, 2012). Education and schooling is a time filler that occupies the lives of male and female students until the time they return to *normal* life. The exception to this way of life is the *wok maket* as evidenced in previous storying. The small-scale market economy is sufficient enough to generate some income to buy household items which are sought after and often lucrative enough to support the pursuit of lifestyles outside of Baimuru. It is also largely a space of enacting *luksave* and moral valuation attached to social relationships (Hukula, 2019; Rooney, 2019). What was evident in Baimuru was the entrepreneurial nature that *wok maket* encouraged where individuals sell garden produce or *gaden kaikai*. The proceeds of this would be used to buy oil and flour (a staple manufactured product) to produce other items for onward sale. The selling of such upscaling products (mostly scones and prawn crackers) enabled the buying of other products such as biscuits; soft drinks; tea bags. Such economy encouraged the steady flow of money in and around Baimuru. The informal trade in Baimuru is lucrative for those who have some basic business and financial management prowess. These scales of production enable people in Baimuru to not only survive but also thrive outside the alternate pathway of education.

The use of the term *normal* by *Sister Aggie* remains neutral however, it is said as affirmation and possibly acceptance of the lifestyle that exists in Baimuru as a positive given that she acknowledges enjoyment of village living. Although development is sought and when it is not realised it seems unsurprising. The desire for advancement does not

necessarily correlate to the expected outcome of achieving that advancement. The *normal life* of Baimuru may be for the most part devoid of this expectation of advancement, yet in *Sister Aggie's* assessment it is a life that is still enjoyable. The circumstances in Baimuru reflects the reality of over eighty per cent of the national population (Australian Government, 2015). These are areas considered to be rural and remote, and on subsistence activities for livelihoods. Livelihood is impacted upon by a limited, sometimes inefficient and ineffective service sector (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2009; Lovai, 2009).

Plate 11. Examples of 'normal life': produce from the garden in a rice bag and in an old grocery basket (left). 'Normal' market produce: Aunty Evai selling bananas and buai [Betel nut] (right).
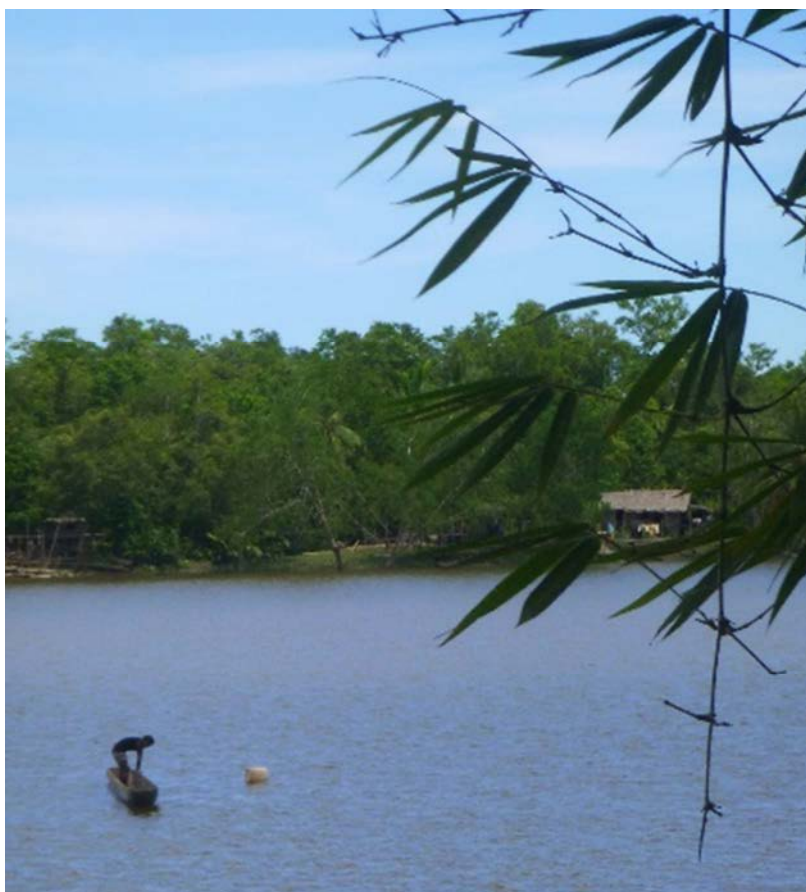
Plate 12. Sister Lily checking her nets for fish (above). Neighbour Kari making sak sak [TP: sago]

5.3   School and Normal Life

Attendance at school is part of what *Sister Aggie* suggests is *normal* life in Baimuru. However attendance at school can also be disrupted by the demands of *normal* life. Due to the prioritisation of daily life activities, schooling can be disrupted.

> Yes! Of course! They [girls] can even get married at Grade 3 too!

> Yeah, with this new education standards, we have that 9 years old in grade 3, but due to some hold backs at home, some children are enrolled very late at the age of 10 (yrs.) in elementary[vii], when they are supposed to be 6 years old. So by the time they're in grade 3, they are 16, 17, so. Probably they decide to start their own little homes as well.

> Many students walk out of my class to get married. At the first place I used to get frustrated - 'Why, and this child who's supposed to be in school and is walking out?' Then I thought 'No. That child has that right!' Because the age has reached that time for her to settle down and have a family. By the time they come to Grade 7 some of them are 20 [years old] or 20 plus. And that's the time they should, you know [chuckling] be making a family.

> So, at the first place I usually am upset, but then I realise, they have that right to walk out of the classroom to start a family. So sometimes we say it's the parents. They hold back their children and enrol them very late. Some enrolled are 20, 21 – born in 1996 they should be at a tertiary level.

The discrepancy in age at which students may be enrolled in Baimuru mirrors a trend in other rural and remote centres (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2016). Although these young girls and boys may be enrolled in grade three, some are already as old as sixteen which is seen as a marriageable age. A discrepancy between student age and grade level enrolment explains *Sister Aggie's* comments about young girls getting married in Grade three and gives greater context and understanding to *normal* life in Baimuru. Furthermore, schooling for young women and some young men in Baimuru is seen as a time filler as they await the time they will enter into relationships and build homes. The changing nature of society from customary tradition to more contemporary lifestyles acknowledges that either form or a mix of contemporary and customary practice of entering into a relationships is increasingly more acceptable as young people choose to *start their own little homes*. *Sister Aggie* not only accepts this outcome for her students but effectively endorses it as she equates it to living a *normal life* in Baimuru.

5.4   The Normal Life and Access to Education

The concept of a *normal life* that *Sister Aggie* acknowledges is one which does not prioritise education. Students that graduate from Baimuru Primary school have limited options to pursue further education as secondary students. The closest schools is Ihu Secondary (78 kilometres east) and Kikori Secondary (64 kilometres west). These may not seem very far in distance, however when you consider the access for people to these areas is by the river systems and open ocean (to Ihu), travel between can be both treacherous and costly (Wiltshire, 2012). Furthermore, the distinction of gender preferences boys over girls limits the access of girls and young women to educational opportunities (Gordon, 1998). Preferential treatment of male students over female is not simply that they are perceived as having higher intellect. The greater concern stems from kin perceiving their young women will be vulnerable to the *wrong* partner (as we saw in the example of *Sister Sha*). Ironically, in the National fora of gender violence experience, women in urban centres that have better access to education and higher levels of attainment are not immune from being vulnerable to the *wrong partner* (Author Unknown, 2012; Slamang, 2018). Parents in rural and remote experiences may only consider sending young women to further education if the young woman can seek lodging and support from family in the places they wish to attend school. Relationships between students do form and this can impact the experience of young women particularly:

> I did have one experience like that some ten years ago. There was a boy and a girl engaged, and another boy probably, pulled the textbook off this girl. So the boys [from Ipiko] saw that and then ran across and punched that boy that pulled the textbook from the girl. Then when we sat down to sort the problem out, they said 'Sorry, these two are engaged'. So some barriers like, you know, girls are already you know [Researcher: they're already 'marked' ah?] Yeah!

The lives of young men and women are impacted by the responsibility and expectation of customary practices (Williams, 1924, p. 52 to 58). These responsibilities and expectations are played out in contemporary experience in the space and place of schools. While education may be prioritised in the National development agenda (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2015) it may not be as valuable in the lives of young people in local experiences.

> Like I was telling you last time, one of the girls in the class went off with her boyfriend and she spent some time, and now she's back in class.
>
> There were some noises [rumour] in class, 'Oh teacher! That one's like ...! I said, 'no, that's her right'. I just let her sit in the classroom; even if she's sleeping with

her boyfriend or husband to be, and she's in the classroom, that's ok. I still accept. That has got nothing to do with me. But her learning in the classroom is my priority. I must look to that. I make sure she learns something so that, you know, when she walks out of the classroom she knows how to mind her own little family. That's the important thing! [Chuckling] She knows the basics. So I have about 3 girls in class. 2 are probably engaged. 1 is living with a man but she's coming to school.

Social relationships are prioritised above other considerations such as education, as are the associated mutual recognition of moral concerns between kin, particularly as kin will eventually support young people in their pursuit of *normal* life. For young women in particular the expectation of *normal* life creates a barrier to their access education. It is perceived that women who enter into relationships have no further need for education. Ironically, women who have access to education are seen to be better placed in society and therefore less likely to experience violence (Macintyre & Spark, 2017). This point is less commonly examined and requires further understanding and reporting.

5.5   "My mum saw me as somebody"

As *Sister Aggie* continues on in self-reflective story, she provides explanation to the sentiment she expressed. Her own experience and ability to access education and advance to become a schoolteacher was supported within her own family, specifically by her own mother:

> Like in Baimuru [for example], if my father dies when I am a young girl, my mother goes off and marries another man, just to keep the family going, and my uncles may not want me to continue school, cause I am nobody, I stay at home. But my mum, she saw me as somebody. She even worked at the Sawmill to pay for my school fees, so I could go that far. So, my own experience, I like to share that with students in the classroom. I always tell them 'despite your problems, you can make it; you can be somebody'. So I encourage them.

The support that *Sister Aggie's* mother exhibited, provided her with the momentum and support she needed to pursue, complete and accomplish her education. The drive and support to develop young women through education does exist in Baimuru, an important point that suggests further research is required.

> That experience has made me a stronger person! After I left college, it took me some time to find a partner. I wanted to enjoy my life. Coming from a single [parent] home, I didn't have that you know, privilege and what to enjoy. So when I got work, I stayed for some time before I got married.

I was 21 when I started teaching, it lasted for almost 8 years – I was 28 years old when I got married.

8 years I stayed cause, you know, I wanted to enjoy myself [life]. I flew to Port Moresby! Or Hagen or Lae! Just enjoyed myself. Then I decided to settle down.

I don't know about in the village because I stay most of my time here [Station]. Most of the girls I see around here, I mean, they don't sort of see life as that important. They just walk out of school and find someone on the road, or wherever. They are not properly married but, you know. Mostly they have babies first before they find partners to settle down.

In just a short statement *Sister Aggie* suggests women themselves may not value their lives enough to prompt the pursuit of further education. This is a moral concern for those, kin and teachers, who support women's futures. Much more than this is the notion that women view their role as bound in the expectation of marriage, home making and childbearing; even as they make subtle judgements as to the process by which women should attain these.

Plate 13. Baimuru Primary School. A visit from the Provincial Education Minister prompts a meeting and questioning from parents and community members about the support and resourcing given to the school.

5.6 Expectations and village life

Sister Aggie makes an important distinction through her observations that although a lot of people regard the station as being like the *village*, life on the station is different. The understanding that the station is a place of access to the modern world is embedded within the expectation of people and their ideals and hopes for development (Wiltshire, 2012). The fact that these two do not correlate proves the station is no better than the village. This being said, *Sister Aggie* makes this distinction to premise her continued support of education as an important pathway for development and the empowerment of women (Hinton & Earnest, 2011; United Nations Development Programme, 2005), a pursuit not always available to those in the *village*. However, the reality is that being in a *marit* relationship is prioritised as an important part of life on the station, especially for women, particularly as it pertains to a certain set of *haus* life responsibilities. In her words it is preferential to other ways of life. This is not an indictment against women for having a lack of vision but directly links to *Sister Aggie's* earlier statements of what is considered *normal life* on the station.

5.6.1 "If you don't have a man, you can be everyone's woman …"

Sister Aggie's support of educational attainment and pathways is an important feature of her person. She asserts her role as an advocate for her students, young women especially, in supporting their return to learning after the disruptions of either familial or *marit* obligations. For young women in Baimuru, a hard situation to navigate is the value placed on them about having a man. Not having a man, or being attached to a man in a *marit* relationship can negatively impact your experience in society:

> That's what many women in here do, because if they don't have a man, then they are nobody's ah!?
>
> Like, if you don't have a man, you can be everyone's woman ah? Something like that!
>
> Like there is value in it. Like you have to be with a man so, what will I say … so, um, like you safeguard yourself as well.
>
> [Researcher: Ok, so it's security?]
>
> It's security. If you don't have one, then anybody can come for you. And with our, you know custom, if you refuse that man, then you are, signing your death warrant.
>
> Like, someone asks you, and you don't like them, maybe you die; they may do something to you; sorcery.

> So, to safeguard woman, especially; you will not find many, but some are strong enough to be single women, but others, they marry this man, when this man dies or what, they marry another. Just for their security. Because we have a custom here, if it's a man, like, if you go to the garden and there's someone there waiting for you and you say 'Ah, did I ask you to come?' then you are … [Researcher: then that man might do something to you?] …yeah. You are losing your life. Definitely!

> Like the woman, she doesn't really have that much freedom to express or do what she wants to do at her own.

Women in Baimuru are seen to attach themselves to their male kin and male partners for various reasons. *Sister Aggie* highlights a particularly pervasive form of attachment and that is security and/or safeguarding. Security from being *everyone's woman* and safeguarding from harm that may befall you if you are *no one's woman*. This harm was described most often as fear of the use of sorcery to coerce women into *marit* relationships. Less discussed but present in Baimuru was the fear of sexual violence against young unattached women. Women are placed in a precarious position of unable to refuse men while, if they are unmarried, are perceived as wanting a man. Wanting a man assumes the job of women is to find a man and get married, regardless of a desire or not, to be in a relationship. Therefore, the refusal of a man they may not desire is a non-question, particularly if a man shows his interest.

The point of difference in contemporary society is that women are now more able to make their own choices about which man they would like to be with rather being coerced or arranged into union with a man, as would have happened in previous times (Williams, 1924, 1939). This sentiment shades the experience of *sister Sha* when we consider her entering into a relationship was productive for her in that she chose this union. Refusal of a friendship with this particular man was not going to happen, not from *sister Sha*. She made a conscious decision to enter into this relationships in the hopes of securing a husband, at some point. Her situation ended in violence against her from her father because in her seeking this union it went against her position, associated responsibilities as part of her relationship to her family.

What was expressed to me on several occasions, including by a teenage cousin sister, is when a man asks a woman to be "friends" (or a form of dating and/or attachment) then she should enter into that relationship. If the man is refused, it may cause retaliatory acts of sorcery against the woman which may result in harm and in more extreme cases,

sexual violence and/or death. Fear of retaliatory or retributive sorcery can prompt male kin to action to act to safeguard their female kin:

> The brothers would approach that man and sort him out. Maybe pay him something. Give him one 20 kina to just [Researcher: so he'll back off]. I mean she [mother] has done that, seen that or experienced that. There was a man who asked for her, she didn't like it. So she went back to her brother. Her brother went over talked to the man and maybe gave him something. Told him don't do it again, or come back to her again. I mean I've seen it.

> So, like women, many women may not have that power to do what they want to do at their own accord. It's sort of a remote control.

Sister Aggie having witnessed a similar situation with her mother, speaks candidly about how male kin can provide support and safeguard their female kin. Yet, she also fully acknowledges that the lives of women are not their own, in her words, *it's a sort of remote control*. She does not elaborate beyond this statement; however the meaning is not lost. An individual is in control and to use the metaphor, presses the buttons to direct how the scenario (whatever it might be) unfolds and is witnessed by others.

5.6.2 "You hear Stories … She Came Home and Died"

The fear of opposing the advances of men is real for women in Baimuru. There is a strong belief that when men's advances are not reciprocated women should fear for their safety and in some extreme cases, fear for their lives:

> Even you hear stories like, she went fishing, there was a man, she refused, and she came home and died. Something like that. So, mostly I'd rather say, especially the young girls too, they're at that risk. If a married man asks them, as they may get into that same situation, you know, lose their lives. So, the best thing, whether they like it or not, is to just get married.

> Mmmm! Like for example, if I was a young girl and man asked for me, and I said no to him and I marry another man. And then maybe I'm expecting and this man says 'oh, so yu les lo mi na yu maritim narapela?' ['oh, so you don't want me and you married another?'] – I may die in child labour. Something like that.

It is not only an internalised personal belief that drives women to act in response to the advances of men. It is also very strongly reinforced by sharing these stories between women and others in the community:

> Yeah. There's so many stories like that. That happens here. So you will see, many young girls, they will just go off and get married to the man who they met. Finish. So they don't do through any, you know problems.

Yeah, sometimes life is harder [for women]... Cause it's only for security reasons that they try to go. Not just because they are in love or something like that, but for security reasons.

Like here, girls are obliged, to listen to their parents. If their parents say 'you have to marry that man', they have no choice but to accept.

Like in these cases, like if the young man is out in Port Moresby, going to school or something, this young woman stays with the man's people, making sago for them, and cooking for them and all this. And then this young man is in Port Moresby and he finds one [woman] there. And then she has wasted precious 3, 4, maybe 5 years, just doing work for those relatives, you know.

I mean it's true like the woman has no power to do what she wants to do. I mean, even we are, in new millennium, you know 2000's, but still those customs are very strong.

The ideal of sentimental relationships between men and women is acknowledged by *Sister Aggie* as being present, yet not a prominent enough feature in the decision's women make when considering their relationships with men. Rather, what is of greater prominence is the parental desires which are translated as directives by parents' wishes for their daughters to marry. Women are bound in these directives. As they bind themselves to the directives of their parents they take on responsibilities that may oblige their time to the families of men. Because men may have greater educational and therefore employment opportunity, they often go to the larger centres of Port Moresby (or Kerema and Kikori) to pursue opportunities, leaving their marked women in Baimuru. Women left in Baimuru can find themselves in positions where their obligations are required even though the men they are bound to might not reciprocate these obligations. It leaves women in these sorts of relationships in very precarious spaces.

I am very vocal, especially with my cousins. Last year I had one cousin, she was engaged to someone who was in Port Moresby. Like she usually goes to this young man's house and works for the family (in Baimuru). When she came around I told her, 'You stop it. I don't like you to waste your time in there. You may not know if he is married'.

And then after some time she came around and I asked her, 'Is this man contacting you?' and she said 'no'. Then we heard a story that this man was married. And I got on my cousin, I said, 'See! You are supposed to be in school!' She was actually in grade 8 when she left to do this for the in laws. I scolded her and I said, 'Look, you are supposed to be in school. You should do something and be somebody.'

So it's still practiced. Though it's a traditional way of life but, I still see that it's still practiced today. Like even if a young girl is in high school, maybe when she comes for holidays, she still goes around to her in-laws and does work for them [chuckles]!

Young women become tasked with obligatory responsibility and attend to their eventual *tambu lain* or *affine* or in-laws, even before the *formalisation* of a *marit* relationship (Williams, 1924, p. 51).

5.7   Dependence or Interdependence?

The position of women is bound within obligations, networks of relationships and framed by social form. The set of social and moral obligations to live a right and good life, to marry and live a *normal* life, might present for women as a dependence on others, whether parents, kin, affine or eventually, husbands (Van Vleet, 2008; Wardlow, 2006). However, it is also important to acknowledge these relationships are more nuanced than a dichotomous divide between masculine and feminine identity. Lepani (2015) discusses how young women in the Trobriand Islands are dictated by their relationships to their kin yet they are not dependent on these relationships, or more pointedly, these relationships do not define their position as they make decisions surrounding who they engage (or disengage) in relationships. The nature of women's dependence in daily life prompts a consideration of the role of men. As women exert themselves in these roles, men also exert themselves.

> The role of men. I mean in this community, like, they are men. Their roles are just, like when they're in the village setting, they are to look after their family, you know, family chores. You know, anything they can do to look after the family.
>
> But in town, like today, I don't see, I mean, let's say, in Baimuru, I don't see many men doing work to look after their family. Like it's the women. So I cannot say what the role of the men is right now. But in the village, yes, they have their role as the father or as men in the community to make garden and canoe and cut sago. But in Baimuru, like I can't really see their role as a father or a husband, because like, many times you see the women taking the lead in raising the family and bringing the income home.
>
> [Researcher: So men don't really provide?]
>
> So I'd rather say, in the village, yes. But in the station setting, I don't really see men as this standing figure. It's the women who try to do everything. Raise the children and bring income home and all that stuff.
>
> Women, mostly its market. They sit at the market and … that's all. But for men, they have nothing to do. Probably just walk up and down, go home and eat.
>
> The way I see it, the women accept all that responsibility. To provide for the family and raise the family. When, you know, providing for the family should be vice versa ah? Two people providing, but women still accept it no matter what. And, the man

feels like he's given the freedom to stay home, or move around, and do nothing. And women, we will say, double the load! [Laughter]

Not only are the lives of women in Baimuru framed by their relationships with men but the contemporary space of the station requires them to take on the task of providing for the *haus*. As women perceive themselves to be tasked with more 'load', they are tenuously placed between fulfilling traditional and on-going obligations, while taking on the burden and pressure to economically provide for their families (Macintyre, 2011; Patterson & Macintyre, 2011).The observation of *Sister Aggie* suggests the role of men in contemporary life, particularly in Baimuru, is in transition. Moreover, her assessment requires an acknowledgment that the roles of women are changing. Or maybe they have always been historically transitional in the life of the Gulf?

> If it was me, I wouldn't accept it. I would make sure that my man becomes the provider as well. He has a role to play, but, mostly, like, I'd rather say, most people don't take life as that important, so, they don't mind if their husbands just come home and eat. They still feel it's ok to feed the children and the husband at the same time. You know … because like, I'd rather say, there are no role models to boost that woman to be somebody ah!? So she can stand out and speak for herself or, like, you know, tell the man, 'This is yours and this is mine". Some women cannot speak out. Probably they are pressed not to say anything.

Mother Ana observed that Baimuru women are unable and possibly unwilling to speak up. Her comments were based on her assessment of women not having the intellectual capacity to speak. *Sister Aggie* regards the inability of Baimuru women to speak as a cultural condition. This condition is further compounded by the fact that there are no or a limited number of women in the community at present that model this behaviour. Women in Baimuru are *pressed* and remain largely unable to speak out against men.

> Like I'm married to an Engan. In Enga, the women speak out. [Laughing] So, sometimes I'm like that!

> I try to hold my tongue because I think, I'll have to respect my custom as well. Like I'm very vocal. When I see my brothers mistreating their wives I tell the wives, "You do this! Don't listen to him". Because I have seen this with the Engans. The women are very vocal!

> But in our society here, we are obliged to listen to the husband. Even when it comes to if he wants to take another woman too, then, he has that freedom. Even the law doesn't allow, and the law is right with us, and we have places that we can get help, but we still keep quiet. We don't want to seek help. Because we are pressed. I mean the women here are told, "You keep quiet", something like that.

> Even there are places close to them where they can seek help or what, but they cannot.

In the statement *Sister Aggie* makes cultural distinctions surrounding women of the Gulf and women of Enga Province (Highlands Region). However, she also highlights that her ability to speak up and on behalf of other women is due in large part to the influence of her Engan in-laws. Being able to witness this in women connected to her as affine (in Tok Pisin *tambu* relations) has resonated to a point that it has been taken up as an action in her own interactions. *Sister Aggie's* indictment of Baimuru women is that their inability to speak up (and out) pressures them into allowing further hardship, even to the point where their husbands seek and acquire a new wife. *Sister Aggie's* voice strongly suggests that the representation of women and role modelling of specific behaviour can provide women in Baimuru with the necessary tools to exert themselves in ways they may be unable to do currently.

5.8   Roles of Men and Women

Sister Aggie is critical of the role that men currently play on the station. She recognises, as others do, that Baimuru women take on a lot of responsibility, including taking on roles and maintaining livelihoods that support entire families. In a conversation with my own uncle (September 2016), he stated that women in Baimuru are hard workers:

> Yeah, they [women] do. Mostly all the work. Yeah. Taim yu lukluk olsem, nau yet, em olsem ol meri tu gat raits blo ol … [When you see, today, women have rights too …]

5.8.1   Sago Production and Gender

My *Uncle Oa*, being a proud Orokolo man, used the comparison between Baimuru life and Harevavo (village) life. He went on to talk about how men and women in our village share the work of making sago. It is an important shared responsibility and indeed a very important process of food production as sago is a staple in the diet of Orokolo and indeed people throughout the Gulf Province. Orokolo men will cut the sago palm, hollow out the trunk and break up the pith. The broken up pith is then taken by women, who then wash, pound and dry the pith until it is in powdered form. The process of washing and pounding is repeated many times until the producer is happy with the end product.

> [TRANSLATION] In Baimuru, the women do everything – everything, yeah! From the tree down to the finished, like, sago itself. That's how they do it here. That's how we [best] describe it.

Women do everything! His thoughts on the unequal labour distribution between men and women in Baimuru were not an isolated comment. Others in the community commented that women in Baimuru work hard, perhaps too hard – they are strong providers for their families, out of necessity. Men such as *Uncle Oa* acknowledge the hardship women face as do the *Uncles*. Perhaps the acknowledgement of women's hardship by men, is an important *pasin blo luksave* that can be used to engage conversations and practical solutions to support for women and alleviate burden and responsibilities and in response to gender violence. Alleviating burden and responsibility, from a mutually acknowledged point can lessen the proclivity of men to act in violence when they are unhappy.

5.8.2   Right to Speak

Women in Baimuru are described as hard-working providers yet their inability to speak up can hinder their ability to seek to address their experiences of violence. A prominent feature of the response mechanism to support women in achieving equality is to provide better platforms of expression. In recent times this effort has been evidenced in the push for women in leadership roles or by way of political representation (Baker, 2016; West, 2018).

> In a traditional sense, the women will not speak out, the men must make all the decisions. But there is always respect between men and women.
>
> But in the modern setting, it's vice versa, but the women still keep quiet. I wouldn't know why?
>
> And, sometimes, when they end up there, it's always one sided.
>
> [Researcher: In favour of the man?]
>
> Yeah, in getting another woman. So, she has no hope, no choice. Just go back to her normal day to day life and forget what is happening.
>
> Like that women's rep said, she's correct. Like, I have seen it. Women with those marital problems, they go to her, she stands on their behalf to go into the police station, and she has done that a lot!
>
> [Researcher: Do you think the police take these cases seriously enough?]
>
> No. They are not serious. There's like, sort of cases like that – I've gone into that police station with a couple of women for their cases. Sometimes they just stand with the man. They say sorry to each other and then [Researcher: even if it's not the women's fault?]. That's it.
>
> Like there was a case where a man wanted a young woman. Though he was a married man, and the parents of the young girl didn't want their daughter to marry him so they took the case – they told the police, "We don't want this young man to

marry our daughter because he's a married man". And then, the police just told the man, "You keep out of the house" but they didn't give him restrictions or conditions. Then they found out that man has been going for this young girl. So when the parents went for the second time, the police said, 'That's ok, it's the man and the girl, they have the agreement to come together, so you parents don't have the right to oppose." [Exasperated laugh] So they [police] always stand with the man.

The challenge for women to speak up may also be an indictment on the way in which their voice is heard by others. This is a realistic for some, as *Mother Ana* exemplifies, but less realistic of many other women. Compounding this is the local reality that the police, who should exercise their duty to respond to the issue of violence in *haus* life, do not take the story or testimony, of women's experience seriously enough to provide a response. This sentiment is told in the *Uncles* story, shown in the frustration that they expressed as they recognise that, the *law and order,* particularly the police, are not likely to respond to these types of cases. Furthermore, according to *Sister Aggie*, the police are more likely to side with men, which implies the story of men is upheld with more authority than that of women. At present, the authority of the male voice in Baimuru speaks louder than the authority of the police, stifling their ability and even culpability in providing a response (Macintyre, 2008a; Rooney et al., 2018). The Police presence in Baimuru consisted of one formally trained and employed Police Officer and a cohort of voluntary Community Police of up to twelve officers at times. At the time of this study there were eight male and two female voluntary police all ethnic Purari people from various local villages, but all residing short and long term in Baimuru.

Sister Aggie's comments reiterate how the actions of men in their daily lives can be condoned and this can support the propensity to enact violence.

> She's now with this man! Actually, she didn't want. But, the police have their own way out. So they told the parents, 'no. you don't have to disagree or separate them. It's their choice to be together'. But they didn't realise it was adultery, and they didn't realise this other woman is affected! The rightful woman [laughter]. So the police always do that. They will always stand with the man. Even if the case is clear or if there is evidence, they always go one side. I've seen couple of cases like that sometimes they tell the women to compensate the other women, but that never eventuates.

Once again we see Baimuru women in a precarious space of voicelessness and an inability to provoke a response to the violence they may encounter. Another distinct aspect of this precariousness is the inability for women to negotiate the acceptance or refusal of

relationships with men. Rather, women may be used, even by family members, as transactional tools that support economic advancement (Bell, 2015). *Sister Aggie* acknowledges that the police, who should effectively advocate for women in these precarious spaces are less likely to acknowledge their position, or blatantly favour the position of men. The desires of women are not heard because the voice of women is not uplifted or supported and the claims they make and raise may be ignored.

5.8.3   Baimuru Women *Seeking Husbands*

Women in Baimuru are observed to operate and inhabit precarious spaces where there are little supports and an inability to adequately voice their experiences. Yet, these women desire relationships, homes and families. All of these aspects of life that women wish to engage are all spaces in which they are required to define their relationships with men. Yet, as we see in the case of Baimuru (as we see in various other reports) the action(s) of men are less scrutinised than those of women. Although the topic of gender causes a draw back to the experience of women, there are important nuances that are detailed in the story that suggest more attention is required to unpack the actions of men beyond the current cultural tropes that come with overarching frames of patriarchy and cultural conditioning. The lives of PNG men can be better detailed to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors of daily life that shape their action, attitudes and behaviours (Eves, 2016).

The tenuousness of experience does not downplay the very important aspect of *normal* life for people in Baimuru. The task of entering into favourable relationships so as to achieve *marit* and *haus* life, is most important particularly in sustaining livelihoods.

> I would rather say that the first thing they [women] look at is probably a husband ah? That's all. Whether the husband is going to provide or look after the family, they don't see that point. As long as they find a husband. Like for example, if a young girl has a man, and the man is a drunkard, screaming and going up and down. If her parents tell her, "Hey look. You want that man, but see, he is screaming walking up and down" and she will tell her parents, "That's my husband I don't care I'll marry him".
>
> So I'd rather say, they only say – man, that's all they look for [chuckling]. They don't look at other aspects [attributes].

Sister Aggie engages a moral assessment of men to offer what might constitute a favourable relationship. However, the reality of obtaining a relationship may be that the desire (and expectation) felt by women to achieve *marit* and *haus* life can be at the

expense of finding the *right* husband. As *Sister Aggie* suggests, it is not the quality of man that is at question for Baimuru women looking to enter into relationships. Rather, it is the finding of a man that is necessary.

> Yeah, she was in my class, and she was a brilliant girl! I had a very high expectation that she would be in tertiary or university. And then, she was in grade 10, and after the exams, it just happened that I was at Waigani (Port Moresby) to check on my younger ones' results and I saw she had these very high top marks! One of those very top students in the country. And then I came home [Baiso] and encouraged the mother. I told her, "Please! I want you to make sure this girl finishes her grade 12 and she's going to be somebody. Give her all the support you can give to this girl".
>
> She went off to do her grade 11 and there she met a man. And then she was expecting. She came for Christmas and the following year she was supposed to go back for grade 12. And then she was still seen around the place, so I asked her younger ones, "Ay, why is your big sister still hanging around when the school has started and she's supposed to be at school?" They were small children so they told me, "Our sister doesn't want to go to school. She wants to stay at home and look after us." And then, I was upset now. I thought, "Oh, this is a brilliant girl, why is she wasting her time?" Then the mother said, "No, she has a husband".
>
> After she gave birth, when the child was breast feeding, I told the mother, "Mother, you get the child off her, send her back to school" and then the mother told me, "No". This is what she told me. Actually, she's my cousin's daughter. When the mother told her that your Aunty wants you to go back and finish school, she told the mother, "What if I'm at school and my husband gets married to another woman?'" Like, we come [back] to the first point.
>
> Many times, women put value in the man. Let's say, the man is a husband! No other things. They don't see whether he's going to provide, or he's going to be a drunkard and bash her up, those are beside the point. She doesn't take that as so serious. The things she takes as serious is, she wants a husband, that's all. That was the reason she gave to her mother. "Oh, what if I'm at school and he marries again?"
>
> Though I was upset, I said, "That is your choice and that is your life you are going to live".

The fear of losing a man is greater than the fear of not finding one. Not only are women seeking men in Baimuru, the value they place on themselves is attached to their ability to be with and stay in relationships with men. This self-valuation comes to fruition when they eventually realise their roles and responsibilities given their respective positions relative to men as a wife; as a mother; or as a daughter.

> I have another case where the girl was in high school, and then she walked out of the classroom, you know, after the grade 10 final exams and then got married. And she was asking, "Ay, why did you do that?" She said, "I don't want to go home. If I go home there'll be a lot of work and a lot of talking." To think if you're with a man

and you won't work and you won't talk much? That girl doesn't realise that you are signing a contract, you'll do more work [laughing]. Your mother works less and she gives you less work [laughing]. But you are signing a contract for life. To do more work.

I mean, many girls say that "Ah, my mum talks a lot. I think when I go to my man, there's no problem". But then she ends up with a black eye. Mum doesn't give her the black eye, it's the man she's goes with that gives her the black eye. But she said something different, "My mum talks a lot". [laughing]

Sister Aggie highlights the lack of understanding that young women may have as they consider their relationships to men as being an antidote to the pressure their parents place on them. It also highlights as *Mother Ana* suggested, that young people (young men and women) in contemporary society are less equipped than before to enter into *marit* relationships and engage in *haus* life. Perhaps this requires a greater sharing of information with children and young people, setting up parameters to do so, that is adequate to recognise their place in contemporary society while being respectful of customary practices that may prevail.

5.9 Violence: "Autim Anger"

To this point, *Sister Aggie's* story has discussed aspects of life in Baimuru that provide particular contextual understanding to the lives of girls and women in Baimuru. From this storying it can be suggested that the decisions women make about the relationships they may enter into are not simply the choice of partner. Rather, their decisions to enter into relationships are based on the broader context of what has been described by *Sister Aggie* as transitional spaces of being, before they enter into *normal* life in Baimuru. This transitional space assumes children use education as a waiting room before their eventual entrance into the lifestyle and livelihoods of *normal* life in Baimuru. It is a space that compounds the voicelessness of women as they enter into adulthood and enter into *marit* relationships and *haus* life. The pursuit of this can threaten forcible and/or arranged marriage (by way of kin pressure or fears of sorcery). It is a space that presumes the desire to be married is the work of women in Baimuru. It is perceived that for women, marriage is the necessary outcome that indicates the entrance into *normal* life and conversely for men.

Men are distinguished by the story in this chapter as of little use to women. The lives of men exist in a pocket of transitional space which renders them idle and stagnant in

productive life, which equates to what *Sister Aggie* suggests as *doing nothing. A*ll these things, identified by *Sister Aggie*, can and do shape the experience of gender violence in Baimuru particularly for young men devoid of alternate pathways to advancement and development, just as is the case for young women. All of which compounds and can present largely as violence against women especially when enacted by young men in these situations. This is not to justify the actions and behaviour of men, but simply seeks to assert that young men are also place in a precarious space in contemporary times.

> Yeah. You will still find some [women] ending up in the hospital. Their husbands beating them up very badly.
>
> I remember there was a time I was expecting my son. I was sitting at the hospital, there was this woman. The husband broke her head. She had a child, a two-week-old child. Her husband broke her head. The nurse treated her. Stitched her head. After another two weeks, with the same place that was stitched, she had a cut again. So this time, this woman, this nurse didn't want to treat her, just told her, "You just get out of my way. Go home. Because you don't want to listen to us".
>
> You know, what will I say; the public servants are helpful, especially the nurses, they'll tell them, "You go to the hospital, this is your medical statement." But women don't end up at the police station, they go, they treat it [violence] as normal. They're happily cooking and feeding their husband who broke her head.
>
> You know I sometimes I comment. If I have a black eye, as long as the black eye is there I don't touch the pot [laughing]. As long as the black eye is there, I don't touch the pot. How you [husband] touch the pot is your business. You know here you will see, even though she has a black eye, she is cooking and feeding the family.

It seems callous that *Sister Aggie* suggest that women who experience violence accept it as a duty if they cannot wilfully respond. They should accept violent action just as they accept *happily cooking and feeding* their husbands. Perhaps women accept this as normal to their experience. Perhaps they are afraid of a worse fate and therefore undertaking the expected role ensures their safety. A lack of support by other women, as shown here by *Sister Aggie*, compounds women's response to violence. There is some suggestion that it is a woman's own fault if she is not standing up, herself, to prevent violence against herself. This is the pervasive nature of gender violence. Lack of personal action by victims out of fear of further violence, and a lack of empathy and imperative to help other women, when violence is witnessed. There are other ways that women act in response to show their disapproval of violent action, particularly disapproval toward their husbands (Hukula, 2012b, p. 92).

5.9.1 "Swearing is our Everyday"

Hukula (2012b) and Wardlow (2006) suggest women engage and enact subversive practices to express and exert their disaffection with the treatment they experience at the hands of male kin and husbands. Wardlow suggests that women that act in this way, through self-imposed restriction of their physical exertions, are acting with what she terms, *negative agency* (2006, pp. 59, 64, 82).

> Mostly, they don't [respond], but maybe, once out of five or ten, they do fight back. But swearing is our, everyday [Laughing]
>
> [Researcher: That's our weapon ah? [Both laughing]]
>
> Weapon! Yes! Of course. Women, they only swear back and …they only win on that side! [Laughing]. Women show their anger with talking. Talking. Of course.

Separate to the suggestion that *Sister Aggie* makes about the action of women, she suggests that talking and even swearing are agentic autonomous tools that women use to exert and express their disapproval toward men. The use of talk and swearing by women is a tactic that expresses their dissatisfaction; however they are not meant as tools that eventually extricate women entirely from situations of violence.

> Even like, she's badly beaten but, she still accepts, that's her husband. But like, I'd rather say, one out of 10 or 20 people, women, may not accept it. Though he's my husband, he cannot beat me that way! I have seen a couple of women with black eye and stitches.
>
> There was a cousin of mine she came and said, "Oh my husband cut my head. See the blood is spilling down". I told her, "Don't waste your time going to the hospital. Go home. Stay at home. There's no need for you to go to the hospital." So I told her, "Why are you looking for nurses to stitch my head, it's bleeding". I told her "no need for you to look for the nurses".
>
> [Researcher: Mm. why did you say that?]
>
> Because, you know, the husband gave her that. It's not like she's going to the garden or chopping firewood and she got that *bagarap* [injury]. So men should know what to do to her. Instead of wasting the nurses time. I want to get the point across to him that the next time you do that, what's going to happen? Even if she's badly beaten she should stay at home and die at home.
>
> [Researcher: I see what you're saying. Don't waste the public servants time [both laughing[viii]] Aiyo sore!]
>
> I'm one of those women here, even at the marketplace, if I see a man beating a woman I try to speak up. The men come and beat their wives while they [women] are busy selling things.

The pervasive nature of violence experienced within *marit* relationships is a point of frustration for *Sister Aggie*. Her apparent exasperation is observed through her pointed comments, particularly that women should not even bother seeking help if it will not change any of their circumstances within their *marit* relationships and *haus* life. Rather, these women should bear the consequences of their circumstance. This notion was similar to what the *Uncles* encountered. The message from them to the husband perpetrator was to consider his own actions of violence carefully because the repercussions of killing his wife would be an added burden of responsibility on him. The other side of the narrative in the messaging that *Sister Aggie* is putting forward for women. Quite frankly, the inaction of women in undertaking duties within the *haus* can prompt their men to consider the hardship they might face should their women stop work. This seems an important way for women to exert some agency and invoke some autonomy and voice in response to the violence they might experience, but it might also be a cause for increased violence against them.

> Yeah, *kain kain* [plenty/variety] reason *blo ol yet* [their own reason for violence]. But I am very vocal about it. I don't like to see women you know, treated [badly] – because she's there [market] at least to bring home food for your plate. And you [husband] are relaxing, walking up and down with the young men, you know smoking away and she is you know, sitting there at least to put something on your plate for dinner.

> But we have these couple down there. [Gestures down the road] Now, probably, he is living with 3 [women]. He usually have about 5 [women]. 1 ran away, 1 was killed and now he has 3. Every night let's say, once in every week or twice, he is beating them up.

> No one helps! Even the police don't intervene. He's [the perpetrator] one of those community-based policemen. Yeah, CBC [voluntary police]. Like what I said, we always stand on one side of everything [bystanders].

> They [police] would tell him [husband], probably, "Go home, that's your [personal] business" or something like that.

> Just recently last year, one [wife] was admitted [into the hospital]. Oh! Now, the other one [wife] is admitted. He [husband] broke her ribs and she's now at Kapuna. Last year was another one [wife]. Dislocated her hips.

> [Researcher: Aiya!]

> She was at the hospital now she came here. The other one, her ribcage. She's still at Kapuna [Hospital] now, right now, while I'm speaking!

> [Researcher: *Trangu*! (sorry)]

> Those are serious cases but the police do nothing about it.

The inability of the police to respond is hampered as their own men are observed as enacting violence within their families. Polygamy occurs in Baimuru and indeed is not uncommon amongst the clans of the Purari (Williams, 1924, p. 60). Williams observed some occasional disruption between wives, "*from shrill words to blows*" (Ibid). *Sister Aggie's* observation indicates a separate issue here. The use of violence against more than one wife suggests a pattern of action. Furthermore, the position this man held as a Community Police Officer (voluntary) assuaged the culpability he had. Rather, as a member of the police body his violent action was not dealt with in a way to that would constitute judicial or formal justice and resolution.

Women have little ability to acquire justice and response when those that are tasked with providing justice are the cause of these problems or considered the perpetrators. The frequency of such acts is hard to gauge when it is not being addressed with response by the police. As I observed in the Police station, the record of daily charges is inconsistently attended with little attention paid to issues of violence, particularly within families and especially those incidents of violence perpetrated against women.

> That happens every day. Yeah of course. That's accepted. You know, men beating their wife. Or sometimes the other way around, but not so often around here. Like once in a while, like when it comes to some conflict at home then they fight. Especially, young men who are drinking, they will go home and beat their women; but I mean, that's normal, we will see, even in the cities you will find that. So you will see women siting at the market, their husbands will be drinking. When they go home, and if they find there's nothing on the plate then there's a fight.
>
> Like, there's one woman. Her husband does that. One time I was at the market and I told her, "You buy all the scones and buy all the fish. You eat here and you go home! You and your children. Simple! He's enjoying his life, he's drinking." She told me, "Yes sister. I think I'll do that".
>
> Of course! Do it! Maybe you'll teach him!

The normalisation of violence by *Sister Aggie* is reinforced by suggesting that violence against women is not just a problem in Baimuru, that it exists in the *cities* [non-descript]. Again, the necessary response according to *Sister Aggie* is for the woman to extricate herself from the responsibilities of *haus* life. This will teach her husband a lesson – or at least that is the hope of such action in response.

In separate discussions with the District Police Officer (April 2016) and the Regional Officer in charge of the Family and Sexual Violence (FSV) unit in Kerema (September 2016), both concurred that police response is heavily dependent on staff and resources,

which limit the accessibility of police to adequately respond to issues in centres outside of Kerema, the capital of the Gulf Province. The words of *Sister Aggie* speak to a number of points. Firstly, the issue of gender violence is focussed on violence against women, and the response focuses on women (Butcher & Seeley, 2006; Ellsberg & Heise, 2002). As *Sister Aggie* has observed, the issue becomes normalised as the expected treatment of women in Baimuru. This sentiment breeds detachment from the issue especially from male police officers. This detachment is compounded by the realisation that police officers have been identified as perpetrating violence within their own families and are often not held accountable for such action.

5.10 Chapter Conclusion

The lives of Baimuru women are attached to the lives and experiences of their men and male kinfolk. Yet, women are able to develop subversive ways of responding to the violence they experience and the violence they witness. One particular tool of subversion is *talk* and *story* and even *swearing*. These avenues of expression allow women to creatively assert agency and claim autonomy to make claims and seek audience as they experience violence against them. The ability to personally respond through active storying about their experience is important for women in Baimuru who might otherwise be stifled in their expression and unable to seek adequate response through the police and law enforcement mechanisms. *Sister Aggie's* story as the other Chapters, represents the importance of adding the texture of the mundanaity of daily life to the greater narrative of violence and rights. Not particularly as a counter narrative, but a nuanced addition to the broader discussion that we witness happening outside of local contexts. Such discussions deepen the accounts that are recorded in the collections by Jolly et al. (2012) and the *rights* discourse of Biersack et al. (2016) that focus on responses that target *outside influence*. Local narratives of what people define *normal life* is entirely important and essential to how approaches to response can be fashioned within the diverse local lived experiences within PNG.

5.10.1 In the Pursuit of Normal Life

Sister Aggie's storying about what might constitute *normal* life in Baimuru provides an important baseline of understanding as to the context of expectation that is constructed around the roles, responsibilities and associated duties of women and men in Baimuru.

All of which are part of an experience that hopes for *normal life.* Obvious challenges exist when the definitions of *normal* life creates and supports action that normalises women's heightened experience of violence and indeed the necessary response by Police to address these. The actions of women that challenge *normal* life are then defined as subversive behaviour, alternate to the modes of operation they are *required* and/or expected to perform. As such, when women are seen to act outside of the parameters set by a particular relationship they can often be dismissed by those in the broader community who witness the gender violence against men and women. From *Sister Aggie's story*, the dismissive behaviour of bystanders that witness gender violence should and can be challenged in meaningful ways within a local context. She realises this is a significant challenge when the expectation of *normal* life is to experience some level of violence.

5.10.2 Representation: The Story of PNG Women

The most prominent tension is a lack of voice to represent their experience. The voicelessness of women in Baimuru further hinders their ability to speak about their experience of violence in ways that could entreat response. Women then take up action that can be considered subversive to ensure their dissatisfaction may be heard and acknowledged. Indeed, as we heard from *Sister Aggie*, the subversive action of women is almost necessary to garner some type of response to the violence they may experience when the mechanisms that should support them such as the police and law enforcement. These mechanisms either dismissive or are inadequate to support response that might enable justice and resolution. The caveat to this is that women may contribute to and exacerbate their own experiences of violence within particular relationships. As Dickson-Waiko (2010, 2013) eloquently portrays in her works about the omission of women's voices from the historical construction of PNG, is that the voice of women like *Sister Aggie*, *Sister Bree* and *Mother Ana* are important to the current situation and circumstance of PNG women, particularly in regard to gender violence. The colonial apparatus has silenced PNG men and women's voices and continues to do so in narratives about gender violence and equally, the responses that are formulated (Abaijah, 1975; Dickson-Waiko, 2013; Firth, 1997). The detail of experience through storytelling of witness and the acknowledgement and recognition or *luksave* enabled by telling the story, is imperative to broaden the narrative and identifying the local nuance that exists in PNG.

The stories of gender violence showcases the cyclic nature of the embeddedness of these acts in *normal life*. What *Sister Aggie's* storying tells us is that the pursuit for *normal life* is reinforced by social and moral concerns that construct a local reality in Baimuru. Part of this local reality is social and moral acceptance of certain types of violence in the *haus*. However, other concerns are raised that question why violence, particularly against women, is accepted. Most concerning is that it is accepted by Police who are tasked with formal response. This is confronting for *Sister Aggie*. There is an overarching desire to have a good and normal life but the pursuit of this is no longer accepting of gender violence.

CHAPTER 6 BAIMURU STYLE! RECOGNITION, JUSTICE AND RESOLUTION

"So when you release your frustration and anger, then you are free of anything! And then you are thinking of doing the next thing. Maybe your [conscience] comes back to its normal senses and you feel like you can settle down and solve it in a better way.

That's typical Baimuru style!"

(Sister Bree in conversation, August 2016)

The story from Baimuru tells us that people have social and moral concerns that directs actions and expectations of life. Women in particular are tasked with a great deal of responsibility as set within particular frames of social relations. When these responsibilities are unmet, they become points at which gender violence can occur. Social relations frame and develop particular individual action that may be attributed to identity and personhood as part of perceptions of gender. As people tell the story of gender violence and ascribe meaning to such acts they also engage in developing social and moral understanding to the modes of response that may be engaged to address such acts. What is most evident from the story from Baimuru is that people engage in activities of moral evaluation of action that is associated with ways of being in specific spaces and places. As such, particular acts of gender violence are condoned, allowed and reinforced within particular sets of social relationships in mutual recognition, and as socially and morally acceptable. While conversely, people act to respond to these acts in meaningful and locally contextual ways as address, redress or as a means of restoration back to *normal life*. The meaning ascribed to particular action is further evaluated through a lens of embedded sociality and relationality and engaged in conjunction with traditional and modern life and underpinned by particular belief systems.

6.1.1 Gender Violence and the Law

National strategies to address gender violence in PNG consider these acts as criminal act, in accordance with guiding legislation (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1974, 2014b). As such, the response mechanisms are focused on achieving fair conduct, as defined through a Law and Justice Sector (L&JS). This approach has been constructed into its' contemporary form, from a colonial history of address and response through identification of crime and necessary processes of seeking justice (Australian

Government & Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015b). Additional supports and response exists as Health Care policy and legislation included in the Lukautim Pikinini Act (2015) and the Family Protection Act (2014b). It is the Police and the Village Courts System that are primarily tasked with the responsibility to address gender violence, however, as evident in the story, this response is ineffective and insufficient due to lack of interest of police, limited resources and capacity in centres like Baimuru (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1989, 2014c; Paliwala, 1982).

While Malinowski's works entitled *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (Malinowski, 1926, 1970a) are important to contemporary understandings of *Melanesian Justice* other scholars add to the breadth of our understanding of the intersections of justice, culture and society in PNG. Importantly, Malinowski's works are premised on the understanding that social relations (through reciprocity) are an integral and underpinning concept in shaping and achieving resolution and/or justice after social conflict including violent action. Contemporary research on justice regarding gender violence suggest the importance of kin and social relationships continues to be prioritised above notions of justice (Demian, 2003, 2016) or justice as a human right (Biersack et al., 2016; Rooney et al., 2018; C. Stewart, 2012).

Social relations are often and evidently privileged above legal considerations, and this can create a challenge in adequately and appropriately addressing gender violence as it is enacted in Baimuru and other similar centres (Goddard, 2009). The idea of justice is complex and modes of justice through exchange practices, such as compensation, particularly in cases of gender violence, are widely accepted. These processes compound the issues of VAW and can further reinforce the inequality of women in particular cultural contexts and result in the inability to address the issue of gender violence in a way that can affect change in behaviour and action (Scaglion, 1981; Wardlow, 2006). Compensation as a form of justice and/or resolution is an area of research that requires further detail and development particularly when it is used as a tool to respond to gender violence (Scaglion, 1981; Slamang, 2018; A. Strathern & Stewart, 2012).

The response to gender violence through a L&JS approach is made difficult as notions of customary justice and Western legal frames of justice prove inequitable at times and contestable at best, given local realities and associated politics (McLeod, 2002). This tension arises as legislation is often misunderstood in local communities, particularly

when the apparatus for responding that is, the Police and Courts, are ill equipped to informing people and in bringing about formal response in the form of legal justice.

6.2 Social Relations and Justice

As witnessed in the story from Baimuru, social relations situate people within their lived experience and shape identity and personhood, from which social and moral action is determined. Using the Kula exchange as an example, Malinowski wrote that social relations provides a frame within which *"two parties … exchange services and functions"* with *"each watching over the measure of fulfilment and the fairness of conduct of the other"* (Malinowski, 1970b, p. 26). These remain the underpinning value and motivating factor for social and moral action as part of *pasin blo luksave.* Each party is involved in evaluating, ensuring and effecting action within the exchange that adheres to a defined measure of *fulfilment* and *fairness* of conduct. The premise in the exchange (whether gift or action) is the understanding that an equitable and reciprocal (gift) action will be enacted by each person.

6.2.1   Pasin and Luksave

A measure of fulfilment and fair conduct within an exchange between two persons in PNG is akin to the dual notions of *pasin* and *luksave*. Hukula (2019, p. 169) writes that "*in everyday talk an ideal person is someone who has pasin and luksave…someone who greets and acknowledges others as they go about their daily lives.*" *Pasin* represents a way of being, "*in which persons make claims to and reveal people and relations"* as part of a *"moral evaluation"* (Ibid, p. 169). *Pasin* and *luksave* are mutually inclusive, as Hukula acknowledges, to have one you must have the other (Ibid). More importantly, *pasin* and *luksave* as a frame of acknowledgement or *pasin blo luksave* asserts that people seek not only to be good as a matter of their individual personhood, but to be seen and recognised as good by others.

6.3 Social Recognition and Justice

The moments of acknowledgement between people are a mutually understood recognition within which people fulfil the responsibilities of their social relations and moral obligations, through fair and equitable conduct. Honneth (Honneth & Farrell, 1997;

Honneth & Joas, 1988) describes the concept of mutual recognition in similar terms to the explanation Hukula provides for the dual notions of *pasin* and *luksave*. These moments of sociality are focused on the mutual recognition between people in daily lives and it becomes a basis from which people define and evaluate moral action as either fair or unfair conduct. As people acknowledge their relationships to one another, at moment of gendered and violent action, a *pasin blo luksave* or frame of acknowledgement is invoked and through this frame people assess the social and moral intent of action, their own and others.

6.3.1   Gender Violence and Fair Conduct

What scholarly works on justice in PNG and the storying from Baimuru offer and acknowledge is that, moments of violence can be considered as fair conduct, given an assessment of the social and moral intent to act. Gendered and violent action is measured and assessed by a cross reference to *fairness* and attached to personhood as part of the social and kin relations that constitute men and women as ideal persons or socially and morally acceptable beings. Fairness of conduct becomes the frame within which reasonable action and offence are defined.

The participant reflections documented in this thesis suggest that the way women and men in Baimuru measure fair conduct or reasonable action depends on the particular type of social relationship under consideration. *Mother Ana* and *Sister Aggie* broadly suggest gender violence in marital relationships today is an outcome of social expectations concerning the roles of men and women and the lack of meeting these expectations given changes in contemporary experience. The *Uncles* and *Sister Bree* speak of the Christian moral imperative as the measure of the *fairness* of conduct implying that there is a measure of goodness in the action of men and women in daily life and particularly in marital or men-women relationships. In like manner, unfair conduct or offence is evaluated relative to the parameters of particular types of social relationships.

6.4   Fairness, Reasonable Action and Offence

My research suggests that the understanding of gender violence that exists in Baimuru parallels the overarching narrative of gender violence in PNG. Violence against women is the most pervasive form and is experienced predominantly within *marit* relationships and *haus* life (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017). In Baimuru, people equate

gender violence to violence against women. Or more importantly, the types of violence they see as unproductive are those acts which impact the lives of women. However, gender violence includes other forms of violence, less researched. Defining gender violence and providing understanding to support response, requires that research also include other types of violence, including men-men, women-men, and women-women.

6.4.1 Another type of gender violence: SARV

Bubu Doa (BD) is the current District Police Officer at Baimuru and has been so for over thirty years. He is also a paternal elder and I recognise and relate to him through the kin term of *Bubu* or in English, a grandfather. Upon my initial arrival in Baimuru there was story of a killing in Mapaio village, the largest of the Purari Delta villages (Bell, 2009). The practice of sorcery is and has been common amongst the people of the Purari (Williams, 1924). In one of our initial conversations, *Bubu Doa* had the following to say (April 2016):

> [TRANSLATION] Like they killed one in Mapaio, it's through sorcery. You came we did awareness. We need to cut down these type(s) of cases, because these young men today, they have already talked amongst themselves, they are trying to murder all the sorcerers.
>
> I was in Kerema interviewing these young boys [Mapaio], that's what they told me in the interview, "We've already talked amongst ourselves and agreed. We need to kill all the sorcerers; maybe that will stop it".

As *Bubu Doa* states, awareness is conducted to inform local communities about sorcery related violence in an effort to address and prevent these acts from occurring. While a Draft National Strategy exists (Forsyth, 2019), and laws have been reformed, there is a significant gap between informed understanding of local peoples to prevent these types of violence from occurring. This group of men had conspired to commit this particular act, they had already agreed, *"ol i pasim tok pinis"*. Not only did they conspire to commit this act, but they were also resolute in that this action was necessary: *"mipela nid long kilim ol sorcerers, maybe they will stop it"*. The "it" that they imply is the targeting of people they perceive as engaging sorcery to be used in harmful ways against others. These accusations often occur at times when there is an unexplainable and/or sudden death and/or illness. This group of men were adamant that they had done the right thing, based on a belief that if they did not (and do not) act to stop these sorcerers more people in the community would be harmed or maybe even killed. They were justified in this belief and therefore would also be exonerated for these violent actions. Furthermore, the notion *to protect* prompts men (particularly) to this type of action. The role of the protector and

indeed men's roles to secure life amongst their people is made more intense when faced with unexplainable and sudden disruption, such that death or illness may present. Gibbs (2012, p. 113) reports on gendered violence and witchcraft in Simbu a Highlands Province, where men were traditionally tasked as defenders of the "interests of the clan". This is not dissimilar to men of the Purari (Williams, 1924). Men's role as defenders, as part of their masculine identity is enacted through moments of Sorcery Accusations Related Violence (SARV) in contemporary times (Hermkens, 2015; Thomas et al., 2017). Additionally, in recent cases of SARV, women present as the primary victims due to being marginalised in their local communities and therefore least trusted to uphold social and moral expectations of the group (Gibbs, 2012, 2016; Hermkens, 2015; P. J. Stewart & Strathern, 2003). There is a very real fear of sorcerer's that prompts people to act to protect themselves and others from these people and their powers (Ashforth, 2015; P. J. Stewart & Strathern, 2003). Sorcerers are deemed to act purposefully in their action. Therefore the sentiment to prevent and stop is exercised in direct response to the perceived purpose of the sorcerer. This response may manifest in the extreme actions of torture and/or killings (Forsyth & Eves, 2015; Zocca, 2010). Both the torture and/or killing of the sorcerer is increasingly deemed to be an acceptable and fair response when a person has been identified and accused as being a sorcerer (Thomas et al., 2017).

The Sorcery Act (1971), now repealed, was originally designed as a mechanism for people to seek action against suspected sorcerers, while allowing those charged with accusations of SARV (any form, including killing) to claim self-defence. The Act, repealed in 2013, now recognises the accusations of sorcery related violence is a criminal act under the Criminal Code Act (Government of Papua New Guinea, 1974). As such, those seen to carrying out violent action can be culpable up to a maximum penalty of death (for accusations killings).

> [TRANSLATION] Because there's no law for sorcery. You need evidence to prove to the court so that they can put them away in jail, like "Oh he's a sorcerer". Now, this law has changed.
>
> They told us [police] to conduct awareness [for people] through their statement, like circumstance evidence, they [accusers] will prove and then maybe they [sorcerers] can go to jail. Now they [public/accusers] are coming back to custom again.

Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) is a significant form of gender violence that has become a pervasive social disruption to daily life in PNG (Forsyth, 2019). It is widely linked to the narrative of gender violence in PNG, particularly in regard to the targeting

of those most vulnerable in communities, that is, women and children (Thomas et al., 2017) and defining men's roles within transitional time, where previously men were "defenders" of their clans (Gibbs, 2012).

In recent times invoking an accusation of sorcery can effect already marginalised people within a particular community, especially women (Forsyth, 2018; Hermkens, 2015; Zocca, 2010). People determine their violent action based on Christian moral imperatives and cosmological belief in such practices. In the example of the sorcery related killing in Mapaio, the threat to the community that this accused sorcerer posed was real and imminent. By the assessment of this group of men, they had acted in fairness when they conspired to kill this accused sorcerer. The outcome of this fair act of violence was to ensure community safety and harmony. This example provides a small insight into how particular violence might be motivated, how masculinity can contribute to such acts and how the formal frames that should provide a legal response are limited by what is considered fair and just action. Furthermore, it highlights tension between a local lived experience and the overarching response mechanism that is based on human rights ethos (Ashforth, 2015; Thomas et al., 2017).

Demian (2016) reports law makers in local settings in PNG often consider the role of the Police and Village Courts to be a tool for seeking "peace" rather than "justice". This notion can encourage and justify acts of gender violence and in the case of SARV resolution, is peace of mind for accusers while for the accused there may be little and/or no justice. As Demian (2003, 2016) and others tasked with researching SARV for policy and legislation reform suggest (Forsyth, 2018, 2019; Forsyth & Eves, 2015; Garbe & Struck-Garbe, 2018; Hermkens, 2015; Thomas et al., 2017), the notion of "peace" over "justice" sets a tone for those tasked with enforcing law and order. Response is not always *justice*, rather local forms of *response* seek peace and this can unwittingly condone and reinforce the use of violence against men and women accused of sorcery, as seen in the case in Baimuru. Seeking peace rather than justice in these instances may also contribute to the reluctance that the kin of the accused feel toward pursuing forms of justice against perpetrators of violence in SARV cases. The notion of "peace" rather than "justice" is an important point in the local narratives regarding SARV and gender violence action and response.

6.4.2 "Law and Order"

While village courts deal with resolving cases, it is up to the district police to not only enforce the law in remote areas like the Purari, but are also tasked with informing people of changes to the law. *Bubu Doa* as the only official police officer in the District of Baimuru recognised there is a significant gap in that the general public has a limited understanding of the legislation surrounding their responses to what are considered criminal acts and that includes gender violence and SARV. The gap in knowledge exhibited in the case of sorcery legislation is one example. The dissemination of different legislation to the general public is limited, particularly in remote areas (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2009). However, it is not simply a lack of information that filters through that is at issue, it is also the ability for this information and associated legislation to then be carried out by police is also considerably inhibited. *Bubu Doa* took the opportunity in our conversation to highlight the ways that accusations should be dealt with:

> [TRANSLATION] So, the way you observe a man, what is he going, "oh, he was doing these things,", where you met him, and then where did you meet him the next day; those are the things that, that will repeat and become a full story for you. So maybe that's the suspect. He [accused] will admit he was there, what was he doing, and he met you at this particular place several times. Why was he on the premises at that time of night, or whenever? That's it, all these things, we need to go out and talk about [make awareness].

Once *proof* is gathered and evidence submitted it is then incumbent upon the accused to admit and give reason against their accusers. The District Manager (*Uncle Davi*) had the following to say on the matter and that specific case of the sorcery related killing:

> Baimuru people, being from here [myself], I know them well …Pacific Islanders are good gossipers … in here, in Baimuru, that's the work of life that we live. When someone does something, they gossip! They put on their extras! It continues for a while and then they stop.
>
> When people do wrong, they gossip. And they say "tru ya"; they don't gossip they say "em tru ya; that's right" because instance [example] someone was killed …

Gossip is a mode of communication that proliferates through the network of social relations and interaction: gossip is, "*the work of life".* Gossip defined as a form of storytelling and information sharing is vital to the lives of people in Baimuru (Besnier, 2009; Brison, 1992; P. J. Stewart & Strathern, 2003). It provides a means of social cohesion by solidifying social relationships in sharing and entrusting others with information, while simultaneously useful for people who produce a story to make sense

of the experiences they witness. Gossip, as a form of information sharing is useful for the storyteller as a means to make claims and assess the conduct of action as reasonable and fair (or not), given a certain type of experience.

As District Manager and person responsible for the oversight of ensuring justice after the SARV case in Mapaio, *Uncle Davi* held an important position in formulating response. He used our conversation (April 2016) as an opportunity to provide his own assessment and input to the SARV killing in Mapaio, and in his story decodes and interprets what he witnessed:

> I was doing a visitation trip; Remember I was telling you about that trip? [Researcher: yeah, Mapaio]. I was doing a trip and someone got killed. I got the report done to present to the administrator…I came back and told them, someone got killed…
>
> When I came back I told them, they said "to kill a man is their pride" [NN: Ok, that's interesting]. Yeah. They said, "to kill a man is their pride, because he was wrong". I said "no, no, you're jumping too early to conclusions. Why did you kill him? You must have a genuine reason."

To *"kill a man is their pride"* forms itself in a masculine sentiment of the ability of these men to respond to and deal with this issue that is the sorcerer, in a way that was both reasonable and acceptable action.

> "If he was practicing sorcery and you saw him and you killed him, that's justified". But because someone died 3 weeks ago, and they were suspecting him. "Where were you 3 weeks ago?" – you see the angle that I'm coming in? They would have said "this fellow was doing this and that, let's kill him" – that's ok.
>
> But 3 weeks ago you were never there! And you suspected him of practicing sorcery, then you took this fellow's life, so you're answerable to your action. Had you seen him doing this magical thing; if you kill him it's because of these evidences; to kill this guy.
>
> But now you just kill him; burn him to ashes. That's inhumane!

The retrospective nature of accusations of sorcery makes finding evidential proof difficult or entirely inadmissible. The *feeling* surrounding accusations is what people draw on to make valid the claims against someone who they deem to be a sorcerer or sanguma (Zocca, 2010). As women are often targets of such accusations, unequal gendered perceptions place women in positions where they are least able to make counter claims. It seems the feeling is currently enough to warrant the intentional use of physical force in the form of torture and violence and in some very extreme instances, killing (Forsyth,

2018; Zocca, 2010). This sentiment is perpetuated and condoned in the continual passing on of information through second-hand story and gossip.

> But there was gossip going on "ah, to kill a man is our pride". Yeah, but he was not an animal – you're killing another person!
>
> So in my report, I told them, to search a person in that form [deceased] is something that I will never forget in my lifetime. This fellow was burnt to ashes … his skin had already turned to black. You know, like you would put sago over the fire; the whole sago over the fire and these ashes, charcoal …they gossip. They gossip for a while then it dies off. Then someone will say something and they start gossiping again.
>
> It's like household discussion ah!? They don't try to find out the story, it's just for the sake of gossiping. And as they gossip, that information, that matter becomes worse, because someone's adding on their bit.
>
> Whether it's true or not. So at the end of the day, you ask the 10th person, he will be telling you a totally different thing!

In Baimuru particularly as described as an I'ai mode of response, physical and violent action is the expression of sentiment that becomes a mechanism for social control for processing and settling disputes. Intentional violent action can also prove an important tool for restoration after offence and social conflict. The violent action that prompted the killing of the accused sorcerer is an example of how this mode of social control is at odds with the justice system and legal apparatus that is supposed to govern and provide a response. The reasonable act in the minds of the young men was to deal with the *sorcerer* in order to contain his power and stop him from causing more harm and therefore prompted his killing. What these men considered as a necessary action was based on their feeling that retributive and extreme violence was necessary to stop this man from causing further issue in their community. Killing this man was the resolution that would bring back community confidence and ensure community safety and solidify the masculinity of these men. The young men who had carried out this killing stood firm on the notion that their action was justified; warranted and necessary.

Interestingly, because of the firm belief that their killing of the alleged sorcerer was a means of *making right* the men presented themselves to the Police Officer in Baimuru after they committed this act. They were then transported to Kerema, the provincial capital, for charges to be laid against them. Kerema is the only place with a sitting magistrate, where offences such as these can be tried. The young men who had carried out the killing and then presented themselves to the authorities were so adamant that

their action was a form of *making right* that they believed they would be exonerated immediately. However, during a visit back to PNG in July 2019, (three years later) and on-going current discussions with my family in Baimuru, I was told that these young men were still awaiting trial for this criminal offence. The L&JS response in remote Gulf is made difficult by the lack of adequate support to try and potentially convict those carrying out criminal acts. Even when those who commit a crime are present in the system, they may not actually be tried and convicted for a long time. This includes cases of SARV and other acts of gender violence.

Furthermore, the belief that these men had in the action as necessary was supported by many in Baimuru. During my time there in 2016, I observed that due to the strong kin and social connection to Mapaio many people in Baimuru knew of and spoke decisively about the case. The support and belief in the values that these young men's action represented were so strong that funds were being raised to support their legal case in Kerema. Most people supported these young men because they too believed that the act of killing an alleged sorcerer to be one of *making right*, a fair and reasonable act that restored communal social continuity.

6.5   Restoration as Response

In his works with the Huli of the Hela Province, Goldman (2007) suggests that social equilibrium is the required outcome in resolving conflict. What constitutes resolution so as to achieve *"social equilibriums"* are *"rather predicated on, cyclic patterns of grievance management … all cultures possess or become endowed with a spectrum of social control mechanisms for processing and settling their disputes. Conflict and conflict resolution characterise all social organisations irrespective of their locale or level of development."* (Goldman, 2007, p. 69). Goldman makes a rather broad and generalised statement in suggesting that *"all social organisations"* are *"endowed"* with some *"spectrum of social control mechanisms for processing and settling their disputes"*. What is not defined in Goldman's statement gives us a broad scope to consider what constitutes dispute and what might constitute fair conduct. In determining what people perceive as fair conduct it is important to consider the social form within which this sentiment is formulated and corresponding action occurs.

6.6 The Process of Restoration

From the story of the sorcery killing in Baimuru and the conceptual frame of Goldman, a frame of necessary action begins to emerge. The notion of necessary action helps to identify, rationalise and determine what constitutes action as offence and action that is reasonable. Necessary action is simply the translation of intent, coupled with a frame that is guided by motive. Just as intent and motive to act (sometimes violently) are considered, there is intent and motive to respond.

The witness voice and storying of this thesis suggest that people do seek a response to issues of gender violence as they may arise in Baimuru. As such, responses can be formulated as a means of:

a) Recognition and acknowledgement of action as either fair or unfair conduct (reasonable action or offence);
b) Formulating responsive action that constitutes a form of justice for those involved, to achieve social stasis.

Recognition in processes of justice and resolution exists within the acts of storytelling as part of the social fabric of community life in PNG. So much so that in Tok Pisin the concept of *restoration* is best translated as and defined through the notion of *"stretim pasin"* a phrase that suggests a processual action, involving story and negotiation (which can constitute practices such as compensation).

6.6.1 Stretim Pasin

An interpretation of restoration into *tok pisin* suggests *stretim pasin* is a frame within which particular action recognises and makes right an act of offence that has transpired between two parties (either individual; collective; or between individual and collective). This ties into the notion of seeking "peace" rather than "justice" (Demian, 2016). These exchange processes enable mutual acknowledgement and social recognition between the wronged and the wrong-doer. Within this frame, the necessary responsive action can be formulated to ensure all parties are assuaged. In a small community like Baimuru these processes are important to support harmony, particularly as instances of violence can prove highly disruptive to kin and community and social life.

6.6.2 Luksave in the process of Stretim Pasin

Luksave is a fundamental indicator of social relationships and as an important mode of acknowledgment and recognition for individuals within a particular context. Engaging *luksave* in the process and practice of *stretim pasin* is useful as a means of response and seeking resolution. When an offence is registered and social disruption is acknowledged to have occurred, recourse is required in response and that is *luksave.* The type of social relationship that is disrupted is used as a basis for assessing the necessary action in response, as a form of *stretim pasin* and making right restoring equilibrium in a social relationship or in Tok Pisin *wanbel.* If the offence is left unacknowledged and/or not addressed, it can create and even exacerbate on-going conflict between parties, which may cause further and cyclic violent action.

The notion of *wanbel* which Troolin (2018, p. 27 to 30) describes as a "complex social concept" that constitutes mutually recognised harmony in a kin or social relationship. Processes of creating *wanbel* vary throughout PNG. The intent of *wanbel* is to support favourable agreements between and amongst people, and to acknowledge wrong(s) done. Getting to a place of *wanbel* after an offence has been felt, acknowledges restoration. This restoration is required following disruption in social relations, so as to ably move forward or past the offence. The intent to restore, to achieve *wanbel* adds further nuance to the acceptability of violent action, when we see retributive violence is used to restore feelings of *wanbel* after offence is felt. The process of restoration is also premised on an experience of shame, particularly where a person has not acted in a socially or morally acceptable way to another.

6.6.3 From Shame (Mai'o'ka) to Saving Face (Oro pape Hareapo)

The following dialogue focuses on the concept of **"*mai'o' ka*"** [may-or-car] (in Gulf dialect - Orokolo language) which translates *shame*; and the reciprocal action of *"oro pape haro apo"* [or-oh pa-pae har-oh-ah-poh], which translates to mean *face to face* (Orokolo language, Brown, 1973). The dialogue highlights how shame is a catalyst for the feeling of offence, and therefore, the necessary motive for responsive action, so as to make right or restore a relationships after disruption, a process of *"stretim pasin"* (April 2018):

> (Father A) Two cousins might go and have a fight, or want to have a fight, and people will say "Makiri ka maioka ka dida" = why do you want to go and fight with that person; that's your brother. That's not how we solve problems.
> So it can be of equivalence, or it can be hierarchical.

(Father A) Mai'o'ka means shame. It's when you feel embarrassed or when you feel ashamed of something. That's really what it means.

(Mother B) And in the Baimuru language it's "maikiri eiria miki"
Maioka and makiri – Q: "maiko ka?" [have you no shame?] A: "Makiri aha doriro" [It's to do with anybody – children right up to [adults]

(Father A) So, in the context of Uncles and nephews and nieces, the nephews and nieces would make amends, it's usually not the Uncle or Aunty. Your, grandparents, and someone who is older than you, or has the seniority, than yourself. You make amends by apologising – but in the cultural context, you invite them for a meal, or sit down and have a cup of tea, or, something like that.
It's called "oro pape haroapo" which means "face to face" in tok pisin, "wanbel". "Oro pape" meaning your face, "haroapo" means one.
So you meet your mother and see each other and acknowledge what has transpired and you don't have to speak about it. [Yep. Just the action of doing that?] Yep. It's the action of doing that. Yeah, stretim pasin.
Maioka – or if the person goes away, and you don't have a chance to apologise and say sorry, then, for example, in the village context, you have to go and say sorry to that person. So you will have to go over and apologise. Often you take something along, as a gift, like a plate of food, or coconuts, or sago or something like that.
(Mother B) Ah, maioka could also refer to squabbles between families, in terms of disagreements, violence, abusive ways and, the person who had caused it might feel ashamed of their action [FA they would be told] they would be told [Like, oh nogat sem blo yu?]

This dialogue between myself and an older couple from the Gulf Province (*Father A* and *Mother B*) now residing in Australia, afforded this brief analysis of how offence is explained and the necessary response to offence amongst kin and social networks. Although not directly of the Purari delta area, the Orokolo (Ihu peoples) share customary practices. Granted it is a story of reminiscences acknowledging customary practices. Yet it is informed by an engrained understanding of the importance of kin and social structure and how shame prompts a mode of social and moral action (Hoenigman, 2015). Feelings of shame and embarrassment are a catalyst for good social and moral action between kin.

6.7   "Birua": Disruption and Restoration
The following story corresponds to the story of *Sister Sha* and her experience of violence*.* The following incident presents my own witness account and is an example of the layered and often on-going nature of the offence that is borne from particular kin and social relationships.

6.7.1 <u>The Build Up</u>

This incident involved two families, neighbours to myself at the time I was in Baimuru (2016). This is a story involving these neighbours the Meas, and their experience of retributive violence. The Mea Family were like family to me and like my own family, they were situated in a 'section' where one predominant family, the Karu family had established themselves. The Karu family just so happened to be the family that instigated this particular attack against the Mea family this night. Because of the proximity in living situation, I had on-going contact with each family, and it became known to me over the course of my time in Baimuru that these families had regular dispute because of historical land issues. The incident that I witnessed, was merely an opportunity to rehash the on-going tension between these families in our 'section'.

This night was the same night that my family and I had already witnessed the beating of sister Sha by her father. Sha is a member of the Karu family.

Sha's family accused the Mea family, specifically the mother of the family (Aunty Shel) of facilitating the relationship between Sha and the young man her parents did not approve of. The times Sha had been seen with this young man was at the Mea family house – sometimes in full view of everyone in our section. What Sha's parents were angry at was the fact that the Mother of that house, Aunty Shel, had taken on a role as a message carrier between Sha and Dari (the young man). Because of this role Aunty Shel played, the Karu family believed that Sha's actions that of entering into this relationship with Dari, was a direct result of this support by Aunty Shel.

The situation surrounding Sha's relationship with Dari, was the catalyst for what then unfolded, as I witnessed - the aggressive attack on Aunty Shel and her family by Sha's mother, Aunty Rea, and her family.

My own Aunty had storied to me that prior to this attack some days earlier, in fact, Aunty Shel had approached Sha's mother (Aunty Rea), as she was worried about the situation – I believe Aunty Shel was worried about the way she would be perceived by Aunty Rea, in allowing the meetings to take place. It was this action by Aunty Shel, along with the culminated frustration of Uncle Ben and Aunty Rea at a) the fact that Sha was developing this relationship with Dari and, b) that they did not approve of the relationship; they felt they as Sha's parents needed to take some action to prevent the relationship from escalating (getting to marriage). I feel a lot of Uncle Ben and Aunty Rea's action was because they feared for the fidelity of their only daughter, and in having to acknowledge her choice of partner, when they did not approve of Dari.

Prior to the incident between Sha and her father (Uncle Ben), it seems Sha's maternal uncle had decided to also confront Dari the day before. Sha's uncle had physically assaulted Dari. In the story I heard, the words that were spoken were "tupela ol fait lo meri ya!" This particular altercation resulted in the police getting involved to investigate and provide resolution. What eventuated was that Sha's Uncle had explained why he felt it necessary to a) become involved (as a kin responsibility) and b) physically assault Dari (as a matter of family honour). Because of this reasoning, the Police found both at fault, although they fined Dari a much greater fee (K1500) than Sha's Uncle (only K1000). Dari was to pay the

difference in compensation (K500) before he was set to leave Baimuru for his return home to the Western Province.

Further compounding this already layered situation, was that Sha, had gone to the neighbouring village to seek assistance from an 'ai man' [eye man] or sorcerer. The suggestion was that she wanted 'skin diwai' [magical tree bark] to use on her mother and father, to prevent them from seeing her movements with the man they did not favour. This was also part of the broader story my own Aunty reported to me during the day. Sha's parents had in fact been searching for her most of the day, while it seems, she was out seeking cosmological assistance for her situation. The beating of Sha, by Uncle Ben, was (I imagine) a culmination of the pent-up rage at the situation, their daughter's 'disobedience', the fear of community judgement as attached to their daughter's behaviour, and then seemingly running around all day looking for Sha.
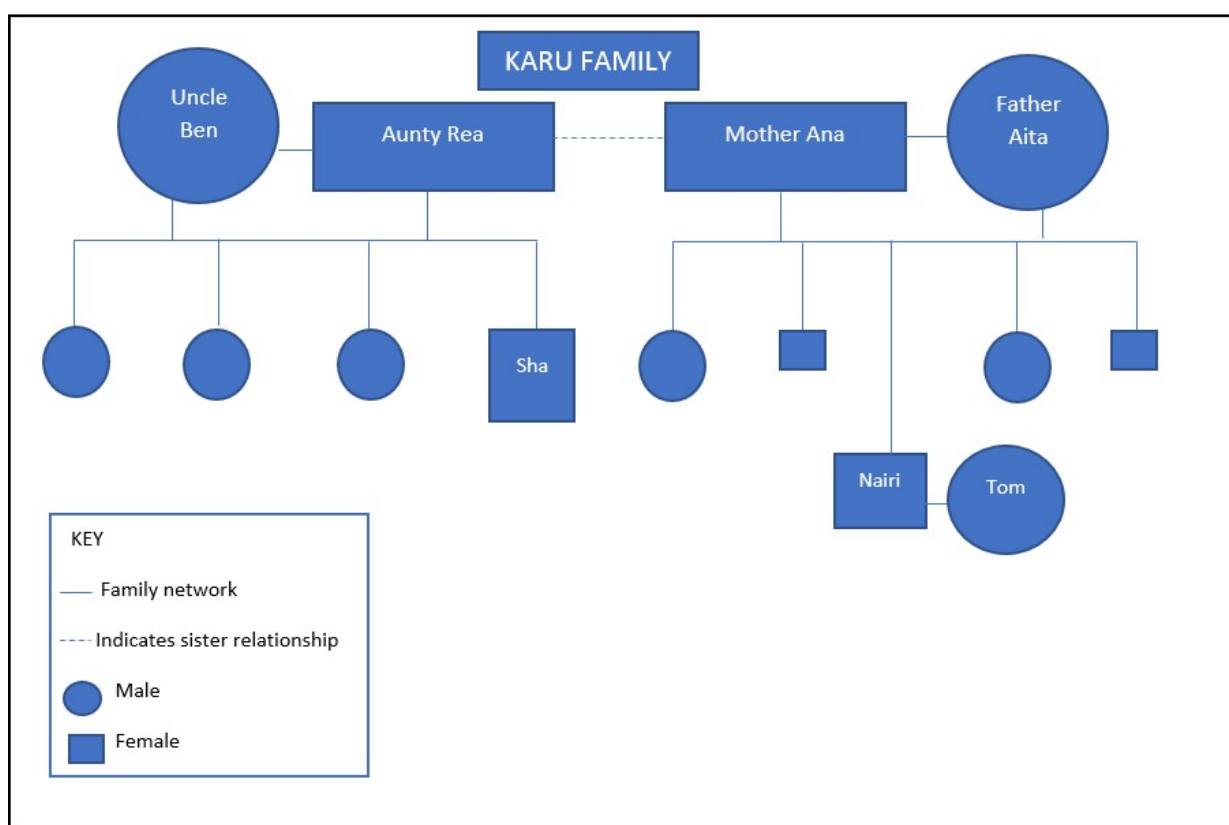

Figure 6. Karu Family structure associated to event

6.7.2 The Attack

As Aunty Rea walked down the lane that ran through the centre of our 'section', she was joined by her nephew (older sister's son) and his mother (Mother Ana). The two were also screaming angrily, swearing, and making accusations in language, Tok Pisin and English.

When Aunty Rea reached the Mea family house she started screaming for Aunty Shel to come out. We then heard the sound of timber against the timber. We heard from Aunty Shel's later accounts that her house had been torn apart. Aunty Rea had removed several loose planks at the bottom of the house and was using this timber to hit the side of the house (timber against timber), while Aunty Shel and her family had locked themselves in the house. The screaming and destruction of the house went on for a good 30 minutes. During this time Aunty Rea kept referring to Aunty Shel as 'pamuk' (prostitute) and using the phrase 'pamuk pasin' (promiscuous). She felt Aunty Shel was responsible for initially encouraging her daughter's behaviour and then supporting it by letting their relationship develop, in her home. Aunty Rea and Mother Ana finally retreated – they seemingly had exerted all their frustration and anger. All the while Mother Ana's son was standing at the land calling out (quite unenthusiastically and unconvincingly) for his mother and Aunty to stop their attack. It seemed he was not going to step in physically to stop his 'mothers'.

The Mea family have two teenage boys and a daughter (9 years old at the time). At the time of this incident, the whole family and their uncle were all in the house. It seems with all these male bodies in the house, they also did not feel they could confront Aunty Rea and Mother Ana at that time. In fact, what their restraint suggests, is that the Mea family did not try to stop either Aunty Rea or Mother Ana, because they were mindful (in some way) that that action of property destruction, was a display of anger and frustration. It did not warrant physical or verbal reaction at that point.

The mothers retreated. The house and 'section' were once again quiet. As my family and I sat in the semi darkness, speaking in hushed tones about the incident, and deciding whether to watch another movie on designated movie night (actually joking that we may not need another movie given the 'action' that had just taken place), we began to hear more swearing and screaming coming from the Mea's house.

Mother Ana's son-in law (effectively Aunty Rea's son-in law), Tom, decided he too needed to 'autim toktok' (speak out). He proceeded down the lane screaming and carrying on, and then eventually took to beating the house as his mother in-laws had. He started to beat the 'kapa' [iron roofing sheets] walls. He was very aggressively (we could hear from our vantage point) calling Aunty Shel out in the same way his mother in-law had, in Tok Pisin, swearing, accusing and calling her names. He went on for a good 20 minutes. After retreating for some 15 minutes, he then returned with a 'Tamiok' [axe]. He started chopping the walls, trying to break the house down it would seem. His wife (*Mother Ana's* daughter) had followed him this time, calling for him (as her brother had done with their mother) to stop the attack – although she sounded more convincing than her brother had been previously.

While Tom proceeded with this second wave of battery, it seemed the Mea family had finally had enough. Aunty Shel's son's, brother in-law and husband (Uncle Kris), had mobilised and were ready to defend their house. After about 10 minutes, Tom's screams and chopping had stopped and we then heard the voices of the young boys – Aunty Shel and Uncle Kris sons. They had armed themselves with all manner of weapons – palang (timber), tamiok (axe), bus naif (machete). They had

crept out of the house in the darkness of the night and startled Tom. We heard as they screamed and shouted and chased Tom. It seems the last 2 hours of abuse had finally culminated to a point. I suspect having Tom present as an adversary (rather than the Mothers) was cause enough for the Mea family to retaliate.

Tom, who was drunk at the time, had managed to cut his foot during his startling retreat. He ran back to his house with an open wound in his left foot. During his retreat, the Mea family had run through my family yard, in pursuit of Tom. As they ran through our property they were soon stopped by my Uncle and Aunty. Our house and a few other households in the 'section' mobilised ourselves to go out and stop the pursuit and potential further violence and aggression. As my own Uncle and Aunty spoke with the Mea family, they would intermittently call out to Tom to come back and face them instead of running away.

At some point during this attempt to deescalate the situation, Tom's drinking buddies from the day decided they also need to get involved in support of him. As these young men arrived and as Uncle and Aunty began to mediate, we heard that Tom had been rushed to the *haus sik* (clinic), because of the injury to his foot. As it would happen, Uncle Kris had also sustained an injury and also had to go to the *haus sik*. As we heard from later stories, the irony of both Tom, whose leg was caught by an old kappa (iron) sheet, and Uncle Kris having his jaw attended to; both being stitched up next to each other, right after this altercation. This is often the case in small communities like Baimuru.

The burst of anger and aggression is at the fore of this experience, and what follows is the effect of such violence on all parties within close proximity to one another. The nature of social disruption in Baimuru presents that there is a very little separation of peoples in such close proximity to one another, to allow these types of events to be assessed and responded. It has also meant that local *haus sik* or aid posts require a small payment prior to any assistance being given to people who present after violent events (Refer Plate 13).

The retaliation of sister Sha's family as maternal kin is similar to what Bonnemère (2018, p. 43) describes this as "the fact that maternal relatives are the source of the blood in their nieces' and nephews' bodies, and thus are viewed as having the power of life and death over them." Such power encouraged the sense of responsibility to enact this violence by *Sha's* family (the Karus), as a way of forcing *Aunty Shel* and the Mea family, to acknowledge her wrongdoing in encouraging the relationship between *Sha* and the young man *Dari*. What translates here is the strong sense of responsibility to act, given the close proximity within which this family lives, and the need for them have their anger about *Sha's* situation acknowledge or show *luksave*, the attack shows how kin relationships prompt and support certain types of violent action within Baimuru. The story, and response by *sister Sha's* kin also suggests there needs to be greater consideration of the

ways in which familial shame has provoked the intent behind such retributive violence (Hoenigman, 2015).
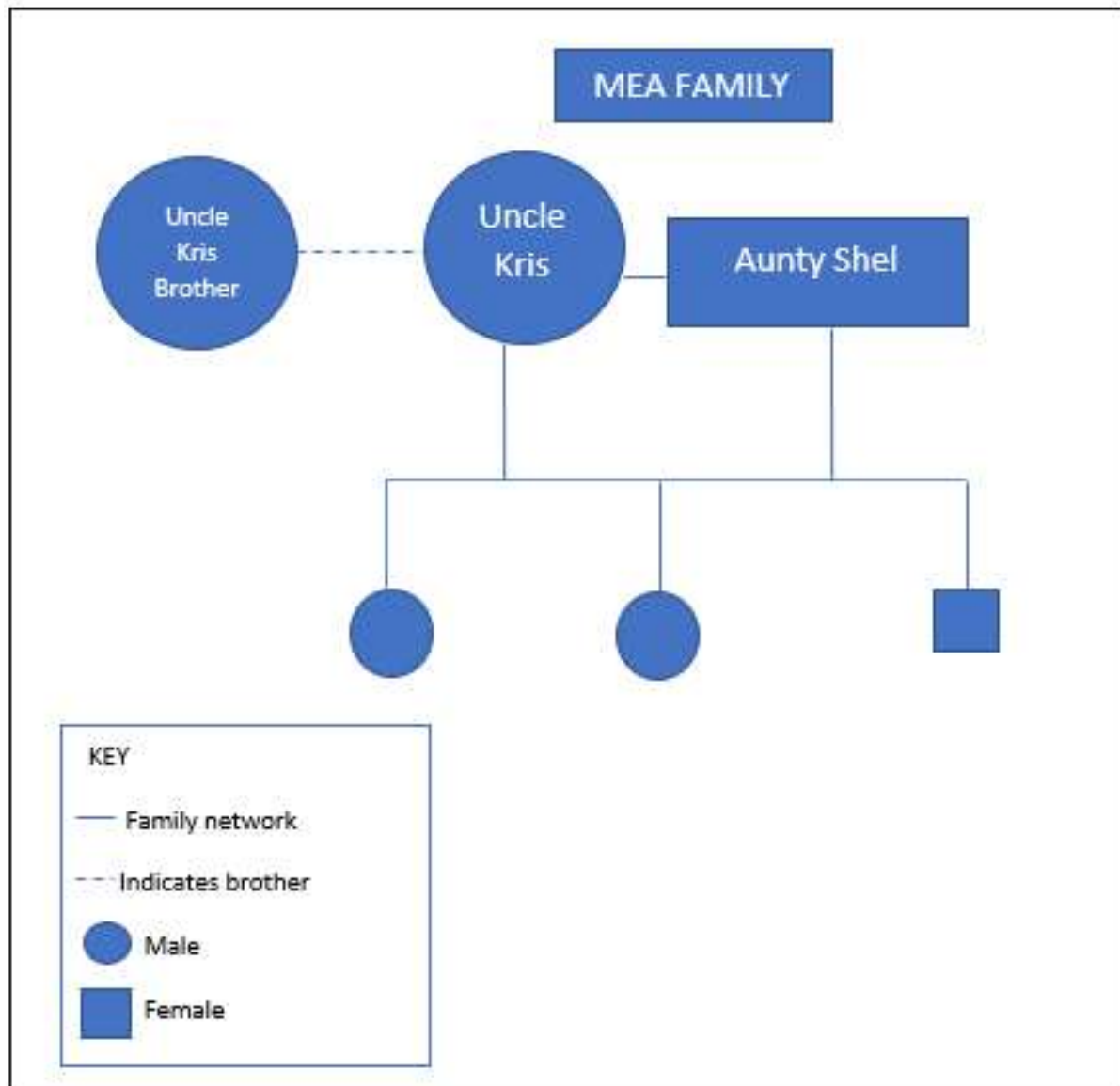
Figure 7. Mea family structure

6.7.3 The Aftermath

My Uncle, Aunty and other neighbours were able to stop the Mea family at the edge of their house boundary, telling them not to fight – "it's night and the darkness is dangerous". After around 15 – 20 minutes of standing there and expressing their annoyance, anger and emotion, they slowly began to retreat to their house. Things eventually calmed down and we retreated to our sitting area. Another 10 minutes later Aunty Shel and her daughter came back over to find Aunty Shel's jumper, which she had dropped during the incident. She had dropped it as she ran after Tom, with her boys. They sat down, she had some tea and her daughter Lina storied about how her father had fallen and injured his jaw.

This particular incident created much tension in our 'section'[ix]. This retaliatory event of violence, spurred by previous events, eventually resulted in this event of collective violence (Bloom & Reichert, 2014; de la Roche, 1996; Ray, 2011; Tilly, 2003). This collective action was not only deemed reasonable but was part of a much bigger network of "*birua*" (on-going conflict) between two families. Sitting in my room the morning after the incident, I could hear my *Aunty* and my cousin (her daughter) *Sister Kai* retelling the story of the incident the night before, as they sat and had their morning coffee in their usual spot under the house. Commonplace to rehash events, people often tell a story to make sense of their witness experience (Jackson, 2002; Ochs & Capps, 2009; Tirrell, 1990). What was also apparent in this retelling of the story was that *Aunty* and *Sister Kai* were formulating an assessment and critique of the action and behaviours displayed (Jackson, 2013b). Sharing the story allowed *Aunty* and *Sister Kai* to draw some conclusions and make suggestions about the outcomes and appropriate resolution, given the nature of the situation. One of those suggestions was that the on-going nature of the disruptions between these two families required some recompense as a means of *stretim pasin* to seek resolution and justice after a major disruption.
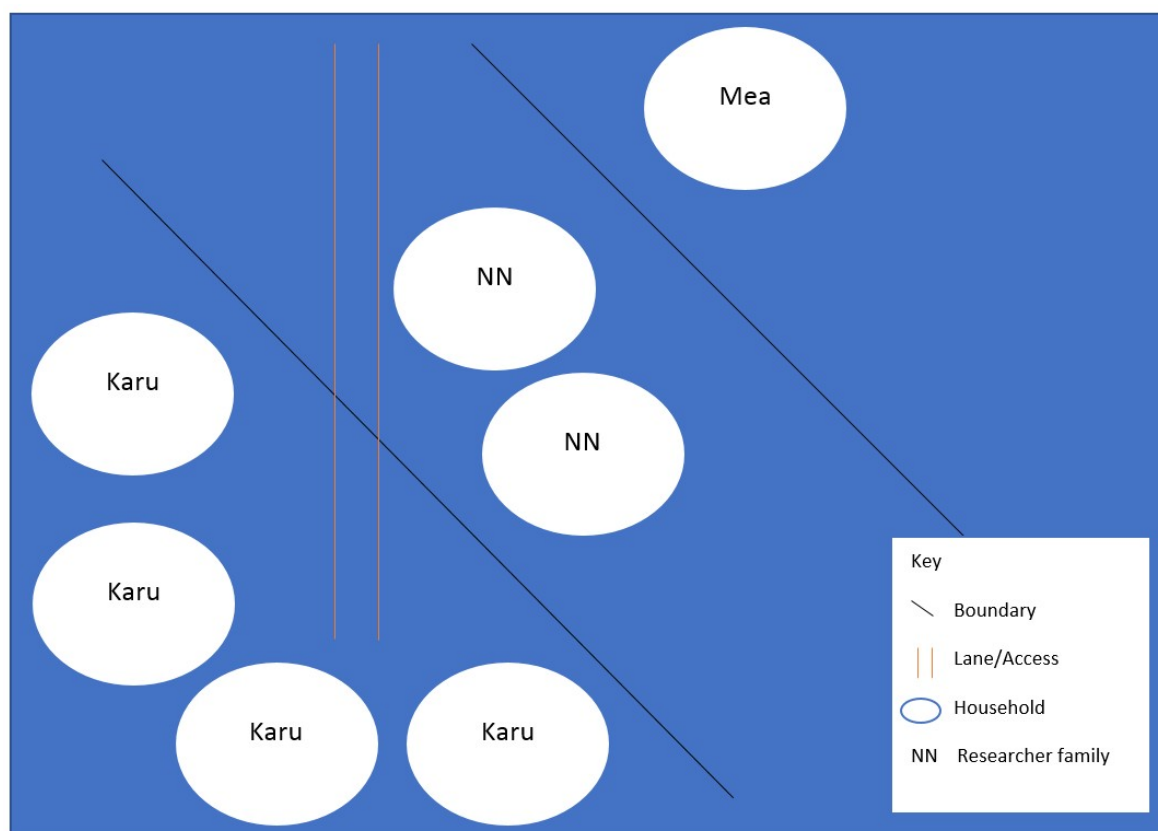
Figure 8. Map indicating household and family in our 'section'

FIGHTING FEE

This is to let all the district know that from the First of July GCS Hospitals (Kapuna Hospital and Kikori Hospitals) will be charging a treatment fee for those who get injured through fighting.

The fee will be K20 or K30 or K40 or K50.

It will be charged for tribal fighting, men fighting, alcohol and drug fighting and domestic violence. It will always be charged if there is going to be a court case.

The reason for this fee is to make people understand that:
Fighting is NOT good.
Men hitting wives (or any woman) is NOT good.
Beating children severely is NOT good.

GCS Management
28.6.99

Plate 14. Notice for "Fighting Fee" at Kapuna Hospital

6.8 Compensation as Justice

Seeking justice and resolution for the purposes of *"stretim pasin"* or restoration is often facilitated through exchange and compensation, as a means of acknowledgement of wrong-doing and of placing responsibility on the wrong-doer. Compensation or the notion of compensatory justice (A. Strathern & Stewart, 2012) is fraught and is often seen as a means of wealth creation, rather than as a process of *"stretim pasin"* or of restoration in righting a/the wrong done. The use of compensatory justice has the same effect as contemporary monetisation of other gendered practices, such as bride price payments. The importance of the value of money in these transactions commodifies the position of women. It can place them in positions of vulnerability as they are seen to be useful in transactions at those times. Outside of those times, these compensatory practices continue to have implications for the way women can operate, how they might be required to conduct themselves and essentially what they (women) might 'owe' to their relations, kin and affine (Hermkens, 2008; Wardlow, 2006). Compensatory practices are too often sought in cases of gender violence that result in death.

In the recent case of Grace Gavera, a young woman who was raped and murdered by her former partner, compensation was rejected by Grace's father. Grace's father adamantly stated he wanted justice (through legal institution) and not compensation as justice. In an online news article, Grace's father stated the following (Slamang, 2018):

> I do not need compensation payments but I appeal to the police to find this culprit and let the law deal with him. I am shocked and extremely saddened to hear that my daughter is a victim of domestic violence.

He was also quoted as saying, the perpetrator, Grace's former partner, must be *"punished"*. Compensation is often offered as a means of justice and resolution, particularly for family members of victims. The payment or *stretim pasin* involved in compensation is seen as punishment. Often it is male kin who decide whether to accept or decline compensation payments and often they benefit from this decision making. However, there is an important discussion to be had about how and if compensation fits into the legal frames of justice and resolution, especially in extreme cases of violence, particularly against women. The current deference to the Customs Recognition Act (1976) can allow customary practices such as compensation to be invoked as a means of justice and resolution, over the rule of law through the Criminal Code Act (1974). Compensation is not adequate, and further, as part of a process of justice, compensation

can compound an already fraught and ineffective structural response mechanism. Furthermore, compensation contributes to the commodification of women, as the social value of bride price or bridewealth exchange practices shifts to more economic values in contemporary times (Lepani, 2012; Wardlow, 2006). This includes commodification of sexual and reproductive rights of women (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016). While still a matter of social and moral concern, the use of exchange practices can be used as a way for male kin to acquire *wealth*. This makes the case of Grace Gavera significant. Her father's stance against compensation as resolution or justice for his daughter's death, was not adequate enough. This suggests a greater examination and reporting these instances of compensation refusal, can serve to support de-commodify the value place on women, through stronger laws and personal examples regarding compensatory practices and justice.

6.9   The Nature of Justice: Nothing Done

The nature of justice as it plays out in Baimuru, is as *Sister Aggie* pointedly suggests, "*there are serious cases, but the Police do nothing about it*"**.** The structural legal and judicial response is ineffective due to an inability and outright lack of interest among the police to respond (Goddard, 2004; Macintyre, 2008a). That has been evident in the various stories presented. The inactivity of the police to provide a better response is also due to the fact that they may be culpable for similar acts within their own homes given their own assessment of fair and just conduct.

As people in Baimuru formulate how they might address the issues of gender violence, they develop responses that seek to resolve the issues enough to move beyond the moments of violence. The purposes of restoration, *stretim pasin* or making right are motivated by the fact that people want to achieve a level of social stasis and enable social continuity to live in close proximity to one another. It is evident in the words of *Sister Aggie* who spoke of women who experience violence one day, and then the next day they return to the responsibilities of *marit* and *haus* life, with "*black eyes*". In Baimuru, seeking justice is a matter of restoring daily life after it has been disrupted. The nature of seeking justice and resolution, indeed the definitions of these, need to be considered from a local lived experience so as to encourage a dialogue at a National Strategy level.

6.10 Gender's impact on Justice and Resolution

As evidenced in the story of sorcery killing in Mapaio, the use of gender distinction to reiterate, reinforce and self-actualise a *right* to act was based on a sense of masculine identity to provide action in response to a potential threat. In the case of the *Mea's* and the *Karu's*, gender relations contributed to the lead up to violent action and the layered nature of the event as it occurred. The notion of gender is connected with other associated events of *Sha* and her desire to formulate a relationship with the young man *Dari*. The event of violence between two families resulted from a sense of kin responsibility associated with the action of a daughter and fears of her inability to appropriately deal with a relationship and maintain fidelity.

6.10.1 The limited impact of pointed response

One of the recent forms of structural response, developed from the PNG-Australian L&JS program (Australian Government, 2018b), has been the creation and implementation of specific units within the police force in PNG that provide a focused response to gender violence. These Family and Sexual Violence (FSV) units now exist in 17 locations around PNG (Australian Government & Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015a; Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council, 2014). During fieldwork in 2016, the Kerema FSV unit was newly opened. On a visit to the FSV unit at the Kerema Police Station[x], I recorded the following [Field note, September 2016]:

> As I was waiting outside the police station for the senior officer of the FSV unit to arrive, I went and stood on the corner of the street at a market with my tambu meri [in-law], my cousin brother's wife – the market sellers were her wantoks ["one language" – also kin]. As we were waiting tambu meri mentioned that I was interested in going in to see the FSV unit to which a senior officer (my sister in-laws Uncle) asked her "em gat sampela problem?" [has she got a problem?] He then looked uneasy as I said, no problem - just wanted to talk to someone in the unit to find out more information about what they do.

> He said to tambu meri and me "mipela les lo harim stori lo dispela unit" [we don't like/want to hear stories from this unit] – it was said with laughter but was also quite serious.

The creation of the FSV units as part of a specific effort of police to combat and respond to gender violence in place, has reinforced and perpetuate the narrative that gender violence is only a women's issue. The automatic association between my wanting to visit the unit and potentially my *"problem"* reiterated how the issue is viewed only as a women's issue. The association between the FSV units as the place for the problems of

women continues to separate the social life of peoples and the connection of men to particular violent action. It also creates difficulty in determining what justice is and how justice might be achieved as a matter beyond that of women's action alone. It is this thinking that further disassociates the ability of the broader community to effectively identify issues and adequately and appropriately deal with issues that cause disruption in daily lives. Furthermore, it may even compound the proclivity to identify the actions of men as reasonable because they are attached to some ideal of masculine identity.

This idea of gender violence as a women's issue is perpetuated in the rhetorical education surrounding gender violence in PNG, and associated awareness. This narrative also extends to the overarching national response mechanisms that seek to address the issues as bound in the lives of women alone (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017).
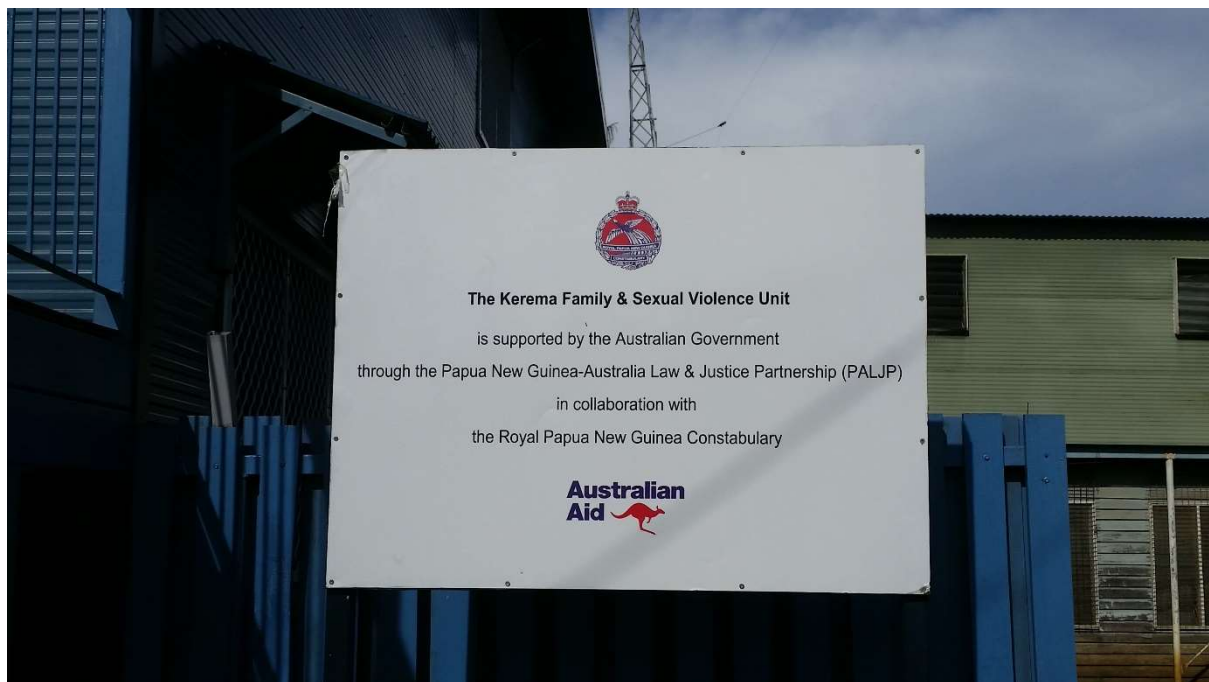
Plate 15. The plaque of acknowledgement for the newly established FSV unit in Kerema. As stated, the unit is part of the collaborate project between PNG and Australia to strengthen Law & Justice in PNG.

Plate 16. Front view of Family and Sexual Violence (FSV) unit in Kerema, Gulf Province. It is located on the ground floor of the two-storey building. The fenced area to the left is the 'lock up' area for people awaiting charge and/or legal action. Often those accused of violence will see their accusers approach the police station from their very open public vantage point.

Plate 17. Vehicle dedicated to the Family and Sexual Violence (FSV) unit in Kerema. Gulf Province. Most FSV units are provided with vehicular support due to the funding of Australian Government Aid program to PNG.

Map 10. The map shows the geographical distance between Kerema Town and Port Moresby. (Source: http://www.mappery.com/map-of/Papua-New-Guinea-physical-Map)

6.11 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter adds further detail to the experience of gender violence, as a necessary space to consider how appropriate response to gender violence is considered as a matter of people's social lives. Utilising some of my own experience as researcher and as a woman from the Gulf embedded within my own kin networks the examples also draw on the witness voice of previous chapters.

6.11.1 Social Action Links to the Enactment of Violence

The story of the sorcerer killing serves to contextualise some of the complexity in being able to formulate adequate responses to particular acts of violence given that some violence is condoned and even expected. The example although not specifically a case of gender violence can inform the way violence is considered, at times, as a necessary part of social life. This is quite obviously problematic to a response mechanism that relies on judicial and legal frames of conduct. Frames that many people in remote centres like Baimuru, often have a lack of knowledge and information surrounding these frames.

The act of gender violence in local contexts like Baimuru, is strongly framed by social responsibilities. The responses to such acts (if any) are to enable and ensure social stasis. The story of the killing in Mapaio serves to show how people not only accept a particular form of violence as part of the broader community and kin networks, but also the strong conviction that people use to ground their decision making to intentionally use violence. This makes current response problematic to responding to violence in a way that could limit or eliminate it as an accepted action. The acceptance of certain forms of gender violence are embedded in particular ways of knowing, being and doing in Baimuru as exemplified through the lives of men and women as they navigate and respond to such acts, given the important of their social responsibilities.

6.11.2 <u>Telling Stories as Response and Analysis of Violence</u>

Telling the stories of these acts creates a forum that allows people to dialogue and then determine what reasonable action is and what might constitute an offence. The determination of what is fair, reasonable and potentially just, is much more complex than any singular assessment can afford. Rather this determination is deeply embedded in action and behaviour that aligns to the moral frames of social responsibilities. Acts of violence, as the stories in this chapter highlight, are considered by participants to be part of their broader communal experience, particularly as an assessment of what can contribute to community social harmony (broadly) and on a smaller scale, kin harmony.

The notion of justice found in Baimuru, as an extension of what is considered *fair conduct* (reasonable conduct or offence) is part of a layered and complex system of social framing. It seems the intended outcome of seeking resolution is therefore to provide a means to resolve and restore, in order to provide individuals in a broader community experience with some cohesion. Finally, as we have *witnessed* in the storying, as people express their experience of gender and violence in Baimuru, they contribute to their own understanding of what gender violence is, how these acts can occur and how people rationalise them to determine and formulate action in response. What has been articulated is the current detail of gender (and general) violence in Baimuru continues to enable and indeed perpetuate the continued use and acceptance of these forms of violent action. This suggests there are obvious gaps between gender violence response messages that seek to address, limit and eliminate gender violence, and the understanding of those that enact gender violence in PNG.

CHAPTER 7 THE POWER OF STORY "TO SEE, THROUGH PEOPLE'S LIVES"

"The power of story encourages empathy. It allows us to see through other people's lives."

(Jordan Peele in Interview with Ramos, 2017)

7.1   The Witness Story of Gender Violence in Baimuru

The act, process and product of story and storying (as witness) have proven useful, productive and important as a mode of recognition that people in Baimuru use to make sense of their experiences of acts of gender violence. While gender is constituted and performed as a matter of social and moral concern, it is one of many considerations that exist when people develop and deploy social action. Men and women become concerned with how they are perceived as *good* people, and construct action that is deemed *right* in mutual recognition of a moral and social acceptance to act. As each story presented shows us, gender violence and violence more generally, creates disruption but can also be a tool of resolution and act of acknowledgement. These acts situate themselves within the context of local social life and personal experience.

In conducting this research, I have experienced my own personal challenges, including questioning my ability to respond to violence I have witnessed, in Baimuru and at other times in my life. My experience of response is shaped by my own moral belief that no violence is acceptable. Yet, this has conflicted me at times during fieldwork, of witnessing violence, and feeling unable to respond, based on my own assessments that to act in response might disrupt my own social and kin ties in Baimuru. Perhaps I would have been seen as the *outsider*, a daughter of Baimuru, but a woman of Australia, and that might have provided a buffer for me? An important learning for me personally, having undertaken this study, is the strength of social relationships that people are embedded in, relationships that are premised on doing *good* to and for one another, and I have been afforded particular lived experience in this. However, doing *good* to and for one another can also mean enacting violence and disruptive social action.

7.2   Social and moral concerns

Men and women in Baimuru constitute their notions of personhood in the frames of particular social relationships, in specific places, enacting these roles in various spaces.

People are socially and morally concerned with constituting themselves as *good* and therefore the action they exhibit is intended to be as a matter of what is *right, fair* and *reasonable*. *Mother Ana* tells us the women act in ways that are concerned with their personhood as wives and mothers in *marit* and *haus* life. A lack of intergenerational sharing of knowledge about homemaking and what constitutes men and women in these spaces, has seen a break down in the value of family, marriage and children, according to *Mother Ana*. When women do not adhere to what is expected of them, she believes, that this is when they experience hardship and even violence.

Men take little responsibility for their own action and/or ability to control their use of violent action, nor are they are culpable or held accountable for this action. For *Mother Ana,* if women and men were taught about how to constitute themselves, in the *right* way, these types of disruptive behaviours would not manifest. The expression of violence as the disapproval of men would not occur if women (and men) knew their roles and place. This seems analogous to patriarchal control over women's lives; however, women too pride themselves on being *good* wives and mothers. The value of realizing and recognizing the *good* social action of women is one way that they fulfil the merits of their personhood. By this understanding, women constitute themselves as seemingly *good* and therefore they would not experience violence from their husbands. It's reductive to assert this is a matter of men's patriarchal control and women's subordination alone, rather women are morally concerned with enacting *good* wifely and motherly behaviours. This in turn leads to women's self-assessments that they are good social and moral beings, and indeed, the broader community belief, therefore some forms of violence against them are acceptable.

Mother Ana also raises an important point about raising children in this experience. Children are constructed by their witness experiences of violence within their homes. Although she chastises the use of verbal abuse towards children, she states that belting children is acceptable. This suggests that adults do not consider the physical action of violence as having any other impact, whether psychological, emotional or mental or even developmental. There is no linkage made to the non-physical implications of physical acts of violence, and this key point requires broader conversations about the use of physical violence and the acceptance of it as discipline in family life in PNG. It links firmly to the experience of *sister Sha*. The implications of such action as children grow into adults is

that they are likely to repeat such behaviours (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, & Kenny, 2003). As a breakdown in intergenerational teachings occurs and modernity influences family, marriage and the upbringing of children, parents like *Mother Ana* face complex and layered social and moral realities. At times the value and intent of their actions are shaped toward good well-being and non-violence, and at other times the value and intent is shaped toward enacting and accepting certain types of violent action.

Those in the Church, like *Mother Ana* and others (threaded through each story in this thesis), follow the precepts of ideological gendered roles and expectations. This shades how men and women view their personhood and adds further weight to women as victims who accept the violence against them as both socially and morally acceptable action (Hermkens, 2008, 2012). Men are viewed as having some right to enact violence against women. This should not deny that men are also concerned with limiting violence as a social and moral concern. The *Uncles* present an important chapter in this thesis as male voices to this experience, as men of the Church, and as men who have intervened to respond to an unacceptable form of household violence. The *Uncles* continue on in the conversation of an overarching frame of *goodness*; this is what men and women desire in *marit* and *haus* life, and in their community. At times this *goodness* is measured by the Church and a Christian moral imperative. At other times it is measured by racial distinctions, to which *Mother Ana* and even *Sister Bree* attest, outside influences as being both good and better. The historical constructs of missionization and the colonial experience have legacies that have intoned ideals and values of personhood and *goodness* as aspirational to being modern and close to *white men* (Bashkow, 2017). When these remain unmet, they become critical to the aspirational experience of people in rural places like Baimuru, who seek the advancement and development they perceive exists in bigger more urban centres. Not being like the *white man* causes PNG people to devalue their own experiences as bad, and to some extent there is an acceptance of this, until such time they become more advanced like the *white man*. This racial sentiment is intoned in various spaces, including *haus*, *marit* life and broader social life.

From the voice of men in this thesis, we hear from their poignant reflections that perhaps men are not *bad* per se. Perhaps they are influenced by *bad* things like the internet, which causes them to do *bad* things like sin. Perhaps the man who the *Uncles* encountered was not essentially *bad*, perhaps he just did not understand the repercussions of his violent

action toward his wife. If he killed her, he would be at a disadvantage. Men who perpetrate violence against their women will suffer as a consequence of their *bad* actions. How will children be cared for? How will a man provide for and maintain a household? The obvious counter to this is that a man would then seek out another wife, would he not? The vital role of women to *marit* and *haus* life is apparent and men recognize the disadvantage to them, even if it is as a product of their own violent action. It might seem arbitrary to suggest that men centre themselves in the narrative of their enactments of violence against women or each other, but herein lies the biggest issue and opportunity for address. If men centre themselves enough to enact violence, surely, they would centre themselves in the response and prevention of such acts also? Or is this simply too naïve to suggest? The nuanced observation that this is at all a factor suggests there is also opportunity to harness men's centering – to harness their patriarchal tendency, so to highlight their own disadvantage when they enact violence against women or each other.

Women do not escape the patriarchal tendency either, and centre the male perspective above their own position and personhood. This is apparent in *Sister Bree's* story, and perhaps a contributing factor to her acceptance of abuse within her marriage. Reluctance to leave her husband highlights deep tensions that women face as they make decisions in response to abuse and violence they experience. Many considerations are encapsulated in this, child welfare, economic status, security of social networks or the lack of reality not living up to the expectation of *marit* and *haus* life. *Sister Bree's* story brings back the point that *Mother Ana* makes regarding the upbringing of children and child welfare a point that requires further examination and beyond the remit of the main thesis here. Children are witness to acts of violence, as are adults, and the extent to which this constructs their personhood raises concerns about the social and moral frames violent action is assessed within. This point underpins the pervasiveness of the acceptability of violence in PNG more broadly.

The most important point that *Sister Bree* makes is that women deem themselves to be responsible for the violence they might experience. The desire for a good and normal life is supposed to be realised in *marit* and *haus* life as women and men enter into these relationships. Yet, the reality for women like *Sister Bree* and other women with similar experiences, is that there is an expectation of violence and hardship in their life, when it

occurs it is of their own making, and is all part and parcel of the struggle to achieve a good and normal life.

Moving on, *Sister Aggie's* story challenges this acceptance of violence as *normal*. Not all violence is good. It is inhibitive of those who experience it, young women predominantly. Women bear the burden of the experience and other women and men, while witnessing these actions occurring, do not always intervene. When intervention happens it is in the form of more talk regarding, analysing and surrounding the issue, rather than as address to resolve or prevent acts of violence from occurring. As a teacher *Sister Aggie* sees that women (and men) engage in education as a way to fill time until they enter into what is perceived as *normal* life. A *normal* life that is constituted by *marit* and *haus* life. She suggests that this is the work of young men and young women, rather than the pursuit of education. Yet she also suggests women desire to be in relationships with men to fulfil these roles are for their own safety and security. Women and men desire relationships with one another to fulfil expected roles and responsibilities because that is *normal* life.

Not all violence that is experienced is resolved. Justice is not available to women when Police are unable and/or unwilling to respond. The apathetic nature of response by Police in Baimuru suggests strengthening the structural response is needed to transform engrained cultures of the acceptability of violence (against women) and eliminating the lack of trust that has developed amongst victims of violence to realising a form of justice through legal mechanisms. The apathy of justice seeking by victims of violence is borne from witnessing what presents as disinterest by the Police, in the concerns and experiences of gendered and violent action.

As we move toward understanding response, the case of the killing in Mapaio tells us that the use of violence is actually a response to threat and offence felt in broader community. It is instigated as a way to assert masculine identities that support men who believe their role and duty is to enable goodness in their community. People endeavour to live good lives that are defined by right action that is befitting their kin and community. While a law and justice sector response exists, it is rarely engaged, and as we saw in *Sister Aggie's* story, it is apathetically regarded. The Police themselves highlight the challenges that prevent them from adequately addressing the issue of gender violence, including a discord between the laws of the country with normal life in Baimuru. The two seem at odds to some regard. Particularly as people in Baimuru and surrounding areas, have not

been given the full information and education that would support them to make a decision to seek response through these mechanisms.

While the FSVUs exist in different locations, set up for the purposes of dealing with issues of gender violence, Family and Sexual violence; these offices are predominantly seen as concerned with only attending to women. At times, this is the view of Police themselves. While a focused structural response seems pertinent to the issue of gender violence in PNG, perhaps a reintegration of this service into general Police business can provide greater understanding that this issue concerns more than women alone – it impacts entire communities.

7.3   What this research tells us

What each of the chapters duly notes is that social relationships and the acknowledgements of these social relationships, construct the lives of men and women in Baimuru. Each story gives ethnographic evidence about the importance of how social relationships constitute men and women in *marit* and *haus* life and how social relationships are deeply engrained in certain types of gendered violence. Although there was an effort to move the story beyond the dominant narrative of women's victimhood in these experiences, we see that it is women who experience violence pervasively. Yet, what is also important to highlight is that the story of men in broader society is an important component of this story of experience, and far less documented; particularly from men who witness rather than perpetrate gender violence. A focus on the lives of women in the story of witnesses also tells us that perhaps the terminology of gender violence is in fact polarizing. Perhaps its use continues to reinforce a narrative that "gender violence" is a women's issue, and, this narrative of gender violence is far reaching to remote centres like Baimuru.

What is most pertinent about this thesis, is that the witness story of life and experiences of violence in Baimuru tells us that people, men and women, are deeply concerned with how they constitute themselves as social and moral beings. In the pursuit of this, there are understood societal levels of acceptance of good, fair, right and just behaviours that people engage in to show themselves to be good and moral beings. At times these actions can actually contribute to the use of violence against one another, women predominantly.

Being able to tell the story of their own experience through a witness perspective is not only vital to unpacking the complex experience of gender violence, it is useful for giving

voice to experience. It is a tool that people can engage in to make claims, give teststimony, remember, represent and share toward addressing the issue of gender violence from local realities.

7.3.1   Moments of recognition

Such stories are useful to highlighting local influences that can feed up into global discourses that shape the understanding of gender and violence, and the response mechanisms employed to address the issue of gender violence in PNG. It allows us as the audience to acknowledge, recognise and *see through other people's lives* (Ramos, 2017). The story and storying of witness experiences within local socio-cultural contexts is useful to broaden the knowledge base of nationally representative data sets that shape responsive action and reaction to gender violence in PNG.

7.3.2   Using Gender to explain Violence

Crook *et al* argue in a more general sense (2016, p. 7 to 8), "*it is the actions performed that gender a person. Gender is relational, performative, reciprocal, circulatory, fluid and dynamic.*" In Baimuru, the expectations of gender that are attributed to men and women have been developed since childhood through adolescence and into *marit* and *haus* life shaped by and performed through particular social action within networks of sociality. Each stage of life and transition is predicated on moral valuations that place virtues on gender and associated roles. It seems the virtues that women are required to enact and exhibit directly link to the responsibilities they are then tasked with, within specific sets of relationships (Butler, 1988), more so then boys and men. The ethnography suggests men are less responsible for their actions than women. However, men are equally involved in processes that create and reinforce socially and morally acceptable gendered action. These processes of creating good action become enacted as a matter of mutual recognition within specific relationships. Individuals draw on their connections to others to decide whether action is reasonable, and their own conduct is fair and this is the root of intent to social action. But gender is not the only consideration that constitutes good, fair, just or reasonable action.

A disassociation exists between how gender might motivate violent action and how people use the concept of gender particularly through defined gender roles, to justify violent action. Some violence, as described by *sister Aggie* (Chapter 5) is viewed as unreasonable just as the *Uncles* suggest when they responded to what they describe as an

extreme case of violence. There is a limit to which violence is accepted and deemed reasonable and this underlies the conversations about violence within a *marit* relationship and indeed within particular kin and social relationships. However the acceptability of some forms of violence still remains. The story of violence against *sister Sha* (Chapter 2 and Chapter 6) and on-going events of violence, shows us how other types of violence exist within particular frames of kin relatedness, specifically between parents and children or as a matter of familial pride. The retaliatory violence is also seen as *good, fair, just* and *reasonable* as a matter of recognition of offence felt. This is the very real challenge of addressing gender violence in PNG, the acceptance of one form of violence over another and this is simply because one form is deemed socially *good, fair, just* and/or *reasonable* and often quite necessary. The fact that some forms of violence are deemed necessary challenges the purview of a Human Rights position of *Do No Harm* when perpetrators, and their supporters create and fortify their positions in their own narratives of *goodness*, *righteousness*, *fairness* and *reasonableness* to act violently.

The discourse of gender inequality that supports response at a National governance level in PNG does not always align or even filter through as considerations for people in places like Baimuru. Gender inequality is not acknowledged as the root of violent action, rather violence is seen as a product of the assessments and moral valuations people make when they consider relations between themselves and their kin and social connections.

7.4 Using Social Recognition (*pasin blo luksave)* to Explain Violence

Social recognition extends beyond the individual, to family, community, and to provincial, regional, and national experience. As people formulate and determine social action, they consider the intent of their relational interactions (Honneth & Farrell, 1997; Honneth & Joas, 1988). As individuals acknowledge the nature of their relationships to others, they then develop social and moral action in accordance within the bounds of these relationships. This social action may therefore be considered as either necessary, unnecessary, restorative and/or disruptive, or a combination of these. *Pasin blo luksave* as recognition as a socially accepted frame guides the action and assessment of individuals. As a frame of mutual recognition, the intent to act in socially and morally acceptable ways is motivated by respectful relatedness within social relationships (Backhaus, Neuendorf, & Brooksbank, 2020; Hukula, 2015). This is a significant value in Melanesian sociality that is linked to gendered status, moral virtue and takes into account

other issues related to modernity and tradition (Macintyre & Spark, 2017). *Luksave* as a frame is an important consideration that can assist those in response to identify moments where social disruption can/will occur between individuals. Identifying moments of social disruption offers insight to mitigate gender violence prior to its enactment. Additionally, identifying moments of social disruption prior to acts of violence is important to aligning local understandings with global discourses of gender violence. Local understandings become entangled in complex ways and identifying and defining these entanglements can offer important discussion with the broader discourse on gender violence, and, gives cause to consider how National response is currently formulated in PNG.

7.4.1   Luksave in Research Practice

Utilising *luksave* as part of my research method is my response to an important mode of relation and recognition that is embedded in many interpersonal interactions in PNG. This mode of interaction can enhance research and reporting, particularly on focused issues such as gender violence. *Luksave* serves as an analytical tool for detailing the social relationships that exist between individuals while being a socially accepted mode to acknowledge kin and social relatedness and networks. Furthermore, it is important in understanding how social, gendered and violent action is formulated.

Gendered and violent action is deemed as either good or bad action against another and is as much tied to the kin and social networks that people form as it is to the individual relationships that are created or to concepts of gender. This is evident as *Mother Ana* story of her own relationship with her husband. This relationship with her husband then becomes her example of what constitutes good and bad relationships between men and women within *haus* life. Maintaining a good home is an important example of how relationships shape action within the context of a specific space. It suggests the men and women strive to create harmonious domestic spaces, but these can be disrupted when men or women do not live according to the expectation that this space and place defines for them. The existence of harmony within *haus* life serves to ensure good action between men and women and harmony or maintaining harmony in these spaces/places can include the use (or not) of violent action.

The ethnography suggests that in a general sense, the intent to act is to produce social continuity and harmony after disruption or offence has been felt. Using this as a base, it

is apparent why the intentional use of physical force or violence, is explained and accepted as a necessary action at times. Following on in this argument, it is not that gender violence is acceptable, rather, it is justifiable within the frames of sociality and relationality that define women and men's positions. A distinction exists between the intent to act and the acceptability of action. Although at times these may seem mutually inclusive, the distinction is important as a means of engaging people in purposeful messaging to address the issue of gender violence in PNG. Perhaps a practical mode of address is to gauge the intent of social action and compare this against how it is accepted.

It is hard to combat a view that all gender violence is bad, when in local realities, some forms are deemed acceptable. In fact there is great belief in particular acts of violence being warranted, as described in the case of SARV in the previous chapter. The ethnography highlights that anti-violence messaging is perhaps not enough to reach people in Baimuru, particularly when some forms of violence are seen as *good, fair, just* and *reasonable.* Perhaps what is useful as a vehicle to transport the messaging of gender violence is to highlight the disruptive nature as *nogut pasin blo luksave*. Enactment of gender violence is not only disruptive, but counter-intuitive to social harmony.

In like manner, a positive or *gutpela pasin blo luksave* can be developed to promote the care and support of women and men who are targeted in violent action. What is therefore needed is to engage people at the place where these understandings are formed, and utilizing their own understanding, decipher how best to develop a *pasin blo luksave* to support socially and morally acceptable behaviour before violence is enacted. We see in all the stories; certain violence is justifiable because it is embedded in the importance of the kin and social relationships that frame the enactments. Instances of violence against women are reinforced by the unknowing complicit nature of women's own understanding that some violence against them is deemed acceptable.

Women's ability to meaningfully engage in processes that seek to help them address the issue as they experience it or as a matter of justice seeking or police intervention, is severely inhibited. Perhaps this is the point of recognition (from a respondent space) that greater context involving men and entire communities within the frame of *pasin blo luksave*, the sociality and relationality that exists; these are the considerations that must be acknowledged and recognised when addressing women in projects of response to gender violence. Men's involvement is important as it is their relationships to women

(and vice versa) that enable the context within which forms of gender violence are morally evaluated as *good, right, fair* and *reasonable* social action. This thesis offers some insight through the story of the *Uncles*, but more work with men is required.

Engaging men in discussions about gender violence at the points where they deem these acts to be acceptable is paramount to broadening how projects of response can engage individuals in meaningful and productive ways. These discussions would enable men and women to re-evaluate the intent of their own actions and even the acceptability of such acts. Undoubtedly men need to be more meaningfully engaged to understand how their actions are embedded in structures that might support their use of violence, and their acceptance of particular types of violence. This supports important discussions and acknowledgements of the implicit power and privilege of men. Acknowledgement can encourage address that can bring men into conversations, rather than isolating or alienating them from it, and can encourage response to be a) effective and locally appropriate; and b) sustainable over time.

7.4.2   Men and Women, Agency and Autonomy in Baimuru

The experience of gender violence (and violence in general) is understood as a matter of individual personhood, attached to the greater responsibility set of kin and social relationships. The space of recognition sets a frame within which individuals are often required to relate to each other by both violence using the example of sorcery and gender violence, and more relational understandings of sociality (Bottero, 2009; Long, 2015) based on morality, exchange, compensation and compassion. What is described in the ethnography, particularly from *sister Aggie* is that women can and do 'act out' in response and perhaps defiance to the violence they might experience, even though from a broader lens this might be viewed as 'disobedience' or a *negative* form of agency (Wardlow, 2006) it is and should be considered women being able to act within their circumstance. The suggestion that it is not agentic is only made when it is viewed through a Western feminist lens. Women act autonomously and purposefully in ways they know how to exert themselves, within their own experiences. It must also be acknowledged that the moments where women are seen to exert themselves or act purposefully can further problematize their own experiences of violence within *marit* relationships, as this 'acting out' might encourage further, more extreme acts of violence against them. Recognising moments where women act with some autonomy is important, furthermore, these

moments are importantly spoken of and defined by PNG women themselves. Perhaps more concerted efforts to understand how PNG women define their own autonomy and agency can help to broaden the responses to gender violence.

7.4.3 Developing broader representation

In addition to recognising that gender violence is a complex experience, we must also acknowledge that the general discourse and associated narrative that represents this experience must reflect this complexity. Gender work is often focused on the lives of women and has developed an overarching narrative of PNG women that is narrow. The experience of PNG women is homogenously asserted in research and reporting by agencies and institutions concerned with addressing gender violence. As Dickson-Waiko acknowledges, the experience of PNG women through colonial history and contemporary nation-building has shaped their position, identity and personhood with gendered perceptions that has omitted their voices (Dickson-Waiko, 2010). It is, therefore, vitally important to consider women as individual's whose identity and personhood are constructed within the space which they express themselves. As women make claims to speak, define their own autonomy and offer depth to the discourse of gender violence in PNG, they become active agents in building the foundations on which they broaden the narrative that represents them, and from which, appropriate response can be formulated.

Perhaps the pervasive nature of violence (specifically that of VAW) is not merely that it is based in gender inequality. Rather, the pervasive nature of violence exists in the proclivity to accept levels of violence within particular kin and social forms. Individuals in Baimuru become motivated to act violently or in response to violence, as a means of strengthening and acknowledging these social relationships and responsibilities. Determinations of the intent of action, fairness of conduct, reasonable action and offence, are made through/by an assessment of the effect felt on/by particular kin and social connections, rather than what development discourses draw on as action based in human rights ethos (United Nations, 1948). By focusing solely on the perspective of a human rights ethos the complexities of social life that contributes to acts of gender violence we are not adequately providing detail to enable focussed attention, response and address that strengthens the general imperative to limit and/or eliminate gender violence in PNG. Unknowing omission of such detail can hinder the general response mechanisms that are formulated at a national response level.

7.5 Responsive Action

7.5.1 Relations and Responsibilities of Justice and Resolution

Just as individuals in Baimuru explain how some gendered and violent action is intentional, what is evident in the ethnography is that kin and social relationships and responsibilities shape the nature of resolution and/or justice. This is evident in the story of *Sister Sha*. The violent action against her by her father did not focus on her position of being a woman alone, rather on her kinship responsibilities. The broader implication of her action as it reflected on her family, reinforced the social acceptance of a reasonable use of violence against her. For her father, *Uncle Ben*, the action was an expression of his position and role as a father as part of *haus* and family life. His violent response was not borne of a need to exert his ultimate authority and right as a man/father, although it can be interpreted as such. The intent of his violent action was also borne from a need to resolve a social situation that he perceived had disrupted his family life, a social situation he did not deem to be appropriate for his daughter. No action was taken against *Uncle Ben* either as a report to the Police, or as a family matter to address. A lack of response to that form of violence suggests complicit acceptance of the action by kin. In this instance *Uncle Ben's* actions, having been deemed acceptable by his kin, did not require any recourse. In Baimuru, the input and responsibility of kin relations are integral to responding to acts of gender violence. They reinforce what might be acceptable forms of violence while also responsible for encouraging response and resolution, should it be deemed necessary.

7.5.2 Stretim Pasin

The 'making right' that is restoration or in Tok Pisin, *stretim pasin* that is enacted in moments of resolution and/or justice is for the purposes of social harmony, restoration and continuity, for creating *wanbel* (Troolin, 2018) and/or mediating "peace" (Demian, 2016), often in moments sometimes with lasting effect. Again, this links back strongly to an understanding that people operate in spaces of greater responsibility defined within particular kin and social relationships enacted in socially and morally acceptable ways.

Given that formal responses of justice, the Police, are viewed as apathetic to concerns and ineffective to respond, they are least considered as able to respond to issues of gender violence (Rooney et al., 2018). Zorn (2012) aptly reports that the engrained beliefs about

women's personhood and their experiences of violence can inhibit the realisation of justice from local courts. However, the assertion that judicial process is inadequate due to the engrained sexism of judges, is limiting. Granted there are many women who continue to be marginalised due to a lack of social relationships and supports and even notions of the right to seek justice after experiences of violence (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016). The situation is both paradoxical and confounding. The experience of women to engage social supports to seek justice after events of violence, can be subjectively good and beneficial to them, or subjectively bad and disadvantageous to them. Given the type and strength of the social supports they exist within. In Baimuru and places like it, the reality of the reach of justice through law and courts is limited at best, non-existent at times (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2009).

The structural implications of responding to gender violence in Baimuru and like places, is that the intention underpinning events of violence can hold greater significance for people than the letter of the law. Effectively, the strong social form that shapes violence and responses to it, can actually debase the formal legal and judicial processes of governance structures tasked with the responsibility to provide *justice.* The story of the sorcery killing in Mapaio highlights another limitation in the operation of processes of judicial justice. People believe fervently in the conviction of their actions as fair conduct and reasonable action, and this makes the application of the legal system's concept of justice problematic.

This suggests greater focussed attention needs to be given to interpreting legal and judicial processes in a way that can articulate against the expectation of people in Baimuru that legal and judicial processes do not support them and therefore their use of violence is in part acceptable. More focused attention on educating people on legal and judicial process can build trust in these processes, so that people can engage with them for the purposes of seeking justice rather than assuming their violent actions can deliver justice. Granted, this awareness must be supported by strengthening structural capacity to respond in remote centres. The establishment of FSV units is an important start in strengthening structural capacity and responsiveness (Australian Government & Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015a) as is the SARV action plan (Forsyth, 2019). However, these mechanisms are hard to establish in local communities where there is little regard or trust in structural mechanisms of government services. Therefore,

people continue to come back to their social and kin relationships to seek support when social life is disrupted.

The notion of *stretim pasin* would then be enacted to enable harmonious community is part of a process of recognition and acknowledgement that individuals deem as important when restoring and/or resolving social relationships after disruption. This is important analysis that contributes to understanding why *sister Sha's* kin expressed such retributive violence against the *Mea* family and is important to greater discussions of the acceptability of violent action and responses to violence in PNG.

What *sister Sha's* story tells us is that for her parents, their relationship to their daughter is paramount and her responsibility to them, and her respect for them are at issue, and her action, her actively seeking out this unsanctioned relationships disrupted this set of relationships. By seeking a relationship that they were not privy to nor did they accept was to devalue her relationship with her parents and questioned her virtues as a daughter. This story allows us to understand that gendered acts of violence are not simply bound in a notion of power. It is in fact part of a greater, more intricate set of responsibilities or shared responsibility and shared respect. With this cultural logic and moral reasoning in mind, violence is justified in this case because it seeks to establish whose values are central in the creation or process of making right or *stretim pasin*; processes of "harmony" and "community" order or peace.

Gender Violence Is Always Disruptive

As I suggest in Chapter 1, gender violence can be socially disruptive to the lives of people in their daily experiences and this has been translated through the storying within this thesis. Yet violence is also enacted at moments of restoration to achieve social cohesion and continuity of social relatedness and networks. Gender violence has been reported primarily as a product of inequalities that cause disruption in daily lives, to community harmony and to achieving *human advancement* and *development* in PNG (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2017; United Nations Development Programme, 2014). The story from Baimuru suggests that acts of gender violence can be considered in categories where people determine their action as necessary or unnecessary, and in terms of disruption or restoration.

Whether researching or reporting gender violence, it is often assumed that all acts are experienced as socially disruptive, and as such, all acts require processes of justice and resolution. However, what is evident in Baimuru, is that some acts of gender violence are understood as productive and necessary to creating social harmony, continuity and restoring community stasis, particularly in the interest of fostering and maintaining a *good* and *normal* life. The ascribed meaning that underpins acts of gender violence must, therefore, be fully understood in local context, before meaningful and appropriate mechanisms of response can be formulated.

In Baimuru individuals ascribe both meaning and intent to the social action of gender violence that can render these acts as necessary, acceptable, and appropriate. The enactments of gender violence are not prescriptive as acts of violence based on gender perceptions alone. Rather, gendered acts of violence have layered meaning that is attributed to; the fulfilment of roles and responsibilities (*marit* relationships; *haus* life; parental, child inter/action); the recognition of kin/social relationships; a desire to achieve *good* and *normal* life; encourage harmony; resolve, seek justice and enable restoration; and/or enable safety and security. The matrix of meaning and intent that is ascribed to acts of gender violence are part of a greater social structure within which individuals and communities operate. Therefore, gender violence in PNG, as evidenced through the Baimuru experience, should be considered as action that is embedded in social life, action that has intent, and action that can often be deemed necessary and not disruptive. Rendering these acts necessary also assumes that they are reasonable acts.

The global discourse on gender violence that is used as a frame response mechanisms in PNG, must acknowledge and recognise this standpoint. For, understanding that violence can be seen as acceptable and reasonable action, enables response mechanisms to be developed that are defined by experience, and that are appropriate to a local context. Addressing the issue of gender violence is important to development agendas and in reinforcing important law and justice sector mechanisms. However, this address requires building on the existing knowledge of such acts, as experienced by people within their own context. An important avenue to develop a foundation for such knowledge, is generating deeper understanding through people's experiences of violence. As demonstrated in this thesis, this is made possible through the storying that people engage in as they witness such acts in their individual and communal social life.

Story and storying, and the acknowledgement of these processes, provides depth to understanding and then responding to acts of gender violence in PNG and proves important and useful in developing the current representation of women in broader discourse.

7.6 Luksave em Gutpela Samting!

We are more than "*bit players in the stories of our own lives.*" (Jackson, 2013). In fact, we all, as individuals, produce stories to make sense of the world we live in. Sharing these stories with others allows us to live in, through and even beyond our moments of experience. In these moments of creating, claiming, remembering, representing and reinforcing knowledge, we are linked to distinguishable characteristics that mirror our social groups and make inferences to the way we (collectively) live. The social process of telling stories, and the product of the story can be cathartic in extreme events such as gender violence. Much more than this, as the story from Baimuru shows, it enables people to make sense of these experiences and formulate what they deem as necessary social and moral action and necessary response to acts of gender violence. A focus on storytelling, proves useful in adding texture and depth to the discussion surrounding the issue of gender violence in PNG. It offers an important mode of documenting experience to understand the reported prevalence of gendered violent action in Baimuru and possibly in PNG generally.

What is also clear is that people in Baimuru act based with an intention to ensure action and behaviour that is determined to be *good* and/or *right* in alignment with their kin and social networks of relating. However, this often means that the use of violence becomes acceptable as part of social life. Violence can be enacted to stabilise, to afford a sense of good and/or *right* and this presents violence as an acceptable form of justice and resolution. The outcome of such resolution sometimes as the use of violence, is therefore translated as necessary action and behaviour for individuals, whether in the family, in the home, in the church, or more broadly, within the community.

Mother Ana tells us what is *good* within the home in Chapter two. While in Chapter three, the *Uncles* tell us how they define being good within the church and as aligned to a Christian moral imperative to act, as does *Sister Bree*. A broader conversation needs to be developed around the impact and influence of the Church on individual social action,

particularly in relation to gender roles, violent action and response to gender violence. Through an account of her own experience *Sister Bree* tells us what is (and should be right) in a partner, *marit*/man-woman relationship and this is ambiguously bound in tradition of custom and in a contemporary Christian ethos. *Sister Aggie* then proceeds to tell us what is *good* in the institution of school, while offering us an opportunity to decipher the position of girls and young women within this community, contributing to a discussion about the way's women can subvert the expectations associated to their position. In each story, the witness voice exemplifies that gendered and violent action is often used as a tool to manage social situations given sets of specific social responsibilities. This observation should not be misconstrued as tacit acceptance of gender violence or justification for why it occurs in Baimuru. Rather, it serves as a call to develop more meaningful engagement given the reality of people's experiences.

Perhaps we, in PNG, are only at the point of recognising how to explain violence against women with our own voices and experiences. The necessary next step is to incorporate and translate the meaning that we (PNG) ascribe to such acts, to ensure appropriate meaningful and productive response is formulated from within PNG. *Luksave,* acknowledgement and recognition, provides a foundation from which to generate greater understanding and navigate how best to respond – given detailed descriptions of the actual concepts and relationships that frame social action in PNG. The objective of this thesis is to be a catalyst for acknowledging that kin and social relationships, and the networks of relating attached to these relationships are frames within which acts of gender violence should be more purposefully considered. But it will be necessary to move beyond discussion of the lives of women, to incorporate the lives of men, and the lives of people (in terms of communal and social lived experience) as they relate to one another within specific frames of relationality and sociality. Focusing on women is useful but any analysis and responses seeking to minimise and/or eliminate gender violence in PNG should also include and be encouraged by community perspectives and experiences to include men and the sociality and relationality or *pasin blo luksave* that exists between and amongst peoples. In this way broadening and deepening the role storying in accounts of gender violence will allow a greater range of individual's lived experience to be acknowledged and broader community responsibility to be recognised – *Luksave long gutpela laif long meri na man em bikpela samting!*

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ENDNOTES

[i] *Section* is often used in PNG as a colloquialism to indicate a particular area of connection. It can indicate a specific site (i.e. house or boundary line), and it can also be used to indicate a proximal area (i.e. I'm from that *section* where the sago palms are). The meaning is distinguishable in the context of the statement it is made in.

[ii] It was talked about that the young man was stranded because of the skipper he had paid to provide him with transport. This particular skipper was from an upriver village (Ipiko) and known amongst most in Baimuru as a drunk and con man. He had taken money from the young Daru man under the pretense of organizing transport but had never actually organized any.

[iii] *Mother Ana's* use of this English phrase "mix around" was not to infer some loss of fidelity on her part. Rather, the use of the phrase *"mix around"* suggested her ability to socialize with some ease. Her claim was stated with pride, which indicated her determination of the importance of the roles she has inhabited. Indirectly, this sense of self-importance fortified in her mind her own legitimate position to not only speak in her own right but also to socialize, interact and talk with men.

[iv] *Trangu* in tok pisin is used as an empathetic expression shown from one individual to another. *Madi* is another such term in Motuan language that has the same sentiment in its expression. And of course, in English *Sorry* – linguistic difference in the use of "sorry" rather than "I'm sorry for" as empathetic expression, rather than apologetic, it is used as an empathetic acknowledgement.

[v] *Bubu Man* or grandfather. The Uncle I stayed with in Baimuru is my father's cousin. His father is who I refer to as *Bubu Man* which is a general term to indicate an elderly male kin.

[vi] Local Level Government President of Baimuru

[vii] PNG education systems consists of Elementary (equivalent Prep to Grade 3, Primary (Grade 4 – 8) and then on to High school 9-10. If it is a top-up high school, it consists of grades 9 – 12.
Baimuru Primary school was a combination of Elementary and Primary (Prep to Grade 8).

[viii] The laugh shared between Sister Aggie and I was not motivated by mirth, rather, it was an almost exasperated laugh of disbelief at the extreme way in which women rationalize their experience, and what the stubborn, stoic response of just dealing with the violence experienced (i.e. staying home and dying).

[ix] The term section is often used colloquially in PNG to indicate a locality of residence e.g. I live in that section. It can often be used interchangeably with other terms such as 'block', or it can simply be distinguished by descriptor such as 'antap' (up there). *Section* is a relative term that people use to attach themselves to particular areas and particular groups of people.

[x] At the time of my visit to Kerema in September 2016, the FSV unit, as part of Police operations, was staffed by 3 permanent staff members. This included the unit commanding officer (a female Constable, a woman from Baimuru) and 2 officers: one woman and one man. The commanding officer stated during our discussion, that the major issue they face is the ability to provide service to communities throughout the Province. Transport is often limited and expensive and this makes access to remote centres very difficult. If major cases occur in these outer centres, they are required to present to Kerema. This generally means that for a victim to engage police response, they and their family will have to find their own finances to travel to Kerema, to report the issue. Due to this, many cases are not often recorded.