Freedom from Violence: A Samoan Perspective on Addressing Domestic or Family Violence

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Abstract

Over the past 30 years, Samoa has been a model example of peace and stability throughout the Pacific region. The fusion of traditional (fono o matai and faamatai) and western institutions (Westminster style of democracy) of governance, albeit not a perfect marriage, has nonetheless been credited with Samoa's ability to sustain peace and stability. Despite this, domestic violence is now an epidemic in Samoa. Numerous research studies have adopted the concept of faa Samoa to examine Samoa's protective and preventative mechanisms

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(va or relational spaces, va tapuia or sacred spaces, faaaloalo or respect, alofa or love, and malupuipui or protection) against domestic violence. However, little is known about whether or not there are other aspects within faa Samoa that contribute to or influence domestic violence in Samoa. This chapter employs Galtung's Typology of Violence, a peace and conflict theory, to analyze Samoa's domestic violence issues. Galtung suggests there are three types of violence – direct, structural, and cultural and that direct violence is reinforced by structural and cultural violence. Galtung's typology of violence raises important institutional and cultural problems that can influence and justify the act of domestic violence. Some of these contributors are subtle and at times invisible, while others are masked and hide behind Samoa's traditional institutions. Whether violence is perceived as unseen (structural and culture violence) or visible (direct violence), this needs to be addressed.

Keywords

Fa'a Samoa · Family violence · Direct violence · Structural violence · Cultural violence

Introduction

A very basic freedom is to be free from violence. However, a vast number of people are not able to enjoy this freedom, particularly women. Violence against women is not confined to times of war and conflict. Women in all countries experience sexual violence committed by an intimate partner. This is a global phenomenon and yet there is little in the peace and conflict literature that addresses domestic or family violence, although positive peace is predicated on the need for freedom from violence. In the Pacific there have been unprecedented increases in domestic violence. Even in Samoa, previously regarded as one of the most peaceful Pacific nations, domestic violence is now an epidemic social issue. (State of Human Rights – Summary. Government of Samoa, 2018, pp. 1–51. https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/National-Inquiry-Report-into-Family-Violence_-State-of-Human-Rights-Report-2018-SUMMARY_English.pdf)

There are peacebuilding theories helpful for analyzing domestic violence that frame violence as direct, structural, and cultural. While there are limitations to Galtung's theory for addressing indigenous communities, in this chapter, I use his typology of violence to consider the incidence of domestic violence in Samoa, not just the direct violence, but also structural and cultural violence. I look in particular at *faa Samoa,* fundamental to Samoan culture, for its impact on domestic violence, and argue that *faa Samoa* has been used to sanction domestic violence, but that this is based on a distortion of *faa Samoa.* A process that engages with the elements of *faa Samoa* that both influence and could prevent domestic violence needs to be followed if positive peace is to be a reality in the island nation.

Violence Against Women

Irrelevant of race, culture, religion, and socioeconomic status, violence against women is the least recognized human rights abuse in the world (Taylor, 2016). Furthermore, in 2012, of all women who were victims of homicide globally, almost half were killed by intimate partners or family members, compared to less than 6% of men killed in the same year (UN Women, 2016). In the same report it is also indicated that around 120 million girls worldwide had experienced forced intercourse or other forced acts at some point in their lives. Former husbands, partners, or boyfriends were identified as the most common perpetrators of sexual violence against women and girls.

In an article published in 2014 by the *HuffPost* (formally the Huffington Post) domestic violence statistics in the United States were alarming. Between 2001 and 2012, it was reported that 11,766 women were murdered by a current or ex male partner during that time. To give this number some context, during the same 11-year period, the number of American troops killed during the Afghanistan and Iraq war was 6,488 – a startling 5,278 less than the number of women who were murdered by a current or former partner (Vagianos, 2015).

The problem of domestic violence has an impact on the global and domestic economy. In 2013, the World Bank released a report entitled *The price of violence against women and girls* (World Bank, 2013). The report highlighted that economic costs to domestic violence impact both rich and poor countries. In 2002, the World Bank carried out a global study to understand the economic costs associated with domestic violence. The figures from this study are provide in Table 1.

The 2013 World Bank report illustrates that while there are gender, human rights, and psychological issues associated with domestic violence, there is also a monetary cost to the problem also. While all countries, irrelevant if they are rich or poor, experience domestic violence, it is the poorer developing countries where the numbers of domestic violence are higher (Ress, 2005), that struggle to address thus social issue due to the lack of resources and capabilities (World Bank, 2012).

In addition to the economic impact of domestic violence, there are also numerous health issues associated with domestic violence. In addition to physical harm and

Table 1 Cost of domestic violence

Country	Estimate
United Kingdom	$42 billion
Australia	$8.6 billion
New Zealand	$1.2–$5.8 billion
Chile	$1.7 billion
Fiji	$210 million
Nicaragua	$34 million
Uganda	$2.5 million

Table 2 Common health consequences of violence against women

Physical	Sexual and reproductive
Acute or immediate physical injuries, such as bruises, abrasions, lacerations, punctures, burns and bites, as well as fractures and broken bones or teeth More serious injuries, which can lead to disabilities, including injuries to the head, eyes, ears, chest and abdomen Gastrointestinal conditions, long-term health problems and poor health status, including chronic pain syndromes Death, including femicide and AIDS-related death	Unintended/unwanted pregnancy Abortion/unsafe abortion Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV Pregnancy complications/ miscarriage Vaginal bleeding or infections Chronic pelvic infection Urinary tract infections Fistula (a tear between the vagina and bladder, rectum, or both) Painful sexual intercourse Sexual dysfunction
Mental	**Behavioural**
Depression Sleeping and eating disorders Stress and anxiety disorders (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder) Self-harm and suicide attempts Poor self-esteem	Harmful alcohol and substance use Multiple sexual partners Choosing abusive partners later in life Lower rates of contraceptive and condom use

abuse, women also experience mental and psychological abuse during domestic violence. While the physical damages related to domestic violence can heal over time, the mental and psychological ramifications caused by domestic violence persist well after the violence has stopped (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2012). Table 2, published in a 2012 World Health Organization (WHO) report entitled *Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women – Health Consequences*, illustrates the physical, sexual and reproductive, and mental and behavioral health consequences of violence against women.

Mental health issues include depression, fear, anxiety, and low self-respect, and reproductive health issues include sexual dysfunction, unwanted pregnancies, gynecological problems, premature births, low birth weight of babies, pelvic inflammatory diseases, and maternal mortality and morbidity (Popa, 2009).

Domestic violence, prior to the 1970s, was a misunderstood and insignificant offence (Clark, 2011). This attitude cultivated new ideologies on women's rights through the establishment of numerous feminist groups. These organizations exposed and consequently accelerated wider issues concerning women such as sexuality, domestic violence, and workplace equality. Feminist groups such as the Battered Women's Movement (BWM) in England and its affiliate BWM in the United States were established in 1971 and 1973, respectively. The BWM was created to provide shelter services for women who were emotionally and physically abused by their husbands. Domestic violence, the once trivial issue, was, through organizations like BWM, becoming an important and significant social problem. In doing so, key organizations such as the National Organization for Women (1966),

Women's Liberation Movement (1970), and the Anti-Rape Movement (1970) became prominent voices of change toward domestic violence (Tierney, 1982).

The establishment of national feminist groups also influenced international movement on addressing domestic violence. The creation of international legislative instruments within the United Nations advocated the importance and seriousness of domestic violence. To address the issues of gender inequality, in 1979 the United Nations General Assembly, through the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), brought the issues of women's discrimination to global attention.

Commonly referred to the Bill of Rights for Women, over 180 countries ratified CEDAW in 1981. The 30-article treaty defines discrimination against women as well as sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination (United Nations, 1979). Article 1 defines discrimination against women as:

> Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, cultural, civil or any other field.

There have also been various amendments and recommendations to CEDAW covering sexual violence. Such amendments include broadening the definition for gender-based violence to include violence perpetrated by public authorities, private acts of violence, subordination of women, pornography, prostitution and trafficking in women, sexual harassment, and unequal access to health care (United Nations, 1986).

Since its inception in 1993 the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women provided a definitional platform (United Nations, 1993). The first two articles state:

> Article 1: The term "violence against women" mean any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether public or in public life.
>
> Article 2: Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following;
>
> 1. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battery, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.
> 2. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.
> 3. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration was created to further address the issue of violence against women as part of the United Nations Fourth World Conference for Women. The declaration stated:

> Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms... In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. (United Nations, 1995)

Four years later (1999) the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 25th of November as the international day for the elimination of violence against women. Since this adoption, the definitional parameters of the terms "violence against women" were broadened to include other issues such as all forms of violence against women, trafficking women and girls, crimes committed in the name of honor, violence against women migrant workers, and traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls and domestic violence (United Nations, 1999).

Domestic Violence as Unfreedom

Agarwal and Panda argue that domestic violence is "a serious and neglected form of unfreedom" (Agarwal & Panda, 2007). Domestic violence is a relatively new field of study among social scientists. Primarily, domestic violence research focused on child abuse. However, research has since broadened to include "wife abuse, dating violence, battered males, and same-sex domestic violence. Moreover, academics have recognized a subcategory within the field of criminal justice: victimology the science or study of victims" (Lockton & Ward, 2007).

For Lockton and Ward (2007), the term "violence" itself is often used in two senses:

> In its narrower meaning it describes the use or threat of physical force against a victim in the form of assault or battery. But in the context of the family, there is also a wider meaning which extends to abuse beyond the more typical instances of physical assault to include any form of physical, sexual or psychological molestation or harassment which has a serious detrimental effect upon the health and well-being of the victim, albeit that there may not be violence involved in the sense of physical force...The degree of severity of such behavior depends less upon the intrinsic nature than upon it being part of a pattern and upon its effect on the victim. (Lockton & Ward, 2007)

In addition to this, Radford and Harne (2008) suggest that domestic violence:

> can occur in any intimate or familial relationship, irrespective of whether the parties are living together or not, whether they are married or cohabiting or living in three-generational extended families. It is the relational element, rather than location that defines the violence as 'domestic', because while it commonly occurs in the home, it can spill out into the streets, bus stops, bars or even result in road traffic 'accidents'. It is the fact that the perpetrator and victim are not only well known to each other, but are (or were) in intimate or familial relationships, that makes it particularly hard to deal with by the survivor or victim, support and criminal justice agencies and the law. (Radford & Harne, 2008)

Scholars and advocates have also suggested that the conceptualization of domestic violence should extend beyond the traditional portrayal of the problem as being

physical, psychological, and verbal domination and control over and intimate partner. Rather they have argued that the proper referent for domestic violence directed at women should not be episodes of specific acts of physical, psychological, and sexual violence but, rather, a pattern of behavior and experiences of violence and abuse within a relationship (Freeman, 2016).

From a feminist perspective, the definition of domestic violence derives from the context of power and control in the context of a patriarchal society. This school of thought argues that:

> domestic violence reflects men's need to have complete control over their female partners in particular and social control over women in general...Advocates of this view believe that domestic violence is not a private problem but rather a societal problem with structural roots. (Straka & Montminy, 2008)

Furthermore, domestic violence is rooted in gender and power and represents men's active attempts to maintain dominance and control over women (Anderson, 1997).

The breadth of the terminology can be problematic when trying to describe the epidemiology of violence against women and in planning surveillance systems for monitoring its occurrence (Freeman, 2016). In the context of research, Freeman further argues:

> Different conceptions of violent behavior directed toward women raise crucial definitional issues to address in formulating research and surveillance in this filed. Given differing referents for the imprecise term violence used by researchers and their differing theoretical perspectives, that researchers can differ in a range of behaviors and experiences they include in the term violence provided they are explicit about their operationalization of this term in reporting results of empirical and theoretical studies and in interpreting such studies. Thus, some researchers may adopt a broad definition including many types of abusive, coercive, and controlling behaviors and others can restrict the term violence to physical aggression or to serious physical aggression in relationships. However, they should be explicit in their operational definitions and describe characteristics of their samples so that sample ignitions of violence against women, however, have implications explanatory conceptualization for violence against women, and prescribing what type of data indicative violence against women should be collected in surveillance systems and how it should be collected. (Freeman, 2016)

Mellender (2002) also argued that the word "domestic" trivialized the abuse in the past when police would not respond on the same level to an assault that was "just domestic" as they would to an assault in a public place. The problem in fact is a public issue and has been a private problem for too long. Mellender further states that there are five problematic issues with the word "domestic violence" (Mellender, 2002):

1. There are other crimes in domestic settings such as child abuse that are not encompassed by it.
2. The abuser and the women he subjects to abuse may have had a relationship but need not actually have lived together.

3. Harassment and violence often continue after the woman has attempted to end the relationship and either she or her partner has left. Many murders are committed by ex-partners.
4. The word "violence" conveys an incomplete impression, since men's ill-treatment of women takes many forms which combine together into a pattern of intimidation, humiliation, and control. It encompasses physical violence, psychological terrorization, sexual abuse of all kinds including rape, and actual or virtual imprisonment.
5. Finally the term "domestic violence" has been criticized because it masks the fact that the socially condoned abuse that makes up the clear majority if these behaviors are inflicted by men on women:

Maguire (1984) calls for a name to define the violence and acknowledge the power relationships:

> I reject all...titles and descriptions that obscure the real nature of violence; that it is violence committed by men against women they live with, have lived with or are in some form of emotional/sexual relationship …. giving any form of violence a name which does not address its nature and causation diminishes its importance. (Maguire, 1984)

In 1993, the New Zealand Law Society (NZLS) during a seminar on domestic violence suggested that the term "domestic violence" should be changed to "family violence." It was argued that domestic violence or family violence takes that belief, intention, and action into our homes. Often, the word "domestic" when applied to violence is used to downplay or even trivialize the violence. The NZLS, therefore, made the recommendation to use the term "family violence" because it more accurately acknowledges the gross breach of trust incurred when violence occurs between family members. In addition to this, "the word 'family' needs a broad definition here, as it must include a range of living situations that go beyond the mythical nuclear family of 'mum, dad and the kids' of the 1960's television sit com. This is especially important to consider if we cross cultural boundaries and take account of the rapid social changes of the last thirty years" (Barnes & New Zealand Law Society, 1993).

The diversity of definitions reflects the complex nature and characteristics of the problem. It addresses and re-emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to understand this protracted problem. Emily Burrill, author of the book *Domestic Violence and the Law in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, states:

> All of these definitions remain contested, and efforts to end domestic violence are, in no small part, efforts to control the definitions of the problem. Regardless of how we define the problem, violence within the domestic sphere continues to take its toll on women, children, men, and society as a whole. (Burrill et al., 2010)

Researchers argue that there is no single cause of domestic violence. It is widely accepted that the problem is complex and that numerous factors contribute to the problem. Internationally, studies on domestic violence have been carried out in many

countries throughout the world such as Japan (see Kozu, 1999; Kumagai & Ishii-Kuntz, 2016), China (see Cao et al., 2013; Lancet, 2016), the Middle East (see Djamba & Kimuna, 2015; Usta et al., 2014), South Africa (see Lancet, 1999; Van der Hover, 2001), Europe (see Nectoux et al., 2010; Xinhua News Agency, 2016), Pacific Islands (see Counts, 1990c; Crichton-Hill, 2001), New Zealand and Australia (see Crib, 1997; Seddon, 1993; Wilson & Webber, 2014), United Kingdom (see Harwin, 2006; Walby & Allen, 2004), and Latin America (see Olavarrieta & Sotelo, 1996; Uribe-Uran, 2015).

Domestic Violence in the Pacific

In the Pacific, it is the entrenched cultural belief systems woven into the problem of domestic violence that compounds the complexity of the problem. The region has one of the highest domestic and sexual violence rates in the world. Almost 70% of women and girls in the Pacific experience rape or other sexual violence in their lifetime (IFRC, 2011). Furthermore, one in ten women in the South Pacific is beaten while pregnant (UNICEF Pacific, 2015). While there have been attempts to discuss domestic violence at both the community and national levels, many Pacific Island countries still view the issue of domestic violence as taboo. This can be problematic and challenging for nonprofit organizations and government ministries tasked with addressing and educating communities about domestic violence (Papoutsaki & Harris, 2008).

In Kaliai, Papua New Guinea, Counts (1990a) states that domestic violence seems to be an expected aspect of family life (Counts, 1990a). Male dominance within the Lusi-Kaliai is inherited at birth and therefore males have automatic dominance of females. This was also observed by Naomi McPherson who argued that 67% of gender violence in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is husbands abusing their wives. Masculinity (therefore) has a role in promoting and legitimizing the use of violence; in prevailing models of masculinity, violence is seen as a normal entirely justified way of resolving conflict or expressing anger (McPherson, 2012; AUSAID, 2011).

In Vanuatu,

> Of women who have ever been married, lived with a man, or had an intimate sexual relationship with a partner, three in five (sixty per cent) experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime; more than two in three (sixty eight per cent) experienced emotional violence; more than one in four (twenty eight per cent) was subjected to several forms of control by their husband and partner, and more than two in three (sixty nine per cent) experienced at least one form of coercive control. (AUSAID, 2011)

Furthermore, the 2010 United Nations Development Fund for Women or UNIFEM reported that the Vanuatu Women's Centre reported 3,600 cases of family violence between 1993 and 2000 and around half of the community legal center business relates to domestic violence (Crooks, 2010). Cultural practices within Vanuatu society have also been blamed for high rates of domestic violence. Merilyn

Tahi, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Center, explained: "We also have to look at our cultural and traditional practice to address violence against women...in some Vanuatu cultures, on the day of the wedding, women are told about their roles and that they cannot tell what happens at home outside the house...and they believe that is culture" (World Bank, 2012).

According to the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Fijian rates of domestic and sexual violence are among the highest in the world. In their report entitled "Somebody's life, everyone's business" 64% of women who have ever been in an intimate relationship experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner in their lifetime, and 24% are suffering from physical or sexual partner violence today. This includes 61% who were physically attacked and 34% who were sexually abused in their lifetime (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, 2011).

In 2010, a report commissioned by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) was implemented to research violence against women and child abuse in Kiribati. The data indicated that more than:

> Two in three (sixty eight per cent) ever-partnered women aged between fifteen and forty nine reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Demographically, cases of domestic violence were more prevalent in the urban areas rather than the rural areas of Kiribati. Other contributions to domestic violence identified in the report were gender inequality, alcohol, acceptance of violence as a form of discipline and jealously. (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2010b)

A similar study was held in Tonga in 2009. Entitled the *National Study on Domestic Violence in Tonga* the report funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID). Like the abovementioned reports, "thirty three per cent of ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical violence in their life time and thirteen per cent had experienced physical violence in the twelve months preceding the time of interview/study" (AUSAID, 2012). Further, the report indicated that women living in the outer islands with less education were more likely to be physically and sexually abused than women who were educated and living in urban areas. In 2016, it was reported that 77% of women in Tonga have been physically or sexually abused. Of greater concern was that 90% of these incidents were carried out by husbands, fathers, and teachers (RNZ, 2016).

New Zealand is not immune from the problem of domestic/family violence. It is estimated that in 2014, a family violence investigation was recorded every five and a half minutes. Furthermore, around 76% of family violence incidents are not reported to police (Its Ok, 2016). The problem of domestic violence in New Zealand is complex because of the many ethnic groups that call New Zealand home. In 2013, the Office of Ethnic Affairs New Zealand released report entitled *Towards Freedom from Violence – New Zealand Family Violence Statistics Disaggregated by Ethnicity.* The focus of the report was to understand family violence within the various ethnic groups residing in New Zealand. In the report Pacific people and Māori were highly represented in categories such as the average annual mortality rates from family violence, emotional, and physical abuse as well as assault (Paulin & Edgar, 2013). In 1994, it was estimated that the cost of domestic violence in New Zealand was around

5.3 billion dollars every year which is equivalent to 8 billion dollars in today's terms (see Lievore & Mayhew, 2007; Paulin & Edgar, 2013; Snively, 1995).

In the context of Pacific families who call New Zealand home, the statistics are very high. Pasefika Proud, an organization that addresses family violence in Pacific families in New Zealand, released the following statistics in 2016 (Pasifika Proud, 2017):

1. Pacific peoples are two times as likely to be an offender who has committed a serious crime against a family member.
2. Pacific students are three times as likely as New Zealand European students to report witnessing adults hit children in their homes.
3. Pacific children are five times more likely to die from child abuse or neglect.

Domestic Violence in Samoa

Statistics showed that domestic violence in Samoa is an endemic problem (Samoa Observer, 2014). Forty-six percent of women are physically abused, and up to 8% are beaten unconscious by their spouse (Haussegger, 2011). In 2000, the World Health Organization conducted a nationwide survey in which 1640 women aged between 15 and 49 participated. The study reported that 41% of ever-partnered women had experienced physical violence at the hand of an intimate partner and 20% had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2003).

Domestic violence in Samoa is not a new social issue. Traditionally, the problem of domestic violence was resolved and reconciled within a familial environment. Despite this, Samoa has been proactive in addressing and understanding domestic violence through the publication of numerous inquiries and research reports to understand and determine trends and contributors to this social problem (see Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2010a; NHRI, 2015; Ministry for Women, 2015; Peteru, 2012; Roguski & Kingi, 2011; WHO, 2003).

More recently, contributions on the issue of domestic violence have been articulated through different social lenses such as religion (see Siu-Maliko, 2016; Vailaau, 2005), parenting (Pereira, 2010), social work (Crichton-Hill, 2001), urbanization (Crib, 1997), and gender (see Boodoosingh, 2015; Jackson, 2014). Furthermore, the creation of a Family Violence Court, the amendment of key legislations (1961 Samoa's Crimes Act), as well as a dedicated Domestic Violence Unit of the Ministry of Police and Prisons are indicators of Samoa's continuous adjustments to address the issue of domestic violence.

The relationship between abuse and discipline has always been a topic of debate in Samoa. Discipline by way of physical punishment is an accepted "socialization tool" in Samoa (see Mageo, 1998; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). The paradoxical relationship between aggressive spanking followed by displays of affection promoted a culture among Samoan children that pain was associated with love (see Howard, 1986; Keene, 1978). Furthermore, punishment and spanking was always seen by Samoan parents as an act that was done out of love, therefore if the parents

failed to instruct their children, parents believed this was a disservice to their children (see Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996; Vaa, 1995).

The use of biblical scriptures to justify discipline and punishment within Samoan families has also been a contributing factor to domestic and family violence. An example of this is the frequent use of scripture found in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. King Solomon teaches "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). This proverb in particular has been frequently used to justify the use of physical force to discipline children in Samoa. However, Reverend Nove Vailaau argues that smacking children has never been a part of pre-Christian Samoan beliefs and that the Proverbial meaning of the scripture suggests that parents are the shepherds of their children. By applying the rod of protection, guidance, care, comfort, and nurturance, they guide them into adulthood (see Ministry for Women, 2015; Roguski & Kingi, 2011; Siu-Maliko, 2016; Vailaau, 2005).

Samoa became the first Pacific Island country to adopt the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1992. Following this, Samoa continued to set the bearing in the Pacific by holding a national inquiry into the status of woman in 2006. This pioneering report examined the frequency of domestic violence issues, the effectiveness of Samoa's legal system on domestic violence cases, health and legal consequences of domestic violence as well as possible strategies and interventions to stop violence toward Samoan women. Several other reports and studies on domestic violence in Samoa were implemented in the following years. More specifically, the Universal Periodic Review for Samoa and the second Samoa Family Health and Safety Study, published in 2016 and 2017, respectively, identified that attitudes in Samoan society reflected the depth and complexity of the problem (Singh & Singh, 2016). In addition to this, both reports identified the different cultural factors that can lead to domestic and family violence, included the belief that the husband is the head of the home, the lack of understanding about women's cultural status within Samoan society, and the deviated opinions on how to discipline children (see MWCSD, 2017; Boodoosingh et al., 2018).

An aspect of this attitude lies in the way Samoan women accept and normalize violence as a part of their regular environment. Compounding this attitude is the expectation within Samoan society that women must be obedient to their husbands and that a good Samoan woman is an obedient woman (see Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2010a; NHRI, 2015).

Numerous community-based initiatives on domestic violence in Samoa have been implemented with varying outcomes. Funded by the Canadian government in 2016, the program held workshops throughout five rural villages as well as Samoa College (High School) and the National University of Samoa (NUS). In understanding the role of women within Samoan society, the study identified that violence against women and girls is both a pernicious and complex problem and that solutions to this problem need to originate within the families and communities (see Percival, 2013, 2016).

Domestic violence issues have also been attributed to Samoa's patriarchal society. With Samoa's rural system of political governance (*matai System*) being dominated

by males, women have no rights in their husband's village and are expected to serve their husband's family...women were and are a highly vulnerable group (Roguski & Kingi, 2011). According to an article published in the *Samoa Observer*, "Seventy per cent of Samoan women still believe that men still have good reason to beat their wives if she is unfaithful or does not do their house work or is disobedient to her husband" (Samoa Observer, 2016). Mine Pase (2003) argues:

> Samoa is a male orientated culture, and women still hold a sub-dominant place in society. In a traditional cultural event or even a church function, it is not uncommon for a woman of esteemed caliber or high social standing to be serving from the back, unrecognized. In a political setting, she may be the boss, but in her own village among chief's wives, she is a mere servant...In some severe cases, women are not even supposed to be seen, as in a royal 'ava (kava) ceremony. Women are looked down upon as not good enough to prepare or serve, let alone partake of it...In short, as children are in some cultures, so are women in our Samoan culture – they are to be seen but not heard. (Pase, 2003)

Male impunity within Samoan culture, as well as Samoan ideologies concerning masculinity, has also been an issue when understanding domestic violence. Attitudes toward male impunity within Samoa's social constructs have been a contributing factor toward the molding of young Samoan boys' attitudes and behavior. The Ministry of Women and Development, New Zealand 2015 report entitled *A malu aiga, e malu foi fafo: Protection for the family, protection for all* stated "cultures of violence and masculinity in the Samoan context can only be read in the context of Samoan societal drivers. Many of these drivers exist in Samoa and migrate with Samoan immigrants to New Zealand and persist to shape their and their children's attitudes and behaviour towards violence" (Ministry for Women, 2015). Gender relationships in Samoa, like other Pacific countries are characterized by inequalities of power, opportunity, and access to researches, (and) these relations are closely linked to cycles of victimization of women and girls (Siu-Maliko, 2016).

Understanding domestic/family violence in Samoa and developing solutions to counteract the problem is a complex venture. However, a predominant influence to the problem and solution has been Samoan culture. To move forward, Crichton-Hill (2001) suggests that the "practitioner has a responsibility to learn about the other's culture first, for culture will have a determining effect on the process...practice with Samoan women who have suffered abuse by Samoan men will have a cultural component that is different from other cultural situations" (Crichton-Hill, 2001).

Faa Samoa and Domestic Violence

At the core of Samoa's traditional value and belief systems is its practice of *faa Samoa* – the all-encompassing code of customary ethics practiced by Samoans. *Faa Samoa* is the sine qua non of Samoan existence. The collective belief among many Samoans is that *faa Samoa* exists far beyond the normalized accepted definition of this concept as – "the Samoan way of life," but rather its meaning is intricate and complex. However, in most cases, when Samoans are asked the questions "What is

faa Samoa?" the replies are usually premised on superficial responses such as "it's our culture, it's our way of living, it's respect, love, etc." Although these answers represent components of what *faa Samoa* is, it does not embody *faa Samoa* in its entirety.

Men within my own family circle growing up in South Auckland, New Zealand, and Samoa normally justify the issue of domestic violence by the default response "because it's our culture." This response implies that *faa Samoa* as a cultural construct gives permission to individuals (mainly male) to hit and abuse others (mainly women and children). Of greater concern was that these attitudes toward domestic violence normalized the problem and framed it as being a part of Samoan culture.

This narrative clashed with my limited understanding of *faa Samoa*. Not only was *faa Samoa* used to justify domestic violence in the home, but it has spread and is used to justify and legitimize the use of force and violence within other areas of Samoan society, such as the village system of governance, the education system, and the private and public sectors. The constant use of *faa Samoa* to justify violence of any form normalized the magnitude of what *faa Samoa* represents. This attitude not only standardizes the problem of domestic violence, it also camouflages the possible contribution of *faa Samoa* toward this problem. By unpacking the loaded nature of the terms *faa Samoa* and "violence" throughout this study, a working platform to discuss possible relationships between the two can be developed.

So, what is *faa Samoa*? Generally, *faa Samoa* is frequently and normally defined as "the Samoan way." Although this definition holds some validity, this accepted interpretation short changes the cultural complexity of what *faa Samoa* truly represents within Samoan society. Furthermore, to frame *faa Samoa* as being simply the Samoan way may also indirectly imply that *faa Samoa* is the only way, and that any other cultural or social constructs within or outside of *faa Samoa* are irrelevant and unacceptable. This is false. Like many Samoan expressions, *faa Samoa* is polysemic by nature and is contextually defined. The meaning and purpose of *faa Samoa* depends on the occasion, environment, audience, participants, and even religious denominations. Its meaning, purpose, and function are not static, but constantly moving and molding according to the cultural, social, economic, and political environments in which it functions.

Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) Contribution to Domestic Violence in Samoa

What has been clearly identified in previous studies on domestic violence in Samoa (see Chang-Tung et al., 2017; Crib, 1997; Percival, 2016; Peteru, 2012) has been the way, generally, Samoa has gradually been moving away from practicing its traditional protective mechanisms. The *aiga* (family), *nuu/matai* (village and chiefly system), and *ekalesia* (church) have been impacted by modernization, globalization, and social change that have, in turn, impacted on the way relationships are valued and sustained within the Samoan milieu. If Samoan culture has existing traditional

practices that protect women and children, why then, have Samoans deviated so much from these practices? Are these protective practices unimportant in modern Samoa? Have western forms of reconciliation processes such as mediation, police, and legal processes taken precedence over traditional processes such as the village and *matai* system? These are some important questions to consider. The peace and conflict studies (PACS) discipline can provide an alternative lens to discuss these questions.

According to Standish (2020), PACS is a field of study that seeks ultimately to construct and disseminate knowledge about both the causes of conflict and violence and the means to transform violent conflict into nonviolent conflict (Standish, 2015). As an academic discipline, PACS is fairly new only having been developed in the mid-1940s. In terms of PACS contribution to domestic violence, there is a paucity within the PACS discipline despite some statistics stating that each day three women die because of domestic violence (National Network to End Domestic Violence, n.d.). Since domestic violence is a form of violence, PACS theories and methodological approaches can expand and broaden the discussion of domestic violence to include other possible contributors to this social problem.

In my doctoral thesis (Ligaliga, 2018), I adapted several peace and conflict study theories to analyze domestic violence in Samoa. For this chapter, I focus on some aspects of Galtung's theories of violence, particularly his violence triangle.

Galtung argues that there are three forms of violence – direct violence, cultural violence, and structural violence (see Galtung, 1990; Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Gewalt, 1993). Violence, according to Galtung, is defined as "the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put in more general terms, the impairment of human life" (Galtung, 1990). Therefore, direct violence can be physical force (torture, rape, sexual assault) and verbal force (humiliation) (Stalenoi, 2014). Cultural violence expands Galtung's definition of violence to include "aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1969). In addition to direct and cultural violence, Galtung also developed the idea of structural violence or the "institutional violence created by the system and it is translated into political oppression, economic exploitation and cultural discrimination" (Stalenoi, 2014).

Galtung's tripartite approach to violence articulates some important characteristics between the three forms of violence. Direct violence is extremely visible in any conflict, while structural and cultural violence are invisible. Each form of violence is interdependent and coexists, collectively reinforcing each other's existence. There is a causal relationship in that whatever form of violence is located at the base corners of the triangle influences the form of violence at the apex of the triangle. In this case (as illustrated in Fig. 1), direct violence is caused by structural and cultural violence. Direct violence can be reconciled if behaviors and contradictions are changed. Cultural and structural violence can also be reconciled if attitudes and institutional structures are also changed (Ramsbotham et al., n.d.)

While Galtung's theories are able to provide a strong theoretical platform for investigating domestic violence, the ethnocentrism of his theory was adapted to

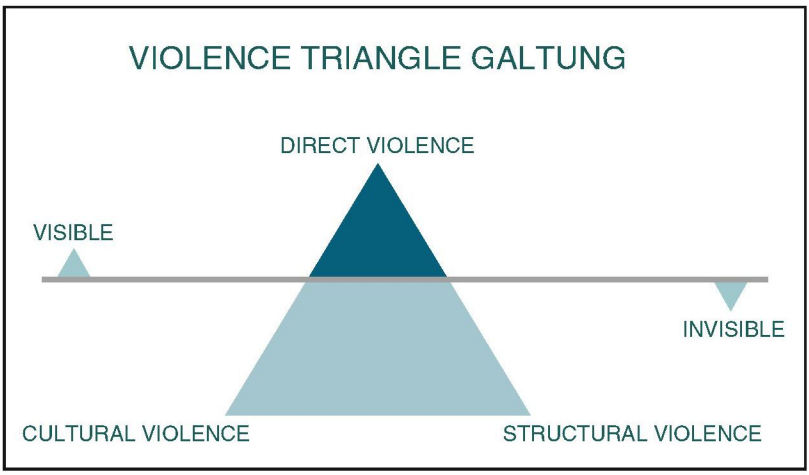

Fig. 1 Galtung's violence triangle

make it relevant from a Samoan perspective. Using an Indigenous Pacific method of *talanoa* (see Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Vaioleti, 2006; Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Otsuka, 2006) and *faafaletui* (see McCarthy et al., 2011; Suaalii-Sauni et al., 2009; Tamasese et al., 2005), Samoan leaders who are directly involved in the agenda to address domestic violence were interviewed. Three themes emerged as direct and indirect contributors to domestic violence in Samoa. These were *aiga* (family), *nuu* (village)/*matai* (chief), and *ekalesia* (churches), all very entrenched within *faa Samoa* practices (Ligaliga, 2018).

Theme 1: Aiga/Family

Direct Violence

As previously mentioned, Galtung defines violence as the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put in more general terms, the impairment of human life (Galtung, 1969). Freedom from violence is a fundamental human need. However, within the social and cultural constructs of the Samoan milieu are attitudes and behaviors that weaken and disable the function of women. The *aiga* or family is a location where direct violence occurs. It is the most important social unit in Samoan society (Holmes, 1969). It is defined as "*o e uma e tau ile suafa ma le fanua* or all those who are bound to the title and the land by reference to which kin group (*aiga*) is identified" (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2006). Therefore, the *aiga* extends well beyond the biological connections as Europeans understand the term, but rather the *aiga* is a wider family group of blood and marriage or even adopted connections who all acknowledge one person as the *matai* (chief) or head of that particular family (Grattan, 1948).

The complexity and functionality of this social unit within Samoan society can be at times contradictory to its purpose and function. The roles and responsibilities of

women, in particular within the rural villages, are substandard and, in doing so, create negative stigmas for them. The *nofotane* is an example of this. Literally translated as to sit (*nofo*) by your male (*nofo*), *nofotane* is the term given to a married women living with her husband's family. However, the *nofotane* has no rights, privileges, or authority. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1991) further explains "wives were considered to be the lowest ranking adult status group in the village ... wives had no status in their husband's family" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991). This cultural status, given to married women, created negative space where attitudes and ideologies flourished. In doing so, married women are often exploited and are vulnerable to physical abuse.

The status of *nofotane* has been the focus of recent domestic violence campaigns. The word *nofotane* is problematic, as it devalues the role of a married woman living with her husband's family. It also carries a racial connotation and differentiates her status in relation to females of her husband's family in the village (Keresoma, 2016).

Furthermore, the problem of the *nofotane* status is also compounded by Samoa's overarching interpretation of the meaning and function of human rights. This was highlighted in the State of Human Rights report that was published in 2015 by Samoa's Office of the Ombudsman & National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The report stated:

> Some Samoan's viewed human rights as a foreign concept that does not have a place in Samoa. This misconception seems to exist because of the Samoan translation of 'human rights' – *aia tatau o tagata soifua.* It seems that when people hear the term *aia tatau* they tend to pay strong attention only to the word *aia* instead of the whole term *aia tatau.* In the Samoan context, *aia* on its own is a powerful word that implies 'you have no control over me' or 'I can do or say anything because it is my right.' Therefore, individuals tend to think that they have freedom or *aia* to do anything with no limitations. (NHRI, 2015)

Samoan scholar Unasa Vaa is in opposition to this explaining "the problem is not that they (women) do not have human rights, as understood in the West, but that people have different understandings of the significance of the words 'human rights.'" (Vaa, 2009) Despite deviating perspectives, the rights of women, irrelevant of customary and western interpretation and rhetoric, are limited. A possible explanation to this limitation is because their roles and responsibilities are nested together, despite the different environments in which they function. Therefore, women's rights are bundled rather than existing independently within the *aiga.* Furthermore, when the roles of Samoan women are amassed, their traditional and customary status in the *aiga* are normalized. In traditional Samoan culture, the highest title was that of *feagaiga* (covenant) between a brother and his sister. It was the responsibility of the brother to protect his sister. Literally translated as to scatter (pae) and smooth out (auli), the title of *pae ma auli* or mediator, peacemaker and comforter was also afforded to women (especially sisters). Just as conflict scatters and dislocates relationships in a family, it is the responsibility of women to smooth, reconnect and heal relationships within the family. Women are given the attribution of *se'ese'e talaluma* (the one who sits in the front of the house) indicating that in family gatherings the front of the house is women's rightful place. She and the

matai/chief are served first. During the important decision-making meetings relating to family matters, her opinion is highly regarded and sought after. In many cases it is the sister that has the authority to veto any decisions of the family (see Latai, 2015).

Many Samoan families incorporate more than just parent and children circles to include extended family. Cases of domestic violence in Samoa are thus not limited to primarily spousal relationships but also included de facto, divorced, guardian, and extended family members. Many Samoan families are also home to extended family members who live with them for education or employment opportunities. Women of all ages leave their rural homes to live in villages that are closer to Apia township. What has been troubling is that the incidence of incest and rape in Samoa has also risen. Many of the victims were either step daughters, cousins, *teinei fai* (adopted), or young women who were brought into the *aiga* to help with the domestic duties.

A women's status in the household can, to a large extent, define how she is treated (Chang-Tung et al., 2017). Women in Samoa endure many emotional and psychological pressures. The stratification of women's roles within Samoan society also breeds and frames certain attitudes and behavior. Traditionally, young females were associated with the *aualuma* group, which comprised the daughters of the village. This group was frequently referred to as the *feagaiga* or covenant group. In particular, the *taupou* or daughter of the high chief represented the "ideal feminine status in Samoan society" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991). The *taupou* played a crucial part in Samoan families, especially in "social, political negotiations and ceremonial occasions" (see Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991; Fana'afi, 1986).

These gender-specific roles within the family have also reinforced and justified certain attitudes and cultural philosophies towards women in Samoa. Shielding these ideologies is the *nu'u/matai* or village and chief systems – Samoa's traditional decentralized system of political authority in which the basic political unit was the *nu'u* or village (Meleisea, 1987).

Theme 2: Nu'u/Matai or Village/Chief

Structural Violence

In addition to direct violence, Galtung expanded his theory of direct violence to include structural violence. This form of violence stems from the injustices and exploitations built into a social system that generates wealth for the few and poverty for the many, stunting everyone's ability to develop their full humanity (Hathaway, 2013). Structural violence also includes discrimination, deprivation, social injustices, inequality between men and women, and denial of human rights which is rooted in the social structure (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). A unique characteristic of structural violence is that there are no actors. Rather it is the institutions within a society that cause structural violence. Unlike direct violence which is visible, structural violence is subtle and at times invisible.

As an institution, the *nu'u/matai* system was not created to safeguard women's rights, roles and responsibilities. Part two of Samoa's constitution articulates the fundamental rights of individuals. Under section 15(1), the constitution states

> except as expressly authorized under the provisions of this Constitution, no law and no executive or administrative action of the State shall, either expressly or in its practical application, subject any person or persons to any disability or restriction or confer any person or persons any privilege or advantage on grounds only of descent, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, place of birth, family status, or any of them. (See Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa 1960 http://www.paclii.org/ws/legis/consol_act_2008/cotisos1960438/)

While section 15(1) protects women from discrimination, there are no legal instruments to safeguard women on the issue of *matai* or chief titles. Under section 100 it states "A *matai* title shall be held in accordance with Samoan customs and usage and with the law relating to Samoan custom and usage." (See Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa 1960 http://www.paclii.org/ws/legis/consol_act_2008/cotisos1960438/) Articles 15 and 100 of Samoa's constitution highlight the contradictory nature of the *matai* titles. While discrimination of women is not promoted in the constitution, women, according to customs and usage of a particular village, disallow women to hold a *matai* title. According to the 2017 Samoa Family Safety Study, 11% of all *matai* in Samoa were women. Thirty-six villages did not allow women to hold a *matai* title. Furthermore, 8% of villages recognized women as *matai* but did not allow women to sit on council meetings (Chang-Tung et al., 2017).

According to Samoa's official government website (https://www.samoagovt.ws/about-samoa/), there are 265 villages, as well as an additional 45 villages within the Apia area. The local power rests with the constituent villages. Each village, according to their specific customs and usage, interprets the same constitutional law differently. In doing so, there are a variety of reasons why the village council, which is usually made up of men, disallows women to hold a *matai* title. They include issues pertaining to rank, the coarse language used by men during the village council, and appeals to certain biblical passages that are read as injunctions against women in local governance (see Boodoosingh et al., 2018; Percival, 2013).

When addressing issues of domestic violence, many villages are ill-equipped with the necessary social, emotional, psychological mechanisms to safeguard victims. In many cases, the village council is left to deal with the issue, based on what they know. However, the "what they know" approach adopted by the village *matai* may do more harm than good. This is a concern, especially when the government's approach to domestic violence heavily relies on the village and churches. Since many of the villages are made up of male *matai* (chiefs), male impunity within the village as well as Samoan ideologies concerning masculinity has also been an issue when understanding domestic violence. Attitudes toward male impunity within Samoa's social constructs have been a contributing factor toward the molding of young Samoan boys attitudes and behavior toward young women. Pase (2003) argues

> Samoa is a male orientated culture, and women still hold a sub-dominant place in society. In a traditional cultural event or even a church function, it is not uncommon for a woman of esteemed calibre or high social standing to be serving from the back, unrecognized. In a political setting, she may be the boss, but in her own village among chief's wives, she is a mere servant. . .In some severe cases, women are not even supposed to be seen, as in a royal 'ava (kava) ceremony. Women are looked down upon as not good enough to prepare or serve, let alone partake of it. . .In short, as children are in some cultures, so are women in our Samoan culture – they are to be seen but not heard. (Pase, 2003)

Structurally, the *nu'u* and *matai* systems can promote and encourage negative attitudes and behaviors toward women. Currently, the village system in Samoa is not designed to encourage and safeguard women young and old. In fact, in some villages women are completely banned from existing in its cultural and social environment. While these attitudes and behaviors are camouflaged behind Samoa's customs and usage as declared in its Constitution, it also reinforces Galtung's argument of how social and political institutions can contribute directly or indirectly to violence – in this case, domestic violence.

Theme 3: Ekalesia/Church

Cultural/Ideological Violence

Understanding cultural violence, according to Galtung, highlights the way in which the acts of direct and structural violence are legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in our society (Galtung, 1990). Defined as aspects of culture (not entire cultures), such as religion, ideology, language, and art, empirical and formal science can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence (Galtung, 2002). Characteristically, Galtung asserts that direct violence is an event, and structural violence is a process with ups and downs, while cultural violence is an invariant, a permanence (Galtung, 1990). However, Galtung also notes that generally, a causal flow from cultural violence via structural to direct violence can be identified. The culture preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation or repression as normal and natural (Galtung & Fischer, 2013).

There were no examples of domestic violence within the institution of the church itself that emerged during the research. However, what was evident was how the churches frame the roles of women within the family and the village through their sermons and the use of biblical scriptures. This is hugely problematic because it reinforces and justifies the dominant roles of men within the family and village. This reinforces Galtung's argument on how religion can be divisive in its purpose and function within a society. Galtung argues that organized, transcendental religion forces society into two paradigms – light and darkness. He argues that "in the general occidental tradition of not only dualism but *manichaeism*, with sharp dichotomies between good and evil, there would also have to be something like an evil Satan corresponding to the good God" (Galtung, 1990). Furthermore, Galtung elucidates that these forms of religion "tend to establish exclusionary categories of 'chosen' or 'lost', thereby legitimizing the exploitation of the latter through the perpetuation of a kind of ordained inevitability" (Jacoby, 2007).

This kind of exploitations does exist within Samoan churches. The power of the pulpit can indirectly create certain attitudes towards women, especially in terms of gender roles and responsibilities. This is reinforced by the fact that many of Samoa's church ministers are men. Furthermore, Samoa being a Christian nation, sermons are generally applied literally taking away any space for interpretation. In doing so, when scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 11:3 are used to understand God's instructions on the relationship between a husband and wife, immediately women are considered secondary to men under God's law. (King James version 1 Corinthians 11:3 "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.") Under God's law, women are considered to exist under her husband's authority. She is expected to be obedient to her husband who is the head of the home. This dichotomous relationship promotes men and demotes women. While the church minister did not give specific instructions for husbands to beat their wives, the ideologies created by religion can justify and normalize the act of violence towards women because it is God's law. Ah Siu-Maliko (2016) explains:

> The Bible has often been misused to justify Samoan men's presumed superiority over women. Samoan family relations are strongly influenced by the patriarchal system which dominates the Old Testament ... This patriarchal form of Christianity continues to shape Samoans' interpretation of the Bible. A literal reading of biblical passages is still used to justify men's dominance over women and their physical 'discipline' of women and children. The Bible is not only taken out of context but is used to buttress the imbalance of power between men and women. (Siu-Maliko, 2016)

If church ministers continue to reinforce and justify the dominant role of men within Samoan society, then they are adding fuel to an already protracted social problem. This concern is at the heart of the study *A Theology of Children* by Nove Vailaau. Although the study focuses on the use of the Bible to raise children in Samoan society, Vailaau unpacks and dismantles how scriptures have been traditionally used to justify the smacking and physical abuse of children. Rather than legitimizing the behavior of smacking, Vailaau suggests that the Church should "promote a society in which every child is valued, and all children have the opportunity to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge, that they make a valued contribution to the society. This is a theological imperative. As God has nurtured the church, so too the church communities are called to provide for children, and to nurture them in the love of God" (Vailaau, 2005). The same approach and attitude should be implemented toward women.

Among the recommendations of previous studies to address domestic violence in Samoa is that family, village, and church should maintain customs and traditions even though some of these customs and traditions have been used to justify domestic violence and family, village, and church are implicated in cultural violence. For example, in 2012, the Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand published a report titled *O le tofa mamao*. This report highlighted the importance of *faa Samoa* in addressing domestic violence amongst Samoan communities and states that "customs and traditions ... are central to preserving and strengthening relationships of blood-ties and marital reciprocity" (Peteru, 2012).

However, the cycle of violence will continue if there are not a number of other values or principles intrinsic to *faa Samoa* incorporated with some of the customary rules and the chiefly system of Samoan culture. Some of the principles fundamental to *faa Samoa* include *va* (relational space), *faaaloalo* (respect), and *fealofani* (harmony and equality).

In Samoan society, *va* or relational spaces exists between "brother and sister, parent (especially father and mother) and offspring, male and female, male and male, female and female, host and guest, *matai*, the dead and living, man and his environment, sea and sky, flora and fauna, the created and creator" (Ta'isi, 2008). If *va* is understood as relational space, then *tuaoi* or boundaries are the parameters by which the *va* exists. Furthermore, "*tuoai* means boundary or boundaries which are constantly negotiated through the process of *sufiga* or to coax, placate, negotiate or persuade. Therefore, *sufiga o le tuaoi* directs that such negotiations avoid rough or violent language or thought, and privilege gentle and prayerful canvassing, coaxing, negotiating, placating, and/or persuading, particularly when negotiating highly contentious and volatile matters" (Suaalii-Sauni et al., 2014).

Along with *va* is the concept of *faaaloala* (respect). This is commonly used to refer to the need for people to respect their elders, their matai, their customs, and proper authority. However, respect should be for all. For example, Samoa's practice of *feagaia* between brother and sister promotes respect and avoidance of body contact. As we have seen with the attitude toward women in the home, in the village and in the church, women are often in a position where they are expected to respect others, and yet they are not held in respect.

According to Ta'isi (2008), a search for peace is a search for harmony. The Samoan word for harmony is *fealofani*. The ideology of *fealofani* in Samoan life "recognizes that all living things are equal . . . human life is equivalent and complementary to cosmic, plant and animal life. In the balance of life, all living things share equal status and power. Man is no more powerful greater than the heavens, the trees, the fish or cattle and vice versa" (Ta'isi, 2008). *Fealofani*, therefore, in its purest form, promotes an egalitarian society. The root of the word *fealofani* is *alofa* or love. It is *alofa* or the act of love, compassion, and care that rebalances the inequalities that exists in the *va* or relational spaces.

There are numerous other values, principles, and aspects of *faa Samoa* that contribute to maintaining good relationships, but these three have been discussed in order to demonstrate some of the complexities of *faa Samoa* that relate to domestic violence.

Conclusion

Fundamental to positive peace is freedom from violence. This chapter addresses specifically the violence against women, and in particular domestic or family violence. Using a Pacific indigenous lens and Galtung's theory of violence, the situation of domestic violence in Samoa is analyzed. The importance of culture is demonstrated in attempts to address this violence, with three critical areas of *aiga* (family), *nuu* (village), and *ekalesia* (church) at the center, influencing this violence.

It is argued that Samoan culture or *faa Samoa* contains within it the prescription for helping to end domestic violence and restoring freedom from violence, particularly for women and girls in Samoa. Addressing this problem will involve challenging the way in which *faa Samoa* has been interpreted to allow and even to encourage male impunity within the home, in the village and in the churches. The features of *faa Samoa*, *va* (relational space), *faaaloala* (respect), and *fealofani* (harmony and equality), can contribute to establishing Samoa's place as a nation of positive peace in the Pacific. Cultural violence needs to be made more visible in order to work toward freedom from violence and positive peace.

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